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**Building a Calgary Community Response
for Children, Youth, and Adults Involved
in the Sex Trade/Sexual Exploitation Trade**

PROJECT REPORT

Prepared for

Project Advisory Committee and
The United Way of Calgary and Area



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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
1. Background.....	2
1.1 Purpose.....	2
1.2 Vision	2
1.3 Objectives	3
1.4 Anticipated Outcomes	3
2. Approach and Methodology	4
2.1 Document Review.....	5
2.2 Interviews with Experiential Individuals.....	5
2.3 Interviews with Key Stakeholders.....	6
2.4 Community Stakeholder Survey	6
3. Document Review.....	7
3.1 Interventions Documented in Academic Literature	7
3.2 Interventions Documented in the Grey Literature.....	7
3.3 Promising Practices: Community Based Programs	8
3.3.1 Creating Options Aimed at Reducing Sexual Exploitation Program: COARSE (Edmonton)	8
3.3.2 Stepping Out Program (Calgary)	10
4. Interview Findings.....	13
4.1 Key Characteristics of the Sex Trade and Sexual Exploitation in Calgary.....	13
4.1.1 Age and Gender.....	14
4.1.2 Location and Characteristics of the Sex Trade in Calgary	18
4.1.3 Description of the Outdoor Sex Trade in Calgary	19
4.2 Psychosocial History and Risk Factors	20
4.2.1 Family and Social History.....	20
4.2.2 Emotional History	21
4.2.3 History of Abuse.....	22
4.2.4 Drug Use and Addictions.....	22
4.2.5 Socioeconomic Status: Poverty.....	23
4.3 Demand Side of the Sex Trade.....	24
4.3.1 Pimps.....	24
4.3.2 Clients of the Sex Trade (“Johns”)	25
4.3.3 Trading Sex for Shelter, Food, Drugs, Etc.....	25
4.4 Continuum of Community Based Services and Supports.....	26
4.4.1 Prevention and Early Intervention	27
4.4.2 Care, Treatment, and Support Services.....	30
4.4.3 Exiting Strategies: Leaving the Sex Trade	38
4.4.4 Support for Women Who Have Exited	41

4.5	Current Responses at the Broader Community Level	43
4.5.1	National Policy Environment vis-à-vis Sexual Exploitation of Youth and Children...	43
4.5.2	Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act (PCHIP)	44
4.6	Barriers, Perceived Shortcomings, and Areas for Improvement.....	47
4.6.1	Wait Times.....	47
4.6.2	Eligibility Restrictions	48
4.6.3	Need for Seamless Network of Services	48
4.6.4	Lack of Funding.....	48
4.6.5	Need for Specialized Addictions Services	49
4.6.6	Confidentiality.....	49
4.6.7	Lack of Empathy	50
4.7	Building Community Awareness	51
4.8	Community Partnerships.....	54
5.	Survey Findings	56
5.1	Characteristics of Respondents.....	56
5.2	Perceptions and Attitudes	56
5.3	Community Development.....	57
5.4	Prevention and Education.....	58
5.5	Research and Knowledge Building	58
5.6	Intervention	59
5.7	Exiting	59
5.8	Legal Responses	59
6.	Recommendations and Next Steps	61
6.1	Invest in Partnerships and Collaboration among Community Members, Non-Government Organizations, Government, and Other Stakeholders	61
6.2	Focus on Underlying Causes and Solutions	61
6.3	Influence on Policy, Systems and Public Attitudes	62
7.	Summary	64
	Appendix A – Professional Profile of Consulting Team	65
	Appendix B – Consent Forms	66
	Appendix C – Organizations Represented in Key Informant Interviews	70
	Appendix D – Community Stakeholder Survey	71
	Appendix E – Mapping of Community Based Agencies	80
	Appendix F – Results from Multi-Stakeholder Survey.....	1

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The Advisory Committee members included:

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1. Background

In fall 2006, the United Way of Calgary brought together a variety of stakeholders to develop a Coordinated Community Response Plan to the Sex Trade in Calgary. Subsequently, San Patten and Associates¹ were contracted to lead the research and writing of the Community Response Plan. This project is strategically positioned under the United Way's Safety from Violence portfolio within the current "People Living in Vulnerable Situations" community impact plan.

The development of a coordinated response for people involved in the sex trade in Calgary and area builds on new and existing partnerships and collaborations amongst a wide variety of stakeholders, including several levels of government, non-governmental agencies, academic researchers, and clients.

Though this project was initiated in part to address the closure of the Stepping Out Program², it is expected that Community Response Plan will also inform future programming efforts in Calgary to help address the diverse needs of individuals involved in, or impacted by, the sex trade.

While valuable research has been conducted on specific elements of the sex trade in Calgary, limited research has been conducted about the broad context of the sex trade and the full continuum of programs and policies that impinge on the sex trade. Our consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, supplemented by research from across Canada and other countries, indicates that there are several factors that are integral to prevention efforts, supporting people in the sex trade, and helping them to transition out of it.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this project is to build a coordinated response for people who are involved in the sex trade/sexual exploitation trade in Calgary and area. More specifically, this project aimed to gather and document the perspectives of a broad range of stakeholders (including community based organizations, government, researchers and individuals currently or previously involved in the sex trade) about the current context of sex trade work and sexual exploitation in Calgary. In addition, this project included a scan of the current program and policy environment with respect to the sex trade in Calgary. This data gathering was completed to identify appropriate responses to the needs of individuals involved in the sex trade, and to identify possible future program and policy directions for the city of Calgary to meet the diverse and complex needs of individuals involved in the sex trade and those who are sexually exploited.

1.2 Vision

The vision for the coordinated response is to ensure a continuum of services and interventions, including:

- appropriate prevention and early intervention programs for individuals at risk of entering the sex trade or sex trade/sexual exploitation trade
- harm reduction and self-empowerment services to people who are already involved in the sex trade or sex trade/sexual exploitation trade

¹ See Appendix A for a professional profile of the Consulting Team.

² *Stepping Out* is a program of the YWCA in Calgary.

- supports for successful transition out of the sex trade/sexual exploitation trade for children, youth, and adults
- interventions preventing and deterring demand for the sex trade
- robust policy solutions for these and related issues

1.3 Objectives

This project aimed to achieve three main objectives:

- To collect and compile research-based evidence that provides information on the target population and their needs; a mapping of existing and missing services, policies and legislation; and promising practices for interventions targeting people involved in the sexual exploitation trade.
- To facilitate community development amongst multi-sectoral stakeholders to engage them in the creation of, and prepare them for implementation of, the Coordinated Community Response Plan.
- Based on the research and community consultation activities, design a Coordinated Community Response Plan for multiple stakeholders, as well as a targeted United Way report providing direction on investments and system changes.

1.4 Anticipated Outcomes

The following project outcomes stated at the beginning of the project have been achieved:

- The mobilization of community and other stakeholders in:
 - becoming aware of the Calgary context with respect to the sex trade/sexual exploitation trade;
 - identifying key issues and priorities for action; and
 - establishing the relationships necessary for implementing the priority actions.
- A report incorporating:
 - research findings;
 - key priority areas; and
 - recommendations for next steps of a coordinated community response to priority areas.

2. Approach and Methodology

We gathered data from diverse sources including: Calgary service providers who work with people involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the sex trade; experiential individuals; reports documenting practices and programs in other Canadian cities; and local studies and reports addressing issues presented in this report. The nature of the Project and the range of stakeholders involved called for a highly participatory and inclusive approach. The following represent key features of the approach taken for this project:

- A project philosophy that promotes participatory processes and that views stakeholders as partners, not subjects.
- A project approach that focuses on the priorities of stakeholders and produces findings and recommendations that are useful to all stakeholders.
- A project approach that is grounded in knowledge exchange, based on the assumption that all stakeholders possess information and perspectives that need to be shared.
- A project methodology that values both quantitative and qualitative research methods.
- A project methodology that encompasses techniques and instruments appropriate for a broad range of stakeholders.
- A project methodology that builds upon the extensive experience of, and has sensitivity to the perspectives of, vulnerable and marginalized populations.
- An emphasis on using project principles and techniques to promote an ongoing iterative process that moves from project to action to reflection.
- A strategy and work plan that builds on each individual component to produce a cohesive and comprehensive action plan.

There were four main components to this project that have informed the overall findings:

1. *Formation of a Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Committee:* An Advisory Committee was developed and sustained for the duration of the project and included: experiential individuals³, representatives of community based agencies involved in service provision, a government representative, a United Way representative, and the consulting team.
2. *Document Review:* A review of academic literature, grey literature, local and internal reports relating to sex trade, sexual exploitation, and multiple interventions to address issues around sex trade and sexual exploitation.
3. *Community Consultations with Key Informants:* Individuals who are directly or indirectly involved with the provision of support and services for those involved with, or at risk for involvement with, the sex trade in Calgary (i.e., organizational stakeholders), and those who are involved or were previously involved in the sex trade (i.e., experiential individuals) were interviewed for the project (n=25).
4. *Community Consultation with the Broader Community:* An online survey was developed and administered using a snowball sampling technique. The survey was developed in part to learn more about: the broader community's awareness, perceptions and attitudes regarding the sex trade in Calgary; the impacts of the sex trade on people and their communities; the tools and strategies that could help make communities healthier and safer for everyone; and how individuals envision an appropriate response in Calgary to the sex trade (n=214).

³ “*Experiential individuals*” refers to a person who has directly been involved in the sex trade either currently or in the past.

5. *Community Planning Day*: A one-day community planning day was held in order to achieve three main objectives: 1) to gather key stakeholders who hold interest in key issues regarding sex trade and sexual exploitation in Calgary; 2) to disseminate all consultation findings; and 3) to stimulate discussion on key priority areas and key action items to address priorities, based on the findings and discussion of the findings during the day.

2.1 Document Review

Early in the project, literature was reviewed to inform the lines of inquiry of this project, with special attention to promising practices and gaps in understanding of the local context. Academic literature was searched using several databases including: Medline, CINAHL, and Social Policy and Practice. In these data bases, academic documents were searched using key words such as: sex trade work, prostitution, sexual exploitation, child/youth, prevention, harm reduction, health, safety, and legislation. Other sources of information were also consulted including: grey literature (including unpublished reports, internal documents used by agencies, World Wide Web resources), local reports, local studies, and local media reports. It should be noted that the document review was not conducted with the aim to conduct a thorough and comprehensive literature review, but rather to inform and supplement findings from the other data sources (i.e., the interview and survey data).

2.2 Interviews with Experiential Individuals

Twelve interviews were conducted with experiential women, both those currently involved in the sex trade, and those who had “squared up.”⁴ Consistent with a participatory approach, consultations with experiential individuals were conducted by a Peer Interviewer who was hired by the Consulting Team. The Peer Interviewer (also a member of the Advisory Committee) was trained by the principal research consultant, and mentored through two interviews. Although recruitment of experiential individuals was attempted through agencies who work closely with experiential individuals, the majority of the interview participants were recruited directly by the Peer Interviewer through her own social networks.⁵ Written informed consent was obtained from participants (See Appendix B for Consent Form). All participants consented to having their interviews tape recorded. The audio tapes were subsequently transcribed and thematically analyzed using a coding scheme developed by the research consultants and the Peer Interviewer.

The twelve experiential individuals were each provided with an honorarium of \$40. While there were some shortcomings in the peer-led interviews (such as limited diversity in the interview participants and lack of formal qualitative interviewing expertise), the benefit of a peer interviewer (rapport, comfort, appropriate language, feelings of trust and openness, etc.) outweighed the shortcomings.

The interviews were conducted with an interview guide that was developed by the Consulting Team, in consultation with the Advisory Committee. The interview questions were designed to gather information about the experiential women’s experience with existing services, their reflections on gaps and needs for services, policies and legislation, characteristics of individuals involved in the sex trade, and their vision for a Coordinated Community Response Plan.

⁴ “Squared up” refers to an individual who left the sex trade.

⁵ The inclusion of women only was primarily due to the nature of the social network of the Peer Interviewer. Recruitment through community based organizations was unsuccessful for various reasons, limiting the diversity of the experiential individuals included in the interviews, but was extensive. However, extensive information on male sex trade workers in Calgary has been documented in a recent local study by Dr. Susan McIntyre (*Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*, 2005).

2.3 Interviews with Key Stakeholders

Interviews were also conducted with individuals representing organizations that most directly work with individuals involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the sex trade, as well as other stakeholders with community influence. Inclusion criteria included: government and non-government agencies currently involved in (or who provide support for organizations involved in) the provision of care, treatment, or support services for individuals currently involved, at-risk for involvement, and previously involved in the sex trade. Fourteen interviews were conducted by the consulting team with agencies which fit the inclusion criteria. Written informed consent was obtained from participants (See Appendix B for Consent Forms). All participants consented to having their interviews tape recorded. The audio tapes were subsequently transcribed and thematically analyzed using NVivo software for qualitative data analysis. See Appendix C for a list of agencies who participated in key informant interviews.

2.4 Community Stakeholder Survey

An on-line survey was developed to gather wider input from a range of community stakeholders in Calgary to help inform the development of the *Building a Calgary Community Response to the Sex Trade Project*. A stakeholder contact list was developed and included individuals and organizations in the following broad sectors:

- Community Based Organizations and Non-Government Organizations
- Government
- Academic/Researchers
- Community, Citizens, and Interest Groups

An invitation to complete the on-line survey was sent out by email to individuals and organizations on a stakeholder contact list developed by the Advisory Committee for the project. The on-line survey was distributed widely through the networks of community based agencies, representative from the municipal and provincial governments, and through networks of all advisory committee members, including experiential individuals. The initial contacts were invited to share the survey web link with their respective colleagues and contacts that they felt would be able to contribute their input. Over a ten-day period (January 16–26, 2007), a total of 214 stakeholders completed the survey.

The purpose of this survey was to gather broad community stakeholder input about:

- awareness, perceptions and attitudes regarding the sex trade in Calgary
- impacts of the sex trade on individuals living/working in Calgary on their communities
- tools and strategies that could help make communities healthier and safer for everyone
- how stakeholders envision an appropriate response in Calgary to the sex trade

All participants who participated in the survey were ensured confidentiality and anonymity in their responses provided. The survey took approximately 10–15 minutes to complete and was administered on-line through the website *Survey Monkey*™. A copy of the survey is found in Appendix D.

3. Document Review

3.1 Interventions Documented in Academic Literature

As described in the methods section above, the document review included academic literature sources documenting interventions that address the needs of individuals involved in the sex trade or who are sexually exploited. The academic literature was limited in that it revealed very little information that directly described interventions across the continuum of service needs (prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, exiting, and other support services). However, the literature revealed that successful and supportive interventions were those designed to meet the unique needs of individuals involved in the sex trade. Successful interventions for individuals currently involved in the sex trade, for example, are those which focus on broader population health promotion⁶ strategies as opposed to direct exiting strategies for individuals. Such strategies include a focus on determinants of health such as: employment, education, socioeconomic status, and social networks.

Commonly described in the literature are interventions that focus on broader participation, community engagement, community partnerships, capacity building among women, and skills building programs for women. Several sources of information looking specifically at the prevention and early intervention aspect of sex trade work and sexual exploitation described the need for comprehensive support services that have the following characteristics: advocacy for individuals, legislation, skilled professionals who are able to provide both psychosocial and social support in the short and long term.⁷

3.2 Interventions Documented in the Grey Literature

Numerous interventions are described in varying levels of detail through agency reports, on-line resources, and unpublished local studies. The review of the grey literature is by no means comprehensive of all relevant intervention models that directly or indirectly address the sex trade, but provides a sampling of the types of interventions that have already been developed. Information was gathered by searching the websites of organizations (governmental and non-governmental) that were identified as directly or indirectly involved in the programs and policies around the sex trade and those involved or vulnerable. Findings from the review of grey literature have been integrated with interview data in order to compare and reinforce or contrast our data with other existing information.

⁶ Population Health Promotion is defined as: A population health approach reflects a shift in our thinking about how health is defined. The notion of health as a positive concept, signifying more than the absence of disease, led initially to identifying it as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. The population health approach recognizes that health is a capacity or resource rather than a state, a definition which corresponds more to the notion of being able to pursue one's goals, to acquire skills and education, and to grow. This broader notion of health recognizes the range of social, economic, and physical environmental factors that contribute to health. The best articulation of this concept of health is the capacity of people to adapt to, respond to, or control life's challenges and changes. (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2005). <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/approach/index.html>

⁷ Bagley C. (1999). Adolescent prostitution in Canada and the Philippines: Statistical comparisons, an ethnographic account and policy options. *International Social Work*, 42(4), 445-454.

Barnitz, L. (2001). Effectively Responding to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Comprehensive Approach to Prevention, Protection, and Reintegration Services.

Melrose, M (2004). Young People Abused through Prostitution: Some Observations for Practice *PRACTICE*, 16(1), 17-29.

3.3 Promising Practices: Community Based Programs

As part of the overall project objectives, a description of promising practices that directly address the needs of individuals involved in the sex trade in Calgary are described in this section. It is important to note that there are several Calgary agencies that provide community based treatment, care or support services to individuals involved in the sex trade. We acknowledge that the agencies in Calgary (Appendix E) each have a special role in supporting individuals, both children/youth and adults, and of different genders, across the continuum including: prevention, early intervention, harm reduction, exiting, and a diverse range of support services including those around legal aids, advocacy support, social support, and health. For the purpose of this report, a promising practice is defined as a practice that warrants special attention, and that calls for an analysis of the successful components of the practice in a particular local context, and of the applicability of the same practice components in another context.⁸ Also, we have chosen to describe in this section programs that have been identified by key informants and survey results as being innovative and responsive to the unique needs of individuals involved in the sex trade.

3.3.1 Creating Options Aimed at Reducing Sexual Exploitation Program: COARSE (Edmonton)

The Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton (PAAFE) is a community based, grassroots organization that helps to create options for women involved in the sex trade. Its vision is to build a community where there is hope, respect and transformation for individuals, families, and communities affected by sexual exploitation. Its mission is to work through partnerships to create and pursue strategies to address sexual exploitation and the harms created by prostitution, as a caring community.⁹ The Edmonton Prostitution Offender Program is an Edmonton City Police (EPS) initiative approved in April 1996 by the Alberta Ministry of Justice as an Adult Alternative Measures Program. The first program was held May 25, 1996. The PAAFE is the governing body that coordinates the Prostitution Offender Program and manages and disburses the funds generated by the Prostitution Offender Program fees.

The PAAFE is a collaboration of community based individuals and groups working towards long-term solutions to the complex issues central to prostitution. Established in 1997, this non-profit organization facilitates four major initiatives:

- The Prostitution Offender Program (“john school”): an alternative measures program for first time offenders charged with soliciting for the purposes of prostitution;
- The Supports Program: The majority of the funds generated through the Prostitution Offender Program are used to directly benefit individuals in transition. These supports include helping address basic needs caused by poverty, paying for counselling, and offering bursaries to help people achieve their educational goals;
- Public Awareness, Education and Community Initiatives Print materials, audio-visuals, media work, displays, and special events, such as an annual memorial for those who have lost their lives through involvement in street prostitution; and
- Creating Options Aimed at Reducing Sexual Exploitation (COARSE).

Recognizing that street prostitution and related activities harm children, adults, families, communities, and the greater city of Edmonton, the PAAFE is a collaboration of concerned

⁸ Bardach, E. (2000). *A practical guide for policy analysis*. New York: Chatham House Publishers.

⁹ The reader is referred to the PAAFE website at: <http://www.paafe.org/Home.html>

individuals and groups working towards long-term solutions to the complex issues central to prostitution. Through established community partnerships, the PAAFE aims to reduce harm and create long-term solutions through various programs and community based research initiatives.

Of particular interest is the COARSE program that began as a pilot project that explored new ways of building capacity and addressing needs of a highly marginalized population, namely individuals involved in street prostitution, and of the communities affected by street prostitution¹⁰. The secondary goals of the project are:

- To develop new relationships and strengthen existing working relationships among the three levels of government and the voluntary sector;
- To ensure that those with past and present involvement in street prostitution are actively involved in designing the diversion process; and,
- To provide substantive input into any policies and programs which affect those with past or present involvement in street prostitution.

Although the pilot phase has ended, the COARSE program continues to operate in Edmonton.

The promising practices of the COARSE program include:¹¹

- The Critical Role of Federal and Provincial Crown Prosecutors and the Police Service. The Federal and Provincial Crown Prosecutors provided the mechanisms and oversight of reducing criminal sanctions for participants who completed the individual case plans. The Edmonton Police Service was instrumental in referring participants to the program.
- The COARSE Court Diversion clearly articulate the goals of court diversion, program eligibility, and the court diversion process from arrest to referral to case planning to final legal resolution.
- An emphasis on Building Capacity through Community Partnerships. COARSE is supported by dozens of partners, including: government departments and services, community based human service organizations, and survivors of street prostitution. These partners participate in two important advisory/working committees:
 - Peer & Community Supporter program. This was originally designed as a way of including individuals who are no longer active in street prostitution to support participants in the Diversion program by providing Peer Mentor training. This program evolved to include community members who do not have prior street involvement by matching these supporters with peer mentors. Over time, this opportunity was extended beyond Diversion participants, to include women in transition who were living either in transition houses or independently. The Individual Development Account program—a matching savings program—was another way to address the poverty issues faced by individuals who have left the streets.
 - COARSE Sharing. These consultations questioned why traditional criminal sanctions for individuals charged with S. 213 C.C. offences¹² seldom result in meaningful withdrawal from street prostitution. Traditional criminal sanctions failed to address the circumstances that shape the individual's involvement in street prostitution. These factors include poverty,

¹⁰ All information presented here is taken from: Prostitution Awareness and Action Foundation of Edmonton (n.d.). *A resource for communities exploring innovative court diversion options for prostitution-related offenses*. Edmonton.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Section 213 is the section of the Criminal Code (CC) which articulates the solicitation law. It is entitled: “Offence in relation to prostitution”.

addictions, lack of education, inability to find and keep employment, etc. The chaos inherent in this existence is characterized by recidivism and hopelessness on the part of those charged. In many cases individuals charged either continued working in order to pay fines, failed to appear for court resulting in yet more charges, or plead guilty often without obtaining proper legal representation, resulting in fines or jail time.

3.3.2 Stepping Out Program (Calgary)

The Stepping Out Program is one of several programs in the city of Calgary that serves and supports women involved in the sex trade. It is highlighted here for several reasons¹³. First, this program helped initiate the current project, examining the current state of sex trade and sexual exploitation in the city. Second, the Stepping Out Program was consistently referred to by nearly all key informants, including agencies and experiential individuals. Many key informants highlighted aspects of the Stepping Out program that seemed to respond to the unique needs of individuals, namely women, involved in the sex trade. Experiential individuals interviewed also highlighted ways that this program responds well to the needs of individual involved in the sex trade.

The Stepping Out program at the YWCA of Calgary began in January of 2000 as a ‘skills for work’ program for women leaving the sex trade. By 2003 it became clear that this approach was not a good fit for the program’s clients, primarily because it was too structured. The program was re-developed and was re-implemented as an exclusively one-on-one counselling program with a focus on advocacy, outreach and harm reduction.¹⁴

An evaluation of the Stepping Out Program was conducted in 2005 and highlighted key aspects of the program and its response to the diverse needs of women involved in the sex trade. The program was able to support women who are currently involved in the sex trade as to their current health, social and safety needs, while involved in the sex trade. As reported in the key informant findings, many individuals who have had contact with this program reported that the program was the most responsive to needs because of the harm reduction philosophy approach adopted by the program staff counsellors.

In June 2005 a program integration study determined that, although both the YWCA and the Stepping Out program seek to work with women to improve their lives, this program may not be a good fit within the YWCA, due to the program’s primary focus on harm reduction, rather than harm prevention or intervention. That is, the program does not set out to move the majority of its clients along the continuum of service—only a minority of its clients have the intention to move out of the sex trade and into mainstream work.

Key informant interviews revealed that in Calgary, sustainable funding and resources were a key factor for the effective implementation of community based programs. The YWCA, like other agencies experience the challenge of not being able to secure sustainable operational funding for this program despite significant investment of staff time and resources over the last seven years and the interim support of a variety of program funders. The United Way of Calgary and Area has been the only funder who has committed ongoing funding for three years.

¹³ All information presented here was taken from two sources: First, from key informant interviews. Second, from Hoffart, I. (2006). YWCA of Calgary Stepping Out Program Report 2005.

¹⁴ Hoffart, I. (2006). YWCA of Calgary Stepping Out Program Report 2005.

Stepping Out Program (Calgary). Sponsored by the YWCA of Calgary¹⁵

Stepping Out is a program for adult sex trade workers and is focused on moving those who are motivated to leave the sex trade to develop skills that will enable them to move back into mainstream employment. Those who are unable or unwilling to leave the sex trade are assisted to maintain safety and physical and emotional well-being to the greatest extent possible.

The Stepping Out program outreach services include personal support and crisis response, information provision, referrals, accompaniment to appointments and court, and individual client advocacy. These and other services are provided over the long-term. Some clients have been receiving services since the program's inception and the Stepping Out Counsellors point out that it takes a long time to establish relationships with these clients and that trust must be built slowly.

Until the end of December 2005, Stepping Out also included a housing component, comprised of four beds in an alcove at the YWCA Mary Dover House. In October 2005 a decision was made to incorporate the Stepping Out beds into the overall transitional Mary Dover beds, meaning that they would not be held back for Stepping Out clients and that, effective January 1, 2006, Stepping Out clients would have to obtain funding in order to access transitional Mary Dover House beds. The primary reasons for this change included low occupancy of the reserved beds (60% occupancy; with only 15% of Stepping Out clients using the beds in the previous year) and Stepping Out clients' non-compliance with rules prohibiting prostitution on site).

Highlights of the Stepping Out Program in 2005 include:¹⁶

- In 2005, a total of 130 clients received program services, including 39 clients who began receiving services in that year. The population served by this program is heterogeneous and includes street prostitutes, dancers, escorts and massage parlour workers who present with a wide variety of issues including: parenting issues such as access to children, working with Child Welfare, and parenting skills; addiction treatment and sobriety maintenance; housing problems, including the need for both crisis and stable housing; financial problems—developing financial independence through paid work that is outside the sex trade and non-criminal in nature, and if necessary, applying for Supports for Financial Independence (SFI); education—upgrading and pre-employment programs; health problems, including physical and mental health, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, and pregnancy; legal/court issues around criminal and family matters; and prostitution as intergenerational problem.
- In the course of their advocacy work on behalf of the program clients, the Stepping Out Counsellors contacted professionals representing most service sectors in the community. They often contacted professionals who seek to address clients' legal issues (such as Elizabeth Fry and lawyers), health professionals (many of them at CUPS) and financial organizations such as Alberta Works.
- The Counsellors also referred their clients to many organizations including those addressing legal, health, financial, housing, basic needs, and education or employment needs.

The following are also highlights from the Stepping Out Program Evaluation report.¹⁷ The program evaluation reported that Stepping Out clients experience barriers accessing services due to multiple

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

exclusion criteria, such as the presence of mental health issues, addictions, absence of fixed address, and disabilities. Although several Calgary agencies provide similar services for youth (e.g., Servants Anonymous, Exit, Street Teams) this program is the only outreach program for adult sex trade workers in Calgary.

Community partners said that the program helps make their services more accessible to this group of clients, provides services that are more flexible and responsive to the clients' needs, and helps them better understand the women's history and situation. According to the community partners, "the program helps us do our job." Some examples include cost savings as a result of reduction in the number of emergency visits or length of hospital stays, reduction in legal/court costs, reduction in foster care costs, and reduction in policing costs. The program Counsellors are described as effective advocates for the women, with the ability to build trust and relationships with them as well as with other service providers. The partners do not think that these women would be accessing the systems they do without the support from the Stepping Out program.

The information presented in this report similarly suggests that the program provides an important service, by linking clients with necessary resources and by effectively advocating on behalf of these clients with professionals in many service sectors. The program is accessible to the clients and the program staff are available to connect with clients on the phone or by meeting with them in locations that are most convenient to the client. The program appears to be most effective in helping clients achieve their financial, health, and legal goals.

4. Interview Findings

Key informants included agencies who are involved in the provision of support and services for individuals involved in the sex trade or who are sexually exploited. Both government and non-government key informants were interviewed and included:

- eight community based, non-government agencies providing support and services for individuals involved in the sex trade or who are at risk for becoming involved in the sex trade or sexually exploited. Service provision includes: health, outreach, harm reduction, prevention, early intervention, exiting, and legal support. Agencies reported reach to the following target populations: adults (male, female, transgendered) and children/youth.
- four government representatives including: Child and Family Services (Government of Alberta), the City of Calgary, and the Calgary Police Services
- one academic researcher

Key informants also included 12 experiential women who had the following characteristics:

Type of Sex Trade Experienced ¹⁸	Squared Up	Still Working
Bars: stripping, exotic dancing, peep shows	4	
Inside: escorts, phone, internet, trick pads, massage	6	2
Outside: A, B, C Track	6	2
Key Informant—Experiential Individuals: Number of years experience in the sex trade		
Mean	Median	Mode
12.54167	11.75	11

4.1 Key Characteristics of the Sex Trade and Sexual Exploitation in Calgary

Participants provided consistent descriptions of the key characteristics of the sex trade in Calgary. Both agencies and experiential women described the characteristics of the sex trade in Calgary, with respect to the demographics and characteristics of individuals involved, and the various types of and settings of the sex trade. Sex trade and sexual exploitation in Calgary is diverse, involving individuals from a wide age range and various but distinct types of activities associated with sex trade and sexual exploitation. Participants were also able to describe the ethnic background of individuals involved in the sex trade or sexual exploitation. In Calgary, most people involved in street-based sex trade work are observed to be of Caucasian or Aboriginal background. Several participants commented that the ethnic backgrounds of individual involved in “indoor” sex trade also include those from Asian backgrounds. While the majority of sex trade workers are female, there is a boy’s stroll in Calgary.

One of the women noted that generalizations about individuals involved in the sex trade (whether sex trade workers, pimps, or clients) result in prejudice. She wanted to encourage that each

¹⁸ Note: Several of the women had experienced multiple forms of the sex trade, accounting for why the numbers in the table add up to greater than 12 (the number of women interviewed).

individual involved in the sex trade be treated as individuals and efforts be made to understand the unique situation of each person, remaining open-minded and avoiding judgment.

4.1.1 Age and Gender

Children and Youth: Individuals Aged 18 Years and Younger

The Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution (PCHIP) legislation in Alberta has greatly impacted the visibility of children and youth involved in the sex trade.¹⁹ PCHIP does not focus on harm reduction, but rather on the safety planning and risk management of children and youth involved in sex trade or sexually exploitative activity. As several agencies noted, children and youth are often not seen in mainstream agencies due to the involvement of PCHIP staff in supporting young individuals involved in or affected by the sex trade or sexual exploitation. Agencies reported that if a child is suspected of being involved in sex trade activity or is being sexually exploited, PCHIP staff are contacted. Also, several agencies reported that if an individual appears to be under the age of 18 years, PCHIP staff will also be contacted to support the individual. Agencies have described, however, a distinction of terminology when referring to children and youth in the sex trade. Many agencies feel that children and youth are most vulnerable to sexual exploitation due to their age and because young individuals are often unaware of the consequences and implications of being involved in sex trade.

Youth

- PCHIP legislation has reduced the visibility of children and youth involved in street-based sex trade.
- Sexual exploitation of children or youth often occurs in “indoor” or hidden places.
- Children and youth more often involved in survival sex, trading sex for food, clothing, shelter or drugs.
- Recruitment from shopping malls, public transit platforms, or from other public places occurs in Calgary by pimps and by other youth.
- Average age that children become involved in prostitution is 15 for girls and 17 for boys.

Sexual exploitation of children or youth often occurs in “indoor” or hidden places such as flop houses²⁰ or residential houses, or through phone or chat lines, and chat rooms or network rooms on the internet. Agencies reported that children and youth involved in sex trade are also diverse, coming from any type of social and economic background. Children or youth are often involved in sex trade not in exchange for money, but rather for other items such as food, clothing, shelter, or drugs. Agencies also reported that children and youth are often recruited into sex trade from shopping malls, public transit platforms, or from other public places in Calgary. Children or youth are also recruited by other youth into the sex trade.

Several recent studies conducted in Calgary have demonstrated consistent characteristics of children/youth that may be at increased risk for becoming sexually exploited in the sex trade, namely:²¹

¹⁹ The reader is referred to the section of the report that discusses and describes PCHIP legislation in Section 4.5.

²⁰ Flop house is a term used to describe run-down residences.

²¹ Local studies include those by:

AIDS Calgary Awareness Association & Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary (2006). *Calgary Youth Health and the Street Study*.

- Youth who are becoming disengaged from school and community life, experimenting with risky behaviours, lacking supports and supervision, and/or whose basic needs are not always being met;
- Youth living on the margins, including young people who are incarcerated and disaffected “street youth” who survive through illicit activities such as gangs, prostitution, and drug trafficking;
- Homeless youth who progress very quickly along a continuum of street involvement from first time social street interactions to entrenched street involvement. Research suggests that if intervention does not occur within the first two weeks of street involvement, youth likely become entrenched within two months;
- Entrenched street youth who face more serious risks, are more heavily involved in illegal activities, and are much more difficult to engage and to serve. Homeless youth are very quickly drawn into participation in high-risk, illegal activities in order to survive. Primary income generation/survival activities among homeless youth include: panhandling, drug trade, and sex trade;
- Youth with a history of physical and or sexual abuse at home; and
- Youth with a history of contact with Child Welfare.

Child and Family Services Authority (Calgary and Area) defines prostitution as trading sexual services for money or goods (including food or drugs) and it recognizes that girls and boys involved in prostitution come from a wide variety of backgrounds including "normal, average, every day" families. The youth can become involved with peers or boyfriends who bring them into a world that seems 'exciting' and 'glamorous'. These individuals are sex trade offenders and they prey on particularly vulnerable youth, offering them 'acceptance' and 'love'. The sex trade offenders will meet the youth's basic need for survival but not much more. Boys frequently begin prostitution at an older age and usually without a pimp. Some 'transactions' occur on the street, though they are more prevalent in clubs and other indoor venues. Boys may be either heterosexual or homosexual in their orientation, but they attract male johns.²² Child and Family Services Authority also provides the following points as a “reality check” regarding sexual exploitation:²³

- Prostitutes under the age of 18 are victims, not criminals
- Customers are often violent with prostitutes
- Pimps use violence or threats of violence to keep prostitutes on the street
- Pimps control all the money prostitutes earn
- Prostitutes are more likely to be robbed, beaten, and sexually assaulted than other youth
- 10–12% of those involved in street prostitution are children
- 85% of children involved in prostitution were sexually abused prior to becoming involved
- the average age that children become involved in prostitution is 15 for girls and 17 for boys²⁴

Broadview Applied Research Group Inc. (2005). *Seeking Sanctuary: An Exploration Of The Realities Of Youth Homelessness In Calgary: Final Report*.

McIntyre, S. (2002). *Strolling Away*.

McIntyre, S. (2005). *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

Merrill Cooper, Guyn Cooper Research Associates (2006). *Vulnerable Youth in Calgary: Environmental Scan*.

²² Children Involved in Prostitution Report by the Task force on Children Involved in Prostitution January 28, 1997

²³ *Handbook for Action Against Prostitution of Youth in Calgary: Victims not Criminals*, 1995.

²⁴ Alberta Child Services Website

The law recognizes that children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse and need protection. Programs and services are available to help children end their involvement in prostitution.

An environmental scan commissioned by the United Way of Calgary and Area (2006)²⁵ discussed vulnerability in youth as ranging on a continuum. On one end are youth who are becoming disengaged from school and community life, experimenting with risky behaviours, lacking supports and supervision, and/or whose basic needs are not always being met. At the other end are youth living on the margins, including young people who are incarcerated and disaffected “street youth” who survive through illicit activities such as gangs, prostitution, and drug trafficking. The environmental scan reviewed literature relating to vulnerable youth, including their propensity for involvement in prostitution:

- Homeless youth are more likely to become involved in prostitution, to use and abuse drugs, and to engage in other dangerous and illegal behaviors.²⁶
- Several studies have shown that nearly 70% of homeless youth have experienced some form of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse. Once on the street, they are further exposed to risks including sexual assault and prostitution.²⁷
- American research has found that the average age of entry into prostitution is 12 to 14 years for girls and 11 to 13 years for boys.²⁸
- Many street youth turn to “survival sex” as a means of obtaining basic needs. Approximately 25% of Canadian street youth report having traded sex at some point in their lives.²⁹
- Older research shows that the majority of girls who resort to “survival sex” do not consider themselves to be engaging in prostitution. Most boys who engage in homosexual sex for money or a bed do define their activities as prostitution, but do not consider themselves to be homosexual; it is simply a way to survive.³⁰
- Survival sex practices lead to increased risk of HIV and other STDs, unwanted pregnancies, and other physical health issues.³¹ Rates of chlamydia and gonorrhea in street youth are more than ten times those in the general youth population.³²

²⁵ Merrill Cooper, Guyn Cooper Research Associates (2006). *Vulnerable Youth In Calgary: Environmental Scan*. For the United Way of Calgary and Area.

²⁶ Wilder Research. 2005. “Homeless youth in Minnesota 2003: Statewide survey of people without permanent shelter.” (Amherst H. Wilder Foundation). Available at http://www.wilder.org/research/reports/pdf/Youthreporttext_2-05.pdf; Ensign J; Bell M. 2004. “Illness Experiences of Homeless Youth.” *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(9):1239-54; Healthcare for the Homeless Clinician’s Network. 2000. “Protecting the Mental Health of Homeless Children and Youth.” *Healing Hands*, 4(1); Schoot, E.; Goswami, S. Undated. “Prostitution: A Violent Reality of Homelessness.” (Chicago Coalition for the Homeless). Available at <http://www.chicagohomeless.org/factsfigures/prost.pdf>.

²⁷ Statistic cited by Raising the Roof, Youthworks Initiative. Available at <http://www.raisingtheroof.org/lrn-youthindex.cfm>.

²⁸ Estes, R.; Weiner, N. 2001. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico*. (University of Pennsylvania). Available at <http://caster.ssw.upenn.edu/~restes/CSEC.htm>

²⁹ Public Health Agency of Canada. 2006. *Sexually Transmitted Infections in Canadian Street Youth. Findings from Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth, 1999-2003*. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer).

³⁰ Karial, P. 1993. *New directions: Stepping out of street life*. (Calgary: Greenways Press); Baxter, S. 1991. *Under the viaduct: Homeless in beautiful B.C.* (Vancouver: New Star Books).

³¹ Tyler, K.; Whitbeck, L.; Hoyt, D.; Cauce, A-M. 2004. “Risk Factors for Sexual Victimization Among Male and Female Homeless and Runaway Youth.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19(5), 503-520; Tyler, K.; Whitbeck, L.; Cauce, A-M. 2001. “The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse on Later Sexual Victimization Among Runaway Youth.” *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 11, 151-176; Greene, J.M.; Ennett, S.T.; Rigwalt, C.L. 1999. “Prevalence and Correlates of Survival Sex Among Runaway and Homeless Youth.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 89(9), 1406-1410.

- A high proportion of street youth report not having used condoms with their regular or client partners during their most recent episode of sexual intercourse.³³
- Several Canadian studies have revealed high levels of criminal activity amongst homeless youth, most frequently, shoplifting, drug dealing, break and enter, robbery, forgery and fraud, and prostitution.³⁴ Many street youth move in and out of these activities to sustain their existence.

In their seminal work on youth homelessness and crime, Hagan and McCarthy reported that hunger causes theft of food, problems of hunger and shelter lead to serious theft, and problems of shelter and unemployment produce prostitution.

Hagan J & McCarthy B (1998). *Mean Streets: Youth Crime and Homelessness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adults: Individuals aged 18 years and older

Based on agency experience and front-line community experience, agencies reported that adults involved in the sex trade belong to a diverse age range, with some individuals as old as 60 years. Participants have reported that sex trade work involves any individuals regardless of social, economic, ethnic background, age, and gender. Adult women involved in the sex trade are generally in the age range of 18 years to 40 years. There appears to be a core of women involved in street-based sex trade, as several agencies reported seeing the same individuals on contact. However, it is also important to note that there are also transient women in Calgary who are involved in street-based sex trade and who move frequently from one city to another.

Agencies reported that male sex trade workers can be as young as 12 to 13 years old. Findings from one local study found that close to half of male sex trade workers interviewed began work under the age of 16 years. Twenty-seven per cent entered into this life when they were adults, or over 18 years of age.³⁵ Those who are older than 18 years tend to be involved in “indoor” sex trade work such as chat lines, on-line services, gay bars, or bath houses. Typically, males involved in outdoor sex trade work are those who are younger than 18 years.

Key informants noted that young males involved in sex trade tend to not conceptualize their involvement in sex trade work as being sexually exploitive. Several agencies described how young males are involved in relationships with older men who are labelled as “Sugar Daddies.” As one agency described:

“The boys don’t identify as gay. One 19 year-old that I know recently told me that he has been staying with an older man in exchange for sex, travel with him as his companion.”
(Source—Key Informant #6).

The term “Sugar Daddy” describes a male who engages in a relationship with a typically younger male. The dynamics of this relationship involves the exchange of short-term housing, stable food, shelter, clothing, and material goods (such as movies, trips, and cash), for a sexual relationship.³⁶

³² Public Health Agency of Canada. 2006. Sexually Transmitted Infections in Canadian Street Youth. Findings from *Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth*, 1999-2003. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer).

³³ Public Health Agency of Canada. 2006. Sexually Transmitted Infections in Canadian Street Youth. Findings from *Enhanced Surveillance of Canadian Street Youth*, 1999-2003. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ McIntyre, S. (2005). *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

³⁶ Ibid.

One local study reported that 54% of male sex trade workers interviewed had experiences with Sugar Daddies.

Agencies also reported a transgendered population involved in sex trade. One agency described how some males identify as female in sex trade work, however identify as male when outside of the sex trade environment. For the extant project, it was particularly challenging to recruit transgendered individuals to participate in a key informant interview in a short period of time. What is known about the transgendered population of sex trade workers come primarily from local research studies.³⁷

Aboriginal Women Involved in the Sex Trade

There is some literature discussing the over-representation of Aboriginal women amongst women who work in street prostitution as a manifestation of sexual oppression, historical patriarchy, racism, and capitalism.³⁸ The author draws the link between the residential school, damage to First Nations culture, and physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, and for some women, circumstances leading to prostitution.

While the majority of sex trade workers who access community based services are Caucasian, there is a sizeable proportion of sex trade workers who are Aboriginal. Aboriginal sex trade workers were characterized by service providers as being particularly under-served primarily due to lack of culturally appropriate services and distrust of governmental organizations (particularly group homes of any kind). Street-serving agencies are also less likely to be used by Aboriginal sex trade workers than by Caucasian sex trade workers.

4.1.2 Location and Characteristics of the Sex Trade in Calgary

The diverse nature of the sex trade and sexual exploitation in Calgary poses a potential limitation to accurately defining every aspect and characteristic of the Calgary context. For this project, we have primarily used key informant interviews from agencies, experiential individuals, and the literature, including the media, to inform the project's objective of describing the sex trade and sexual exploitation activity in the city. Our description focuses on the richest source of data used for this project, the information collected from key informants. In the following section, key informants describe the distinct types of sex trade work in the city. The information primarily involves adults in the sex trade, unless otherwise noted.

Sex trade work is described as being indoor or outdoor. Indoor sex trade includes activities that are not visibly seen, or are hidden from the public's view. The outdoor sex trade is primarily street-based sex trade work, involving individuals who are on public streets in various neighbourhoods of Calgary.

Location of the Sex Trade in Calgary

- *Indoor sex trade* - internet chat rooms, phone sex lines, escort agencies or individuals who work from their own residence, strip bars, exotic and lap dancing, bath houses, massage parlours.
- *Outdoor sex trade* - primarily street-based sex trade work including: high track (track A), main track (track B), and low track (track C); cars, bathrooms, hotels, crack houses.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Lynne, Jackie 1998 "Colonialism and the Sexual Exploitation of Canada's First Nations women," paper presented at the American Psychological Association 106th Annual Convention, San Francisco, California.

Experiential women in Calgary had experienced a wide variety of forms of the sex trade. Most of them had worked in various locations across Canada and some also in the United States. The experiential women interviewed had had experienced the indoor and the outdoor sex trade.

One woman explained that she preferred working through street-based sex trade because:

“I like to have eye to eye contact and see who I’m taking out, and if you don’t like them, you don’t have to take them out, you don’t even get in their vehicles. Escorting, you have to do it all out of the paper and you don’t know those dudes, so that’s a bit more high risk I think.” (Source—Experiential Individual #8).

Another woman who had only ever worked in the inside sex trade (massage parlours) explained that she “wasn’t tough enough, or smart enough to be out on the street.” She explained that “straight” massage therapists put up resistance to the massage parlours that provide “rub and tug” services: “they go to the city council meetings and demand that these chicks have more required training hours and want them banished and this and that.”

4.1.3 Description of the Outdoor Sex Trade in Calgary

Typically, key informants described outdoor sex trade workers as those who are not tied to agencies or pimps and who tend to work independently. It was reported that the users of sex trade form both a regular “client base” for sex trade workers, as well as those who are transient to the city.

Most of the outdoor sex trade occurs in the core (downtown) area of the city as well as in a periphery neighbourhood found in southeast Calgary. There are three distinct divisions between the geographic locations of street-based sex trade work in Calgary: Tracks A, B, and C.

Calgary’s Outdoor Sex Trade

A-Track - Individuals who work in the A-track are typically women who are described as being the most physically healthy, with few issues around mental health and drug addictions. Most women involved in this area of the city are described as those who take responsibility for their health, and seek health services regularly, particularly for testing of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Individuals involved in the A-Track stroll tend to charge more for sex trade.

B-Track - The B-track women are described as being functional in their lives, but who are coping with drug and addiction issues as well as other physical health concerns.

C-Track - The C-Track has been described as being the “lowest” track of women involved in the sex trade. This cohort of women tends to be less functional in their daily lives and tend to have more progressed drug addiction concerns. Many of the women who work in this area are also known to be involved in the sex trade in order to feed a drug addiction habit. Community based agencies also described that women involved in C-track need more medical health services related to STIs, drug addiction, and mental health concerns.

4.2 Psychosocial History and Risk Factors

Factors Leading to Involvement in the Sex Trade

- Fragmented family
- Low self-esteem
- History of abuse
- History of drug use or addiction
- Low socio-economic status

When looking at the psychosocial histories of individuals (both adults and children/youth) involved in the sex trade or who are sexually exploited, key informants described diverse histories of individuals. An individual's history proves to be a complex web of factors that have had compounding effects on each other and have led to involvement in the sex trade. Both women and agencies described some of the factors leading to involvement in the sex trade or to being sexually exploited. Here, the stories of women tell of their past social and familial histories prior to becoming involved in the sex trade and the agencies also describe key psychosocial factors.

4.2.1 Family and Social History

Key informants described unique family and social histories of individuals involved in the sex trade or who have been sexually exploited. Agencies report that individuals involved in the sex trade tend to come from fragmented families (including single parent families, families where sex trade work is already present, and families with little familial or social support), who leave home at an early age, and who come from lower socioeconomic status. It was also noted by several agencies that there are women involved in the sex trade who are single mothers and are trying to provide for their children and trying to come out of poverty. The following excerpts are from women who talk of such experiences. Some of the women provided explanations of why people get initiated into the sex trade, discussing topics such as family history, history of abuse or violence, low self-esteem, and other living conditions.

Women spoke of common stories about they themselves or knowing other women who have experienced violence and abuse (mental, sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse) at home, poverty at home, and being kicked out or running away. Some of the girls had been placed in group homes and had run away in rebellion against the rules. Many of the girls are faced by financial need, homelessness, and lack of employable skills. This combined with low self-esteem and curiosity compels them to try the sex trade when a friend presents them with the opportunity to make some quick cash. Or, they are lured into the sex trade by a pimp who introduced them to the sex trade and:

“...promise them the world. Oh, you can own a house, you can own a car, you’ll have clothing up your ying-yang, and then they get them hooked on the drugs and kick ‘em out with nothing but the clothing on their back.” (Source—Experiential Individual #4).

One woman explained that she had grown up on the street (since the age of 10) and was surrounded by many members of her “street family” who were involved in the sex trade and thus was exposed to the sex trade very early in life, including exotic dancers or strippers. This woman eventually became a female pimp and she describes her motivation as changing the system from within.

“Growing up as a child, I saw how the women were being treated from their pimps, from their boyfriends, just from their family in general. I saw how the women were being treated and being slapped around because they didn’t have enough money, and I didn’t think that was right, so that’s why I thought, well I’ll give them the choice, they can be with me, or they

can be with those people who are going to do that. So that's how I kind of got into. I didn't agree with what was going on at all because I didn't think that somebody's going out there risking whatever they're risking, and then they're coming 20, 40 dollars short, and they're getting fucking beat the shit out of because they're 40 dollars short? But if they weren't out there in the first place, that pimp or boyfriend would be starving." (Source – Experiential Individual #3).

One woman explained that individuals are initiated into the sex trade usually by somebody close to them who:

"...puts it into their head and say: 'You know you could do this and we would be okay.'" (Source—Experiential Individual #2).

One woman had been initiated into the sex trade when she was 12 years old by an older woman who offered to "show her the ropes," in exchange for a "teaching fee." Another woman described how her 'boyfriend' at the age of 14 forced her to drink large amounts of alcohol and violently forced her into a john's car. She had run away from home and was staying in hotels until her money ran out. She refused to ask for help "because I was the queen and I knew everything and I didn't need anybody's help, I could help myself." She met a boyfriend who was doing drugs and was \$3000 in debt, and:

"he told me he loved me and he cared about me and that if I did this for him that everything would be okay. We'd be all better and I still told him to fuck himself, I wanted nothing to do with it and then he decided that his second approach was going to be violence and it was drink this 2-6 of tequila, okay and the knife goes to your throat and says you know get your ass on the corner and make me my money and everything will be okay. And so I went out on the corner and I got forced into the first car and I can tell you everything about that car. Everything, what he looked like, what the car smelled like, clothing. And I actually did the date, I don't know what I was thinking and then I got the guy to drop me off at my boyfriend's. Like what the hell was I thinking?" (Source—Experiential Individual #1).

4.2.2 Emotional History

Key informants also described the emotional histories of children or youth involved in the sex trade, the most prominent characteristic being low self-esteem. Youth involved in sex trade work tend to have histories of low self-esteem and tend to search for belonging with peers or others or a sense of security with others. Having a low self-esteem, coupled with other factors such as a non-supportive social or family environment, learning challenges, or abuse places young people at risk for becoming involved in the sex trade.

One woman explained that she had very low self-esteem and thought that the sex trade would be a great way to make money. She explained that she had a glamorized perception of the sex trade and initially thought "it would be something really cool to get into." One of the women remembered at the age of 9 or 10 seeing a television program depicting a:

"...high-priced call girl who was making 200 bucks an hour, and I thought that was kind of cool. We were living in poverty, and you see on the TV everyone has money and is dressed so pretty and fancy car and this and that. I mean the influences back then are pretty tame compared to now a days, so it makes me wonder. There's the saying, 'sex sells', right?" (Source—Experiential Individual #7).

4.2.3 History of Abuse

A history of abuse, including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse was described by key informants as a significant psychosocial factor among individuals involved in the sex trade. Nearly half of the agencies reported being in contact with individuals who have experienced physical or sexual abuse as a child or as an adult. Agencies reported that as much as 80–95% of the individuals they provide support to and who are currently or previously involved in the sex trade have experienced abuse as a child. These findings are consistent with those found in the literature.³⁹

4.2.4 Drug Use and Addictions

Drug addiction was cited as a common factor in individuals getting involved in the sex trade. The sex trade provided a quick way to make enough money to support drug addictions and to pay off drug-related debts. Agencies also reported that many of the individuals they support also have histories or current concerns with drug abuse and addictions. This is also consistent with the literature.⁴⁰ The use of drugs has been observed in different settings. For example, children and youth who are involved in sex trade or at risk for being involved in sex trade are also individuals who have been or are currently involved in drug use.

“Those girls are deemed to be at risk of sexually exploited. Extreme challenges – when a girl applies for service or referred by an agency, is there a history of abuse – current or past, experimenting with alcohol or drugs, drawn to street life, engaged with older men, learning challenges, struggling in her home environment, school or community.” (Source—Key Informant #9).

Drug use also becomes a concern after an individual becomes involved in sex trade work, where one continues involvement in the sex trade in order to meet drug addictions. Drug use ranges from alcohol to harder drugs such as crack cocaine or crystal meth among those involved in the sex trade. There are also reports of injection drug use among individuals involved in the sex trade in the city.

There are also other forms of addictions reported by those involved in the sex trade. For example, some individuals are also addicted to the money received through sex trade work, which has been connected to the continued involvement in the sex trade. Many of the women describe themselves as being addicted to the sex trade and the money that they can make. One woman explained that even though she had left the boyfriend who initiated her into the sex trade,

“I left him and I still kept doing it because the money was oh, so good. I mean there’s me, 14 years old and I’ve got 15, 16, 17 hundred dollars in my pocket, I’m like I’m rich. I wasn’t that rich, I don’t have anything to show for it but the money was good.” (Source—Experiential Individual #11).

³⁹ Bagley C. (1999). Adolescent prostitution in Canada and the Philippines: Statistical comparisons, an ethnographic account and policy options. *International Social Work*, 42(4), 445-454.

McIntyre, S. (2002). *Strolling Away*.

McIntyre, S. (2005). *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

Melrose, M. (2004). Young People Abused through Prostitution: Some Observations for Practice. *PRACTICE*, 16(1), 17-29.

⁴⁰ McIntyre, S. (2002). *Strolling Away*.

McIntyre, S. (2005). *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

Merrill Cooper, Guyn Cooper Research Associates (2006). *Vulnerable Youth In Calgary: Environmental Scan*.

Another woman compared her addiction to the sex trade to alcoholism: “It’s actually kind of like being alcoholic, you’re always, once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic” and she suggested that a 24-hour hotline could be available for women who have left the sex trade but may be tempted to re-enter.

Another woman who had already paid off her debts stated that the money kept her in the sex trade, along with the fact that she didn’t have to pay taxes, was always able to buy what she wanted like a car and a house, and just always having money in her pocket. Whereas, with a “straight job you get paid on the 15th, and then you run out of money 3 days before, so what are you going to do? It all boils down to money.”

4.2.5 Socioeconomic Status: Poverty

Agencies reported the significance of an individual’s socioeconomic status and education to becoming involved in the sex trade. Although individuals involved in the sex trade come from diverse socioeconomic and educational backgrounds, agencies reported that many of the individuals they support tend to come from lower socioeconomic status and who are living in poverty. Many also live on the streets in unstable housing conditions; many women and individuals cannot afford housing in Calgary, which has contributed to their involvement in the sex trade. More than half of the agencies reported seeing individuals with complex social situations such as homelessness or unaffordable housing, single parenting, drug addictions, or physical and mental health issues that have contributed to their involvement in the sex trade. One woman explained that she became involved in the sex trade in her early 40s after amassing a large debt because of injury leading to unemployment.

“I didn’t want to be a secretary no more, and I needed money. I was sitting on a goldmine and I was damn good at it.” (Source—Experiential Individual #12).

Another woman described how she initiated her involvement in the sex trade through escorting:

“I was looking through the paper, I was really, really broke, had a baby, living in Toronto, we were starving, and the money that I was getting just wasn’t enough, so I started, I was looking in the paper for a job, and I didn’t have enough education to get any job cause I only had grade 9, so what I did was, I seen the ad for the escort agency place, and I called them.” (Source—Experiential Individual #8).

One of the women who had worked in massage parlours for many years was initiated into the sex trade when a friend opened a massage parlour. She was living in poverty at the time and took up the offer to work in the massage parlour, with full knowledge of what type of work she would be doing. Although she saw it as a temporary way to make some money, she eventually became addicted to drugs (cocaine) and didn’t leave the sex trade for many years:

“I got caught up in the drug lifestyle. Fly with the crows and get shot with the crows, kind of deal.” (Source—Experiential Individual #2).

Women described that individuals also get initiated into the sex trade when they feel that they have no other options:

“She needs a roof over her head or she needs her next fix or maybe it’s a way for women to make themselves feel better about themselves. Because it’s kind of a rush to, okay you know you’re a woman but you have men who are stopping in the street and they’ve picked you out of and this is the stupidest thing to say now, but they’ve picked you out of all those other

girls down there and they're going to pay you to be with you. It's kind of like a, it kind of makes you feel good about yourself." (Source—Experiential Individual #1).

Two agencies reported working with women who will leave the sex trade and then return to the sex trade work in order to meet basic living needs such as food, shelter (rent), and basic living needs for themselves and/or their children. The link between lower socioeconomic status to sex trade involvement or sexual exploitation is also found in the literature.⁴¹

4.3 Demand Side of the Sex Trade

Participants described the demand factors involved in the sex trade in Calgary, namely those who either seek the services of a sex trade worker (commonly known as “johns”), those who live off the avails of a sex trade worker (also known as “pimps,” or those who exchange any other goods or materials in exchange for sex (described as “Sugar Daddy” or “Sugar Momma”). Key informants strongly expressed the need to address the demand side of sex trade as part of a broader solution to responding to the sex trade in Calgary.

Who Creates Demand for the Sex Trade?

Pimps - Those who live off the income of a sex trade worker.

Johns - Those who seek the services of a sex trade worker.

Sugar Daddies or Sugar Mommas - Those who exchange goods or materials for sex

4.3.1 Pimps

Some of the experiential women wanted to dispel stereotypes about individuals who act as pimps, who are generally defined as someone who derives income from the earnings of a prostitute usually by soliciting business.⁴² One woman noted that an individual labelled as a pimp is not necessarily a “bad person” but that there are many pimps who are cruel and controlling.

Pimps were described in terms of their role in initiating the women into the sex trade, usually when the experiential women were in their teens. One of the common places frequented by pimps recruiting girls into the sex trade is Marlborough Mall.

Pimps are often boyfriends or husbands who live off the avails of the sex trade workers. According to one of the experiential women, a woman entered the sex trade because:

“she and her husband were getting into kinky sex and shit and I think he’d already been seeing massage ladies on the side, and he said to her that he met somebody and that this would be a good way for her to make money for a little while. So she started working, and I was like what?! Your husband’s your pimp? And she said ‘No, that’s not the way it is.’ I says,

⁴¹ AIDS Calgary, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary Community Partners in Research (2006). *Calgary Youth Health and the Street Study*.

Broadview Applied Research Group Inc. (2005). *Seeking Sanctuary: An Exploration Of The Realities Of Youth Homelessness In Calgary: Final Report*.

McIntyre, S. (2002). *Strolling Away*.

McIntyre, S. (2005). *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

Merrill Cooper, Guyn Cooper Research Associates (2006). *Vulnerable Youth In Calgary: Environmental Scan*.

⁴² Pimp. (n.d). Merrian-Webster’s Dictionary of Law. Retrieved February 5, 2007 from Dictionary.com <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/pimp>

yeah well you hand money over to him, and she said ‘well we’re using it to get ahead and pay off our house’ and she ended up taking tricks and getting into dope.” (Source—Experiential Individual #7).

One of the experiential women who was interviewed reported that she had acted as a pimp, or as she described it, “marketed women” for about 15 years. She was convicted for living off the avails of a prostitute when she was 15 years old and served jail time for that charge. She described her role as a pimp as:

- making sure that the girls were safe while standing on the stroll
- taking down license plate numbers of johns
- making sure the girls had somewhere to sleep and healthy food
- taking girls out of dangerous situations
- advocating for girls in their relations with the police

4.3.2 Clients of the Sex Trade (“Johns”)

One of the women explained that many of her clients were married men who had unsatisfying sex lives with their wives. She felt that for some johns, purchasing sex is a sickness, compelling them to seek young girls, to try to keep their youth and to satisfy their sexual needs. She felt that an important component of “john’s school”⁴³ would be a course on healthy sexuality, and perhaps couples’ sex counselling for men who are married or have a partner:

One of the experiential women reported that clients generally aren’t “single guys who can go out to a bar and pick some broad up for nothing.” She estimated that about 15% of her clients are married, while the majority most of them are widowed, divorced, single, separated, mostly in their 50s who don’t want to do the bar scene.

Some of the experiential women felt that many johns are men with tendencies toward pedophilia, sexual violence and misogyny. They described their role as contributing to the safety of mainstream society, particularly children and women who would be potential victims of johns with violent tendencies.

“There’s a huge lack of understanding of what prostitutes do for society. We deal with sexual deviants, molesters, voyeurs, pedophiles. If we didn’t have prostitutes, there would be a huge amount of sex crimes. There are men who are obsessed with sleeping with their children-instead they go to a stroll and find a young girl instead. It’s a serious service that we provide.” (Source - Experiential Individual #9)

4.3.3 Trading Sex for Shelter, Food, Drugs, Etc.

Women explained that the sex trade involves many different forms of the exchange of sex for various commodities. One woman, for example, described her initiation into the sex trade as beginning at the age of 12 when she was having sex with a man in exchange for a place to sleep and for drugs. When she decided that she didn’t want to sleep with the man anymore, she was thrown out. She was initiated into the sex trade by a sex trade worker who lived in the same place. Another experiential woman described how she provided sex to a man who paid her with drugs, so she then

⁴³ "John School" is a diversion program offered in some cities (like Edmonton) in which qualified offenders have the option of completing a curriculum and paying a fee, in return for having their charge dismissed.

had to sell the drugs to get money. Then she started using the drugs, and ended up being charged with illegal drug possession and dealing and was incarcerated for two years.

Several agencies described how young males and females are involved in relationships with older men or women who are labelled as “Sugar Daddies” or “Sugar Mommas.” The dynamic of such relationships is one where a person’s basic needs are being taken care of by a “Sugar Daddy” or “Sugar Momma” over a short term, in exchange of sex.⁴⁴

Looking at the sex trade by analyzing the “demand side” of the sex trade is also shown to be a complex discussion, and outside the scope of this project. One author describes the complexity around the demand side of the sex trade.⁴⁵ One local researcher from a study conducted in Calgary in 2002 described that:

“A need exists to alter the demand for such services. During these interviews, both male and female sex workers spoke about the continual flow of customers wanting to purchase their services. This presented a challenge for those trying to escape the trade.”⁴⁶

4.4 Continuum of Community Based Services and Supports

The key informant interviews included representatives of organizations that are in contact with current or previously involved individuals (both adults and youth). They described their agencies’ community based programming, outreach work, or other types of response. The type of care, treatment, and support fell generally on a continuum of services including: prevention and early intervention, care, treatment and support services (health and safety, harm reduction), and exiting strategies. Some types of support are distinct from others, where others overlap with each other, such as health, safety, support, and harm reduction. A mapping of community-based organizations providing direct or indirect programming to individuals involved in, or at risk of involvement in, the sex trade is provided in Appendix E.

In this section of the report, the current support and services provide in Calgary are described by agencies and women interviewed. Also, many women talked about ways to improve support and services in the community. Many of the women described the importance of providing client-based care. When women spoke of the ideal community based program for sex trade workers (both those currently working and those who have “squared up”), it would include features such as:

- having staff that get back to clients the same day a message is left for support
- having a program or support services in operation for 24 hours a day
- having individualized programming through goal-setting as opposed to a prescribed and rigid “cookie cutter” program
- holistic programming that addresses all the factors affecting an individual’s involvement in the sex trade

One of the experiential women explained the need to have a “one-stop shop” for services in order to meet the immediate needs of sex trade workers:

⁴⁴ McIntyre, S. (2005). *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

⁴⁵ Raymond, J (2004). Prostitution on Demand Legalizing the Buyers as Sexual Consumers. *Violence Against Women*, 10 (10), 1156-1186.

⁴⁶ McIntyre, S. (2002). *Strolling Away*.

“These women are very insta-grata, if they can’t get it now, when and where they want it, don’t want to have to wait months for assistance, we’re here now because we have an immediate problem.” (Source—Experiential Individual #12).

Continuum of Types of Interventions Needed to Respond to the Sex Trade

- appropriate prevention and early intervention programs for individuals at risk of entering the sex trade
- harm reduction and self-empowerment support to people who are already involved in the sex trade
- supports for children, youth, and adults leaving the sex trade

4.4.1 Prevention and Early Intervention

Nearly a third of the agencies interviewed were involved directly with provision of services for youth. Prevention and early intervention included implementation of Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution (PCHIP) legislation, one-on-one counselling of higher risk children/youth, identifying high risk children/youth and intervening early on risk factors such as learning challenges, abuse at home, or having a history of fragmented families. In implementing PCHIP legislation, Child and Family Services work closely with other agencies, families, and children/youth to assess people’s situation, and provide supportive services in order to ensure children and youth are protected from sex trade and sexual exploitation. Other agencies describe intervention involving the identification of children/youth at risk of sexual exploitation, which involves identifying children/youth with histories of abuse, neglect, low self-esteem, drug use, and addictions, and ensuring these children/youth are connected to resources and support that would provide safe and supportive environments. One agency who works with high-risk youth described:

“All of our kids [we see] at risk of sexual exploitation. They come with so many risks and very little adult support, looking for something that’s going to make life better; come with violent family backgrounds, self-harm issues, abandonment and neglect.” (Source—Key Informants #5).

One agency works specifically with higher risk female adolescents, using a resiliency based approach, providing a safe, structured environment where learning, skills building, and positive relationship building takes place:

“...we used a resiliency based approach whereby we focus on all the wonderful things happening in her life, show her all the strengths she displays and decide what she wants to focus on first, while also engaging her in more productive activities with a mentor or youth worker, have family learn how to support her more effectively (stop abuse, praise her), have her talk about her challenges with a therapist, build coping mechanisms, being brought into a classroom setting with high levels of intervention with 10 girls and two staff members to learn appropriate behaviours in a classroom. We know that people don’t change because someone tells them to, they change when they choose to.” (Source—Key Informant #9).

One of the experiential women emphasized that PCHIP service providers need to make an explicit effort to assist youth in exiting the sex trade while also intervening through programs such as the protective safe house. She reported that although she had been apprehended through PCHIP

legislation several times as a youth, she was never explicitly asked by a service provider: “Do you want to get out of this situation?”

Another agency provides awareness and education sessions to regular high school students and adolescents in group homes to educate students about sexual exploitation. All agencies described the use of protective safe housing for youth who may not be actively involved in the sex trade, but who are at risk for becoming involved in the sex trade. Other prevention and early intervention strategies include providing healthy personal skills building in relation to relationships, sexuality and respect for self and others, both among young males and females.

Experiential women described their insights into how to prevent individuals from getting involved in the sex trade, and how programs should respond to this need. Women’s suggestions included:

- Ensuring that youth complete their education and stay in school;
- Providing education about pimps and how to recognize situations when someone is trying to recruit them into the sex trade, and the settings within which recruitment typically happens (at school, in the malls, at parties);
- Training youth with life skills such as how to negotiate out of situations in which someone is attempting to recruit them into the sex trade;
- Targeting youth at risk, such as those living in group homes, children who have been abused;
- Providing youth with information that realistically conveys what is involved in working in the sex trade, preferably “shock talks” delivered by experiential individuals who share their real-life stories about their experience in the sex trade. This education would show the “before and after” pictures of women’s lives who have been involved in the sex trade and pictures of sex trade workers who have been assaulted or killed, and the impacts of the sex trade on individuals from a mental, physical, and emotional health perspective;
- Providing education to youth in schools at a young enough age to prevent entry into the sex trade (i.e., before grade nine or ten), perhaps in conjunction with sexuality and health education; and
- Providing education to the general public to raise awareness amongst parents, teachers, service providers, and mall security personnel about how to recognize when a youth is at risk of getting recruited into the sex trade and how to recognize individuals acting as recruiters.

As another woman described:

“Maybe we should have a course in high school...where you could bring in somebody from our end of the trade to see what it does to you, or what it can do to you. Because at [inner city high school], a lot of them walk by at lunch hour watching, and they’re walking these girls make money, and thinking, “hey, that looks like an easy way to make money,” but they don’t understand the whole concept. That they get in there, and then they’re going to get hooked by a pimp who’s going to promise them the world, put them in a hotel, beat the shit out of them, sell their ass, and they’re going to walk away with nothing.” (Source—Experiential Individual #10).

However, one of the experiential women was doubtful that young people could be dissuaded from initiation into the sex trade if they had their mind set on doing so. She was also doubtful that young people would even be willing to sit through any educational sessions about the reality and the dangers of the sex trade.

Experiential women also provided insight to the early intervention and re-direction of at-risk youth. For example, another way to prevent young people from becoming involved in the sex trade is to recognize early when youth are on the "wrong path" and to redirecting them into more productive and healthy life paths. Women suggested that early intervention efforts should target youth in juvenile detention, in residential treatment programs, youth who have experienced sexual abuse, and generally youth who are part of the child welfare system. Higher risk youth were especially seen to require "shock talks" that communicate the dangers of involvement in the sex trade.⁴⁷

Experiential women also felt that the large majority of sex trade workers had experienced abuse as children/youth and most had not addressed the issues through any type of counselling. One experiential woman felt that it would be more beneficial to take the approach of focusing on building youths' assets, strengths, and skills, steering youth into healthy and productive activities such as music classes or sports, and facilitating access to Big Brother or Big Sister programs, teen drop-in centres, and positive recreational programs. She emphasized that 'just say no' campaigns have clearly been proven not to be effective.

Women discussed the role that stability at home and within the family (or the lack thereof) plays in individuals becoming involved in the sex trade. One of the women felt that lack of stable home environments was a significant factor in young people being kicked out or running away onto the streets and having to fend for themselves. Another woman explained that she perceived that being placed in a group home was:

"...the system trying to replace my family with people I didn't even know, and that made me rebel because I didn't know these people and they were supposed to be there to help me, but they had no idea about me. So in my mind as a 10 year old child, I was rebelling because there was no way that they could even start to help me if they didn't know who I was, or where I came from. Not only that, but the system labelled me as a troubled child, so right away they wanted to put me on medication, switch me from home to home to home to home, so I had no stability. I was in 4 different schools growing up in child welfare in 1 year, so I did not get any education for the simple fact that there was no stability." (Source—Experiential Individual #8).

She expressed the need to make group homes more comforting environments for youth, rewarding them with privileges for good behaviour, rather than punishing for breaking rules.

Another experiential woman felt that greater intervention needs to be offered to young people when abuse cases are discovered, including intense and long-term counselling (provided over years, not months), integrating youth back into school and self-esteem building.

Some of the experiential women described their role in advising, warning and educating other sex trade workers, particularly those who are just starting out in the sex trade. They stated that they would advise them about how to protect themselves, the realities of the sex trade and dispel some of the glamorous notions about the sex trade. One of the women described how she had attempted to deter new girls from becoming entrenched in the sex trade business, but was unsuccessful.

The Calgary Health Region's "Teaching Sexual Health" resource⁴⁸ is aimed at school teachers to equip them with the tools they need to teach sexual health content to students in various grade

⁴⁷ "Shock-talks" were a term used by the key informants to refer to educational talks delivered to youth (either in schools or targeting high risk youth) to use fear messages to deter them from getting involved in the sex trade, depicting the harms (e.g., violence) associated with prostitution.

⁴⁸ Calgary Health Region (2005). *Sexual Exploitation*. www.teachingsexualhealth.ca

levels. The resource includes a module on sexual exploitation for Grade 9 students to raise awareness in young people of the dangers and risks of the sex trade. The module discusses myths and misconceptions around who becomes a prostitute and how it happens. It also communicates the message that teen prostitution is sexual abuse and is an issue of power and control. The aim of this session is not to create fear but to increase knowledge and understanding so teens know how to avoid being approached and who to turn to for help.

4.4.2 Care, Treatment, and Support Services

Other types of support, such as legal support, addictions counselling, skills building, health and safety, and harm reduction tend to be provided to individuals currently involved in the sex trade and have been described by many women as the most responsive types of support for individuals involved in the sex trade.

Safety and Legal Support

Some of the experiential women discussed the need to modify legal responses to the sex trade, including changes to penalties and decriminalization. Several of the women felt strongly that efforts to eliminate the sex trade are futile. Rather, the sex trade should be legalized in order to increase the safety for sex trade workers, regulating the sex trade, and taking away the power of pimps.

Experiential women also felt that alternative measures are needed for women charged with prostitution-related offences. Suggestions included alternative measures that would keep women from having criminal records (as a record hinders their ability to “square up” with a straight job). The SNUG and COARSE diversion programs in Edmonton were mentioned by a couple of the women as good models. They felt that as long as sex trade workers are being respectful, not causing a public nuisance (such as by leaving condoms or used needles lying around), they should not be targeted by law enforcement.

Many of the women indicated that they would like to have programming that provided legal assistance for sex trade workers with criminal offences. Women described one of the existing programs in Calgary that is well received by women in the community, which involved the legal assistance in helping women get their solicitation charges dismissed so that they wouldn’t be burdened with a criminal record. Women also spoke very positively about another Calgary agency which also provided specific assistance with legal issues.

One woman (a female pimp) felt that it would have been helpful during her legal difficulties to have access to a mediator to bring agreement between herself and her girls. Experiential women also described the need for a pro-bono lawyer who is understanding, non-judgmental, and specializes in solicitation charges and would accompany them to court. Another request from the experiential women was to have a legal advocate available on-call 24-hours a day “because a lot of these girls are arrested at night.”

Women also described the need for a 24-hour legal advocate for sex trade workers who are arrested or for women who are victims of a “bad date” and need to talk to somebody:

“If she’s had a bad date, maybe she wants to talk to somebody, if the cops have arrested her, she wants to talk to somebody, right? You’re definitely not going to be phoning the cops. And your friends can only listen to you so much. Your other half may not be able to listen to you, your pimp sure don’t want to listen to you. They’d say get your ass out on the street, we don’t care, you’ve had a bad date, the hell with ya. Go out on the street, make me money.

But they should actually have a phone line just for working girls.” (Source—Experiential Individual #3).

Women also spoke of the role that police had in sex trade work or sexual exploitation. Generally, the experiential women called for “more protection from the police, not harassment, and vice working with the girls, not against them.” The experiential women felt that the Calgary Police Services (CPS) needs to be more responsive to their safety concerns, and not discriminate against them or make judgments when they report violence. They provided suggestions about how the police could help sex trade workers stay safe. One suggestion was that the police offer an anonymous 24-hour hotline for sex trade workers (both those who work on the inside and those who work on the strolls) to report “bad dates” and for sex trade workers to have confidence that police will respond to their call, follow up on the report, and arrest the bad date. Better relations with CPS would also encourage more sex trade workers to report pimps.

They also suggested that CPS should be given sensitivity training from experiential individuals:

“Maybe what we could do is get a group of the old sex trade workers that are now out of the field, and have maybe a meeting with the Calgary police service to let them know, hey this is what’s really going on and this is why you don’t have a lot of girls phoning you for help because this is what’s happening when they do phone.” (Source—Experiential Individual #5).

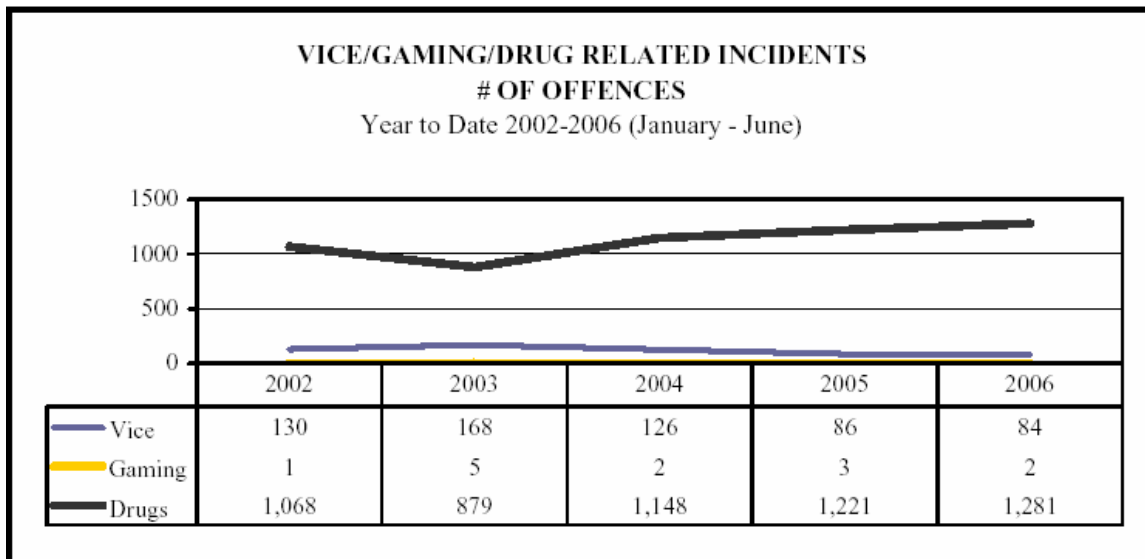
One of the women reported that one outreach program sometimes has undercover police officers riding along and there was also the perception that community agencies transfer files on sex trade workers to the police. Instead, the women felt that the police need to be better educated about the sex trade and have greater sensitivity towards sex trade workers, and greater respect for the privacy and confidentiality of sex trade workers. It was suggested that such training should be provided by experiential individuals.

Other women felt that strict penalties need to be enforced for “pimps and predators” such as higher fines and confiscation of their vehicles. Predators were defined by women as johns who seek out under-aged girls.

Calgary Police Service discusses prostitution in terms of affecting those who buy and sell sex, as well as those communities where the transactions take place. Increased traffic, road congestion, discarded needles and condoms, public sex, and a negative impact on community activities, businesses and property values are all spin-offs of the sex trade.⁴⁹ The Vice Unit works closely with community based organizations to address residents' concerns and the underlying issues that can lead to a life of prostitution. Community associations, street-level support agencies, CAAPI, the Alberta Crown Prosecutor's Office, Calgary Probation and Community Corrections, and The City of Calgary Licence Division are all partners with the Vice Unit in developing a long-term innovative and strategic prostitution enforcement approach to address crime and safety concerns.

The figure below indicates that the number of Vice offences has remained relatively steady over the last four years, which is not necessarily an indication of the amount of prostitution activity, but could also be explained by reductions in the number of vice officers, which has been reduced from 12 to 2 in the 2002–2006 period.

⁴⁹ <http://www.calgarypolice.ca/sections/organized/vice.html>



Data Source: PIMS, July 2006

The Vice Unit actively targets pimps, sex trade offenders (commonly referred to as johns) and sex trade workers (commonly referred to as prostitutes). More than half of the prostitution-related charges laid by the unit are against sex trade offenders. Enforcement initiatives are directly aimed at addressing the harms that sex trade activity brings to Calgary communities. The Vice Unit also enforces PCHIP legislation, apprehending children and taking them to a protective safe house where they receive emergency care, treatment, and an assessment. The Act also provides specialized services and rehabilitation programs for children involved in prostitution. Since its enactment, the number of child prostitutes on the streets of Alberta has been a vastly reduced.

All businesses employing, and individuals working as, escorts, exotic entertainers, or massage practitioners must be licensed by The City of Calgary Licence Division. The Vice Unit works with the city to ensure the licensing criteria are enforced. Detectives also monitor these businesses for illegal prostitution-related activity and conduct investigations when such activity is suspected or identified.

Harm Reduction and Health Services

Both experiential women and agencies spoke of the range of harms and risks faced by sex trade workers such as: sexually transmitted infections, including HIV; drug addiction; risk of being raped, beaten, or killed by johns or pimps; risk of assault from other sex trade workers; exposure to the cold, freezing to death; and gay bashing (for male sex trade workers).

Experiential women described the importance of acknowledging that male sex trade workers are at even greater risk for harm than females, because males don't have access to the same services that women do, there is even greater stigma against male sex trade workers, they are prone to gay bashing, and they are less likely to receive sympathy when they come forward to report violence.

Women also discussed the emotional harms experienced by sex trade workers:

"You don't really think about it when you're out there, but when you get home or you finally quit, you've got to deal with the fact that you have literally sold yourself to someone else for money for whatever reason, for drugs or whatever you're doing at the time. It's not

something that even talking to a psychologist is going to help you get over. Like you are mentally messed up for the rest of your life.” (Source—Experiential Individual #2).

Emotional harms resulting from involvement in the sex trade include: difficulty trusting others; feelings of paranoia; feelings of stigma; and low self-esteem.

Services that address the physical and mental health needs of individuals involved in the sex trade are available in Calgary. Forms of service include outreach and clinic sites provided by the Calgary Health Region. Health care agencies and other community based agencies provide service through using a harm reduction approach. With this approach, individuals are offered non-judgemental health care and support to individuals currently involved in the sex trade. The focus of harm reduction approach is to ensure the health and safety of individuals involved in the sex trade are addressed and includes the distribution of condoms for safer sex, clean needles for those involved in injection drug use, and non-judgemental counselling and referral to those involved in the sex trade. Agencies have described this approach as meeting the individual where they are at in their life and ensuring they receive the right health care services, counselling and treatment, regardless if they intend to exit the sex trade or not:

“...it’s all about harm reduction, we make referral when they need it based on where each individual is at, and what they need and want from us. We don’t know or even really get concerned with why people are out there, but how we can help these people.” (Source—Key Informant #1).

The Stepping Out program is an example of a harm reduction program. It is a program that has been described as one that responds effectively to women who are involved in the sex trade and their needs, whether their needs are related to health, or social or legal factors. Program staff have been described as being able to be present and empathetic to the women who access this program and to provide the non-judgemental support that women often seek. Agencies using a harm reduction approach described their goal as to ensure the health in their current involvement in the sex trade, as opposed to exiting women in the sex trade. One of the unique aspects of using a harm reduction approach to responding to the needs of individuals involved in the sex trade is that it focuses less on the criminalization of the sex trade and ensures that individuals are ensured safe, trusting, respectful environments to meet their needs.

Some of the women discussed a harm reduction facility for sex trade workers that would be modeled after safe injection sites. One suggestion was that there be a “safe trick site” or “safe trick zone.” Several of the experiential women suggested that the CPS, in cooperation with other city stakeholders, designate “a safe working area” in the city. Women generally felt that criminalizing the sex trade was futile and that a more pragmatic approach should be applied:

“...it’s a fact of life, it’s the oldest profession in the world...but it’s gonna happen and whether the government says you’re wrong or you’re right, it’s going to be there, and if the government’s smart, it’s like I said, put it out in the industrial zone. These men are gonna cruise come hell or high water, put it in the industrial zone, build houses on the site, it’s like a bordello, they pay a fee when they go in, everybody charges the same rates, they give so much to the girl, and so much for taxes, and life carries on. That way they’re covered under health care, they have the doctors on facility, on site, to take care of them, and life will carry on. The government will get their due, and when I retire, I have old age pension.” (Source—Experiential Individual #5).

They also felt that CPS should focus their energies on increasing the safety for the sex trade workers rather than just responding to demands of neighbourhoods and: “harassing the girls downtown and pushing them into areas that are totally dark, and discrete, that nobody knows that they’re even there until they’re really gone.” (Source—Experiential Individual #7).

Another experiential woman also felt that the CPS should not be pushing sex trade workers off well-lit streets into: “...hiding where there’s more problem occurring because now they’re hiding from the police and trying to hide what they’re doing. It makes it even more unsafe.” (Source—Experiential Individual #8).

Other suggestions for harm reduction was to expand the outreach services of Safeworks to include more hours of van outreach for the strolls: “Safeworks is only out for a few hours a night and if you miss them, you’re SOL, they need to be out there 24 hours a day – two vans, one that services the downtown core, and one that services the rest of the city. They could run on two different pager numbers or the one downtown doesn’t even need a pager, just makes the circuits around the inner city core and that alone will reduce the number of bad dates because they will see the van.” One of the sex trade worker also requested that Safeworks visit the massage parlours to drop off “gift baggies like they do to the girls downtown.” AIDS Calgary was also mentioned by one of the experiential women as a good place to get condoms, as well as “extras” such as Christmas food hampers.

Some of the women also discussed the role that peers can play in helping less experienced sex trade workers remain safe. One sex trade worker reported that she would “train” the new girls in the escort agency and tell them: “Trust your intuition. Always let someone know where you are, you know if you’re doing an outcall. What I would do is when I went out on an outcall, somebody knew I was doing it, and then I’d have the address in the car, I’d leave it in the car, so that if anything happened to me, they’d find my car and find the address.” Another suggestion was to help peers create a list of “stay safe tips” that could be distributed to sex trade workers through the service providers.

Inclusive and Supportive Living

With respect to health-related care and services, women expressed their appreciation for health care services provided by health service agencies particularly with respect to STI, HIV, and Hepatitis testing and the provision of free condoms.⁵⁰ When describing one health service agency that provides outreach services, one woman felt that:

“[health outreach service van] needs 3 vehicles working everyday—one during the day, two during the nights to meet the current needs of guys and girls on the stroll.” (Source—Experiential Individual #12).

They also appreciated the food and coffee provided by another outreach service agency to the women on the strolls to help them warm up in a caring environment. Women explained that sex trade workers are especially prone to illness:

“You’re working outside, it’s cold, it’s wet, it’s damp, it’s miserable.” (Source—Experiential Individual #1).

Many sex trade workers don’t have Alberta Health Care insurance, and therefore have to pay for doctor’s visits as well as the full price for any prescription medications. The women felt that health care services should not be rushed and that prescription medications should be provided free of

⁵⁰ STI = Sexually Transmitted Infections; HIV = Human Immunodeficiency Virus

charge. They also felt that free emergency services should be provided to women who have reported a bad date “so they don’t have to go to the health clinic and pay a bunch of money to get the shots. Because they don’t have Alberta Health Care [insurance], and they don’t have Blue Cross, that’s a very expensive trip to the hospital.” (Source—Experiential Individual #9).

When envisioning the ideal program for sex trade workers, some of the women felt that a nurse should be available to provide Depo-Provera shots and a regular physician on site who would provide regular health exams and blood work. Some of the women also mentioned the need for free dental services. Although some women were able to get free dental coverage if they file income tax and indicate low income, many do not file their income tax.

One of the women discussed the need for health care workers to be better trained about how to provide services for sex trade workers, including training about addictions and violence issues, and sensitivity building.

One experiential woman reported that she appreciated the non-judgmental attitude of one of her health care providers: “Even my gynaecologist knows. I finally told him 3 years ago what I did for a living. He was amazed, he went “Oh really, and how’s business?”” (Source—Experiential Individual #6).

Although CUPS was mentioned by some of the women as a good service provider for health care, others did not feel comfortable going there: “It’s not a very clean or sanitary place to get medical attention – I’m just not comfortable going there.” The women also don’t like the system used at CUPS which requires women to come in the morning to make an appointment for the afternoon since keeping appointments was seen to be a barrier: “They’ve got one available doctor and a lot of them, you go in and tell them what you do for a living and they all look at you. You have to somebody that the girl would feel comfortable with.” (Source—Experiential Individual #3). Another barrier to service at CUPS is the fact that it has normal office hours which is inappropriate for some of the sex trade workers.

Other Support and Care

Ideal Programming

- Drug Use and Addictions Treatment
- Affordable Housing Options
- Spirituality
- Recreational Activities
- Reconnecting with Family
- Professional Support and Counselling

More than half of the agencies interviewed described different ways that their agency provides support to individuals involved in the sex trade. Such support ranges from legal aid, addictions, psychological, skills building, housing support, social support, and employment skills building. One agency, for example described the program of another agency which focuses on skills building for women, as they exit the sex trade:

“...they do fabulous work, also do training and education while you’re living there, teach them to do something else for employment. Help them get back into school to upgrade quickly in order to get high school, college or university. Give the, an opportunity for a second chance. Multi-disciplinary approach, deal with their health, addiction, family issues, education employment, however long it take to get them on their own.” (Source—Key Informant #5).

Key informants described the need for a front-line staff with care and compassion when working with individuals involved in the sex trade. Several key informants described the qualities of a front-line worker that was very responsive to women's needs:

“ [Name's]...work is very hand-on and grassroots, mostly out in the community...she goes to doctor's appointments with clients, in courts a lot as an advocate, she does a lot of work with women as they are giving birth. Some of [the] women are connected to the program for many months or even years.” (Source—Key Informant #10).

Many of the women spoke of diverse aspects of community based programs needed in the community, as described in the following sections. Women were asked to identify the features of their ideal programming for individuals involved in the sex trade. They were asked to consider the full spectrum of services, from prevention to harm reduction to assistance in exiting. Most of the women focused on program elements that would help women transition out of the sex trade.

Drug Use and Addictions Treatment

Experiential women described drug use as a cause of initiation into the sex trade, a result of being involved in the sex trade, or as a way of coping with involvement in the sex trade. Women who have left the sex trade may also use drugs to cope with their post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental health issue felt to be common amongst former sex trade workers. One of the women described that she was living in a group home and another sex trade worker introduced her to cocaine injection, resulting in her being evicted from the group home and having to work in the sex trade in order to support her addiction and meet her own basic needs.

Drug use as a coping mechanism was described as at first helping sex trade workers “deal with what they're doing, kind of to numb your mind, numb your body so that you can get through what you're doing and make it easier.” Then drug use becomes the reason to stay in the sex trade and creates a vicious cycle:

“Before you know it, you're hooked on all these things, and maybe you're trying to get out of the business now, but now it's hard to get away from the drugs or whatever, because your body's dependant on them now.” (Source—Experiential Individual #5).

Many of the experiential women emphasized that programs to help women exit the sex trade must also be integrated with addictions treatment programs.

Affordable Housing Options

Affordable housing in the city has been raised as concern by both agencies and experiential women alike. Often, affordable housing, or the lack of affordable housing coupled with poverty have been described as complex factors contributing to continued involvement in the sex trade. One of the women felt that the shortage of affordable housing in Calgary is a significant factor for sex trade workers attempting to “square up”:

“I would like to see the city look at their own people, I'm not trying to sound racist right now by any means, everybody's equal, but what I've noticed is if you go and apply for Calgary housing, you will sit on the Calgary housing list for 3–6 months at least. Because I would say that probably 85% of the units that are filled, are filled with immigrants. So I believe that the city should make Calgary housing and Calhomes, they should make those units more easily accessed for Canadian people and for the sex trade workers. Because I know women that are out there just to pay their rent and it's because it's \$900 a month, like

who can afford that by themselves? Nobody, especially when you got no skills and no education.” (Source—Experiential Individual #11).

Some of the experiential women discussed the need for a multi-function group or peer home with many services under one roof. They described their conception of the ideal program for individuals who are working in the sex trade aimed at harm reduction and safe housing. They described a “one-stop shop,” such as an independent house downtown which was not physically linked to any of the street-based agencies or shelters. One of the women explained the discomfort that sex trade workers feel in accessing other services for street-involved populations:

“There’s other people in there that are looking down on the women because they know what program they’re in and stuff, and it’s not fair that, so they should be in a place that knows what they’re dealing with, and aren’t going to be biased to the women so the women don’t have to feel threatened or insecure, or whatever, every time they come in there.” (Source—Experiential Individual #9).

Spirituality

Some of the women described the need to ensure that programs address individuals’ spiritually as well, helping them “find their roots and culture.” However, they were quick to emphasize the difference between spiritual-based programs and religion-based programs: “I benefited greatly from going back to my roots and culture. It gave me a lot of strength to learn about it and accept it, and it was a part of learning about myself” (Source—Experiential Individual #7). At the same time, several of the women were resistant to Christian-based programs that “push the bible in your face.”

Recreational Activities

Some of the experiential women felt that an important feature of any program aiming to help sex trade workers get away from the sex trade (even temporarily) would be to provide positive recreational opportunities, or diversions to “take their mind off things.” In the “one-stop shop” described by the women, there would be a TV room “where the girls can get peace of mind, where they can sit and think about their goals and watch a soap or something on TV. And just to feel human for a few hours and not have worry about, oh where am I going to go next because I’ve only got 15 minutes left here” (Source—Experiential Individual #11). It was also suggested that this “recreation room” could be combined with laundry and shower facilities.

Other recreational opportunities suggested by the women included: access to fitness; facilities and programs; movie passes; access to a swimming pool; team sports like volleyball or soccer; hiking; and camping.

Reconnecting with Family

Some of the experiential women discussed the need for help in reconnecting with family members in order to leave the sex trade. For those under 18 years of age, travel assistance and family-based counselling should be provided for youth who have a safe home to return to. Another form of helping sex trade workers reconnect with their families is to provide Christmas parties for the working girls and their children, giving them a good meal and providing the children with gifts.

One of the women felt that if she had had greater family support, she would have been able to leave the sex trade. She stated that having family counselling and mediation would have been beneficial:

“It would have helped them better understand what I was going through. Because a lot of people don’t really know. They just have their own perspectives of what it is and what they think it is ‘cause they never really been there, so they don’t know. And plus they don’t feel comfortable talking about those kinds of things. I find with a lot of the working girls that I do know, they don’t tell their family because they’re scared on what their family’s going to think.” (Source—Experiential Individual #2)

One of the women explained that her son was a main motivator for leaving the sex trade:

“I didn’t want him to know. Well, I think he knows, but to this day we won’t talk about it, but when he turned 16, I went home and thought, I’ve got to get out, I’ve got to get out. By then, you couldn’t get away with wearing the mini-skirt and high heels no more, looking too much like the whore that I was. But it was him knowing, and I thought that he would hate me for that.” (Source—Experiential Individual #5)

Professional Support and Counselling

Some of the women acknowledged that sex trade workers need a range of counselling services, ranging from peer support workers, to professional psychologists and therapists. Professional counsellors were seen as important, for example, when a sex trade worker discloses to family members or to other relationships. One of the women noted that some of the current service providers deliver counselling too much “by the book” and felt that they need to “adapt to people’s needs rather than go by the book all the time.” She stated that good counselling requires not only knowledge, but also love, care, and passion. The experiential women also described the expertise and training that they would like counsellors to have: addictions, rape issues, prostitution, legal system, and high risk behaviour in children.

One woman noted that more support needs to be provided to ensure a range of “good counsellors” because “not everybody can associate with one type of person. Some people do really well with a counsellor who has the structure of being educated and knows the theories. While others do better with someone who is more spiritual. As a counsellor you’re just helping someone carry out a decision that they’ve already made” (Source—Experiential Individual #4).

4.4.3 Exiting Strategies: Leaving the Sex Trade

Exiting Strategies

- Life Skills
- Retreat Location
- Financial Skills and Assistance
- Education and Training
- Clothing

Several agencies described their community based programming goals to involve exiting strategies for women involved in the sex trade. One agency described their program goal to help women exit from the sex trade. This particular program involved short-term to long-term support that meets the diverse needs of women including: life-skills training, employment training, parenting skills, health and wellness activities, counselling, drug treatment, and other activities that facilitate the social re-integration

of women into communities. Another agency described how their program initially started as one that aimed to exit women from the sex trade, but evolved to become a harm reduction program as the agency continually responded to the needs of the community.

Life Skills

Experiential women identified life-skills development as one of the essential program features that need to be offered to sex trade workers to help them transition out of the sex trade. They discussed the need for “something that could teach you how to do things that normal women have done their whole lives” such as: personal care skills; supportive living like cooking skills, laundry and household skills; anger management; communication skills; child-care skills; coping skills; budgeting and money management skills, and financial planning; goal-setting skills; self-discovery skills; training about “how the system works” with respect to welfare, education, the legal system, getting children back; and the provision of a library card so that women can access information and computers.

One of the experiential women explained:

“I wasn’t very good at dealing with people. Government people, basically. Now I’m better at dealing with these people than I was before. I’m not a 100%, but we’re about 90%! Because who’s going to help me go back to school if I can’t even sit down and have a conversation with them without wanting to rip their head off, you know?” (Source— Experiential Individual #1).

Another recommendation from the experiential women was to provide life-skills development about healthy sexuality, emphasizing in particular the message that “sex and love are not the same thing.” One woman noted that after leaving the sex trade, many former sex trade workers no longer wish to have sex and that it could present difficulties in having relationships with boyfriends.

Retreat Location

One of the women explained that a remote location would help women avoid encountering former clients and other “triggers”:

“I’m working my straight job, and I fuckin’ run into a trick on the first day, and I fuckin’ had a break down. You know because that’s one of the triggers. A counsellor suggested I get out at least 150 miles from where I used to work, but then you know, what am I going to do? It sounded like a good idea at the time, but you’re still going to be looking over your shoulder and you’ve wacked off guys from fuckin’ Texas to New Brunswick, to Vancouver... Where do you go?” (Source— Experiential Individual #2).

Some of the experiential women described a house in a retreat location as the ideal setting for sex trade workers to escape the sex trade. They described a place women could go to get away from the sex trade to “square up,” including services and resources such as: counselling; safety; a place to sleep and rest; beautiful natural setting; detox and addictions treatment; services that focus on health, wellness, and mental wellness; new comfortable clothing; mental health therapy; education and training programs; time to heal, with no time limits; non-punitive approach, non-abstinence based; and a “one-stop shop” for diversion programs, advocacy, counselling, legal assistance, and health care.

Financial Skills and Assistance

All of the women felt strongly that financial assistance was necessary for sex trade workers to exit the sex trade. They discussed many aspects of financial assistance that they conceived as needing improvement.

One of the women explained that even if a sex trade worker is serious and mentally ready to “square up,” s/he won’t be able to survive financially if they don’t have enough education to get a job that

will pay enough to meet basic needs, particularly in the context of Calgary with its rising cost of living and inflation:

“It’s hard for you to square up if you don’t have no money, and it’s like, okay I want to quit, but I still have to keep a roof over my head, I still have to feed myself, you have to feed the kids, you have to feed the pets, you have to pay bills, you can’t live for free, so you have to be doing something to get money.” (Source—Experiential Individual #9).

The women felt that the ideal financial assistance program would provide funding to women who weren’t able to access from the government what they need to live above the poverty line:

“It’s not realistic to say, “Ok, here’s \$500, live for a month with 1 or 2 kids.” One person can’t even live off of \$500 in a month if they’re paying rent and eating.” (Source—Experiential Individual #11).

Some discussed the need for greater ease for sex trade workers to access Supports for Independence (welfare):

“The government welfare people give you a hard time, and they need to change that. You shouldn’t need to come into an office with a counsellor just to be able to get a cheque, you shouldn’t have to go through all that, and you shouldn’t be treated like shit because you decide don’t want to suck dick no more, you want to try to better your life. You know they’re going to treat you like shit and make you feel worse, you already feel bad enough having to come in there in the first place to get their handouts. They should have a special welfare that deals with the cases of these women saying they’re coming out of the sex trade business.” (Source—Experiential Individual #8).

Another suggestion was to provide women who are serious about making the efforts to leave the sex trade with a bursary for finding housing, transportation, paying bills, buying clothing, and getting education or job training. One woman also suggested that the agencies cooperate to create an emergency fund for sex trade workers to deal with unexpected expenses such as ambulance rides. One of the women did caution that the money can’t come too easily:

“But then, I wonder too, you know, if it’s handed too easy to you, you just fuck it up. You know, if you work for it, you appreciate it more.” (Source—Experiential Individual #6).

Financial assistance should also include help with financial management, as many of the women explained that they were “terrible with money.”

Education and Training

Along with financial assistance, education and training were commonly discussed by the women as an essential feature of programming aimed to helping individuals leave the sex trade.

“...because if a lot of the girls, if they had a better education, they could pick and choose what job they want. But with no education, there’s no job that you can pick and choose, and education unfortunately is not free, you have to pay for it. Or maybe some kind of skilled trade program to help me integrate myself into society in order to get skills to get a regular job.” (Source—Experiential Individuals #3).

One of the women felt that education and training would be best provided in special classes for sex trade workers, so that they wouldn’t have to attend regular classroom with “other people.” Ideally, these classes would be drop-in throughout the day and evening, so that individuals wishing to leave

the sex trade could complete their GED or other training programs such as computer skills, secretarial and office management skills, and various trades.

Clothing

The women also requested other related types of assistance, such as getting access to proper work attire in order for women to have physical appearance that will help them go out and find a job as well as boost their self-image and self-esteem:

“Work clothes make you feel a little better that you’re going in for a job interview not dressed as a hooker because you know 90% of hookers got the heels and the short skirt and that’s pretty much what you own because that’s how you make your money. You know, you want to be able to get that job not because you’re showing skin but because you have the skills to do it.” (Source—Experiential Individual #2).

4.4.4 Support for Women Who Have Exited

The experiential women noted that even those individuals who have successfully left the sex trade behind need sustained support. They discussed the challenges that former sex trade workers face and the emotions they experience when attempting to get out of the sex trade, including:

- post-traumatic stress disorder
- depression and suicidal ideations
- low self-esteem
- battling drug addiction and alcoholism
- poverty and unemployment
- removing themselves from “toxic relationships”
- fighting temptation to re-enter
- anger and regret

“I know when I was getting out, I needed somebody to talk to, and I didn’t and so many of us are shattered and death was an attractive option. After leaving, there are so many issues above and beyond just leaving. I started working on my addiction, and for me that was number one. I wouldn’t have been able to do anything unless I hadn’t addressed drugs and alcohol.” (Source - Experiential Individual #8)

Self-Esteem and Confidence Building

When asked what programming should be in place, many of the experiential women mentioned program approaches that would help to build their self-esteem and confidence in themselves such as:

- makeovers (clothes, hair and makeup) to make women leaving the sex trade feel better about themselves (as well as to help them avoid being recognized by former clients or other sex trade workers)
- identifying goals and working towards the top three priorities
- being shown that someone cares about them as individuals
- having positive actions facilitated by a caring support worker, but not having that person “do it for you” and being allowed to make mistakes but then knowing that they will “pick you back up again so you can say, well you know I had her help but I did most of it myself.”
- being treated with respect rather than being looked down upon or being judged

- long-term confidence and strength building program targeted for women who are or were involved in the sex trade
- long-term supports and self-esteem building activities that get women “into the habit of being confident”
- challenging physical activities such as sky diving or rock climbing
- activities or exercises that help women “find out about yourself, like kind of person you really are, and what your likes are, and what your don’t likes are”

One woman articulated her feelings of empowerment:

“There’s a lack of understanding here in Calgary about what a prostitute is. We’re not victims, we’re not dumb, we’re not walking disease machines, there’s so much stigma to what we are. We’re brilliant survivors, salespeople, problem solvers – we need to be given a chance to contribute to the community. All a woman needs is the chance to make a contribution.” (Source—Experiential Individual #4)

Many of the experiential women felt that an important element of services aimed at helping individuals exit from the sex trade is the recognition from service providers that some individuals do not want help and they simply need to be provided with the space, resources, and support so that they can help themselves when they are ready: “There’s only so much we can do, I can do, if they don’t want to leave...There’s nothing I can do, you can’t club ‘em over the head and make them quit.” (Source—Experiential Individual #10)

One of the women felt strongly that any support (peer or professional) should be offered only to individuals who are making efforts to create positive changes in their life: “You know if you just want sit and talk about your last trick, fuck off, I don’t want to hear it! But if you want to tell me what you’re doing positive, or if I can help you do something positive...but I ain’t going to wipe your butt and blow your nose for ya.” (Source—Experiential Individual #7)

Though a wide range of support services are present in the community, key informants often discussed the barriers to accessing such services. This is discussed in more detail in section 4.6 of this report.

Peer Support and Counselling

A universal recommendation from the experiential women was to develop a peer-based program that would provide support and counselling:

“It’s easier to talk to somebody who can relate to what you’ve already been through.” Ideally, they wanted the program to be run by “somebody that’s been in my shoes before who’s already gone through the journeys that I went through.” (Source—Experiential Individual #6).

Key features of peer counselling were described by the experiential women, as having the following components: confidentiality; empathy; trust; supportive listening; available on a 24-hour basis such as through a phone hotline or a pager to a peer support worker; personal advocacy and motivation; buddy matching with another experiential woman; friendship-based counselling; and peer support groups.⁵¹

⁵¹ Women described, for example, the Stepping Out Program’s *Serious About Squaring Up* peer support group.

Some of the experiential women who had “squared up” noted that even though they had been out of the sex trade for several years, they still occasionally felt that they needed support “when issues come up.” One woman explained that individuals who have been involved in the sex trade often experience post-traumatic stress disorder and suicidal episodes:

“There are some times triggers that will happen and I’ll get a panic attack and there’s no one to talk to, so I just tough it out.” (Source— Experiential Individual #2).

Another woman explained that sometimes she just needed help to:

“...get my ass out of bed, you know, it’s hard to cope with the aftermath.” (Source— Experiential Individual #6).

Peer support was also recommended for women who are currently involved in the sex trade, such as through peer mentoring provided by more experienced sex trade workers for the “new girls coming in.”

Many of the experiential women emphasized the need for any programming targeting sex trade workers to be based on policies and delivered by individuals who are empathetic, non-judgmental, and open-minded. Ideally, they would like programs to be delivered by support workers who can relate to the experiences and perspectives of their clients.

“Women need to, if they have that bad date, to be able to go to someone who’s going to understand them. Not like a psychologist who’s just going to sit there and say ‘oh, everything’s going to be okay, time heals everything.’ They need someone who’s been there, someone who can relate with them.” (Source— Experiential Individual #11).

Another woman described the need just to have someone to talk to, who will listen and not necessarily even say anything back, such as a phone line similar to the Kids Help Phone.⁵² The women described the support worker at Stepping Out as the ideal type of individual for providing empathetic and caring support. The women felt that many of the social and health professionals that they encounter would benefit from “empathy training,” including CPS, health care providers, welfare officers, etc.

4.5 Current Responses at the Broader Community Level

Broader community level response in Calgary includes responses at the government level (municipal and provincial), as well as any policy implemented at the meso or organizational level in the community. For the purpose of this report, current legislation and policy at the macro level are described here.

4.5.1 National Policy Environment vis-à-vis Sexual Exploitation of Youth and Children

Combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) is a responsibility that is shared in Canada by both federal and provincial levels of government in partnership with a number of national and international non-governmental organizations. Most policies and practices that directly affect children such as health, education, child welfare, and social services, fall under provincial

⁵² Kids Help Phone is Canada's 24-hour, toll-free confidential and anonymous phone and web counselling, referral and information service for children and youth. It provides counselling to young people between the ages of 5 and 20. Young people who contact Kids Help Phone can speak with a professional counsellor over the phone or on-line.

jurisdiction as does the municipal government (cities, towns, villages, and metropolitan regions). However, many decisions made at the federal level have a direct impact on children and cut across several federal departments.

Over the years, the Government of Canada has enacted a body of legislation to protect children under the age of 18 from sexual predators. In particular, the *Criminal Code* has been amended to provide extraterritorial jurisdiction enabling the Canadian prosecution of nationals who sexually abuse children while abroad (child sex tourism legislation) and make available testamentary aids (screen or closed-circuit television or video-taped statements) to child victims/witnesses who testify in court against their pimps (1987); make it easier to detain in prison until the last day of their sentence sex offenders who victimize children (1996); enable the use of video and audio-link technology to obtain testimony from witnesses located outside Canada (1999); allow police to use electronic surveillance to investigate organized and telephone prostitution rings and make it illegal to contact victims or witnesses (1999); target the luring and exploitation of children for sexual purposes via the internet (2002); create a new trafficking in persons (TIP) offence under the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment (2002); create the *Sex Offender Information Registration Act* (2004); and enhance child pornography prohibitions by broadening the definition and by providing increased protection against sexual exploitation to youth between the ages of 14-18, as well as facilitate testimony by child and other vulnerable victims/witnesses under the age of 18 through the use of testimonial aids (2005). Furthermore, proposed legislation was tabled in the House of Commons in May 2005 that amends the *Criminal Code* to prohibit the TIP, including the trafficking in children for sexual purposes. The federal government also supports the RCMP National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC) and Cybertip.ca, a national tip line for reporting the sexual exploitation of children on the internet. Finally, Canada ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography on September 14, 2005 following extensive negotiations with the ten provinces and three territories.⁵³

4.5.2 Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act (PCHIP)

In June 1996, the Government of Alberta established the Task Force on Children Involved in Prostitution to build upon efforts by community groups to address this issue. The task force at the time was chaired by the Calgary-Fish Creek MLA, and included representatives from the public, schools, police, community agencies, Justice, and Children's Services.⁵⁴

Through public consultation, the Task Force collected information about this issue and ways to address it. The Task Force's report, which included a number of recommendations, was released in early 1997. One of the key recommendations was to develop legislation to protect children involved in prostitution, which led to the development of the *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act*. The *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act* was proclaimed on February 1, 1999 and subsequently amended on March 18, 2001.

The *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act* (PCHIP) recognizes that children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse and need protection. Previous to this act, children involved in prostitution could be charged with solicitation. Together, PCHIP staff work with community

⁵³ Canadian Strategy Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children & Youth.

⁵⁴ The reader is referred to the Government of Alberta website www.gov.ab.ca for further information on the PCHIP legislation.

based programs and services to help children end their involvement in prostitution. As an example, a child involved in prostitution can be apprehended by police or social services and taken to a protective safe house, where he or she can be confined for up to five days. At this secured facility, the child receives emergency care, treatment, and an assessment. Assessment includes a meeting with a PCHIP support worker who conducts:

- A preliminary assessment that helps determines the child's physical health, nutritional status, drug/alcohol use;
- A crisis risk assessment that determines the child's risk of self-harm and risk of returning to prostitution; and
- A preliminary child protection assessment that determines if the child's survival, security or development factors are at risk as defined under the Child Welfare Act.

Voluntary Support services are also available for sexually exploited children and their families, whereby an individual agrees to receiving support and services such as psychological support, in-home support, and home placement in order to assist the individual to exit out of sexually exploitive situations. Individuals under the voluntary agreement are also able to extend services beyond the age of 18 years, under another type of legislation called the Child and Youth Family Enhancement Legislation.

Under this legislation, johns and pimps can be charged with causing a child to be in need of Protection and fined up to \$25,000, jailed for up to two years, or both fined and imprisoned. Also, under this act, protective safe houses are available to children and youth, which are secured facilities with restricted access.

The City of Calgary has currently described their involvement with the sex trade more on the enforcement level. The City typically becomes involved in sex trade-related issues when there are community complaints and when the activities surrounding prostitution such as drug activity or increased neighbourhood traffic becomes a concern in a community. City Alderman serving the needs of communities affected by street-based sex trade work have reported the need to gather more information of the community issues in order to develop a community response to the issues. City Aldermen have traditionally worked with the Calgary Police Services on enforcement issues. However, through recent media releases,⁵⁵ it appears that the City Aldermen of affected neighbourhoods are interested in looking at a broader community response to the issues and to effectively address the needs of individuals involved in the sex trade by examining local research studies and environmental scan findings. Factors such as housing, employment skills and drug treatment programs are currently being explored as part of a response to the issues.

The Calgary Police Services⁵⁶ currently contribute an enforcement role in the City of Calgary towards sex trade and sexual exploitation. Under the Organized Crime Section, the Vice Unit is led by a staff sergeant and has twelve detectives and one civilian clerk. Detectives receive specialized training in each area of investigation. These areas are: prostitution; child prostitution and pornography; illegal gaming; prevention and education; and enforcing licensing bylaws governing escorts, exotic dancers, and massage practitioners in conjunction with the City of Calgary Licence Division.

⁵⁵ Source of local media release: CTV Globe Media (2007).

<http://calgary.ctv.ca/servlet/GIS.Servlets.HTMLTemplate?tf=CFCNPlus/generic/hubs/fr>; Calgary Herald February 12, 2007

⁵⁶ The reader is referred to the CPS website at www.calgarypolice.ca for more information

The Vice Unit currently works with community based organizations to address residents' concerns and the underlying issues that can lead to a life of prostitution. Community associations, street-level support agencies, the Alberta Crown Prosecutor's Office, Calgary Probation and Community Corrections, and The City of Calgary Licence Division are all partners with the Vice Unit in developing a long-term innovative and strategic prostitution enforcement approach to address crime and safety concerns.⁵⁷ According to CPS statistics, more than half of the prostitution-related charges laid by the unit are against sex trade offenders. Enforcement initiatives are directly aimed at addressing the harms that sex trade activity brings to Calgary communities.⁵⁸

The CPS has investigators who are involved in the development of several groundbreaking initiatives, including those under PCHIP legislation. In addition, the CPS has developed a program to prepare young victims of prostitution for court testimony and has executed successful child pornography investigations that have resulted in the seizure of child pornography and the arrests of perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.

The CPS have recently implemented Bill 206, legislation targeting sex trade offenders, or “johns,” whereby vehicles of offenders can be seized and impounded according to this bylaw. As of February 12, 2007, more than 30 cars have been seized and impounded as a result of violations under this legislation.⁵⁹ The CPS has also described their role in responding to the needs of sex trade workers. For example, upon contact with a sex trade worker, an individual taken into custody will also refer this individual to a community based organization that provides support and services for sex trade workers. However, the CPS also described the need to address a gap in services, namely the time lapse between the CPS point of contact and contact with a community based agency. Currently, there is no community based agency that operates 24 hours a day, or where services are available at the point of contact with the CPS, typically very late at night.

The CPS has also described their partnerships in the community to help address the needs of sex trade workers. Partnerships with community based agencies and drug treatment programs exist. However, the CPS describes the needs for better coordination and availability of services at all hours of the day. Although CPS reports that some women do not wish to access such services and support, it is important to explore the reasons why individuals refuse such services and support.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Calgary Herald February 12, 2007

4.6 Barriers, Perceived Shortcomings, and Areas for Improvement

Key barriers to ensuring responsive programs to sex trade workers include:

- wait lists for services;
- lack of sustainable resources for community based programming;
- the need to ensure confidential and empathetic services;
- safe and affordable housing;
- lack of adequate addiction treatment programs;
- lack of a coordinated continuum of services

Key informants described key barriers and gaps to service and support provision to individuals involved in the sex trade.

Some of the experiential women provided feedback about some of the organizations, services, or programs with which they had contact. Some of their grievances included issues of confidentiality, lack of empathy, inappropriate services, and lack of adequate availability.

4.6.1 Wait Times

The immediate barriers to responsive support include wait lists for community based services, addiction treatment services, and safe affordable housing. Agencies described how individuals involved in the sex trade experience wait lists of up to three months for support and services. Services include access to legal support, safe housing or shelter, and other types of advocacy support. As one agency described, when people involved in the sex trade make a decision to start drug addiction treatment, quite often, there are no treatment beds available for that particular individual at that particular time. People often go through a process of change before making a decision to enter treatment, however, treatment and care is often not available when an individual is ready for treatment.

“When people are at the stage of change for readiness to look at their addiction issues, there’s no beds available for detox and that’s a big frustration. With addiction people move with the stages of readiness and it’s frustrating when you can’t help a person when they’re ready to go to detox.” (Source—Key Informant #12).

Many key informants described the needs for safe and affordable housing for individuals involved in the sex trade as an immediate need. It has been often described that individuals are unable to access such housing, which contributes to involvement in the sex trade. Further, the needs for integrated services such as drug and addictions treatment while in safe and affordable housing is seen as an immediate need for individuals.

The system or structure of some programs shows that the current structure of service delivery is not responsive to the unique needs of those involved in the sex trade. Though several agencies describe efforts to ensure responsive services and support to individuals involved in the sex trade, challenges arise when faced with waiting times, and unavailability of care and treatment staff.

4.6.2 Eligibility Restrictions

There are also instances when eligibility criteria for treatment or support services are restrictive to meet the unique needs of individuals involved in the sex trade:

“If somebody wants out, there’s places you can refer them to, but there are so many barriers to getting from the corner on the stroll, to getting out of the addiction and into a straight life. The older they get, the harder it is and for the boys it’s the most difficult because they can’t get into any kinds of shelters... [Some] barriers – one, they need to physically be somewhere else with a bed, so they need immediate transportation, it’s midnight and all the services are shut down; two-and then trying to find initial programs for referral that deal with addiction and sex trade are separate, there isn’t a program that deals with both issues hand in hand.” (Source—Key Informant #1).

4.6.3 Need for Seamless Network of Services

Several key informants spoke of the need for a coordinated and integrated spectrum of services; ensuring the diverse needs of individuals involved in the sex trade are met. For example, several agencies spoke of ensuring a round-the-clock program that can respond to the needs of individuals at any time of day. The CPS also spoke of the need to ensure individuals are connected to services at the point of contact. Quite often, when individuals are taken into police custody, there is a gap between the point of contact and when individuals are connected to support and services.

Several agencies spoke of the need to ensure young people under the age of 18 years are connected to support. Several agencies described a concern for young individuals not getting connected to support due to full programs or housing sites. There is concern that there are still young people not connected through PCHIP:

“One of our biggest concerns is that we don’t see underage girls since PCHIP came into effect. Stats at [residential program] – they’re always full. We don’t know where they are, we don’t hear much. In the last year, we hear virtually nothing. It concerns me for their safety – do they have condoms and have contact with anybody who could intervene and help them with anything that they need, like to see a doctor, go home to their family... exploitation – that’s who I think of the most, anybody who is younger and has nobody to ask for help.” (Source—Key Informant #1).

4.6.4 Lack of Funding

Many of the experiential women acknowledged the challenges faced by organizations due to lack of funding. One woman noted that:

“There are too many chiefs and not enough Indians – too many people sitting in corporation meetings and managers in the offices and not enough front-line staff working directly with the clients. There’s just too much talk and not enough action.” (Source— Experiential Individual).

Another woman felt that targeted services were very lacking and that sex trade workers are unaware that certain services are available at all. Another woman noted that although Stepping Out is an excellent program, it had limitations because of only having one staff member:

“[Name] is great, but, it was hard in the program getting the help from her because I never ever had her undivided attention because her phone’s always ringing, and she always has to

answer it because she's the only one. You can't run a program realistically like that with one person, so if they're going to do another program or something to help these girls, they can't do it with one woman." (Source—Experiential Individual #10).

The other issue raised by the experiential women was the lack of stability in the Stepping Out program:

"It can't be up and down and closing 5 months from now and opening again in a month, you know, closing and opening, closing and opening, they can't keep doing that cause there's no stability in the program. And if there's no stability, it can't work." (Source— Experiential Individual #8).

One of the women explained that the instability in the Stepping Out program made her feel uncertain about the supports that are available to her, particularly from a counselling, support and advocacy perspective.

4.6.5 Need for Specialized Addictions Services

Another issue with respect to service availability raised by the women was the lack of addictions services specifically targeted to sex trade workers, and the inadequacy of six-day detox programs: "You get a girl off drugs 6 days, she's going to go right back out like that [finger snap], and she's going to turn right around and get involved in the same thing. 'Cause that's not long enough to keep them off the streets."

Additional hours for the Safeworks and Exit outreach vans was mentioned again: "A lot of those girls, they come out there and they don't have safes, and if they've missed the van, they're in real trouble if somebody doesn't have any extras, so the van, like that Exit van and the Safeworks van, they should go around each track at least twice in the night. I think the day time service, they should be out there, because there's a lot more girls working the day, and you don't see them in the day."

Further, key informants described that criteria for certain residential or addiction treatment programs are not flexible to meet the diverse needs of people. As an example key informants described how some programs do not integrate services for a sex trade worker who is addicted to drugs. Support for sex trade workers who are also experiencing addiction problems is often not integrated due to restricted program goals.

4.6.6 Confidentiality

Some of the experiential women felt that confidentiality was not adequately respected by some service providers: "It has to be if somebody's speaking about how their feelings are or what their situation is, I don't believe that that person should breach that trust and go and disclose the information to anywhere else. Because if that person wanted that information to go there, then they would go there and tell them themselves." Complaints about confidentiality were in relation to client files, which they perceived as being shared between programs within agencies, or even between agencies. One of the women stated that her evidence of breaks in confidentiality was that one service provider whom she had never met knew personal information about her situation as a sex trade worker which had been passed from another counsellor. She felt that she had been labelled and assumptions made about her even before she met the new service provider:

"Confidentiality is huge for trust, for healing." (Source—Experiential Individual #4).

Stepping Out is perceived as a program that effectively protects confidentiality, whereas it was felt that other agencies "make big files with irrelevant notes and share this information widely."

However, this lack of program documentation makes it difficult for Stepping Out to demonstrate its outcomes.

4.6.7 Lack of Empathy

Some of the women felt that a barrier to accessing some programs was the lack of the empathy that they felt from the service providers and from other clients who are not involved in the sex trade:

“You can’t just throw all these random people into these programs and say, ok teach these girls, because already those people I think have their little perceptions of us that aren’t nice, so already coming to the program with bad thoughts about the people. And if you’re thinking we’re bad people, we’re going to pick that up and you’re not going to be able to help us because we’re not going to trust you.” (Source—Experiential Individual #5).

One of the women also expressed the need to feel that service providers really care and are not just doing their job for a pay cheque: “They’re doing it because they care, and they want to make a difference and help and change these women’s lives, and are sincere about helping.”

The female pimp felt many barriers to accessing services because she was perceived by service providers as a criminal and she felt that they were not interested in helping her get out of the sex trade.

Another manifestation of the lack of empathy in some service providers was described by the women as rigid and unrealistic programs:

“People who are running the programs aren’t down to earth and not realistic. They are setting goals that most of the women can’t reach and the women are set up to fail. [Program Name] is really hard-core, it’s very structured almost hour by hour, it works for some people, but it’s faith-based, with lots of rules and it feels like jail. It’s just not where these women are coming from. Spirituality needs to come on your own time, not on someone else’s schedule.” (Source—Experiential Individual #11).

Another program was described the following way:

“They want to take a girl who’s been on her own for however long and tell her that this is what you have to do, this, this, this and this and plus she’s going to chores and make your bed and do this and this. I’m trying to deal with the fact that I did what I did for so many years and they want you to go to religion classes and make your bed and sweep the floor and really I just want to sleep the rest of my life because I have enough to deal with. They’re not understanding, they’re not, they want to push their own views on you rather than hearing you out and listening to what you have to say.” (Source— Experiential Individual #6).

4.7 Building Community Awareness

Key informants spoke frequently of the need to raise awareness in the city of Calgary of the sex trade and issues related to the sex trade. Raising awareness in the community was described at different levels including: the philosophical approach to a community response; ways to respond to the sex trade as a community; and targeted strategies to raise awareness in the community.

Building Community Awareness

- develop public's concern for the health and safety of individuals involved in the sex trade
- encourage the community to perceive issues as a social problem rather than a criminal or moral problem
- build compassion and understanding of the complex psychosocial histories of sex workers
- encourage the greater community to acknowledge the role of the demand side of sex trade work

Key informants spoke strongly of the need to address the attitudes and stereotypes in Calgary around the sex trade, and the people involved in the sex trade. Stereotypes around who is involved in the sex trade are still prominent. Key informants described how the average person would still see individuals involved in the sex trade as those who have made the choice to be involved in the sex trade, and who are unaware of the factors surrounding one's involvement in the sex trade:

“I would love if we could change the mindset around prostitution, still people see prostitution as a choice, a lifestyle – strange public perception that doesn't understand that women have been coerced to be there via drugs or pimps and they are really being exploited.” (Source—Key Informant #3).

In addition, the media plays a strong role in reinforcing stereotyping of the sex trade and those involved in the sex trade. Terms that are often derogatory and disrespectful are quite often cited in the media. Also, sex trade work is often associated with crime and moral language in the media, which seems to further the stereotypes of sex trade workers in the city.

Key informants spoke of the need for the community to acknowledge that sex trade in the city is a concern for all citizens and that concern is needed for the health and safety of individuals involved in the sex trade. The need to approach the issues as a social problem has been expressed by key informants, indicating a need for community members to show compassion and understanding for individuals involved in the sex trade. Many of the individuals involved in the sex trade are involved due to complex psychosocial histories that have placed them in situations of surviving and coping with complex health needs and addiction problems:

“It needs to be seen as a social issue that needs to be addressed in the community.”
(Source—Key Informant #4).

Key informants report that there is still a common perception that individuals involved in the sex trade are involved due to a choice, as opposed to a response to a complex situation to meet basic needs.

Key informants have also described the need for the greater community to acknowledge the demand side of sex trade work. There is a need to ensure people understand how individuals who purchase

the services of sex trade workers, including those involved in the indoor sex trade and those in the outdoor sex trade, contribute to the complex issues of the sex trade.

By understanding the complex issues contributing to the sex trade and sexual exploitation of individuals in the community, the community would potentially be able to approach the topic of sex trade work and sexual exploitation as a social issue, requiring a compassionate understanding community to respond to the issues. As an example, most people would not recognize that safe and affordable housing is a factor contributing to sexual exploitation and sex trade work in the community. Many individuals involved in the sex trade come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and are unable to afford stable housing. Other local research studies demonstrate key determinants linked to involvement in the sex trade and to becoming sexually exploited.⁶⁰

General awareness-raising in the community to break stereotypes and misconceptions of the sex trade and sexual exploitation has been described as key intervention as part of a community response to sex trade and sexual exploitation. The greater community needs to become aware of the complex factors contributing to the sex trade and sexual exploitation happening in Calgary, including the demand factors contributing to the sex trade/sexual exploitation to the complex factors that have shaped the lives of individuals involved in the sex trade.

Public Perception and Sensitivity

Experiential women felt that public perceptions and attitudes about the sex trade need to be improved:

“They need to understand that we’re not bad people, that we all have our own reasons for being there. And we’re really not trying to “pollute” their area because we’re just trying to put a roof over our head or whatever.” (Source—Experiential Individual #7)

With the increasing number of high-end properties going into the downtown core (traditionally an area for sex trade strolls), the individuals working on the strolls are increasingly being harassed:

“One woman was standing on a balcony yelling at a hooker last summer telling her to move. If they could understand why we’re there instead of saying oh well, you’re this, this and this and you’re in front of my house. Cops showed up, told the working girl to move, and that police officer kept harassing all the girls farther down, telling them to move, and that’s crap. I’m not in front of this woman’s apartment building, I’m not the one yelling out onto the street. I’m not bothering anybody.” (Source—Experiential Individual #11)

One woman explained that nobody involved in the sex trade set out in life to become sex trade workers and that assumptions can’t be made about their background:

“They could come from a very square, uppity family where they have money and everything, but something’s missing, something happens and the girls or guy ends up going out and doing these things, and people need to stop judging. It’s the oldest profession in the world, people need to be stop being so close-minded. The sex trade has always been there, and it

⁶⁰ Bagley C. (1999). Adolescent prostitution in Canada and the Philippines: Statistical comparisons, an ethnographic account and policy options. *International Social Work*, 42(4), 445-454.

Barnitz, L. (2001). *Effectively Responding to the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: A Comprehensive Approach to Prevention, Protection, and Reintegration Services*.

Melrose, M (2004). Young People Abused through Prostitution: Some Observations for Practice *PRACTICE*, 16(1), 17-29.

Bardach, E. (2000). *A practical guide for policy analysis*. New York: Chatham House Publishers.

might always be there. These people can't be hating these girls because it could be their daughter, the new born baby that they just had, in 15 years that girl could be out walking on the street, or doing escort, or on the stage dancing. You don't know, you don't know what's going to happen." (Source—Experiential Individual #8)

One of the women felt that community members first need to accept that the sex trade will always exist, and that individuals are involved for their own complex reasons. Even if community members don't understand those reasons or don't condone the sex trade, they should not treat individuals involved in the sex trade with disrespect and violence. Women who worked on strolls reported that they had curses and slurs yelled at them and objects (e.g., glass bottles or oranges) thrown at them by passing vehicles.

One woman said that a message she would like to give to the general public is: "I don't judge you so don't judge me." Another woman wished that Calgary would respond to the sex trade "with open arms." One woman felt that media portrayal of sex trade workers was largely responsible for public perceptions:

"Instead of when the news is talking about these things to Calgary, when they're talking about these things on TV, they need to stop talking about the girls like they're a disease and talk about them like they're real people like everybody else and try to get the sympathy from the community instead of making everybody be mad and hate them and want to get rid of them. Instead, let's try to help them." One suggestion was to create some films depicting how people get involved in the sex trade for different reasons, in different ways, and how easily "it can happen to them, or somebody that they know." (Source—Experiential Individual #6)

Another assumption that the women wished to dispel was that all sex trade workers are "druggies." Rather, many of the women are "out there working for their kids, working because this is what they want to do, not necessarily have to do."

Targeted interventions as part of a community response may also be required to ensure prevention and early intervention efforts among younger individuals under the age of 18 years. A coordinated strategy to ensure young people are aware of factors that contribute to involvement in the sex trade or to sexual exploitation would be beneficial.

Awareness about Services

Awareness campaigns targeted to all service providers about the continuum of services available for both children/youth and adults who are involved in the sex trade and are sexually exploited are needed. As one key informant described:

"We have 400 social work staff working with kids. 70, 000 calls from the community per year and a huge volume of agencies. Probably not even half of the staff know where to refer adult women for exiting." (Source—Key Informant #3).

Some of the women discussed the need to raise awareness amongst sex trade workers about the range of services available to them. One of the experiential women who had experience in the inside sex trade suggested that informational pamphlets with contact numbers be handed out by the City of Calgary when individuals are given their escort licenses or massage therapy licenses. She saw a positive role for sex trade establishments in helping women or providing women with information such as a listing of services available for harm reduction as well as for counselling and assistance with exiting.

Some of the women felt that efforts need to be made to increase awareness amongst sex trade workers of the services that are available to them, including food, housing, and financial assistance. One woman felt that if she had had better awareness of the services available to her, she would have left the sex trade much earlier than she did.

One woman felt that very few sex trade workers know that they can access condoms at AIDS Calgary:

“If people don’t know where AIDS Calgary is on 15th and Centre, a lot of the girls don’t even go there. I go there and you can use the washroom, you can get a coffee if you want a coffee. A lot of the girls don’t even know that that place is there, and they’re only open through the day. And they’re not educated enough, well if you need safes, you need something to go to, and I tell people that. So mainly better advertisement is needed.” (Source—Experiential Individual #10)

Other examples of targeted awareness interventions include:

- Awareness of current legislation (e.g., PCHIP) relating to sex trade and sexual exploitation among children/youth and adults.
- Awareness among youth and their families about the sex trade, sexual exploitation, and how to identify warning signs related to involvement. Also education and support for families who are struggling with their lives.
- Early education among youth, both males and females, around healthy sexuality, healthy relationships, and how to recognize signs of exploitation and where to get help.
- Education for sex offenders or those who contribute to the “demand” side of sex trade work to address the social aspects and issues central to sex trade work.

4.8 Community Partnerships

Several agencies spoke of existing partnerships and the need for strengthened partnerships in the community in order to effectively respond to the needs of individuals involved in the sex trade. As an example, several agencies work together to ensure effective implementation of PCHIP legislation. Community based organizations, the CPS, and Children’s Services provincial ministry work together to ensure young individuals are connected to support and services before becoming entrenched in sex trade work or in activities that are sexually exploitive. This formal partnership works together to ensure that:

“Different community resources and contracted resources [are there] to support people in the community rather than confining them, and being punitive, [we] address concerns sooner when families first see signs of a young person’s involvement.” (Source—Key Informant #3).

A coordinated referral system has also been reported by several agencies, where individuals and families affected by the sex trade are referred to existing programs that can help individuals exit the sex trade, or to help individuals cope with their current needs.

Though agencies have existing partnerships within the community, they also spoke of the need to strengthen current partnerships or to build more effective partnerships to enhance a coordinated response to the community’s needs. They reported two key types of partnerships: one in which agencies work together to coordinate services (for example, referral services); and the other type which involves agencies working together to integrate services and support and to ensure a

provision of a wide continuum of services for individuals involved in the sex trade or who are sexually exploited. Several agencies already work by integrating services, where staff from multiple agencies work to support individuals involved in the sex trade. However, many agencies spoke of the need to strengthen both the integration and coordination of services:

“...Would be nice if all the agencies talked to one another just about the basic issues of sex trade and exploitation—if we were all on the same page and working toward the same goals. We work pretty independently right now. The way that people do work cooperatively is by staff moving between organizations and different positions. As far as the organizations working together, that doesn’t happen enough. Opening up communication and knowing that there is room enough for all of us and we all have a part to play.” (Source—Key Informant #6)

Another key informant described the benefit of developing a standing committee on the sex trade:

“...Agencies don’t communicate well...We need a standing committee on sex trade issues...it would be useful to have a standing committee on the sex trade, but it depends on the focus of the committee – frontline people versus program managers can achieve different goals...” (Source—Key Informant #1).

Another agency described their formal partnerships in the community which help to maximize use of resources to respond to the need of individuals:

“We are deeply embedded in our partnerships so we are enhancing, not duplicating programs.” (Source—Key Informant #13).

5. Survey Findings

This section provides a brief summary of the findings from the on-line survey, which gathered wider input from a range of community stakeholders in Calgary, including community-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, government, academic researchers, community members, citizens, and interest groups. The purpose of this survey was to learn more about:

- the impacts of the sex trade on individuals living/working in Calgary on their communities
- the tools and strategies that could help make communities healthier and safer for everyone
- how stakeholders envision an appropriate response in Calgary to the sex trade

Full details of the survey findings are provided in Appendix F.

5.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Over a ten-day period (January 16–26, 2007), a total of 214 stakeholders completed the survey, with the following characteristics:

- 83% were between ages of 26-59
- 79% were female
- 41% were from community-based organizations, 19% academic researchers, 12% government
- 42.4% of respondents work in the social services field, 17% work in business sector, 13% in education
- 86% had never worked in the sex trade, 4% had worked in the sex trade in the past, 1% currently worked in the sex trade, 9% worked with individuals involved
- 49% of the respondents work in Ward 8, 26% in Ward 9 and 20% in Ward 11
- 19% of the respondents live in Ward 9, 12% in Ward 7, 12% in Ward, and 11% in Ward 8

5.2 Perceptions and Attitudes

The respondents were asked to indicate if they classified various forms of sex work as part of the sex trade. The respondents clearly considered street prostitution, massage parlours and escort services as part of the sex trade. On the other hand, strip clubs, lapdancing, peep shows, phone sex, phone chat lines, internet chat lines, video and internet pornography, were less clearly defined as part of the sex trade.

There was a set of questions designed to assess respondents' perceptions and attitudes about the sex trade. Almost all respondents acknowledged that there are male sex trade workers in Calgary and that males can be victims of sexual exploitation. This is a positive indication of respondents' awareness that the sex trade affects women and men, girls and boys.

Most respondents (84%) agreed or strongly agreed that the sex trade is sexual exploitation. Almost all respondents disagreed that sexual exploitation only affects children and youth, indicating a broader concept of sexual exploitation to include adults as well.

The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the sex trade cannot be ended and thus should be made as safe as possible for sex trade workers. However, a significant proportion (14%) felt neutral on this statement and 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

There was some ambiguity amongst the respondents regarding their perception of the sex trade in terms of vulnerability to violence. On one hand, almost all of the respondents (96%) felt that sex trade workers need to be better protected from violence, while on the other hand only 62% felt that the

sex trade is a form of violence against women. A sizeable minority (23%) were neutral on this statement and 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The statement – “the sex trade is a consequence of male domination of women” – also created mixed reactions amongst the respondents. The largest group of respondents (39%) agree or strongly agree with this statement, 31% were neutral and 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The statement – “the sex trade is immoral and efforts should focus on eliminating it from our city” - also elicited a wide range of reactions amongst the respondents. The largest proportion (40%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that efforts should focus on eliminating the sex trade from Calgary, while 26% agreed with this statement and 34% were neutral. One problem with this statement is that some respondents agreed with the first part of the statement (that the sex trade is immoral) but not with the second part of the statement (that efforts should focus on eliminating it).

Three statements were designed to assess how respondents perceived the concept of “choice” with respect to sex trade workers’ involvement in the sex trade. The majority of respondents (72%) agreed or strongly agreed that most sex trade workers have been forced into the sex trade by circumstances.

This result is consistent with the next statement – that most sex trade workers choose this lifestyle for themselves – to which 69% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed. A significant minority (20-21%) of respondents were neutral on these statements. Just over half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the sex trade is a legitimate form of employment. A significant minority 29% were neutral on this statement and a small proportion (15%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Generally, these results indicate the majority of respondents do not believe that individuals in the sex trade have chosen this as a form of employment without being forced into it in some way.

Just over half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the sex trade is a legitimate form of employment. A significant minority 29% were neutral on this statement and a small proportion (15%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Generally, these results indicate the majority of respondents do not believe that individuals in the sex trade have chosen this as a form of employment without being forced into it in some way.

5.3 Community Development

The majority of respondents (63%) felt that there would be some positive impact or very positive impact from greater engagement of community members in discussing local strategies to improve the health and safety for all community members. There was a large majority of respondents who felt that very positive impact (52%) or some positive impact (27%) would result from communities supporting a Coordinated Community Action Plan for Calgary to address the sex trade.

There were very mixed results for the idea of a “safe zone” for sex trade workers in communities. About 37% of respondents felt there would be some positive or very positive impact from safe zones while 18% felt that there would be negative impact. Qualitative data indicated that some of the respondents (3) felt that safe zones were a good idea but only if they were situated in industrial areas (versus in residential areas).

The respondents also provided other ideas about how to address the sex trade through community development:

- support for sex trade workers – awareness, empathy, involvement
- education – for prevention, for sex trade workers, for community

- address the demand side
- inclusion and partnerships
- addressing root causes (housing and poverty)

5.4 Prevention and Education

Prevention and education includes efforts to prevent individuals from entering the sex trade, addressing the circumstances which place individuals at risk of getting involved in the sex trade. All of the prevention and education strategies suggested were viewed by the majority of respondents as having very positive impact or some positive impact on the sex trade. Several respondents noted that greater availability of addiction treatment facilities should be a priority. Respondents were also asked to reflect on specific messages that would be delivered through a comprehensive and standardized prevention program in schools. Respondents almost uniformly felt that all of the messages would have very positive or some positive impact:

- promotes the development of self-esteem among youth
- promotes positive sexual attitudes amongst boys and girls
- provides education against homophobia
- builds awareness about recruitment into the sex trade builds awareness of tactics used by sexual predators
- demonstrates the reality of what it is like to work in the sex trade, from the perspective of former sex trade workers
- provides access to confidential and affordable counselling and personal support for youth

The respondents also provided other ideas about how to address the sex trade through prevention and education:

- empowerment: self-esteem and confidence
- school-based preventive education
- preventive education focused on youth at risk
- community-focused preventive education
- education targeting the demand side

5.5 Research and Knowledge Building

Research would help governmental and non-governmental organizations understand the sex trade in Calgary and build knowledge about the most effective ways to protect the health and safety of all community members affected by the sex trade. The majority of respondents felt that research would overall create very positive or some positive impact on the sex trade. However, about 18% of respondents felt that conducting more research about the demand side of the sex trade would have only neutral impact.

The respondents also provided other ideas about how research and knowledge building could help address the sex trade in Calgary:

- developing better understanding of psychosocial histories of people involved in the sex trade
- better understanding of the Calgary social and economic context
- developing better understanding of the demand side
- developing better understanding of needs in exiting the sex trade
- participatory research opportunities
- research partnerships
- better application and dissemination of research

5.6 Intervention

Interventions are actions to help community members, including sex trade workers, remain safe and healthy, and respectful of others' rights and needs. The intervention actions which respondents felt would have very positive impact were:

- Innovative drug treatment programs should be developed to support sex workers with addictions, to increase sex trade worker's capacity to make positive healthy choices, and to reduce the harms of drug use (75% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)
- Daily outreach services to sex trade workers should be provided, building on services that are already provided by community organizations (72% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)
- Provide increased access to supportive housing for sex workers (68% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)

Some of the respondents expressed reservations about the idea of designating “no-go areas” for sex work activity, while others fully supported it as a safety measure for community members. Several respondents disagreed with the suggested action area of creating supportive housing for sex trade workers. The respondents also provided other ideas for interventions which could help address the sex trade in Calgary:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ○ mental health interventions | ○ primary health care |
| ○ addressing needs of Aboriginal peoples | ○ inclusion of experiential individuals |
| ○ rehabilitation interventions for pimps | ○ safe space for sex trade workers |
| ○ multi-sectoral approach to interventions | |

5.7 Exiting

Exiting refers to a set of actions which assist individuals in leaving the sex trade once they are ready to do so. All three of the suggested actions aimed at helping individuals exit the sex trade were deemed by the large majority of respondents to have very positive or some positive impact. The respondents also provided other ideas for actions aimed at helping individuals exiting the sex trade that could help address the sex trade in Calgary:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ○ place priority on programs to help sex trade workers exit | ○ support older women |
| ○ anonymity and confidentiality | ○ education and life skills development |
| ○ non-denominational | ○ multisectoral collaboration |
| ○ support for sex trade workers – awareness, empathy, involvement | ○ mental health and addictions services |
| | ○ meeting basic needs |
| | ○ health services |

5.8 Legal Responses

Legal responses refer to a set of actions that address the sex trade through changes to the roles of the law enforcement system. There were mixed responses to some of the suggested action areas with respect to legal responses to the sex trade. Generally, there seemed to be a lack of understanding amongst respondents of the concept of a community court system (five respondents noted that they didn't know what a community court referred to). The legal responses most universally supported by the respondents were:

- Enhance and improve projects such as the RCMP's 'Project KARE' which report and investigate missing high-risk females in the Province of Alberta (73% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)
- Enhance and improve the 'bad date' program which reports violent or abusive customers as reported by sex workers (74% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)

There were some specific comments from respondents in opposition to the idea of self defense training for sex trade workers. The respondents also provided other ideas for legal responses that could help address the sex trade in Calgary. Their ideas are summarized below:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ○ legalization/decriminalization/licensing | ○ target the demand side |
| ○ community court/alternative legal systems | ○ protection – police, community, and sex trade workers |
| ○ legal advocacy/aid services | ○ move sex trade out of neighbourhoods |
| ○ tougher penalties for pimps and exploiters | ○ anti-legalization, in favour of elimination of sex trade completely |
| ○ tougher penalties for drug offences | |
| ○ tougher penalties on johns | |

6. Recommendations and Next Steps

6.1 Invest in Partnerships and Collaboration among Community Members, Non-Government Organizations, Government, and Other Stakeholders

There was evidence to show that community-based agencies are connected at the level of service provision (i.e., through an informal referral system). A coordinated referral system has also been reported by several agencies, where individuals and families affected by the sex trade are referred to existing programs that can help individuals exit the sex trade, or to help individuals cope with their current needs.

Although agencies identified existing partnerships within the community, they also indicated the need to strengthen current partnerships or to build more effective partnerships to enhance a coordinated response to the community's needs. Agencies spoke of two key types of partnerships: one in which agencies work together to coordinate services (for example, referral services); and the other type which involves agencies working together to integrate services and support and to ensure a provision of a wide continuum of services for individuals involved in the sex trade or who are sexually exploited. Several agencies already work by integrating services, where staff from multiple agencies work to support individuals involved in the sex trade. However, many agencies indicated the need to strengthen both the integration and coordination of services. In order to do so, it is recommended that community partners including non-government organizations, government, and other key stakeholders invest in integrating, coordinating, and strengthening services. Investment is not limited to financial investment, but also contributions in expertise, skill, knowledge, and human resources.

It is recommended that a standing committee be formed as part of the overall coordinated community response to sex trade and sexual exploitation in Calgary. A standing committee would be formalized through a partnership agreement, a terms of reference, and be action-oriented to ensure the needs of individuals involved in the sex trade or who are sexually exploited are met through a coordinated and seamless network of services. Further, this committee would take leadership in advocacy, funding and resource development, and ensure efficient, coordinated, and maximal use of available resources. Finally, a standing committee would provide leadership in connecting with other sectors and all levels of government to advocate for the issues in the community and for sustainable resources to help address the issues at the community. Sectors would include (but are not limited to) those from justice, health, education, and child services.

One of the key recommendations developed at the Community Planning Day was the development of a formalized provincial-wide council of community members, community-based organizations, government, and other stakeholders who meet to address the issues on a regular basis. Key activities for this council could include: strategic planning for sustained funding and resources; dissemination of knowledge (research, resources, and other information); strategic planning for changes in the broader system that could contribute to a province-wide response to sex trade and sexual exploitation in Alberta; and policy development.

6.2 Focus on Underlying Causes and Solutions

This project collected extensive information which helps to create a picture of the sex trade and sexual exploitation in Calgary with respect to: age and gender of those involved in the sex trade; location and forms of sex trade activities; descriptors of individuals who solicit services of the sex

trade or who exploit individuals in the sex trade; and the key psychosocial history and risk factors of individuals involved in the sex trade or who are sexually exploited.

Of particular importance in the project findings is the psychosocial histories of individuals who are involved in the sex trade, or the contextual factors surrounding an individual who is at risk for becoming involved in the sex trade or sexually exploited. By understanding these factors, appropriate responses may be designed and implemented to help support individuals at different levels including: prevention or early intervention; support services (including harm reduction support, physical and mental health services, drug or addiction treatment programs, personal coping skills, legal aid); exiting strategies; and support for those who have already left the sex trade (including employment skills, safe and affordable housing, and counselling).

While most community-based service providers are aware of the complex psychosocial histories of men, women, and children/youth involved in the sex trade, greater supports are needed to intervene in the contextual factors, interrupt a life trajectory towards the sex trade, and to address the complex factors keeping individuals in the sex trade. Attention to the multiple psychosocial factors provides the basis for designing and implementing responsive interventions across the continuum of services from prevention to harm reduction to exiting.

It is recommended that funders and service providers in Calgary work together to establish and enhance a full continuum of services to meet the unique needs of male, female, transgendered, children, youth and adults who are at risk for involvement in, currently involved in, or exiting the sex trade or sexually exploitive situations. It is also important that service providers and funders acknowledge that the exiting process for individuals is not a one-time, single event. Many individuals who exit the sex trade/sexual exploitation trade often do so over a long period of time. Some have reported that it takes up to 7 years to completely recover from involvement in the sex trade/sexual exploitation to cope with and manage with: the emotional and psychological impacts, impacts on physical and mental health, and finding stable housing and employment.

The population health promotion approach⁶¹ may be a useful framework upon which to base and design interventions that address the complex contextual factors surrounding involvement in the sex trade. At the very least, it could be applied to ensure that programs address one or more determinants of health and their complex interactions. For example, early interventions may be most effective if they focus on determinants of health such as education, social environments and healthy child development. Harm reduction interventions, could focus on determinants such as income and poverty, physical environments, and access to health services. Finally, exiting or transitioning programs may be directed at the determinants of employment, social supports as well as access to health services.

6.3 Influence on Policy, Systems and Public Attitudes

In order to create a more supportive and inclusive social environment for individuals involved in, or at risk of involvement in the sex trade, efforts need to be made to alter public attitudes with respect to the sex trade. It is recommended that strategies are developed to: develop a community response grounded in compassion, inclusion and care for individuals involved in the sex trade and who are sexually exploited; develop general awareness campaigns to heighten awareness of sex trade work and sexual exploitation as a health and social issue (rather than a criminal or moral issue); and to develop harm reduction and safety strategies grounded in a rights-based approach.

⁶¹ Hamilton & Bhatti (2002). *Population Health Promotion: An Integrated Model of Population Health and Health Promotion*. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/phdd/php/php.htm>

Stereotypes, misconceptions, and lack of compassion towards individuals involved in the sex trade are still prominent in the community. Thus, a key recommendation is that Calgary stakeholders collaborate to develop social marketing messages and educational programs which aim to create greater understanding of the complex interaction of psychosocial, economic, gender, and systemic factors which place individuals in situations of sexual exploitation and the sex trade. Also, if community members have better understanding of the risks and harms created by intolerance, a rights-based approach to ensuring safety for sex trade workers will be more readily accepted. The greater community needs to become aware of the complex factors contributing to the sex trade and sexual exploitation happening in Calgary, including the demand factors.

An effective community response would include: targeted interventions to ensure prevention and early intervention efforts among younger individuals under the age of 18 years; a coordinated education strategy to ensure young people are aware of factors that contribute to involvement in the sex trade or to sexual exploitation; and awareness campaigns targeted to all service providers about the continuum of services available for both children/youth and adults who are involved in the sex trade and are sexually exploited.

Other examples of targeted awareness interventions include:

- Awareness of current legislation (e.g. PCHIP) relating to sex trade and sexual exploitation among children/youth and adults.
- Awareness among youth and their families about the sex trade, sexual exploitation and how to identify warning signs related to involvement. Also education and support for families who are struggling with their lives.
- Early education among youth, both males and females, around healthy sexuality, healthy relationships, and how to recognize signs of exploitation and where to get help.
- Education for sex offenders or those who contribute to the “demand” side of sex trade work to address the social aspects and issues central to sex trade work.

Influencing broader system and policy arenas is also critical to developing a long-term action plan to address sex trade and sexual exploitation as a social issue. As an example, provincial PCHIP legislation illustrates how policy can impact and respond to the needs of children and youth who are at risk for becoming involved in the sex trade or sexually exploited. Policy responses at all three government levels (municipal, provincial and federal) are needed to ensure sustainable resources and structures that can effectively respond to the issues at the community level. It is critical to have sustained financial and human resources in place in order to support responsive programming and policy development to meet the needs of individuals who are at risk for involvement, currently involved in, or exiting the sex trade or sexually exploitive situations. One of the desired outcomes of this report is that it contributes to providing direction for policies that meet the needs of the community.

Use of evidence-based knowledge to inform policy and decision making is also a critical factor to consider in creating a coordinated community response to the issues. Policy makers, decisions makers, and community-based agencies must be active in collecting information, including local studies, and local evaluation data to inform practice and policy. Locally produced information, including this report, provides evidence and information to help design and implement responsive interventions at the community level.

7. Summary

People who are involved, or at risk of involvement, in the sex trade in Calgary experience a highly complex interplay of psychosocial histories, responses to the demand side, safety issues, access to health and social services, housing and income challenges, and psychosocial needs to exit. This report provides a broad overview of many of the most prominent and pressing issues facing individuals involved in the sex trade, but more work is needed in research, planning, designing, and mobilizing community to address specific aspects of risk and involvement, such as:

- stemming the demand side of the sex trade
- preventing young people from becoming involved in or from becoming further entrenched in the sex trade
- enhancing safety and reducing harms for people working in the sex trade
- creating supportive social environments for sex trade workers as members of Calgary communities, in particular by improving public attitudes and perceptions towards sex trade workers
- creating holistically supportive, long-term programs to assist individuals who wish to exit the sex trade
- addressing the socioeconomic factors (e.g., poverty, lack of other employment opportunities, lack of housing, violent/abusive relationships, etc.) that keep individuals trapped in the sex trade

On one hand, the city of Calgary has excellent community-based organizations and programs which provide services either directly or indirectly to individuals who are involved, at risk of involvement, or wishing to end their involvement, with the sex trade. These programs provide a wide range of programs and supports across the continuum of needs, from early intervention and prevention, to harm reduction and supports, to assistance with transitioning and exiting. On the other hand, these services need to be strengthened and enhanced, particularly with respect to:

- greater emphasis on client-based programming
- access to some form of 24-hour support for sex trade workers in crisis
- expanded and enhanced support services for individuals who are transitioning out of the sex trade as well as sustained support for those who have exited
- greater coordination and communication between service providers

While there are several important recommendations stemming from this project, the one key recommendation is the formation and support for a standing committee which would be responsible for meeting the needs of individuals involved in the sex trade or who are sexually exploited through a coordinated and seamless network of services. This committee would take leadership in advocacy, funding and resource development, ensure efficient, coordinated, and maximal use of available resources, and provide leadership in connecting with other sectors and all levels of government to advocate for the issues in the community and for sustainable resources to help address the issues of the community.

Appendix A – Professional Profile of Consulting Team

San Patten, MSc.

San has an MSc in Community Health Sciences from the University of Calgary (1999). Her masters thesis was an ethnography of HIV risk behaviours amongst injection drug users in Calgary. San has a wide range of experience in HIV/AIDS program evaluation, epidemiology and surveillance, policy development and community-based research. Recently she has specialized in the development of multi-sectoral strategies, including document review, environmental scanning, stakeholder consultation, meeting facilitation, and policy writing. Key examples include the Canadian HIV Vaccines Action Plan (2005) and the Canadian Microbicides Action Plan (2006) which were designed by a broad range of national stakeholders including policy makers, researchers, community-based organizations and health service providers.

Finally, San is very familiar with local and national community issues related to the sex trade. She has worked extensively with related populations such as injection drug users, street-involved youth and the homeless. She has worked with many of the community-based organizations serving those involved or at risk of involvement in the sex trade, particularly through her collaboration with AIDS Calgary Awareness Association on the Street Youth study (2003-2006) and in consulting work with Safeworks Calgary. San has also researched and wrote a plain-language environmental scan report and accompanying Community Tool Kit called “*Environmental Scan of Injection Drug Use, Related Infectious Diseases, High Risk Behaviours and Relevant Programming in Atlantic Canada.*”

Aniela dela Cruz, MSc.

Añiela dela Cruz is a graduate from the Centre for Health Promotions Studies (University of Alberta), receiving her Master of Science Degree in 2001. Her interest and focus is on population health promotion, the determinants of health and developing healthy public policy. Añiela has recent experience working for the Public Health Agency of Canada for the last six years as a Program Consultant. During this time, Añiela focused on areas of health such as HIV/AIDS and other health issues, to provide regional perspective, strategic analysis and subject matter expertise in the development of regional and national Public Health Agency of Canada program planning and policy. She also participated in joint planning consultations with stakeholders in other sectors and promoted dialogue between regional community partners and other levels of government to ensure local policy concerns are listened to and acted upon.

Other areas of experience include: managing and delivering regional programs (e.g. funding program, operational initiatives, departmental priority issue areas), including consultation, priority setting, planning, budgeting, providing support, establishing and managing advisory committees, managing program resources and evaluation and reporting. Añiela is also experienced in supporting communities and organizations to build capacity in achieving health goals through action on the determinants of health.

Appendix B – Consent Forms

Building a Calgary Community Response for Children, Youth and Adults Involved in the Sex Trade or in Sexual Exploitation

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Goals of the project

This interview is part of a project that was initiated by the United Way to develop a Community Response Plan for children, youth and adults involved in the sex trade or in sexual exploitation. By participating in this study, you will help us gather the perspective of people who have experience with the sex trade or with sexual exploitation in order to understand the full range of services and supports that are needed in Calgary.

Description of participation

For this study, we are asking that you participate in an individual interview with either Farah Walker, San Patten or Aniela dela Cruz. You may choose who you would like to conduct the interview with you. The interview will take between 1 to 2 hours.

Data storage and confidentiality

The information you share during the interview will remain confidential. We would like to tape the interview in order to capture your ideas in your own words. The audio tape will be given directly to the researchers who will store them in a secure place. For the analysis, the interviews will be identified only with numbers and never with names.

Possible risks

There are no risks related to your participation in the study.

Participation and withdrawal

Your participation in the interview is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not affect the services to which you are entitled. Moreover, even if you sign the consent form, you can stop participating in the interview at any time.

Please turn over →

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the interview for the project “*Building a Calgary Community Response for Children, Youth and Adults Involved in the Sex Trade or in Sexual Exploitation.*” I understand that the information collected by the research team will be kept confidential, in accordance with the rules and regulations in force, and that my participation or refusal to participate will not affect the services I could receive. I also understand that my participation is totally voluntary, and that I can call (403) 816-3951 and speak to San Patten if I have any questions about the study.

All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in the interview.

Participant’s signature: _____

I agree to have the interview tape recorded.

Participant’s signature: _____

I have received \$40 for my participation in this interview.

Participant’s signature: _____

Participant’s Name in BLOCK letters: _____

Signed on: _____
date

Interviewer’s Signature: _____

Building a Calgary Community Response for Children, Youth and Adults Involved in the Sex Trade or in Sexual Exploitation

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Goals of the project

This interview is part of a project that was initiated by the United Way to develop a Community Response Plan for children, youth and adults involved in the sex trade or in sexual exploitation. By participating in this study, you will help us gather the perspective of people who have experience with the sex trade or with sexual exploitation in order to understand the full range of services and supports that are needed in Calgary.

Description of participation

For this study, we are asking that you participate in an individual interview with either San Patten or Aniela dela Cruz. You may choose who you would like to conduct the interview with you. The interview will take approximately one hour.

Data storage and confidentiality

The information you share during the interview will remain confidential. We may tape the interview in order to capture your ideas in your own words. The audio tape will be given directly to the researchers who will store them in a secure place. Any notes taken during the interview will also be securely stored. For the analysis, the interviews will be identified only with numbers and never with names.

Possible risks

There are no risks related to your participation in the study.

Participation and withdrawal

Your participation in the interview is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not affect the services to which you are entitled. Moreover, even if you sign the consent form, you can stop participating in the interview at any time.

Please turn over →

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the interview for the project “*Building a Calgary Community Response for Children, Youth and Adults Involved in the Sex Trade or in Sexual Exploitation.*” I understand that the information collected by the research team will be kept confidential, in accordance with the rules and regulations in force, and that my participation or refusal to participate will not affect the services I could receive. I also understand that my participation is totally voluntary, and that I can call (403) 816-3951 and speak to San Patten if I have any questions about the study.

All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
I agree to participate in the interview.

Participant’s signature: _____

I agree to have the interview tape recorded.

Participant’s signature: _____

Participant’s Name in BLOCK letters: _____

Signed on: _____
date

Interviewer’s Signature: _____

Appendix C – Organizations Represented in Key Informant Interviews

AIDS Calgary Awareness Association

Boys and Girls Club of Calgary

Calgary Police Services

Child and Family Services

City of Calgary

Elizabeth Fry Society of Calgary

Family & Community Support Services (FCSS), City of Calgary

Justice Studies, Mount Royal College

Safeworks

Servants Anonymous Society of Calgary

The Hera Society

Woods Homes

YWCA of Calgary

Appendix D – Community Stakeholder Survey

Building a Calgary Community Response to the Sex Trade

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

Introduction

This survey is being conducted by the *Building a Calgary Community Response to the Sex Trade Project* for residents of the City of Calgary. *Building a Calgary Community Response to the Sex Trade* is a city-wide project that focuses on the development of a well-informed, coordinated approach to issues associated with sex work in Calgary. The vision for the project is to ensure a continuum of healthy public policy, services and interventions ranging from: prevention and early intervention for individuals at risk of entering the sex trade, to harm reduction and self-empowerment services for people involved in the sex trade, to supports for transitioning or exiting out of the sex trade.

Through the winter of 2006–07, we are conducting a community consultation process to address issues around sex work in Calgary and to develop strategies to increase health and safety for all community members.

In addition to this survey, we are holding a series of interviews with key informants and with experiential individuals (i.e., individuals who currently or have in the past been involved with the sex trade or have been sexually exploited) to inform the project.

The purpose of this survey is to learn more about:

- The impacts of the sex trade on you and your community
- The tools and strategies that could help make communities healthier and safer for everyone
- How you envision an appropriate response in Calgary to the sex trade

Your participation will be valuable in helping us understand the issues and in generating action plans to respond to community needs. Your answers will be important in the development of a Coordinated Community Response Plan.

Privacy

Your answers will remain anonymous. No one reading your answers or comments will know who you are.

Instructions

- You can answer the questions yourself or work with someone to help you.
- Check the answers that apply to your experience.
- The survey is designed to take 10–15 minutes to complete.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact San Patten and Associates at san.patten@shaw.ca. Thank You for your time in completing this survey.

Survey questions

PART I. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

1a) Which quadrant of the City do you live in?

- ☐ NE
- ☐ NW
- ☐ SE
- ☐ SW

1b) Please name your neighbourhood.

2. Are you:

- ☐ under 18
- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26 to 59
- ☐ 60 to 75
- ☐ 75 and older

3. Are you:

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Transgendered

4. What is your occupation?

5. I work within an organization within the following sectors:

- ☐ Non-governmental organization/community based organization
- ☐ Government (municipal, provincial/federal)
- ☐ Regional Health Authority
- ☐ Academic/Research
- ☐ Business owner in a neighbourhood affected by the sex trade
- ☐ Community association representative or community member in a neighbourhood affected by the sex trade
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____
- ☐ None of the above apply to me

6. Are you or have you in the past worked in the sex trade?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Other (please specify)

7. Have you contacted any of the following supports to deal with the impacts of the sex trade in your community?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Police
- ☐ Friends/family
- ☐ Government (e.g., health or social services)
- ☐ Non-profit community group
- ☐ Politician (MLA or MP)
- ☐ Business Improvement Association
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

8. How are you, your family, your community or organization impacted by the sex trade in Calgary?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ There is more garbage in my neighbourhood due to the sex trade
- ☐ There is increased traffic in my neighbourhood due to the sex trade
- ☐ My business/employer has fewer customers because of the presence of sex work outside
- ☐ My neighbourhood feels unsafe because of the presence of the sex trade
- ☐ There is increased crime in my neighbourhood because of the sex trade
- ☐ I have been mistaken for a sex trade worker while walking down the street
- ☐ The reputation of my neighbourhood has declined because of the presence of the sex trade
- ☐ I am uncomfortable or fearful of talking to my children about the sex trade
- ☐ People, including children in my neighbourhood have been recruited into the sex trade, or were approached by pimps/recruiters
- ☐ As a sex trade worker, I experience violence in the sex industry
- ☐ My mental well-being has been affected by my work in the sex industry
- ☐ My physical health has been negatively affected by my work in the sex industry
- ☐ As a sex trade worker, I feel stigmatized and treated poorly because of the work I do
- ☐ The control of gangs and/or pimps over the sex industry increases the fear about my own safety
- ☐ As a sex trade worker, there are no legal, safe places to work
- ☐ I have been sexually exploited as a sex trade worker
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

8. In your own words, how would you define 'the sex trade'?

9. How would you classify each of the following:

Check all that apply	I define this as part of the sex trade	I don't define this as part of the sex trade	I don't know
street prostitution			
massage parlours (i.e., 'rub and tug')			
escort services			
strip clubs			
lapdancing			
peep shows			
phone sex			
video and internet pornography			

10. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The sex trade is sexual exploitation.	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual exploitation only affects children and youth.	1	2	3	4	5
There are male sex trade workers in Calgary.	1	2	3	4	5
Males can be victims of sexual exploitation.	1	2	3	4	5
The sex trade is a legitimate form of employment.	1	2	3	4	5
The sex trade is immoral and efforts should focus on eliminating it from our city.	1	2	3	4	5
The sex trade cannot be ended and thus we should make it as safe as possible for sex trade workers.	1	2	3	4	5
Prostitution is an act of violence against women.	1	2	3	4	5
Sex trade workers need to be better protected from violence.	1	2	3	4	5
The sex trade is a consequence of male domination of women.	1	2	3	4	5
Most sex trade workers have been forced into the sex trade by circumstances.	1	2	3	4	5
Most sex trade workers choose this lifestyle for themselves.	1	2	3	4	5

11. Ideally, what approach would you like Calgary as a community to take in response to the sex trade?

PART II. Possible Strategies for Addressing the Impacts of the Sex Trade

The following are some ideas about strategies for increasing health and safety for all community members in relation to the impacts of the sex trade. These recommendations are based on research and approaches adopted by other cities, such Vancouver's Living in Community Project.

The actions fall under six strategies:

- Community development
- Prevention/education
- Research and ongoing building of knowledge
- Intervention
- Exiting the sex trade
- Legal responses

This is your opportunity to provide feedback on these ideas and let us know which strategies should become a priority for implementation in Calgary.

12. How do you think the following actions will contribute to making communities healthier and safer for each and every community member?

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by them with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities.

	very positive impact	some positive impact	neutral impact	negative impact	I don't know
People in my neighborhood need to gather and talk about local strategies to improve the health and safety for all community members.	1	2	3	4	0
As a community, we need to support the development and implementation of a Coordinated Community Action Plan for Calgary that addresses sex trade work in our city.	1	2	3	4	0
My neighbourhood should support the designation of 'safe zones' for sex trade workers in the community. Safe zones are based on relationships of reciprocal respect, understanding and commitment to ensure the health and safety of all community members.	1	2	3	4	0

Do you have any other ideas about how to address the sex trade through community development?

PREVENTION/EDUCATION – efforts to prevent individuals from entering the sex trade, addressing the circumstances which place individuals at risk of getting involved in the sex trade

	very positive impact	some positive impact	neutral impact	negative impact	I don't know
Develop a comprehensive and standardized prevention program that is delivered through schools and community organizations which work with youth, which:					
○ promotes the development of self-esteem among youth	1	2	3	4	0
○ promotes positive sexual attitudes amongst boys and girls	1	2	3	4	0
○ provides education against homophobia	1	2	3	4	0
○ builds awareness about recruitment into the sex trade	1	2	3	4	0
○ builds awareness of tactics used by sexual predators	1	2	3	4	0
○ demonstrates the reality of what it is like to work in the sex trade, from the perspective of former sex trade workers	1	2	3	4	0
○ provides access to confidential and affordable counselling and personal support for youth	1	2	3	4	0
Address poverty through strategies such as increasing social assistance, developing more low-cost housing, ensuring access to affordable childcare and creating employment opportunities.	1	2	3	4	0
Develop a public education campaign to raise awareness about how individuals get involved in the sex trade work	1	2	3	4	0
Develop a public education campaign to change public attitudes and behaviour toward buying sex.	1	2	3	4	0
Develop standardized training for professionals who may work with sex trade workers to raise their sensitivity and awareness about the sex trade.	1	2	3	4	0
Professionals include: police officers, justice officials, doctors, nurses, ambulance attendants and others.					
Create more detox and addiction treatment facilities for people with addictions	1	2	3	4	0

Do you have any other ideas about how to address the sex trade through prevention and education?

RESEARCH & ONGOING BUILDING OF KNOWLEDGE – research would help governmental and non-governmental organizations understand the sex trade in Calgary and build knowledge about the most effective ways to protect the health and safety of all community members affected by the sex trade.

	very positive impact	some positive impact	neutral impact	negative impact	I don't know
Support partnerships between community organizations and researchers to ensure effective research, policy and practice about the sex trade work.	1	2	3	4	0
Support partnerships between community organizations, universities and colleges to develop research and learning about what works to increase health and safety in communities.	1	2	3	4	0
Conduct more research about why individuals purchase sexual services and how to change attitudes and behaviour toward buying sex.	1	2	3	4	0

Do you have any other ideas about how to address the sex trade through research?

INTERVENTION – this refers to a set of actions to help community members, including sex trade workers, remain safe and healthy, and respectful of others' rights and needs.

	very positive impact	some positive impact	neutral impact	negative impact	I don't know
Develop and implement a city-side crisis response team to respond to community crises and to provide critical services to sex trade workers, as needed.	1	2	3	4	0
In consultation with residents, businesses, sex workers, police, non-profits and other community groups, develop guidelines about safety and respect that provide standards for behaviour for all community members.	1	2	3	4	0
In consultation with residents, businesses, sex workers, police, non-profits and other community groups, designate 'no-go areas' for sex work activity (e.g., school areas and parks).	1	2	3	4	0
Communities and sex trade workers work together to educate the general public on sex trade work, its impact and how to lessen the impact of sex trade work.	1	2	3	4	0
Innovative drug treatment programs should be developed to support sex workers with addictions, to increase sex trade worker's capacity to make positive healthy choices, and to reduce the harms of drug use.	1	2	3	4	0

Daily outreach services to sex trade workers should be provided, building on services that are already provided by community organizations.	1	2	3	4	0
Provide increased access to supportive housing for sex workers.	1	2	3	4	0

Do you have any other ideas about how to address the sex trade through interventions?

EXITING – this is a set of actions which assist individuals in leaving the sex trade once they are ready to do so.

	very positive impact	some positive impact	neutral impact	negative impact	I don't know
Support funding for a long-term recovery facility for individuals in sex trade work or who are transitioning out of sex trade work.	1	2	3	4	0
Develop employment opportunities, support and skills-building for individuals exiting sex trade work.	1	2	3	4	0
Build on and expand models that involve people with past or current work in sex trade to support individuals exiting sex trade work.	1	2	3	4	0

Do you have any other ideas about how to address the sex trade once individuals are ready to exit?

LEGAL RESPONSES – these are a set of actions that address the sex trade through changes to the roles of the law enforcement system.

	very positive impact	some positive impact	neutral impact	negative impact	I don't know
Institute a community court system for sex trade workers who have been charged for sex work offences.	1	2	3	4	0
Institute a community court system for johns/clients who have been charged for sex work offences.	1	2	3	4	0
Enhance and improve projects such as the RCMP's "Project KARE" which report and investigate missing high-risk females in the Province of Alberta.	1	2	3	4	0
Enhance and improve the "bad date" program which reports violent or abusive customers as reported by sex workers.	1	2	3	4	0
Offer self-defense training to sex trade workers.	1	2	3	4	0

Do you have any other ideas about how to address the sex trade through legal responses?

13. Reflecting on the impacts of the sex trade work on you or your community, what other actions do you think are needed to make communities healthier and safer for everyone?

14. Are there any other ideas or comments you would like to share?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
If you have any questions, please contact
San Patten and Associates at san.patten@shaw.ca

Appendix E – Mapping of Community Based Agencies

Prevention and Early Intervention

1. Implementation of Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Legislation (previously PCHIP)
2. Intervention with higher risk youth
3. Identifying and intervening early on risk factors (learning challenges, histories of abuse or neglect, drug-use and addictions, low self-esteem)
4. Awareness and education sessions about sexual exploitation
5. intervention for high risk males – prevention to becoming “johns”

- *Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary**
- *Hull Child and Family Services*
- *McMan Youth Family and Community Services, Family Support, Independent Living Support, Crime Prevention*
- *The Hera Society**
- *Wood's Homes, Youth in Crisis, Family-Centered Support and Care **
- *Canadian Red Cross - Southern Alberta Region, RespectED: Violence and Abuse Prevention **
- *Enviros Wilderness School Association*
- *Aspen Family & Community Service Network Society*
- *Calgary Sexual Health Centre **

Care, Treatment and Support

1. Addresses harms and risk factors such as violence, poor nutrition and health,
2. Legal support- current and pardon applications
3. Self-esteem and Confidence building
4. Support and counseling for trauma, coping and stress
5. mental health
6. child welfare support

- *AIDS Calgary, Stepping Out, Information & Support*
- *Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary, Avenue 15, Street Teams/Side Doors **
- *Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS)*
- *Calgary Health Region, Mental Health Outreach*
- *8th & 8th Health Centre, Calgary Health Region*
- *Safeworks, Calgary Health Region*
- *Mental Health Outreach, Calgary Health Region*
- *Servants Anonymous Society**
- *Elizabeth Fry Society*
- *Wood's Homes, EXIT Community Outreach Program, Safe Haven*
- *Calgary Legal Guidance*
- *The Alexandra Community Health Centre, Community Health Program, Crisis and Resource Program.*
- *The Women's Centre*
- *Attendance Centre – Probation and/or Alternative Measures*
- *Calgary Police Service & Crown Prosecutors*

Exiting Strategies & Continued Support

1. Safe & Affordable Housing
2. Life skills development (financial skills and assistance, communications skills, coping and goal setting skills)
3. Education and training (addressing poverty and unemployment)
4. Addiction Recovery
5. Mental health
6. Child welfare, family reuniting strategies & support

- *Servants Anonymous Society**
- *AIDS Calgary, Stepping Out*
- *John Howard Society, Windsor Park Long Term Youth Residence**
- *Calgary Alpha House Society*
- *Addiction Centre*
- *Aventa Services for Women*
- *AADAC, Enhanced Services for Women*
- *YWCA, Mary Dover House *, Skills Training*
- *Renfrew Recovery Centre*

* All agencies with an asterisk have services specifically for people 29 years of age and under.

Appendix F – Results from Multi-Stakeholder Survey

Introduction

A survey was developed to gather wider input from a range of community stakeholders in Calgary to help inform the development of the *Building a Calgary Community Response to the Sex Trade Project*. The original stakeholder contact list included individuals and organizations in the following broad sectors:

- Community Based Organizations and Non-Government Organizations
- Government
- Academic/Researchers
- Community, Citizens and Interest Groups

An invitation to complete the on-line survey was sent out by email to individuals and organizations on a stakeholder contact list developed by the Advisory Committee for the project. The contacts were in turn invited to share the survey web link with their respective colleagues and contacts whom they felt would be able to contribute their input. Over a ten-day period (January 16–26, 2007), a total of 214 stakeholders completed the survey.

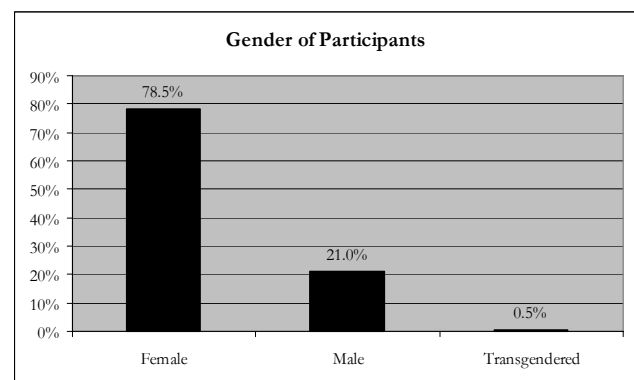
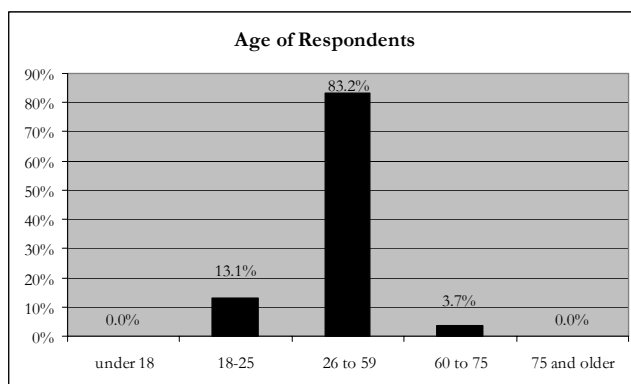
The survey was one source of data in the community consultation process conducted throughout the winter of 2006–07. In addition to this survey, the project gathered input through interviews with key informants and with experiential individuals (i.e., individuals who currently or have in the past been involved with the sex trade or have been sexually exploited).

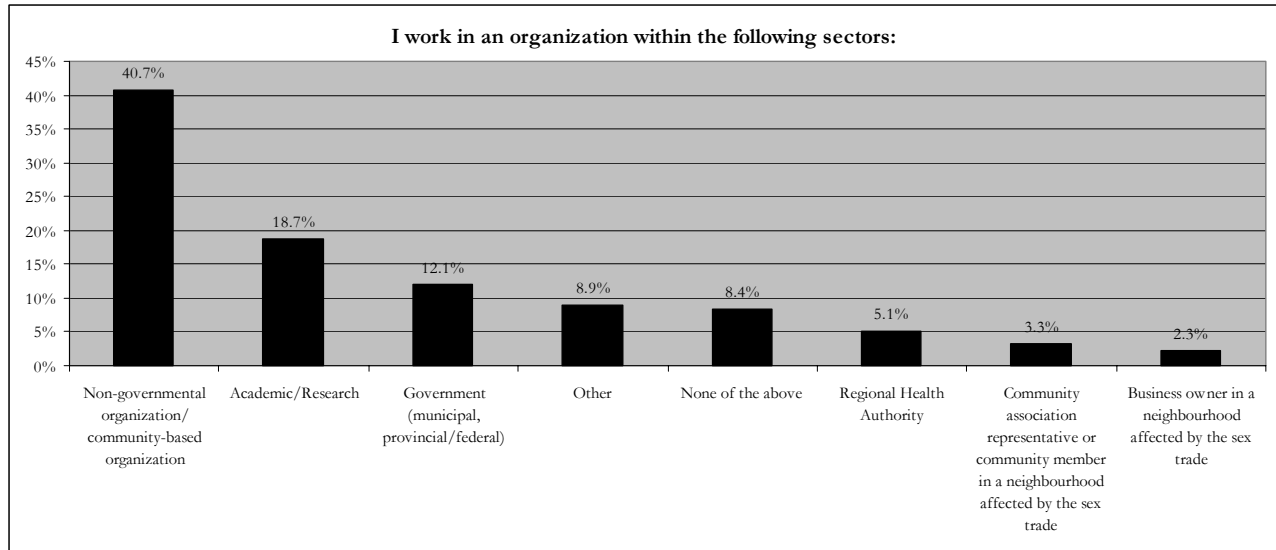
The purpose of this survey is to learn more about:

- The impacts of the sex trade on individuals living/working in Calgary on their communities
- The tools and strategies that could help make communities healthier and safer for everyone
- How stakeholders envision an appropriate response in Calgary to the sex trade

Respondent Characteristics

The bar graphs below indicate the demographics of individuals (n=214) who completed the on-line stakeholder survey. The majority of respondents were in the 26–59 age group (83.2%) and female (78.9%).

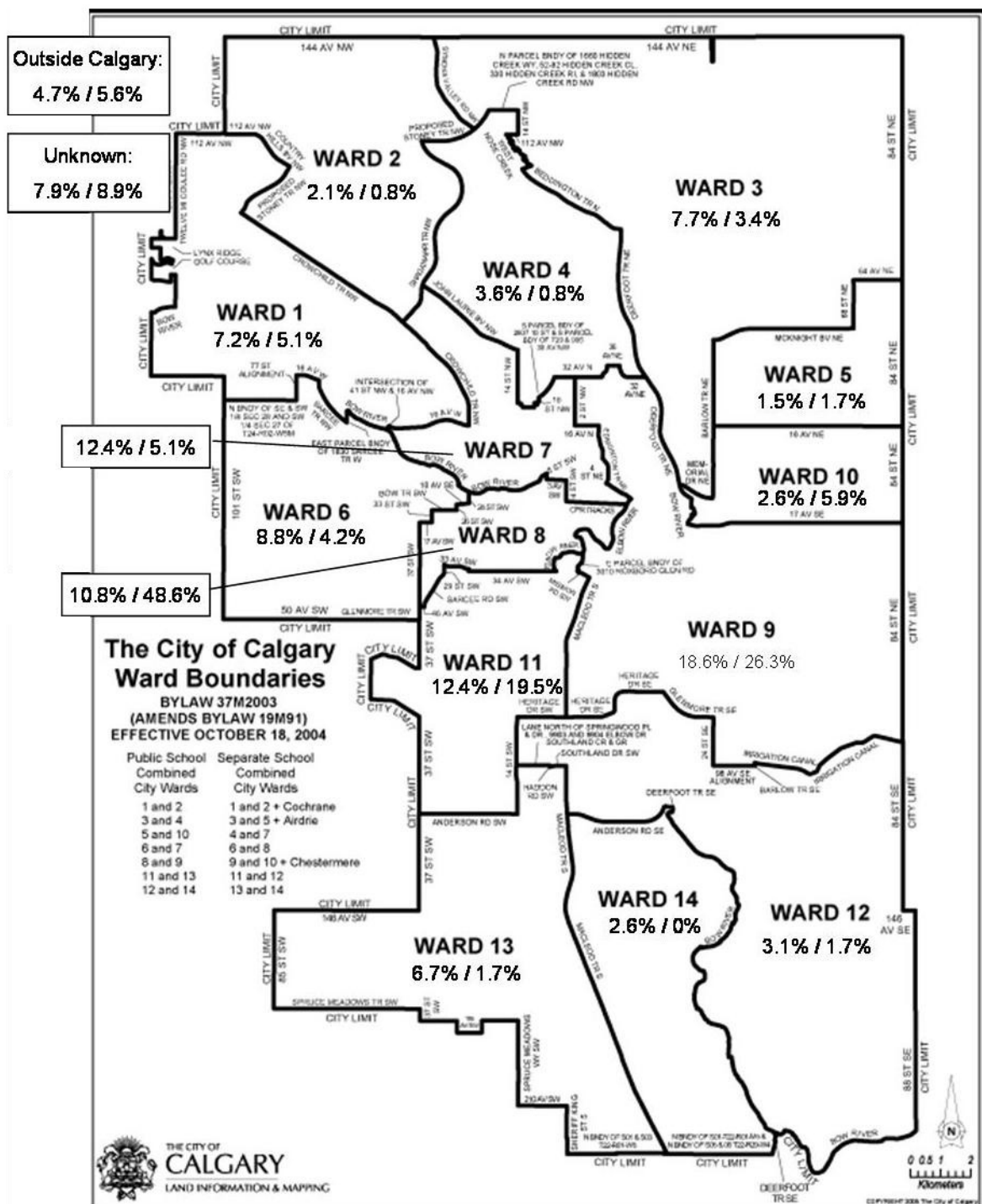




The largest proportion of respondents (40.7%) reported that they work in an organization in the non-governmental or community based sector. In terms of their area of specialty, the largest proportion (42.4%) of respondents work in the social services field. Thus, all findings should be interpreted keeping in mind that about 40% of the respondents work in social services and/or community based organizations and thus bring a certain perspective to the issues surrounding the sex trade.

Respondents' Occupations		
Field or area of specialty	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
Health	13	8.2%
Education	20	12.7%
Law Enforcement	8	5.1%
Legal System	10	6.3%
Business	26	16.5%
Social Services	67	42.4%
Students	14	8.9%
Total	158	

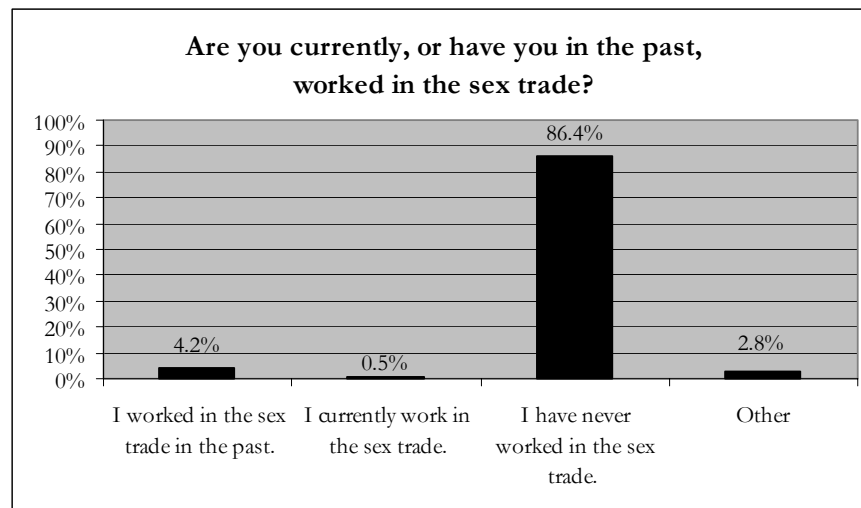
The city map below indicates the proportion of respondents who [reside/work] in each city ward:



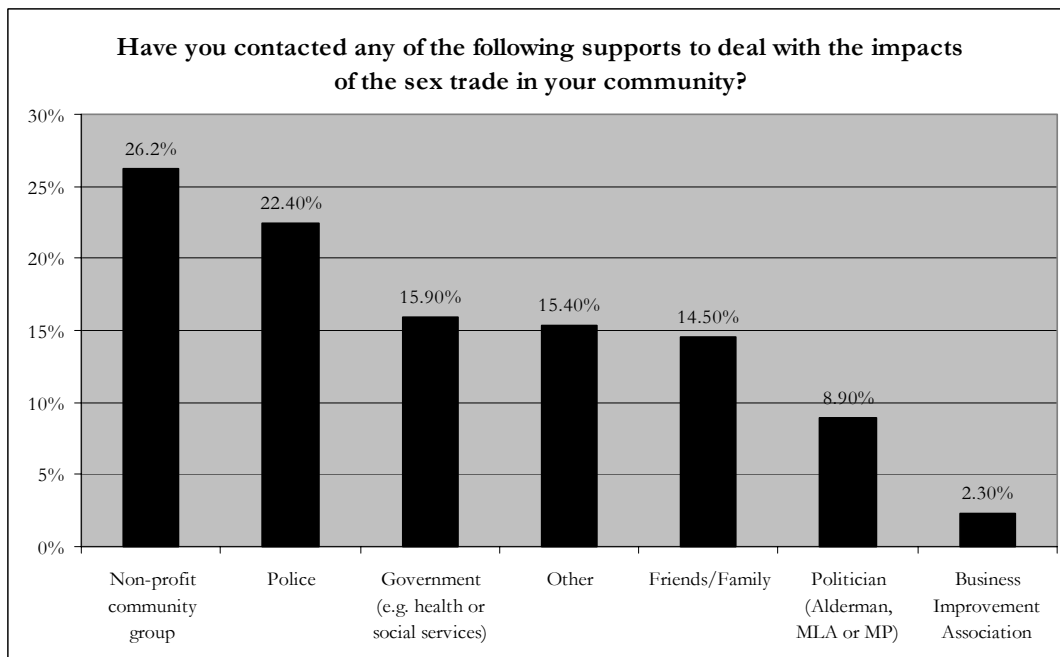
The majority of respondents work in Ward 8 (48.6%), Ward 9 (26.3%) and Ward 11 (19.5%). The respondents were quite dispersed across the city in terms of their place of residence, although the largest proportions live in Ward 9 (18.6%), Wards 7 and 11 (12.4%), and Ward 8 (10.8%).

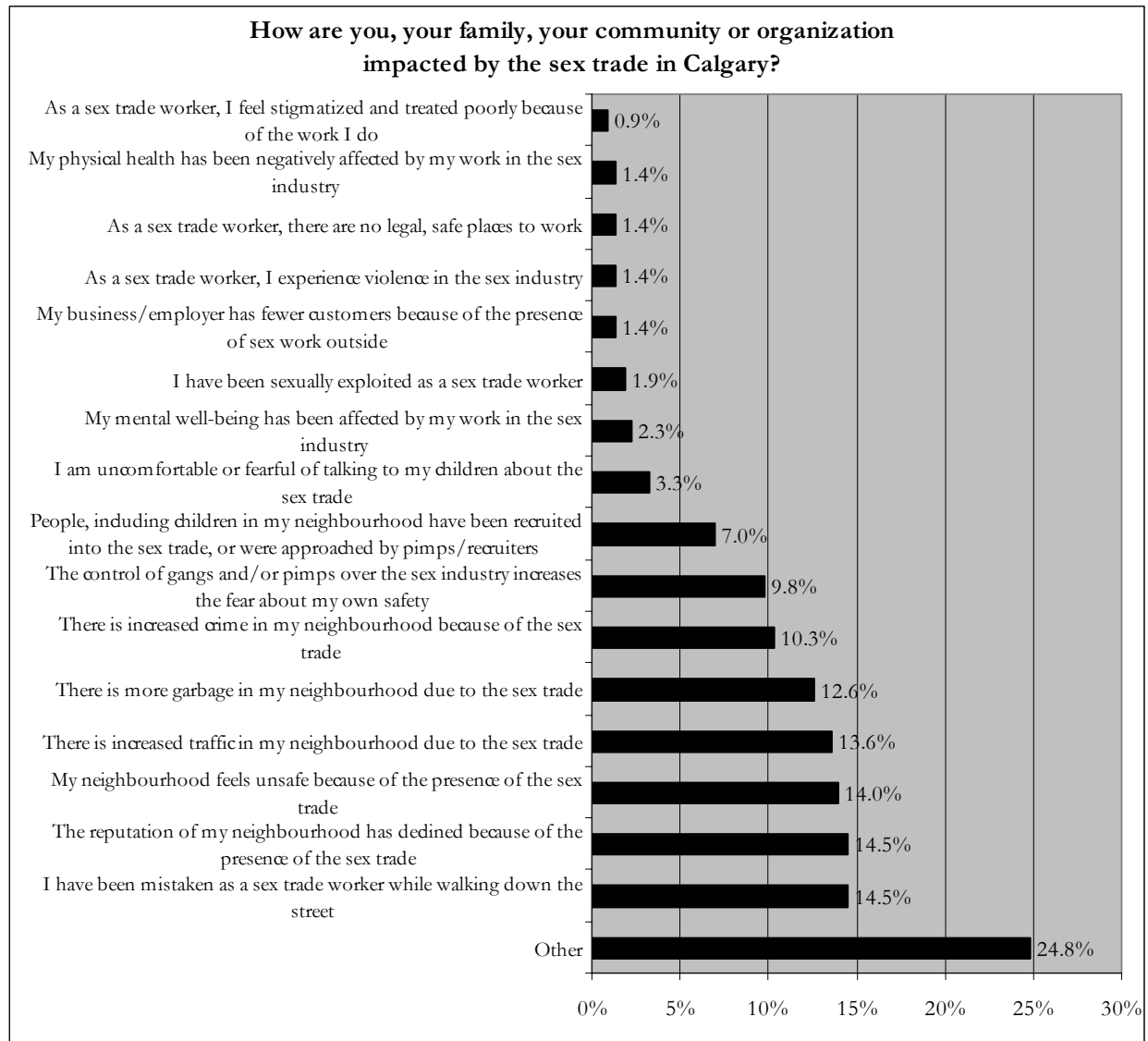
Respondents' Experiences with the Sex Trade

The respondents were asked to indicate if they had personal experience working in the sex trade. The large majority of respondents (86.4%) had never worked in the sex trade; only 10 respondents reported that they had worked in the sex trade in the past (4.2%) or was currently working in the sex trade (0.5%). Those who indicated “other” worked with individuals who are involved in the sex trade. One of the limitations of the survey was that it was administered through the internet and the research team was dependent upon individuals with contacts in the sex trade community to facilitate access to the on-line survey. Also, the sample is naturally biased towards organizations for which the research team had email addresses, versus individuals working in the sex trade as no email list exists for sex trade workers, past or current.



Of those individuals who had contacted community supports to deal with the impacts of the sex trade in their community, the largest proportion had contacted community organizations (26.2%) and 22.4% had contacted the police.





The “other” impacts identified the respondents included:

- 19 individuals who were not able to identify any way in which they had been impacted by the sex trade
- 3 individuals noted increased number of people involved in the sex trade due to inequities created by the economic boom situation in Calgary
 - *“more clients are recounting experiences of current involvement in the sex trade due to a high demand, and their feelings that this is the only way to participate in the city's economic boom”*
 - *“I am concerned with the lack of economic choices for women and men which makes the sex trade more attractive”*
 - *“I have noted an increase in the number of street people overall.”*
- 4 individuals identified themselves as “concerned citizens” and expressed feelings of concern for individuals involved in the sex trade although they themselves were not directly impacted by the sex trade:
 - *“whenever a citizen is exploited the whole community suffers and is less than it could be”*

- *"I feel a sense of responsibility to those less fortunate and want to work towards providing solutions for those who wish to safely exit the sex trade lifestyle."*
- 11 individuals are impacted by the sex trade only through their work with sex trade workers or related populations
 - *"Women (primarily) seeking assistance from our organization has increased in the past year"*
- 3 individuals expressed concern specifically about reports of sexual exploitation of children and women, here in Calgary and around the world
 - *"I have been distressed by exploitation of women and children here and abroad"*
 - *"Pimps hanging outside elementary school yards is so very wrong"*
- 3 individuals felt that the presence of the sex trade (and the accompanying crime) in their neighbourhood affected their own safety and/or comfort
 - *"I feel unsafe in and will not travel to areas of the city due to the presence of the sex trade"*
 - *"The women do not pose a threat, however the 'boyfriends' or 'pimps' ask for change, loiter outside the store, use the payphone to get drugs delivered to them, and the hotel close by is crack ridden."*
- 2 individuals felt that the sex trade impacted them in the general sense of gender inequities:
 - *"The general impact of sex ttrade in the media, news and how that affects negatively society's image of women and in turn what it does to young girl's self-esteem and self-concept"*
 - *"As a woman, I feel negatively impacted by comments men make about the sex trade."*

Other miscellaneous comments included:

- *"these are past issues for myself"*
- *"People's physical health is affected"*
- *"It is largely invisible to my community which is unfortunate because this issue needs to have the entire city's attention in my opinion, as it is unsafe work for the women and men who do it"*
- *"Clients who work in the sex trade face increased violence and issues around addictions (especially crystal meth and crack)"*
- *"sex trade workers are often the victims of domestic violence at the hands of their pimps and their clients"*
- *"There have been occasions of sex trade activity occurring in the commercial high-rise buildings from the washrooms"*
- *"limited resources for point of first contact for STWs, not enough resources focused on targeting Johns rather than criminalizing workers, age limits on programs designed to assist STWs"*

Perceptions of the Sex Trade in Calgary

Respondents' Definition of the Sex Trade

The respondents were asked for their definition of the 'sex trade.' Below is a composite definition based on their responses:

The sex trade is the exchange of sex/prostitution/pornography/escorts/exotic dancers for profit/money, housing, drugs, rent, clothing, etc. The exploitation of youth, adults (female and male) was defined as sexual behaviour where there is no 'choice' to engage in prostitution but rather because of lack of choices due to economic, mental health, addiction, family, and other barriers.

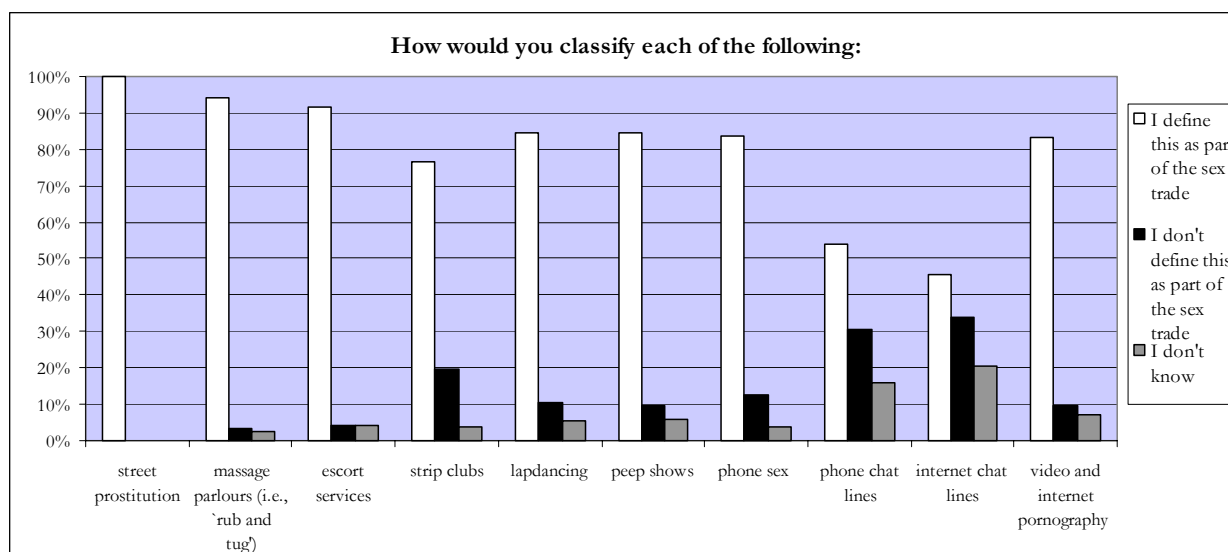
Sex trade encompasses street-level prostitution, escort agencies, pornography and sex trafficking in which sex trade workers are viewed as commodities. Many sex trade workers are forced into becoming a part of the sex trade due to their life circumstances. The sex trade is an illegal occupation that relies on vulnerable people who often use it as a way to fill a void in their life, which can range from financial, emotional or addiction.

The sex trade is a commercial industry that employs individuals in various capacities (film/internet pornography, massage, escort, sex workers among others). The ‘pimps’ are those who facilitate transactions—those who earn from and clients are those who pay money or trade other commodities (such as housing, drugs, food, clothing, gifts, etc.) for sexual services. Sex trade was defined as a part of the reality of the larger community/society whose views or actions stigmatize and criminalize those involved.

Others defined the sex trade as a trade that offers a mostly male clientele access to engage in sexual activities for a negotiated or dictated payment, usually involving a pimp who takes a considerable amount of the sex trade worker’s money, often controls her involvement in the trade and is often violent and/or abusive. The sex trade is sexually exploiting, violent, dangerous, manipulative and condones violence towards women.

Sex trade is exploitive and dangerous for sex trade workers, often violent, often involving mental illness, extremely difficult and often dangerous to leave, community tends to focus on sex trade workers more than the johns, health hazard to communities, often associated with gangs, organized crime and drugs, extreme lack of community services and a gap in service for older sex trade workers.

The sex trade is the exploitation and criminalization of women and men involved in prostitution for many reasons most of which are about being marginalized, such as living in poverty, experiencing abuse, addiction, racism, lack of education and access to secure employment. The sex trade exploits people (adults and children) for the purpose of sex in the presence of and the use of violence and coercion (rape/sexual assault, degradation, etc.). Adults who may enter prostitution in an equitable and just society would do so as a legalized business/industry, which would include those workers within occupational health and safety policies and regulations.



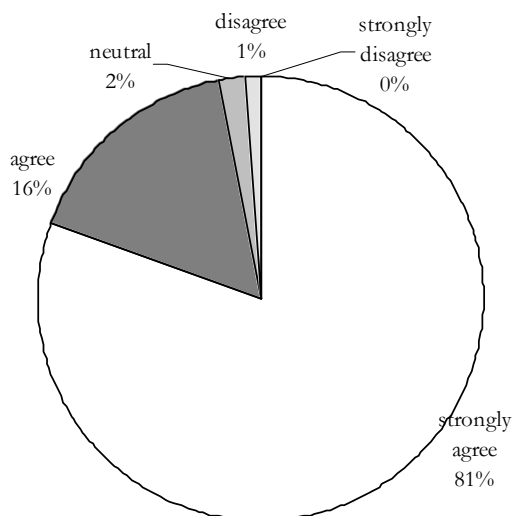
The respondents were asked to identify any forms of the sex trade that they would add to the list. Their responses are below (if more than one respondent mentioned an item, the number of respondents is indicated in brackets):

- prostitution establishments [i.e., trick pads, bawdy houses or brothels, private homes, “underground settings”] (5)
- bikini bars—because they use women’s bodies to sell their products (2)

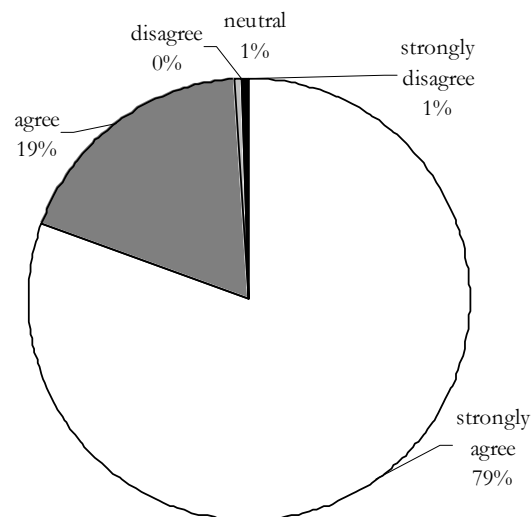
- 'survival sex' or sexual acts for living necessities, e.g., rent, food (2)
- hardcore pornography
- pimps and mistresses in 'high class' prostitution (2)
- bath houses (gay bars) (2)
- magazines geared especially to teens, most television programs geared for teens
- associated criminal activities, drug related activities, pimps (2)
- prostitution, not on the street level (where it is organized from one's home)
- street prostitution should include community as it is happening in schools, in neighbourhoods, etc.
- child pornography
- johns
- swap clubs
- adult stores that sell sexual toys and other sexual materials, adult theatres
- advertising with sexual content, call girls, e.g., the higher priced off the street type of prostitution
- sex workers with no freedom, those in a slavery relationship, human trafficking (3)
- classified ads, advertisement for partners (Grape vine or something) in the Sun for male/female companions—some of the advertisements are looking for Sugar daddies (2)
- any other setting where sexual behaviour is used as a tool of power and control over another person(s)
- organized crime, gangs, drug houses (2)
- teens that are sexually exploited by peers—behind closed doors
- misogyny and homophobia

The following pie charts indicate respondents' level of agreement with a series of statements intended to measure their attitudes and perceptions of the sex trade.

There are male sex trade workers in Calgary.

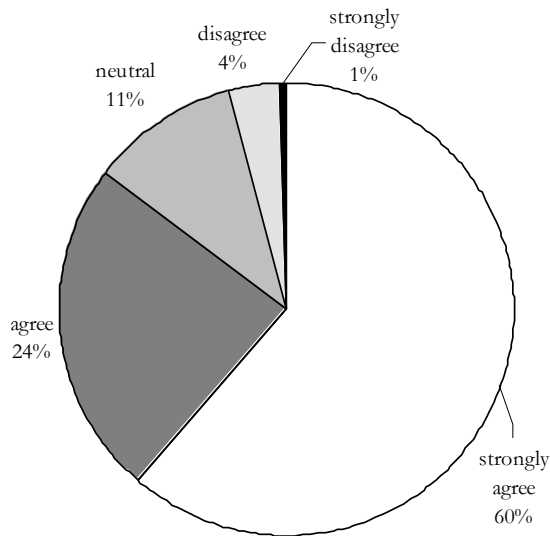


Males can be victims of sexual exploitation

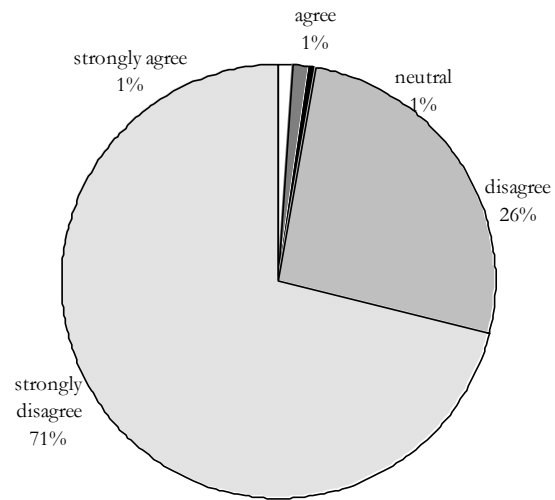


Almost all respondents acknowledged that there are male sex trade workers in Calgary and that males can be victims of sexual exploitation. This is a positive indication of respondents' awareness that the sex trade affects women and men, girls and boys.

The sex trade is sexual exploitation

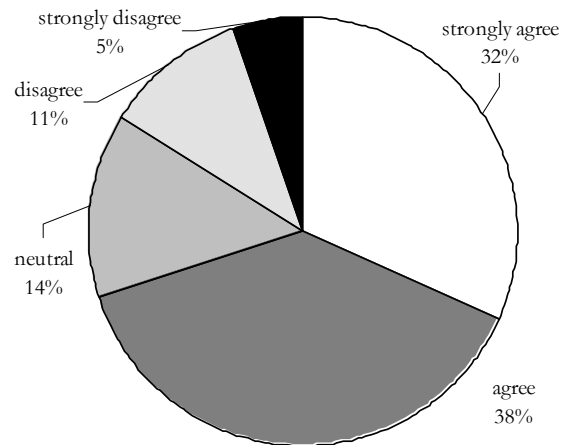


Sexual exploitation only affects children and youth



Most respondents (84%) agreed or strongly agreed that the sex trade is sexual exploitation. Almost all respondents disagreed that sexual exploitation only affects children and youth, indicating a broader concept of sexual exploitation to include adults as well.

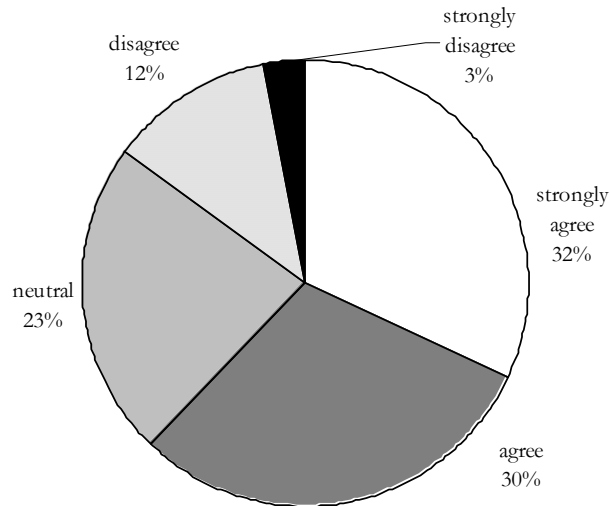
The sex trade cannot be ended and thus we should make it as safe as possible for sex trade workers.



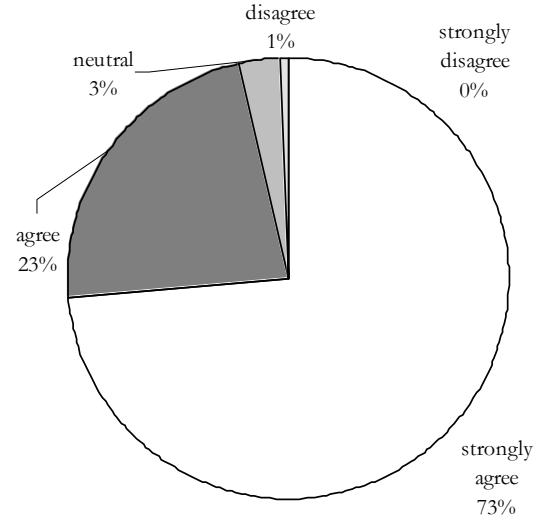
The majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the sex trade cannot be ended and thus should be made as safe as possible for sex trade workers. However, a significant proportion (14%) felt neutral on this statement and 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

As indicated in the next two figures, there is some ambiguity amongst the respondents regarding their perception of the sex trade in terms of vulnerability to violence. On one hand, almost all of the respondents (96%) felt that sex trade workers need to be better protected from violence, while on the other hand only 62% felt that the sex trade is a form of violence against women. A sizeable minority (23%) were neutral on this statement and 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

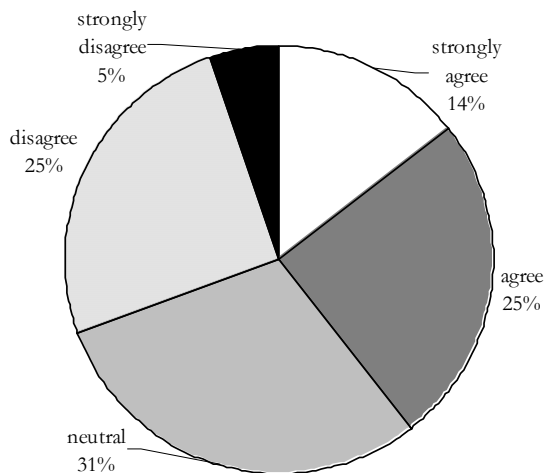
Prostitution is an act of violence against women



Sex trade workers need to be better protected from violence.



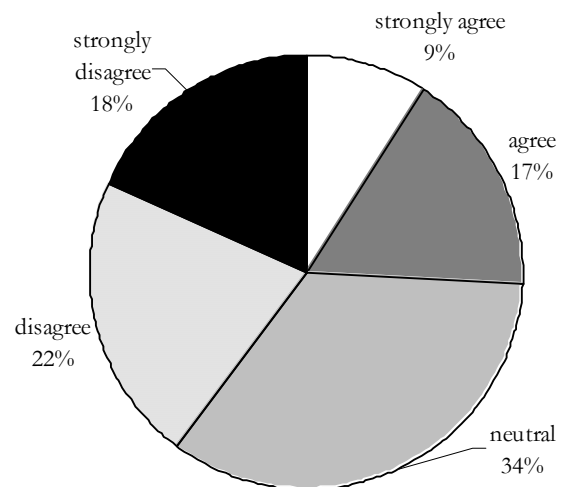
The sex trade is a consequence of male domination of women.



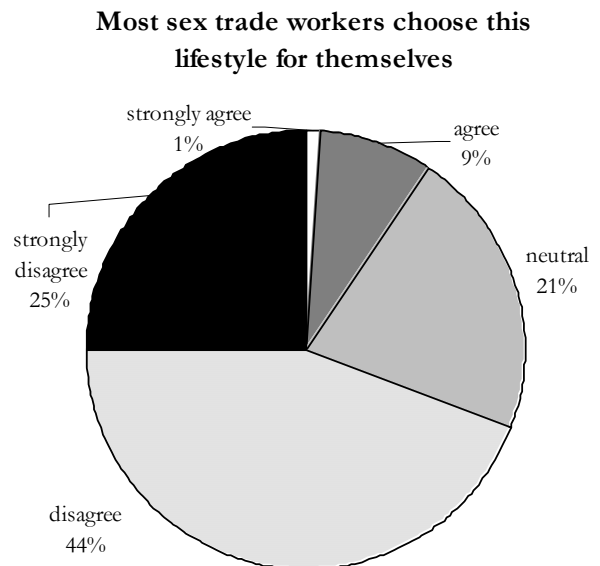
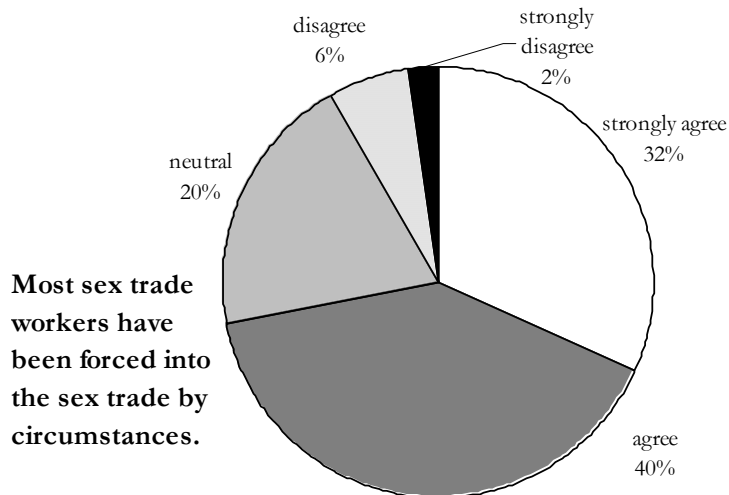
The statement – “the sex trade is a consequence of male domination of women” – also created mixed reactions amongst the respondents. The largest group of respondents (39%) agree or strongly agree with this statement, 31% were neutral and 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

The statement to the right also triggered a wide range of reactions amongst the respondents. The largest proportion (40%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that efforts should focus on eliminating the sex trade from Calgary, while 26% agreed with this statement and 34% were neutral. One problem with this statement is that some respondents agreed with the first part of the statement (that the sex trade is immoral) but not with the second part of the statement (that efforts should focus on eliminating it).

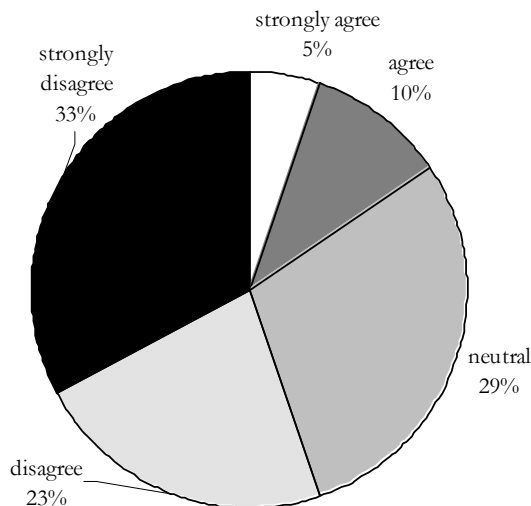
The sex trade is immoral and efforts should focus on eliminating it from our city



The next three statements were designed to assess how respondents perceived the concept of “choice” with respect to sex trade workers’ involvement in the sex trade. The majority of respondents (72%) agreed or strongly agreed that most sex trade workers have been forced into the sex trade by circumstances. This result is consistent with the next statement with which 69% of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed – that most sex trade workers choose this lifestyle for themselves. A significant minority (20–21%) of respondents were neutral on these statements.



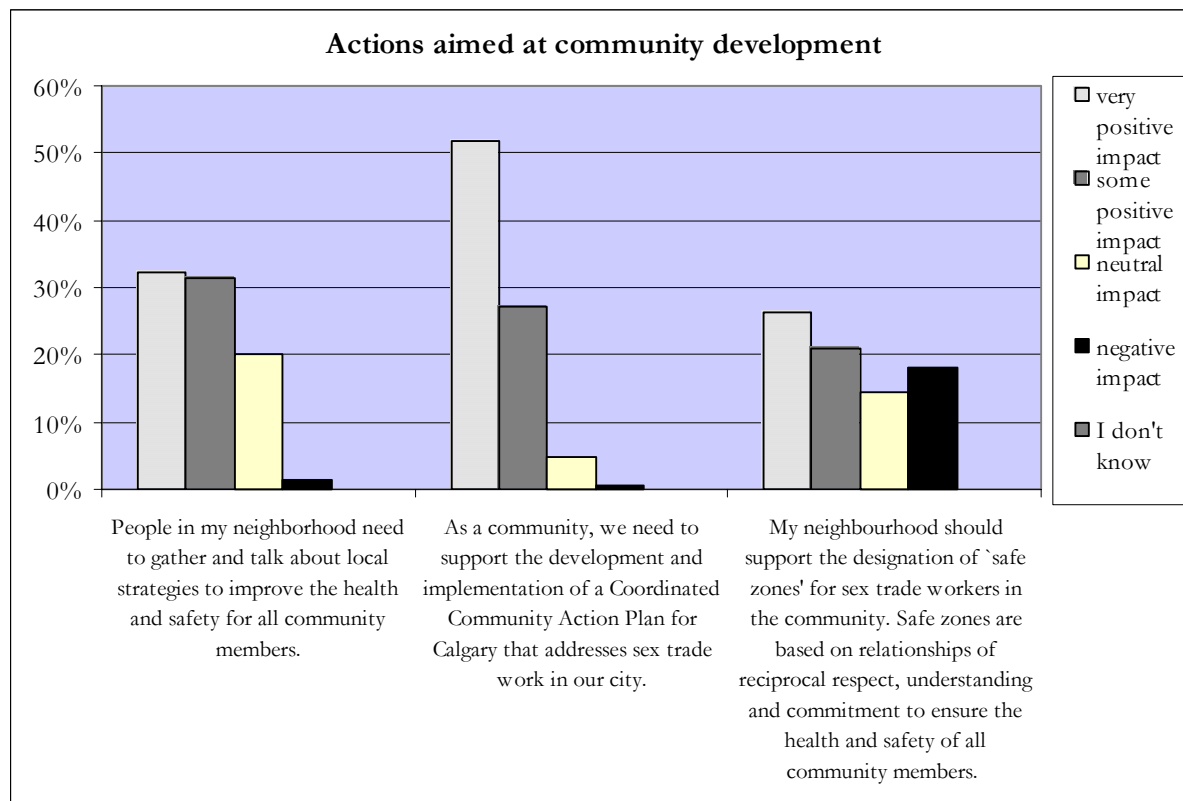
The sex trade is a legitimate form of employment



Just over half of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the sex trade is a legitimate form of employment. A significant minority 29% were neutral on this statement and a small proportion (15%) agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Generally, these results indicate the majority of respondents do not believe that individuals in the sex trade have chosen this as a form of employment without being forced into it in some way.

Respondents' Recommendations for Actions to Address the Sex Trade in Calgary

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – seeks to empower individuals and groups of people by them with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities.



The majority of respondents (63%) felt that there would be some positive impact or very positive impact from greater engagement of community members in discussing local strategies to improve the health and safety for all community members. One respondent noted:

- *"Opening dialogue between community members including STW's so a mutual understanding such as a 'safe zone' may be achieved."*
- *"Community input would increase support. To increase the safety of the sex trade workers and the people in the community, both coming to the table and working together may be a solution."*
- *"Acknowledgement that the sex trade exists and working to address the problems rather than working to eliminate it totally."*

There was a large majority of respondents who felt that very positive impact (52%) or some positive impact (27%) would result from communities supporting a Coordinated Community Action Plan for Calgary to address the sex trade.

- *"Community development has its place. However, its applicability is limited with this problem. The sex trade issue requires more assertive efforts, a coordination of services, and an investment that goes well beyond, 'let's have a group of concerned community members meet and discuss the problem'. The CD approach will yield very little tangible change."*

There were very mixed results for the idea of a “safe zone” for sex trade workers in communities. About 37% of respondents felt there would be some positive or very positive impact from safe zones while 18% felt that there would be negative impact. Qualitative data indicated that some of the respondents (3) felt that safe zones were a good idea but only if they were situated in industrial areas (versus in residential areas).

- *“Re: the 3rd question, I do not favour safe zones for those involved in the sex trade as it normalizes this activity as an acceptable part of society, in my opinion, and gives sex trade workers the message that they are not worth more than this, that society does not expect they have more to contribute than to sell sex, and that indeed society agrees it is appropriate for some people to sell sex (but not 'our' daughters, sons, sisters or brothers), that sex is an acceptable birthday gift for a father to give his son, or a boss to an employee, etc. However on the reciprocal part of this idea, it is important to ensure that neighbourhood people are not hurt as a result of the impact of the sex trade in their neighbourhood.”*
- *“Get it out of neighbourhoods with kids!!!”*
- *Safe zones I don't think is an understood concept—the closest discussion has come to this is red light districts, and I know you don't mean that!*
- *I am one who feels that the sex trade is going to go on forever, so I think that there should be a area some where in Calgary for sex trade workers. This way it won't be around children, homes and families, and business.*

Respondents were asked to identify other ideas about how to address the sex trade through community development. Their ideas are listed below, grouped by theme:

Support for Sex Trade Workers – Awareness, Empathy, Involvement

Several respondents suggested that a shift in public perception of STW's was an important part of improving working conditions. More specifically, 12 respondents suggested that recognizing STW's as people – not just as sex workers, and reducing the stigma attached with their work, are important first steps. In addition, 5 more respondents suggested that, after such a change in perception, more attention should be paid the needs expressed by STW's themselves, and encouraged an open minded approach to these needs. In 2 cases, the respondent made these changes contingent on changes in the behaviour of the STWs, specifically that they work harder to remove themselves from sex work.

- *“I believe that marginalization and exclusiveness are current sentiments within our community that are preventing all parties involved from achieving a mutual consensus on the where, why and how of the sex trade. i.e., because STW's are marginalized this may prevent them from feeling like they can seek support from the community.”*

Education

Many respondents indicated a need for increased education as part of a community development approach. In general, respondents suggested that sex workers themselves should be the educators, and that this education process should ensure that sex work is seen as victimization, not just a lifestyle choice on the part of STWs. Beyond these general positions, the responses relating to education can usefully be broken down into several categories:

For Prevention

One respondent encouraged the use of education to prevent sex work, specifically by targeting at risk youth and offering them safer after-school activities.

- *“More than just education, we need to give kids looking for identity and belonging an alternative to gangs, with team activities and even work programs to give kids a sense of meaning and accomplishment. I guess I'm*

kind of advocating child labour... ;) I think meaningful and paid work for kids with no where to go and few options would go a long way to helping the problem.”

For Sex Trade Workers

Respondents suggested education for STW's should focus on support programs, especially in terms of exploring ways of escaping sex work.

- *“To me, this would be a key focus of the first 2 actions listed above—education as to why someone finds themselves in the sex trade, understanding how people have successfully left the sex trade and implementing ideas gleaned from the perspective of those who made it into a new and healthy life.”*

For Community

Respondents also suggested that the community should be better educated about sex work. Many of these responses (23) emphasized the need for increased public knowledge of the realities of the sex trade in Calgary. Some of these respondents (5) believed this would contribute to greater acceptance and support of STWs within communities. Several respondents (6) emphasized an education campaign that would raise awareness of male STWs. Three respondents suggested that community education programs should do more to explain the connections between poverty, addiction, and the sex trade. One respondent suggested that community education should explore the role of women generally in modern society, in an attempt to explain the roots of sex work.

- *“I think that community members should be educated about the sex trade so that they will be fully aware of the issues that are occurring in the sex trade”*
- *The men need more support too. The men are forgotten a majority of the time when it comes to sexual exploitation. Most people don't believe that a man can be exploited.*

Demand

Qualitative responses also emphasized the importance of education about the demand side of sex work in any community development efforts. Twelve respondents commented on this issue. Of those who explained further what sort of education was needed, all 8 suggested that education efforts that targeted STW users should attempt to prevent their involvement in the future. Two of these respondents suggested the establishment of “john’s schools.”

- *“Education of those who seek the services of sex trade workers to help people change their attitudes towards being able to 'buy' someone for sex and physical connection.”*

Inclusion and Partnerships

Five respondents suggested that community development should endeavour to create partnerships between STW's and community organizations.

- *‘Community development is an inclusive process, this means that we should include sex trade workers in community development efforts.’*

Focusing on Exiting the Sex Trade

Three respondents emphasized community development efforts to help STWs to exit the sex trade.

Harm Reduction

Many respondents also proposed that community development efforts should go towards harm reduction. Most of these recommendations emphasized the need for access to safe sex materials (13), including birth control pills and condoms, or the accoutrements for safer drug use (6), including needles and, in one case, legalizing drugs. Two respondents emphasized the need for the government to focus on harm reduction strategies, with one suggesting that Calgary's municipal government should create a reciprocal agreement with other Canadian cities to assist STWs to escape their pimps. One respondent suggested that these efforts should focus on the location of sex work, as harm reduction would be most effective on site. One respondent emphasized that harm reduction was needed for STWs who were looking to leave the sex trade.

- *"items such as birth control, condoms and other such things that would protect both the sex trade workers and the community"*

Addressing Root Causes

Many respondents offered suggestions about how community development could target the root causes of the sex trade, as well. Generally, respondents divided the root causes of the sex trade into two categories – poverty, including a lack of low-income housing (15), or drug addiction (6). Four of these respondents regarded poverty and drug use as joint causes. Most of those respondents who suggested solutions emphasized the provision of low-income housing (8), but one respondent suggested that a drop-in work site would help STWs escape the poverty that leads to the sex trade. Some respondents focused more on the social causes of the sex trade. One suggested that the key to addressing the root causes of the sex trade is to teach young women and men to respect each other and to better understand sexuality. Five respondents suggested that constructing healthy, diverse communities was the key to preventing the sex trade. Finally, three respondents suggested that assisting families to be functional and supportive was the key to preventing the sex trade.

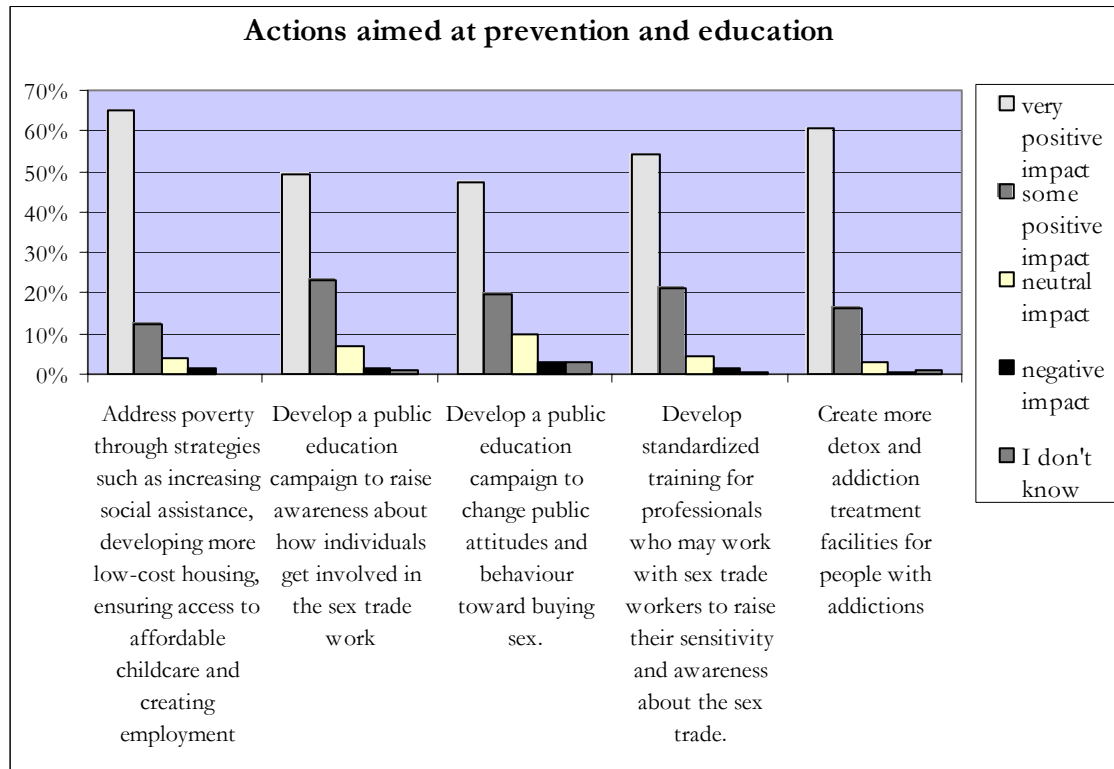
- *"One is to teach young women and men to respect each other and to understand how sexuality is a healthy part of human life. This means a more concerted effort at sex education that is more encompassing in the schools. But adults also need to be more tuned in"*
- *"More low income housing would eliminate some of the need for people to enter into the sex trade in the first place."*
- *Communities need to be diverse, healthy with affordable housing all over the city, with a mix of people in each community to ensure its health. there needs to be good lighting and elimination of dark and scary areas in communities.*

Against Community Development

Two respondents argued against a community development approach.

- *I also don't think that we should do ANYTHING to make the sex trade gain in social acceptance-at least the stigma it currently carries deters some people from entering.*
- *focus on services and direct support-the CD strategy and collaborative stuff just bogs things down*

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION - efforts to prevent individuals from entering the sex trade, addressing the circumstances which place individuals at risk of getting involved in the sex trade

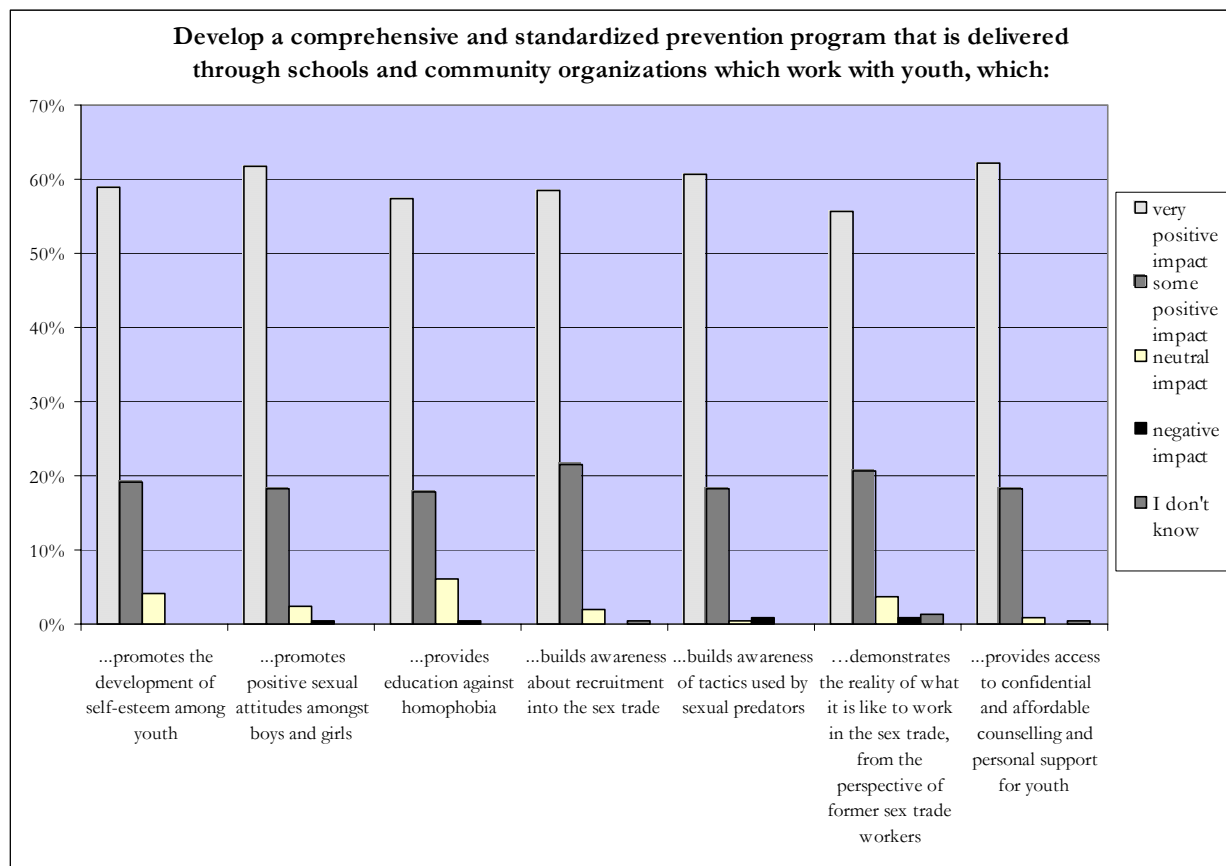


All of the prevention and education strategies suggested were viewed by the majority of respondents as having very positive impact or some positive impact on the sex trade. Several respondents noted that greater availability of addiction treatment facilities should be a priority. Qualitative responses reinforced the respondent's support for these strategies.

- *"A community response to demand social services adequate for the soaring costs of the Calgary community, including low cost housing."*
- *"Education in the schools should include information and a focus on areas such as where are the 'pimps' recruiting? What should parents and teens and younger be on the look out for?"*
- *"more initiatives that address the demand side of the sex trade. Early education with respect to males purchasing sex."*
- *Police need to be trained on how to communicate more effectively with sex trade workers*
- *More detox beds, easier access to treatment and long-term housing for after treatment*

Respondents were also asked to reflect on specific messages that would be delivered through a comprehensive and standardized prevention program in schools. Respondents almost uniformly felt that all of the messages would have very positive or some positive impact. Respondents' comments once again reinforced their survey responses.

- *"Develop a comprehensive and standardized prevention program that is delivered through schools at the elementary level which: 1. promotes the development of self-esteem among children 2. Introduces positive and healthy attitudes about their bodies 3. Educate the parents: on same topics above plus: promotes positive sexual attitudes, education against homophobia, awareness about recruitment into the sex trade and tactics used by sexual predators."*



Respondents were asked to identify other ideas about how to address the sex trade through prevention and education:

Empowerment – Self-Esteem and Confidence

Six respondents suggested that a key aspect of prevention of the sex trade is building up young people's self-esteem and confidence.

- *"Give this a more positive spin. What do we want to see and focus on that versus what we don't want. For example, rather than teaching youth about how to get involved in the sex trade (build awareness about how this happens), instead teach them about how to gain self-esteem, love self, care for others, maintain a job, build a bank account (MCC employment)"*

School-Based Preventive Education

Eleven respondents suggested school-based education could be an effective deterrent to involvement in the sex trade. Two suggested education campaigns that involve work outside of schools as well, and two respondents emphasized the importance of after-school programs to keep children out of at risk situations. One respondent, however, suggested that these education programs may not be effective.

- *"You have to start teaching children from a very early age about people and the realities of life. You also have to teach more real life situations. Have a class where they can have open dialogue. Define all the different kinds of abuse there are out there is a huge one."*

- *“I am not sure school based activities is the way to go-it just adds to all the other school based education and I wonder if it is being missed, ignored by the kids and parents.”*

Preventive Education Focused on Youth at Risk

Eight respondents believed in more carefully targeted education campaigns, specifically targeted at youth at risk. One respondent felt that these programs should target at-risk preschoolers, whereas another suggests targeting at risk teens. Indeed, one respondent suggested that choosing which age group to target was the biggest challenge of an approach that emphasized helping at-risk youth. One respondent suggested that education of at-risk youth should emphasize creating social messaging about the dangers of HIV and AIDS.

- *“massive educational campaigns not targeting the sex trade business but the attitudes of people towards a more healthy view of sex and respect of women and their bodies (more respect of bodies in general, men and women).”*
- *“There are several prevention programs already in Calgary. A major question is at what age to start such programs. Also why not target high-risk youth such as those in the child welfare system, rather than using universal prevention.”*

Community-Focused Preventive Education

Some respondents felt that education programs were an important preventive measure, but that these programs needed to take place outside of schools. Five of these respondents suggested educating parents was especially important, as they could help prevent their children from succumbing to the sex trade. Eight more felt that educating the public in general about the realities of the sex trade, including by speaking to STWs about their experience, was an important step to preventing the sex trade. One respondent suggested that this community focused education campaign should work towards reducing homophobia as part of preventing the sex trade.

- *“Maybe start with the parents of these children who are involved, if the parents would spent more time with there children, maybe the children would not want to leave home and live on the streets making a living selling themselves. Having the parents get involve with children's friends and school and know exactly what is going on with there children, this might cut down on sex trade in the city.”*
- *“get more recovered sex trade workers to tell there story to the communities as this is a strong way to impact children, youth, young adults, parents, social workers, teachers and any other professionals”*

Education Targeting the Demand Side

Two respondents recommended that public education campaigns should target the demand side of the sex trade. One recommended a preventative educational approach, while the other recommended “john’s schools.”

Involve Police in Delivering Education

Two respondents suggested that the police should be involved in the education process.

Exiting the Sex Trade

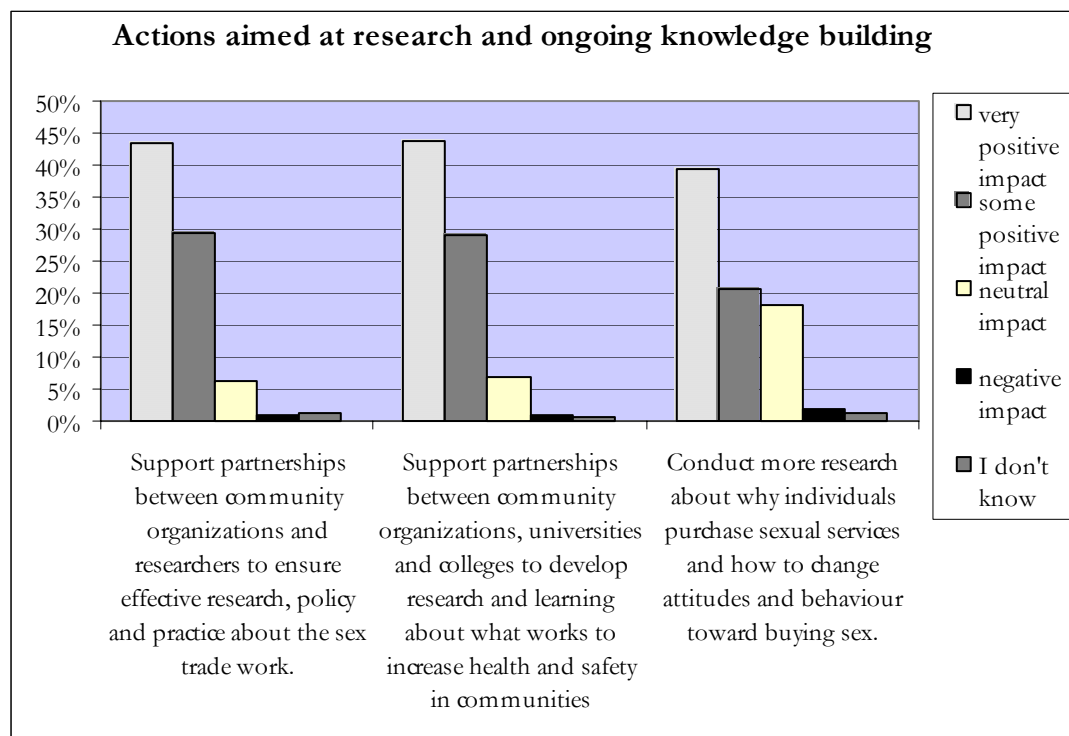
Two respondents believed that preventative measures did not have the value of providing effective exit strategies. One respondent insisted that the money spent on United Way research should be used instead to develop and provide effective exit strategies.

Drug Enforcement

Five respondents argued that preventative measures should include a drug enforcement plan. Three respondents suggested that this enforcement should work to undermine drug trafficking, while two respondents urged firmer action to force STWs with addiction issues into treatment.

- *Work on strategies to eliminate drugs. Actually impose big prison sentences for drug traffickers, so that when they look at the money they make in contrast to the prison term they may receive there is some deterrence.*

RESEARCH & ONGOING BUILDING OF KNOWLEDGE – research would help governmental and non-governmental organizations understand the sex trade in Calgary and build knowledge about the most effective ways to protect the health and safety of all community members affected by the sex trade.



The majority of respondents felt that research would overall create very positive or some positive impact on the sex trade. However, about 18% of respondents felt that conducting more research about the demand side of the sex trade would have only neutral impact. Most qualitative research supported the survey results, although some respondents (9) argued that no more research was needed.

- *A need to stress 'Collaboration' among the service agencies, this prevents a duplication of programs but also allows for valuable partnerships and community success! Knowing what already exists and how to improve on it!*
- *A path may be available to invite individuals to participate in research if that is their desire and not a requirement of being in the centre.*

- *Enough with the research! Nothing has changed in a thousand years. Just deal with it.*

The respondents were asked to identify other ideas for how research and knowledge building could help address the sex trade in Calgary. Their ideas are summarized below:

Developing Better Understanding of Psychosocial Histories of People Involved in the Sex Trade

Several respondents (6) suggested that achieving a better understanding of the personal histories of STWs is an important research agenda for addressing the sex trade in Calgary. Of these 6, 2 suggested exploring the link between abuse as children and entrance into sex work, while 1 suggested more attention be paid to the correlation between economic position and sex work. One respondent suggested researching the life of pimps, to discourage participation in that part of the sex trade.

- *there should be more research done regarding income and social status, including both the sex trade workers and the neighborhoods where it takes place to see if there is a correlation between economic status and life choices.*
- *users be researched to find out what links to violence against women and children and how the sex trade as it is right now validates social values and assumptions about sex trade/exploitation and oppression of women and children. A very good question would be to identify what social determinants of health are linked to involvement in the sex trade, and at a societal (macro) level what types of initiatives and policies are needed to legalize prostitution (adult only) and protect workers*

Better Understanding of the Calgary Social and Economic Context

Five respondents recommended research agendas that would explore the social and economic context in Calgary that leads to sex work. Two of these respondents suggested looking to other communities for examples of how to manage/prevent the sex trade, while two others suggested that more attention be paid to the unique aspects of conditions in Calgary.

- *Take a look at local factors affecting the sex trade. Calgary is different than other major cities in Canada.*
- *By following examples of researches done in other communities and the effect of creating 'safe zones' and seeing what impact happened in those communities Research and implement some of the strategies other countries have used in legalizing or tolerating prostitution or 'red light district'.*

Developing Better Understanding of the Demand Side

One respondent suggested more research attention should be paid to the demand side of sex work.

- *studying the sex trade's connection to patriarchal thinking and structures. In terms of attitudes towards buying sex, in many circles people find the idea appalling. Those who do purchase sexual services must do so largely in secret. Do these men feel shame for doing it? If not, why are some ok with it while it disgusts others? Also some people find porn to be a form of prostitution while others don't. Perhaps we need to have a set definition rather than relying on the general public to determine their own individual terminology to suit our unique consciences.*

Developing Better Understanding of Needs in Exiting the Sex Trade

Two respondents recommended more research into exit strategies for STWs.

Participatory Research Opportunities

Four respondents recommended that future research should provide opportunities for STWs to participate. One suggested that this participation might be part of a recovery process/exit strategy.

- *Ensure the research is community driven which includes involvement from sex trade workers.*

Research Partnerships

Two respondents urged future research to emphasize collaboration between researchers and the service agencies that work with STWs now.

- *Talk to agencies that work directly with sex trade workers. Putting a researcher on the front lines to gather the information, I feel, is the wrong way to go about things. Getting involved with front line workers is the best way, then trends and issues that have been occurring over a longer period of time can be addressed instead of counting on the 2 weeks a researcher may spend in a van talking to sex trade workers.*

Advice for Researchers – Approach, Methodology

One respondent suggested that the key to future research is a research approach that is non-biased and non-judgemental about sex work.

Better Application and Dissemination of Research

Two respondents asserted that future research needed to be disseminated more effectively to achieve the desired ends. One of these respondents also suggested that future research should be required to have an applied component, as opposed to being purely academic.

- *Research is good, but does very little to support changing attitudes unless it is promoted through education, the media, etc. The information needs to get out to people, and too often it just sits in dusty little tomes, no matter how good it is.*

No More Research

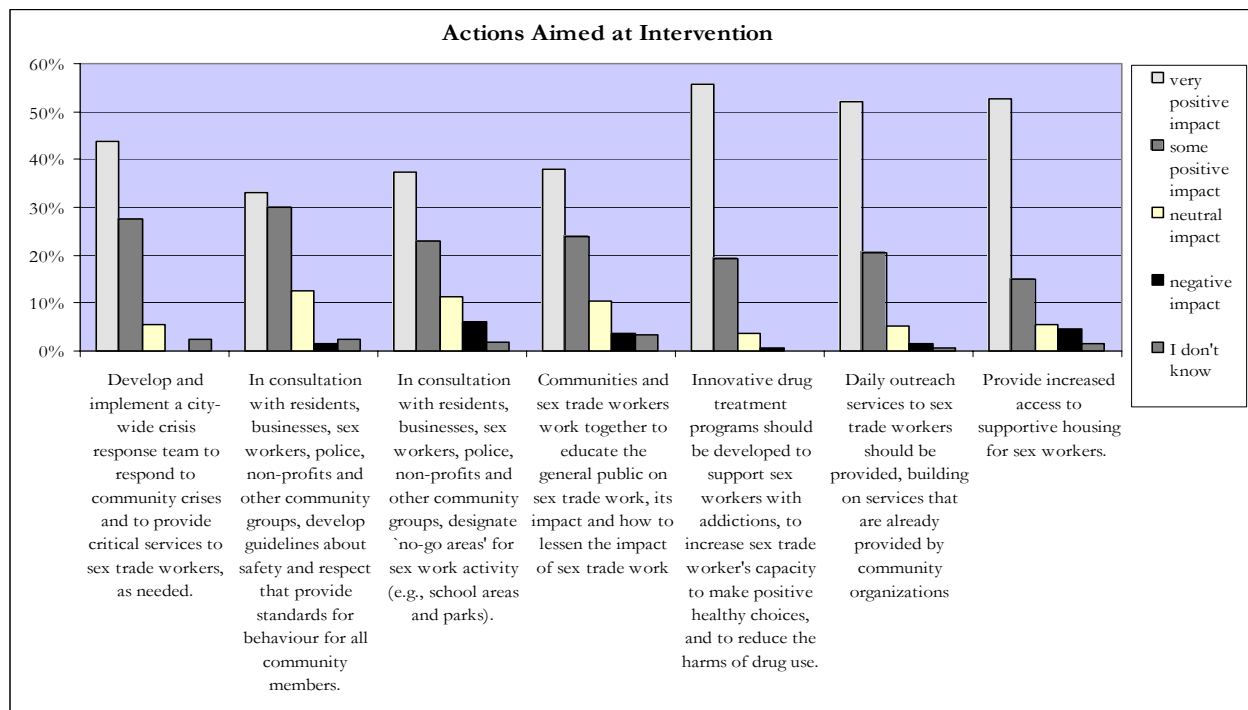
A large number of respondents (9) insisted that no more research was needed. These respondents tended to contrast resources used for research against those used for more action-based strategies, and argued that more resources should go to these more action oriented approaches.

- *I don't think spending a lot of money into more research is needed. It is pretty obvious about what is going on. Research has shown that positive, peer models from people who have been there and done that is the most successful way for personal change.*

INTERVENTION – this refers to a set of actions to help community members, including sex trade workers, remain safe and healthy, and respectful of others’ rights and needs.

As indicated in the figure below, the intervention actions which respondents felt would have very positive impact were:

- Innovative drug treatment programs should be developed to support sex workers with addictions, to increase sex trade worker's capacity to make positive healthy choices, and to reduce the harms of drug use (75% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)
- Daily outreach services to sex trade workers should be provided, building on services that are already provided by community organizations (72% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)
- Provide increased access to supportive housing for sex workers (68% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)



Some of the respondents had comments specifically on the idea of designating “no-go areas” for sex work activity:

- *Some of these ideas may never work, as with the new laws about johns, if there are the no go areas, the police may target the areas that are go areas.*
- *be careful not to end up being punitive about the 'no-go areas'. It will not be effective if sex workers are fined or arrested for violating the no-go areas.*
- *I like the idea of no-go areas.*
- *I think the idea of no go area is an excellent idea to protect our children as much as possible*

One respondent made a comment specific to the action area regarding crisis response teams:

- *I'm not sure that a city wide crises response team is required. I think that a group of human service workers that are well-educated in the needs of this population and can act as legal, political and service advocates would be sufficient. This population is difficult to build relationships with (rightly so) and respond well to individualized service with a few people to help them build trust.*

Several respondents disagreed with the suggested action area of creating supportive housing for sex trade workers:

- *"the main purpose of interventions should be to stop prostitution by any means-interventions such as providing 'increased access to supportive housing for sex workers' will have a negative impact and would never be accepted by Calgarians"*
- *"Community housing etc, just frees up more money to be spent on drugs."*
- *"I don't particularly agree that supportive housing for sex workers should take priority over, say, a working family that can't afford housing who does not struggle with addiction issues."*

The respondents were asked to identify other ideas for interventions could help address the sex trade in Calgary. Their ideas are summarized below:

Mental Health Interventions

Two respondents identified interventions on behalf of STW's mental health to be an important part of addressing the sex trade.

- *"Immediate access to mental health professionals-the waiting lists are horribly long."*

Addressing Racial Oppression

One respondent argued that, since a disproportionate number of prostitutes in Calgary are aboriginal women, addressing the unique challenges facing First Nations women should be part of an intervention agenda.

Rehabilitation Interventions for Pimps

According to one respondent, intervention strategies should attempt to rehabilitate pimps.

- *I think that pimping should be looked at more closely and something should be done about that. Not harsher sentences but a rehabilitation program for them, so they can understand what sort of violence they are involved in because I don't think they understand.*

Multi Sectoral Approach to Interventions

Several respondents (14) identified a multi sectoral approach to intervention as the most desirable. Three respondents mentioned existing examples of a multi sectoral approach, specifically the Mustard Seed Storefront 101 program, Stepping Out, SAS, EXIT van, and CUPS.

- *Active, preventative, assertive. The days of pushing the problem from one community to another is long past. Police and social agencies, municipal governments and other services need to work together to address the individuals affected.*

- *The services would work together for an integrated approach. We have SAS, EXIT van and CUPS and Stepping Out is closing which leaves a gap in services.*

Primary Health Care

One respondent recommended interventions that ensure STWs are engaged in wellness oriented behaviours, as are the health care providers they rely on.

Inclusion of women with STW experience

Intervention should also include women with sex work experience, according to two respondents.

- *Hire ex sex trade workers to work with those individuals still victimized. Recruit ex sex trade individuals to sit on advisory committees with a focus on the sex trade strategies.*

Safe Space for Sex Trade Workers

One respondent identified the need for a safe space for STWs as a key part of an intervention agenda.

- *We need a place built in the areas that the Sex Trade workers where there counsellors on site, they can have a shower, and get a hot meal. A place only for Sex Trade Workers.*

Exiting the Sex Trade

Another popular theme within respondents' suggestions about intervention is an emphasis on helping STWs to exit the sex trade. Eight respondents offered comments that fit within this theme. One respondent suggested creating programs that help STWs escape those who may have coerced them into sex work. One suggested more access to education was necessary, while one more suggested affordable housing and gainful employment were the keys. Two respondents suggested that interventions that were meant to help STWs escape sex work should be more patient, and reflect the fact that it may take more time for some STWs to change their lifestyles. Two of the 8 respondents recommended that former STWs play an integral role in these intervention strategies.

- *have recovered sex trade workers also talk to those who are in the beginning of a program so that the sex trade worker can see that there is some kind of hope to leave that life style.*
- *More safe and affordable housing, more long-term support as this is something that is not cured in 60 days.*

Tracking At-Risk Youth and Children

One respondent suggested intervention should take the form of a tracking system for at-risk youth.

- *Find out which children have been molested or abused and develop a data base to keep track of their behavior as they begin to enter into the system via drug addiction or jails or institutions or homeless. As Adults give consequences to the offenders and worker, users of people who are profiting and reoffending. Even though majority of individuals who are found to have been vulnerable children at one time and who have been exposed to abuse, addictions of all kinds, gambling(neglect), drinking, drugs, etc. Still need consequences, because each individual also has a choice after a long treatment phase.*

EXITING – this is a set of actions which assist individuals in leaving the sex trade once they are ready to do so.



All three of the suggested actions aimed at helping individuals exit the sex trade were deemed by the large majority of respondents to have very positive or some positive impact. Qualitative responses reinforce that respondents supported all three suggested actions.

- *As a society we need to offer as much support (financially, emotionally and medically) as is possible to those persons leaving the lifestyle. I don't believe we have very realistic supports in place, with unreasonable timelines and expectations placed on these individuals.*
- *A caring, concerned and respectful approach to the victims/prostitutes involved, with opportunities for these people to choose to change their life by providing education, housing, employment and to create change in their lives*

The respondents were asked to identify other ideas for actions aimed at helping individuals exiting the sex trade that could help address the sex trade in Calgary. Their ideas are summarized below:

Place Priority on Programs to Help Sex Trade Workers Exit

Eleven respondents suggested that making programs to help STWs exit sex work a priority was key. Of these, five emphasized making these exit programs safe for STWs, and two recommended an approach that was rehabilitative, not punitive. One respondent suggested looking to Vancouver for guidance.

- *Less punitive measures, more rehabilitative*
- *I would prioritize initiatives that support sex worker's transition high on my list. There are excellent programs in Vancouver (and I'm sure other places) for this type of action.*

Anonymity

One respondent suggested that exit strategies must protect STWs anonymity, to ease the transition into mainstream society.

Non-Denominational

One respondent argued for non-religious treatment facilities.

Support for STWs – Awareness, Empathy, involvement

Some respondents (9) insisted that exit strategies had to begin with an approach that supports STWs, while others (2) suggested that approaches to this point had been too empathetic towards STWs, and STWs needed to be held responsible for their own care. Of those who regarded an increase in awareness and empathy to be necessary, three urged a combination of financial and emotional/spiritual support. Two also called for mentorship, employing former STWs, one suggesting to the exclusion of non-STW service providers. Three insisted that this support should include the recognition that leaving the sex trade can be a multiyear process.

- *'make your choices and then ACT'!! providers must stop accepting the manipulations of sex trade workers, perhaps using 'contracts for care' more often is an option. whatever the route, STWs have to become more diligent in making their choices and accepting the consequences of those choices. If this sounds harsh, consider the world of a STW in the Ukraine vs. Canada. Canadian STWs have a boat load of services available to them ... if they are truly to exit, STWs MUST make the leap to a life outside the trade .. and 'work that leap' as hard as they do 4th ave.*

Support Older Women

Two respondents suggested that more support was needed to help older women (30 years and older) to exit the sex trade.

Education and Life Skills Development

Eight respondents suggested that exit strategies should emphasize education opportunities and life skills development. Two respondents suggested making trades programs available to those leaving the sex trade, while two others recommended increasing access to college. Several respondents suggested coupling access to education with programs to assist ex-STWs with specific challenges they may face, including drug rehabilitation centres (3), learning disability assessments (1), and financial assistance with tuition and debt (3). Three respondents suggested that these education opportunities needed to be publicized better among working STWs as well.

- *Develop education (upgrading and college) opportunities for those who have completed recovery program (as with 2nd point on employment and skills-building) opportunities. Would need to include learning disability assessment, literacy support, scholarship funding as many have tried school unsuccessfully and lost ability to access student grant and/or have massive student debt which is obstacle to re-entering school.*
- *Encouragement to trades such as cooking, baking or industrial trades where wages are competitive and recognized. Many sex trades workers are not suitable for office work. Perhaps some career planning and opportunities for education would be appropriate for some.*

Multisectoral Collaboration

Many respondents (23) indicated that they felt any exit strategies should be based on a multi sectoral approach. Eight of these respondents suggested that existing programs were a good start, but were in need of more resources. One respondent named Stepping Out and Servants Anonymous as

examples of effective programs. Of the responses that indicated what sort of services these multi sectoral collaborations should include, three indicated they needed to address the needs of men as well as women trying to exit the sex trade; four suggested addiction issues/drug use needed to be addressed; four identified counselling/helping STWs cope with trauma; two recommended that the specific issues of STWs with children be better addressed, and two suggested that the specific issues faced by older STWs (30 years and older) needed to be more effectively addressed by these multi sectoral collaborations.

- *Increase resources to organizations aimed at supporting men, women, and youth trapped in the sex trade industry.*
- *Range of services offered to individuals involved in the sex trade that address the issues that they identify in their lives, i.e. addictions, safety, programs for exiting, programs for education and training, etc.*
- *Professional level counselling support would also be good, to look at the effects of trauma, as well as lifestyle issues. Having community service working together would be awesome.*

Mental Health and Addictions Services

Nineteen respondents recommended that exit strategies needed to include mental health and addiction services.

- *More long-term addictions and mental health services specifically designed for sex trade workers. Any transitioning MUST address addictions and mental health SPECIFICALLY.*

Meeting Basic Needs

Respondents also pointed to a need to fulfill basic needs for STWs who want to leave the sex trade. Nine suggested that basic financial support was key to helping STWs exit the trade. Fifteen identified housing as a need that STWs need assistance with in the exiting process. Three respondents recommended that transitional housing was a necessary step for any exit attempts. Four suggested that better job opportunities were an important part of any exit strategy. One respondent recommended that support for relocation might be necessary, to protect STWs from the issues that drove them to sex work, especially for those who were imported by traffickers.

- *Provide focused programs with assistance (child care, nutritious food, access to health care and medicine, shelter) along with financial and other living support while those who choose to exit the sex trade industry go through the appropriate programs.*

Health Services

Six respondents indicated that better health services were needed to help STWs to exit sex work, including testing for sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.

LEGAL RESPONSES – these are a set of actions that address the sex trade through changes to the roles of the law enforcement system.

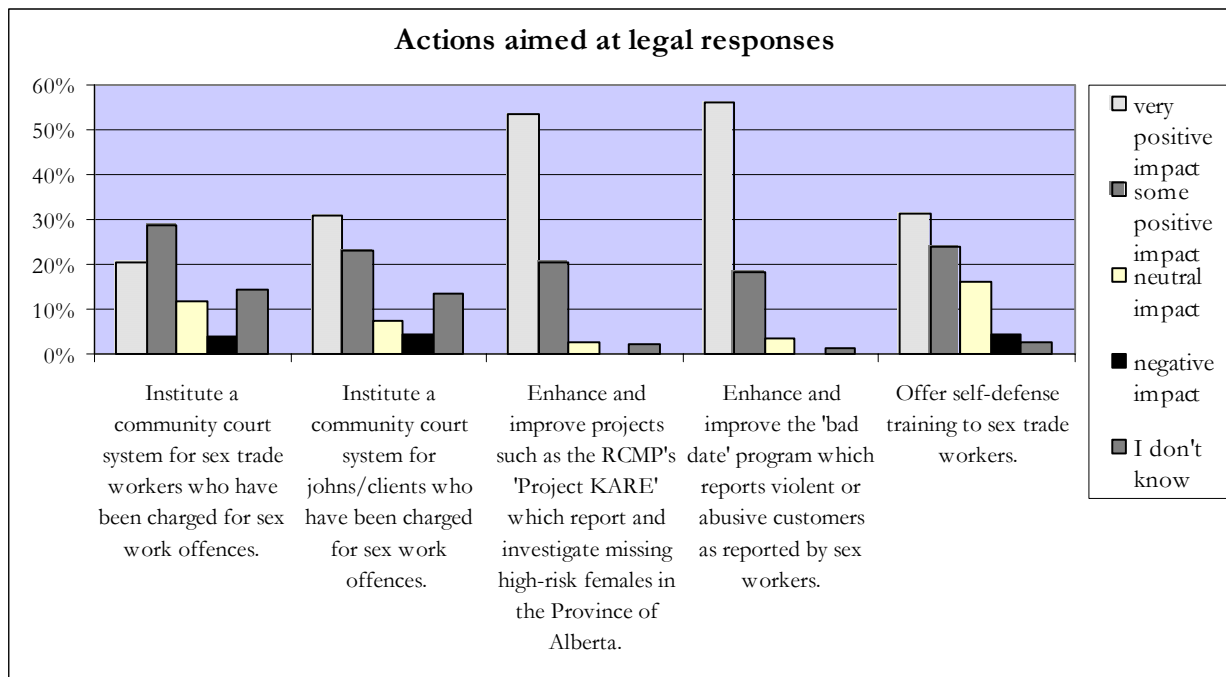
As indicated in the figure below, there were mixed responses to some of the suggested action areas with respect to legal responses to the sex trade. Generally, there seemed to be a lack of understanding amongst respondents of the concept of a community court system (five respondents noted that they didn't know what a community court referred to). The legal responses most universally supported by the respondents were:

- Enhance and improve projects such as the RCMP's 'Project KARE' which report and investigate missing high-risk females in the Province of Alberta (73% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)
- Enhance and improve the 'bad date' program which reports violent or abusive customers as reported by sex workers (74% felt that there would be some positive or very positive impact)

One respondent commented on the suggested actions aimed at legal responses: *"I believe that these measures may help STWs feel as though they are valued within the community and therefore make them feel more comfortable accessing community supports."*

There were some specific comments from respondents in opposition to the idea of self defense training for sex trade workers:

- *Offering 'self-defense training to sex trade workers' adds legitimacy to the illegal trade*
- *Self defense is a bad idea as it can create a false feeling of security. It is very difficult to effectively fight someone without years of training. I don't think this is a good option.*
- *I have been in a situation where I have had to run away from a prostitute on drugs in Victoria Park while walking home from work. would be very upset if she had additional training to come after me. Support women getting out of this life, don't help them make others lives miserable.*



The respondents were asked to identify other ideas for legal responses that could help address the sex trade in Calgary. Their ideas are summarized below:

Legalization/Decriminalization/Licensing

Many respondents indicated that some level of legalization would be an appropriate legal response to the sex trade in Calgary. Twenty seven respondents urged legalization or decriminalization of the sex trade. One of these 27 also recommended legalizing drugs, to address the root causes of the sex trade. Five called for regulation, usually for safety reasons. One respondent wanted more police involvement as part of the regulation process. In contrast, one respondent recommended supporting federal efforts regarding communication laws.

- *Legalize prostitution and drugs. Fines and jail time don't work you must hit the root of it-drugs!*
- *Or, if we have to, legalize it and tuck it away far from Ramsay so everyone is safe.*
- *Support federal efforts re: communication laws*
- *Municipal licensing with dedicated, monitored facilities that keep all involved as safe as possible.*

"I lived in Amsterdam for many years, where prostitution is legalized, and could see the benefits of not marginalizing the 'sex trade' community. They pay taxes on their income, declare their profession on tax forms, and are accepted as a member of the larger community, rather than living on the fringes of societal interaction. I do not doubt some of these workers are there under duress without autonomy, but the safety factors for those choosing that lifestyle are key in keeping the workers safer and healthy, which filters through the larger global community."

Rationale for legalization:

Respondents justified their support for legalizing prostitution almost exclusively (21 respondents) on the basis that STWs would be safer under a more carefully regulated system. Two respondents suggested regulation might allow tax revenue to be increased, and one respondent hoped legalization would help STWs exit the sex trade. One respondent also hoped that legalization would help to eliminate underage sex work. Six respondents suggested that, in addition to improving the safety of STWs, licensing would increase public health by reducing the spread of sexually transmitted infections, and by reducing the presence of condoms and drug paraphernalia in residential neighbourhoods. Four respondents recommended basing these legalization efforts on the precedent offered by the Netherlands.

- *to eliminate underage and exploited persons and to improve their emotional and physical well being*
- *sex trade workers would have more open access to counselling to get into other areas of employment, eventually lessening number of people in this work*
- *if they were in a red light district and or regulated maybe there wouldn't be needles in the playground and condoms in my alley.*

Community Court/Alternative Legal Systems

Two respondents suggested that an alternative legal system was needed to address the sex trade. One explicitly recommended a community court approach. One respondent suggested that the existing legal system might be used in a more STW positive way – specifically, the respondent wondered whether a prostitute had ever sued a john.

- *Community court-I do not necessarily have faith in the general public, especially those whose lives have been negatively affected by sex work occurring near their homes and businesses.*

Legal Advocacy/Aid services

Two respondents suggested that more access to legal aid was needed for STWs. Specifically, one recommended investigating the “pilot diversion project” in Edmonton.

Tougher Penalties for Pimps and Exploiters

Many respondents (28) suggested that a legal strategy targeting the sex trade should include harsher penalties for pimps. Four respondents specifically demanded harsher penalties for the pimps and johns involved in the underage sex trade. Two respondents also indicated that the boyfriends of STWs should be targeted.

- *Prosecute the pimps. Make the consequences hurt and make them stick. If you start to make it harder on the people making the money, the sex trade will begin to diminish, as will a lot of the violence associated with it.*

Tougher Penalties for Drug Offences

In addition to tougher penalties for pimps, 8 respondents demanded harsher punishments for drug dealers. Two respondents indicated meth producers and dealers should be especially heavily targeted. Two respondents also suggested that penalties for gang related be increased.

- *“I think the focus needs to be in eliminating gangs and addiction issues, and the sex trade will fall out of that naturally. There needs to be a zero tolerance level, and to achieve that I believe you need to have a heavy anti-gang and anti-drug initiative starting with kids, especially in 'tougher' neighborhoods.”*

Tougher Penalties on Johns

Many respondents (33) feel that tougher penalties for johns are an important part of an anti-sex trade legal strategy. Four respondents thought that public identification of johns, usually by publishing their photos, would be an effective deterrent. Four respondents suggested the police should seize johns’ vehicles; two recommended community service, and one mandatory jail time as part of a deterrent strategy. One respondent recommended more police stings to catch sex trade clients.

- *“In the meantime, taking license plates, making arrests, having john's pick up the dangerous garbage left wearing the orange jumpsuits, is all good, as is mandatory treatment for those involved in the sex trade, perhaps talks from those who have left the sex trade etc.”*
- *Post 'John' photos in papers, they always get to remain anonymous, instead of the story always being about the sex trade worker make about the buyer of sex, they obviously need help to.*

Miscellaneous “Penalties” Ideas:

Respondents had other suggestions for penalties given to johns. One respondent recommended a penal colony, based on historic Australia, in the far North; another suggested looking to Singapore and Iran for guidance regarding laws against public intoxication, which they felt would undermine the sex trade. One respondent emphasized forced treatment for those STWs and johns who suffered from sexually transmitted infections. Two more respondents indicated that new penalties were needed, but offered no clear suggestions for what kind of punishments were necessary.

- *Create a new 'Australia' in the far north where incorrigibles are left to fend for themselves.*

Protection – Police, Community, and STW's

Many respondents (34) recommended more attention from the police to protect STWs from violence. Four regarded moving the sex trade to specific areas as an important part of this process. Several respondents (3) indicated that the Pickton case in Vancouver was an example of why there was a need for greater police protection of STWs. Two respondents suggested community policing (one compared it to the block parent program) as a good solution, and another respondent pointed to the “project kare” program in Edmonton as a good example. One respondent wanted to see increased police presence in locations of high density sex work, specifically the Shamrock hotel. One respondent also suggested that a campaign of public education, encouraging STWs to take their work off residential streets, would be an important part of increasing the safety of STWs.

- *“Get it out of neighbourhoods and into industrial areas with strong law enforcement for protection of workers and prevention of abuse and violence.”*
- *More community policing; reducing the paperwork burden placed on police officers, which requires them to spend much of their time on red tape instead of policing*
- *Protect the workers, both the men and women, from abuse. The industry will never be eliminated completely, so make sure that things such as the 'Pickton' events don't happen again in Canada.*

Move Sex Trade Out of Neighbourhoods

Eleven respondents argued that changing the legal strategy against the sex trade would include moving the trade out of residential neighbourhoods. Specifically, 2 respondents indicated Ramsay and one indicated Inglewood were neighbourhoods from which sex work needed to be removed. Four respondents insisted that more police involvement would have to be a part of this process.

- *Way more police presence is needed in Ramsay. There is so much illegal activity going on in the southeast corner it's disgusting. Sex, drugs and violence are so common by the Lilydale chicken plant and the Shamrock it's sad. Honestly, I wish law-makers could see what's going on.*

Anti-Legalization, in Favour of Elimination of Sex Trade Completely

Eight respondents wrote against legalization, arguing instead that the agenda for change should work towards eliminating the sex trade completely. Two respondents feared that legalizing prostitution would make it more attractive to young women in the future.

- *I think legalizing or protecting the sex trade will cause deep repercussions by unintentionally making the use of the sex trade acceptable, along with the counterculture that flourishes with it.*

Response to this Survey

Two of three respondents who offered their feelings about the survey itself indicated that they were pleased with its agenda, and believed it was “on the right track.” One respondent indicated they felt that further research was wasting time, and that action needed to be the primary agenda going forward.

- *I am somewhat skeptical of these Calgary grand strategies ... we've seen it with homelessness and housing with little result. The focus needs to be on funding and developing services and supports, and not wasting time on research, 'consultation' with stakeholders, etc. Action not more blab, blab, blab and intricate and dysfunctional communities and networks with all the usual suspects.*
- *If we could implement those initiatives that you have set out here in this survey, we will be on the right track. The most important thing I can do is keep telling my story, in hopes that it will change at least one life.*