

**CUISR:**

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Community – University Institute for Social Research

*Evaluation of the Activities of the  
Working Group to Stop  
the Sexual Exploitation of Children*

**by Wendy MacDermott**



*Building Healthy Sustainable Communities*

## **Community-University Institute for Social Research**

CUI SR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUI SR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluates applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUI SR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUI SR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

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by  
Wendy MacDermott



*Community – University Institute for Social Research*

289 John Mitchell Building  
118 Science Place  
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E2  
phone (306) 966-2121  
fax (306) 966-2122  
e-mail [cuisr.oncampus@usask.ca](mailto:cuisr.oncampus@usask.ca)  
[www.usask.ca/cuisr](http://www.usask.ca/cuisr)

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Community-University Institute for Social Research

University of Saskatchewan

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## **ABSTRACT**

This report describes an evaluation that was conducted to: identify gaps in, and strengths of, services delivered or administered through the Working Group to Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children (hereafter referred to as Working Group); provide recommendations to guide future activities; and demonstrate, to a limited extent, the effects of the Working Group's efforts. This Working Group is one of six that make up Saskatoon Communities for Children (SCC), a non-profit aggregate of government and community representatives dedicated to child safety in Saskatoon. The Working Group has undertaken many initiatives, including public awareness campaigns, The Safe House, lobbying for legislative change related to children's sexual exploitation, and outreach to street youth.

Interviews were conducted with Working Group members and youth currently and formerly involved in the sex trade to better understand the Working Group's activities, identify gaps and strengths, and assess the extent of its implementation and subsequent success. Working Group activities are described separately and recommendations provided for each.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In some circles, Saskatoon has been referred to as the capital for the child sex trade. In order to rid the city of this undesirable reputation, the Mayor's Task Force on Child Prostitution in Saskatoon was created. As part of this measure, SCC was asked to create an action and budget plan to tackle sexual exploitation of children on Saskatoon's streets. Acknowledged as a high priority issue, SCC established a Working Group representing those with an interest and stake in decreasing child sexual abuse by perpetrators and "johns." The structure of SCC and the Working Group is discussed later in this report.

The issue of children in the sex trade is also a societal issue. The community is involved, not only because we have moral and legal obligations to protect children, but because community members are buying children's services.

The terms "child sexual abuse" and "child (sexual) exploitation" are used in place of "child prostitution" in this and other documents produced by Saskatoon Communities for Children and the Working Group to Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children. Uncited direct quotes are derived from interviews with Working Group members and youths.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There is little peer-reviewed literature pertaining to child exploitation and only one Canadian content journal article was identified. Most available research is limited to anecdotal accounts by survivors and argues that child sexual exploitation is a social problem (Clark et al, 1999; Joseph, 1995; Sanders and Ackerman, 1990). Few solutions, however, are proposed.

Barrett and Beckett (1996) discussed disparities between children's needs and resources available to them. Multi-disciplinary approaches were cited as essential to service provision to this population. Change is necessary at both policy and practical levels. Drop-in centers, outreach, voluntary screening for sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy testing, and advice telephone lines have been identified as interventions that do not alienate children or adolescents. Although these interventions have been reported as helpful, the sample addressed in the literature is adolescents and adults, not children. Children may have different needs than those of older counterparts.

The United Nations and the United Nations' International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has declared that "child prostitution" is a universal phenomenon (Barrett and Beckett, 1996). In 1996, the United Nations published a report by the former Special Rapporteur of the Commission on "Sexual Exploitation of Children" through the sale of children, child "prostitution," and child pornography. This document outlined the international nature of child exploitation and encouraged each country to take action to protect its children. There was no specific mention of Canada in this report.

Documents such as "Sexual Exploitation of Children" and popular belief suggest that living conditions for young people on the streets in Canada is better than in other countries. This, however, was not indicated in Bagley's (1999) comparative research. This research contrasted conditions of children in the sex trade in Canada (Calgary and Edmonton) with those in the Philippines. **Table 1** summarizes these findings.

Although the study investigated girls in Calgary and Edmonton, they do not necessarily represent experiences in other Canadian cities. In Saskatchewan, the number of Aboriginal girls in the sex trade is disproportionately higher than in the general Canadian population. Local outreach data suggests that approximately 80-90% of girls in Saskatchewan's sex trade are Aboriginal.

## WORKING GROUP DESCRIPTION

The following sections describe various Working Group sub-groups, their activities, and perceived strengths and weaknesses. This data was gathered from documents and interviews with Working Group members representing various government partners and community agencies, as well as youth currently and formerly involved in the sex trade. Direct quotes are included where appropriate.

**Table 1. Comparison of Demographics for Calgary and Manilla Sex Trade Workers.**

Variables	Calgary (n=45)	Manilla (n=81)	Significance (<.05 is sign.)
Death of parent	6.7%	25.9%	p < .01
Step father +6 months	42.2%	3.7%	p < .001
Alcoholic (Step) Father	44.4%	25.9%	p < .05
Physical neglect/ extreme poverty	22.2%	50.0%	p < .01
Had run away	49.0%	0	p < .001
Physical abuse	55.5%	29.6%	p < .01
Sexual abuse by adult before “prostitution”	49.9%	9.9%	p < .001
Sexual abuse before “prostitution” (intercourse)	26.6%	3.7%	p < .001
Two + perpetrators before “prostitution”	22.2%	3.7%	p < .01
Mean age of first intercourse	11.4 yrs	14.8 yrs	p < .001
Mean age of becoming “prostitute”	15.4 yrs	15.2 yrs	ns
Physical and sexual Abuse	73.3%	34.6%	p < .001
Maximum no. of clients in a week			
100+	20.0%	0	p < .001
50-99	66.7%	3.7%	p < .001
25-49	11.1%	14.8%	
8-24	2.2%	60.5%	
< 8	0.0%	22.2%	
Mean number client/ week when full-time	56.1	9.2	p < .001

Note: Statistical significance (<.05) means that the differences are greater than can be expected by chance.

The Working Group to Stop the Sexual Exploitation of Children was created to address child sexual exploitation by pimps and “johns.” It is one of seven existing Working Groups under the umbrella of Saskatoon Communities for Children. The Working Group and SCC are comprised of persons from government, community, and private concerns. Creating a network that includes decision and policy makers, service providers, and community members is conducive to executing meaningful change. Change from within the community is key, but the best initiatives will stagnate if government interest and support is not obtained. **Figure 1** illustrates how this Working Group fits within the structure of SCC. **Figure 2** shows the Working Group’s composition, each sub-group’s goals, and of each sub-group’s recommendations.

The Working Group is broken down into sub-groups responsible for specific program components and goals. Although sub-groups are distinct, they address related issues and should work collaboratively where appropriate. Although the sub-groups have undergone a number of changes since 1997, each Working Group’s mandate has largely remained the same.

Figure 1. Organizational Diagram of Saskatoon Communities For Children.

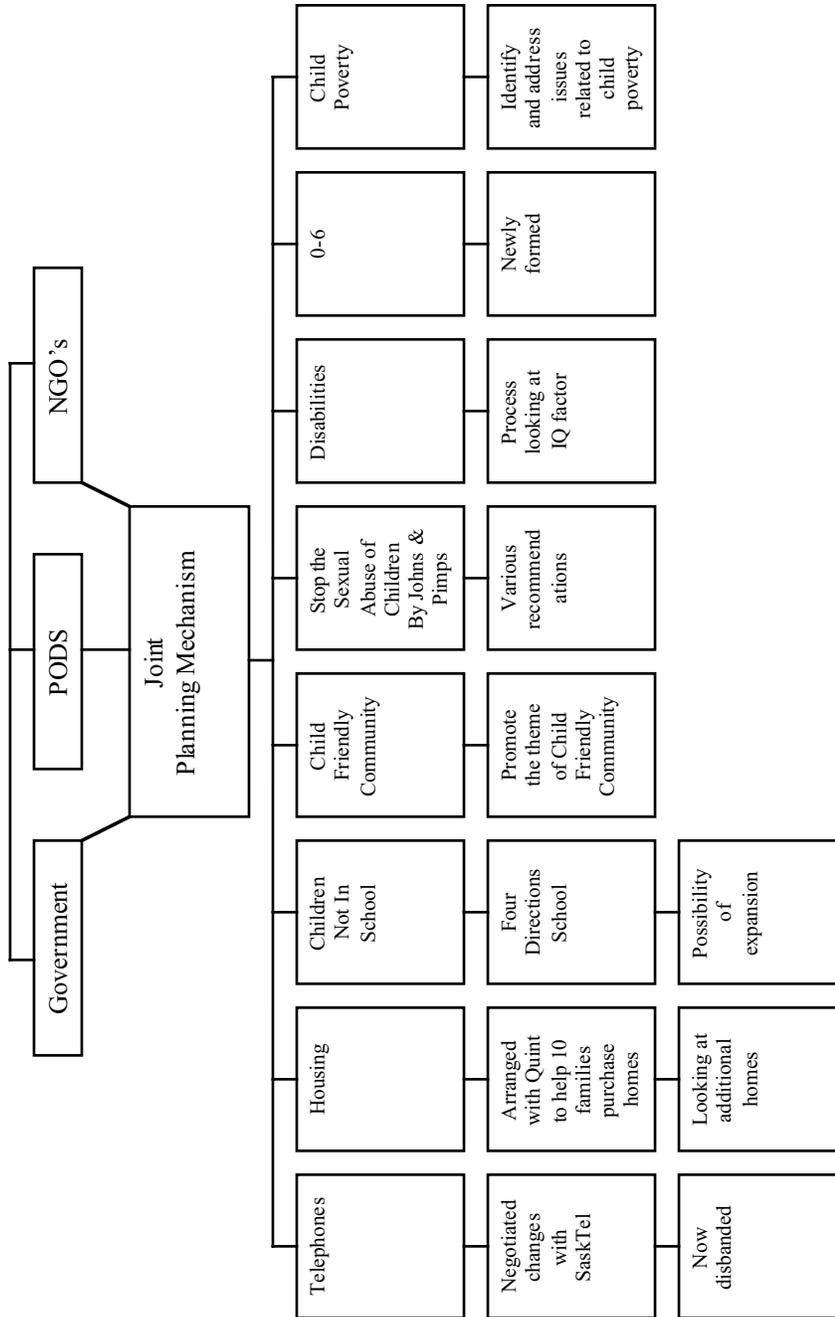
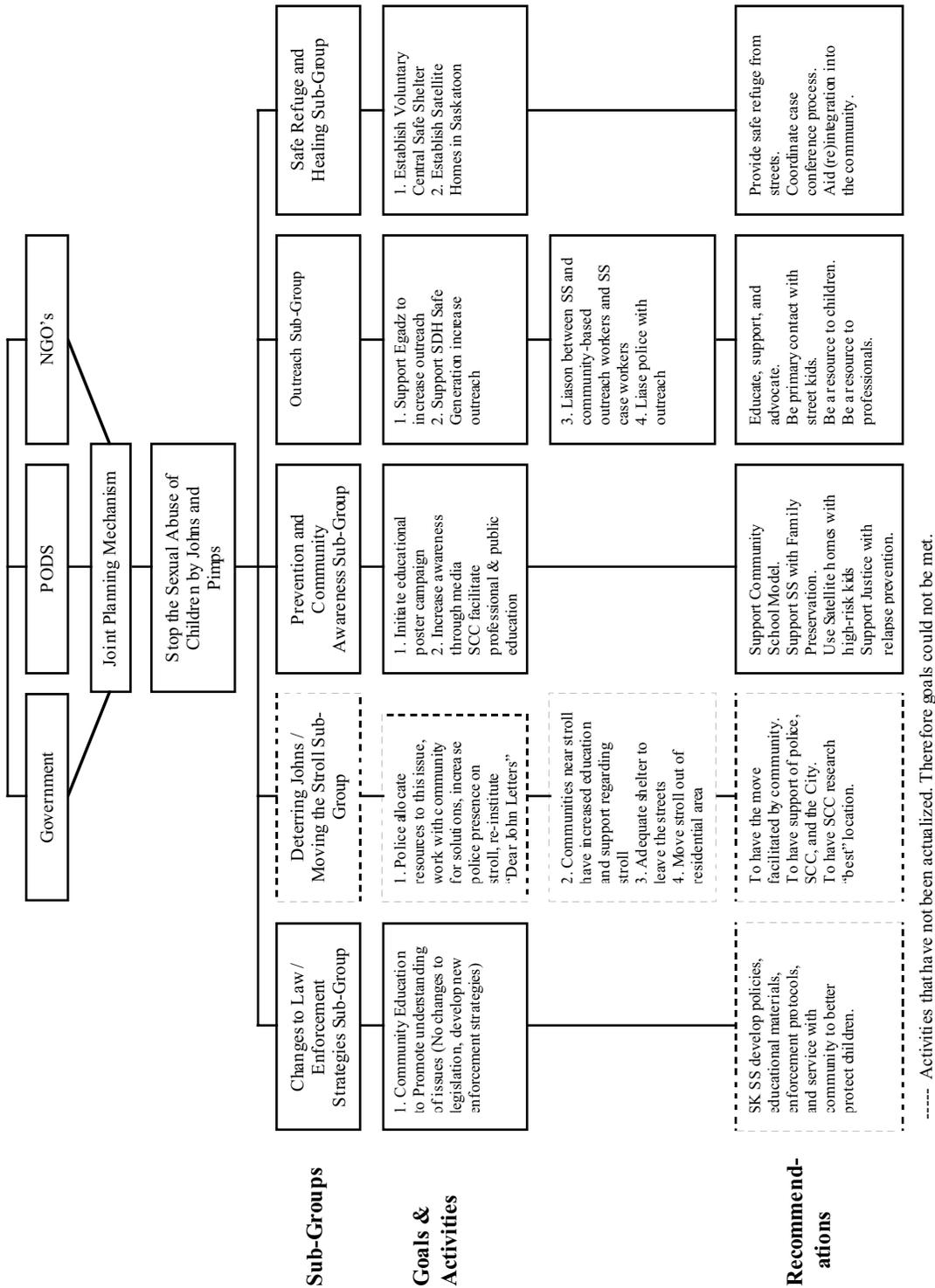


Figure 2. The Working Group’s Structure, Activities, and Recommendations.



## ***CHANGES TO LEGISLATION AND REINFORCEMENT STRATEGIES SUBGROUP***

This Working Group was developed because it was believed that existing legislation that mandated charging and incarcerating sexually exploited children was harmful, rather than helpful. Furthermore, it has been reported that charging and prosecuting perpetrators has been frustrating. It has also been reported that implementation of stiffer fines alone is an ineffective deterrent. Since incorporation of stiffer fines (\$25,000 maximum), only two perpetrators have been charged with the offense.

It is necessary for our community (especially law enforcement and the Justice System) to strategize and find creative ways of utilizing our Criminal Code to stop the sexual abuse of children by ‘johns’ and pimps. It is also important to recognize the limitations of our punishment-oriented system in deterring the activities of those in our community who are addicted to such aberrant behaviour as sexual contact with children. (Working Group ..., 1997: 24)

The Criminal Code of Canada states the following:

- Children under the age of 14 cannot give consent to sexual intercourse. Therefore adults engaging in sexual activities with a child 14 or under could be charged with sexual assault and receive a penalty of ten years in jail.
- Communicating with a child with the intent of “prostitution” is punishable by up to five years in jail.
- Pimps can be charged for living off the avails of the sex trade, punishable by up to fourteen years in prison.

The following are amendments made to the Criminal Code in 1997 to better protect children.

- Canadians who have sought sexual services of children in other countries can be prosecuted at home.
- Police are able to pose as children to detect those who would sexually exploit children. The amendment permits conviction when buyers believe the person to be under 18 years of age, regardless of actual age.
- Recognizing their vulnerability, children are now allowed to testify outside of court, videotape statements to use as evidence, and give account of events only once. The court will also be able to issue a publication ban to protect witnesses or complainants.

The provincial legislation that provides protection for children in need is the Child

and Family Services Act. The Act has been amended to: classify children exploited through the sex trade as in need of protection; allow for use of protective intervention orders for youth up to age 18 years, which could prohibit contact between youth and offenders; give courts discretion to accept hearsay evidence so that children up to age 18 years do not have to appear in court; criminalize encouraging a child to become involved in the sex trade; and increase perpetrators' penalties from a maximum of six months and \$2,000 to two years and \$25,000.

"In theory," one Working Group member commented, "these laws should address the issue because they appear to be directed at offenders, yet the reality is that when it comes to prosecution, it is easier to prosecute the kids." The social causes of children in the sex trade do not appear to be addressed with current legislation. Social causes would be better addressed "[i]f families had a living wage, kids had access to school programs geared toward their special needs, and adequate housing."

The Working Group has suggested looking at different areas of the Criminal Code to deter johns, such as greater enforcement of loitering, mischief, disturbance, interfering, and traffic laws. Indeed, a curfew bylaw for youth under 16 years of age is in effect. "Sting" operations to arrest a "prostitute" are much easier because undercover johns can be any age. Similarly, apprehending johns is difficult because youth under the age of 18 cannot be used in such operations.

Education, however, is the most powerful tool. Youth and children must be aware of their rights, what services exist, and how they can access those services. One Working Group member reported that "victim services for child sexual abuse did not consider the potential client base of kids in prostitution. There is no programming for them." This identifies a need for programming to address sex trade survivors' unique needs and for those who have not left.

This sub-group has provided recommendations that direct attention and energies toward creative enforcement of existing laws and updating others to deal with child sexual abuse. Working Group representatives spoke to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan via meetings with the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Sex Trade in March 2000.

One issue addressed was legislative approaches. Changes to Alberta legislation (Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act) in February 1999 were discussed at this meeting. The Alberta laws enable police to apprehend and confine children who were under 18 years of age and "suspected of prostitution" for 72 hours in a "safe house." This confinement is used as an assessment period to aid children, but is not intended to criminalize the child. Representatives of the Working Group and youth opposed this law. As one former youth sex trade worker stated, "The last thing I want is somebody that I despise dragging me somewhere, you know, and holding me against my will. ... If you're going to change you're going to do it ... and until you're ready to

do it, nobody can force you to. And the more you force somebody, the more hate is created.” On 24 July 2000, the courts overturned this law because it was viewed as violating children’s rights. Furthermore, it was reported that “this legislation does not begin to address the issue of child exploitation, but rather forces the problem underground” (Adrienne Clements, Executive Director of Safe the Children, quoted in the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix*, 25 July 2000). It should be noted that not all Working Group members oppose this law.

The Alberta legislation may not be appropriate for Saskatchewan because:

- In Alberta, strolls are not located in or near residential or school areas, and the proportion of girls involved in the sex trade is representative of large Alberta cities population.
- Girls in Calgary or Edmonton do not necessarily represent the experiences of girls in Saskatoon. In Saskatchewan, the number of Aboriginal girls in the sex trade is disproportionately higher than in the general population. Approximately 80-90% of girls in Saskatchewan’s sex trade are Aboriginal.
- Alberta cities also have support services in place for sex trade survivors, including extensive outreach and safe houses.

An additional concern among Working Group members is that children who are simply “on the streets” could be mistaken for “soliciting,” and forcibly and wrongly removed.

#### *Recommendations*

- **Continue communications with police and justice systems to increase awareness of effects of sex trade involvement and charging on youth.** Meet with officials from police and justice to expand officer and lawyer training, including the video, *It’s not prostitution, it’s child sexual abuse*, and have survivors share their stories.
- **Pursue educational events for youth pertaining to their legal rights and available services.** This information may be provided by outreach workers who have already established rapport with youth.
- **Invite more members to sit on this subgroup.** The number of Working group members sitting on this subcommittee is small. More people would facilitate the workload.
- **Have all agents of the justice system utilize the Child and Family Services Act as an option to protect children at risk, rather than arrest or charge them.**
- **Discuss the “Alberta law” with Working Group members.** This ensures that the Group has reached consensus and helps to develop rationales and explanations for its position *vis-a-vis* the “Alberta Law.” Issues should be revisited occasionally to ensure maintained consensus when there is membership high turnover.

- **Enhance services for survivors of sexual exploitation by providing existing service providers with information pertaining to survivors' unique needs.** Providing more in-depth information to services for children at risk (e.g. drug rehabilitation), avoids duplication, and further informs the community.
- **Invite representatives from police, justice, and legal sectors to speak to the Working Group to update members about recent or potential changes to legislation.**

The recommendations presented in this report do not fall solely within the confines of Working Group activities. Some recommendations may need to be undertaken at other levels (e.g. Central Planning Steering Committee, specific organizations). Therefore, the Working Group should direct recommendations to the appropriate body for action. Further, all recommendations are contingent on funding. Therefore, the Working Group can only be responsible for recommendations for which adequate resources are available. The Working Group will need to prioritize recommendations based on utility, feasibility, and resources.

### ***DETERRING JOHNS/MOVING THE STROLL SUBGROUP***

The lives of community members residing near the stroll (a non-static area) are disrupted by activities pertaining to the sex trade. Saskatoon's stroll is currently in a residential area within range of three elementary schools. Pimps and johns have been observed propositioning young children around school areas. Perpetrators are commonly reported as white, married, and middle class males. Intolerance of this behaviour must originate in the community neighbourhoods directly affected by the disturbance. However, support must be sought from other neighbourhoods as this is not solely an "inner city" issue. The Deterring Johns Subgroup underscores education as integral to their efforts.

Efforts to move the stroll are not underway at this time. However, a number of prerequisites to moving the stroll were proposed and are underway, such as providing safe shelter to leave the streets (The Safe House) and community education. Moving the stroll is an extremely sensitive issue and it must be made clear that moving the stroll does not condone child sexual exploitation in another area. However, moving the (adult) stroll to a non-residential area may protect and dissuade children from becoming involved in the trade.

### ***OUTREACH SUBGROUP***

Street children have often suffered abuses prior to entering street life. Interactions with adults, especially those in authority, have been marked by violence, betrayal, and abuse of power. As a result, many children are mistrusting and fearful of adults, particularly those in positions of power. For many children on the streets, interaction with an outreach worker is the only positive contact they have with an adult. The role of the

outreach worker is “to form a bridge between the children on the street and the world that is so frightening to them” (Working Group ..., 1997: 18). Youth currently involved in the sex trade credited outreach workers as the most helpful resource available to them: “Egadz has helped because they care, no matter if I’m stoned or drunk. But they need to be out there more, more hours, longer, but they say they don’t have the money for it.”

Two outreach programs, Egadz Downtown Youth Center (Egadz) Staff and Saskatoon District Health’s Street Outreach Public Health Services, operate in Saskatoon. The Working Group identified insufficient resources in terms of staff as outreach workers’ primary obstacle. Therefore, the Working Group recommends support for additional staff positions and coordination with Social and Police Services.

Social Services provided funding to be distributed for outreach at the Working Group’s discretion. Funding was provided to Egadz for an outreach worker’s salary for three years. Public Health Services also received some initial funding to hire two youth and one survivor part-time to work as assistants and conduct research.

Outreach to children on the streets was increased “to deal with the number of people involved in the trade and with addictions, to steer them into services they needed. Often they did not come into an office and were not accessing services.” Outreach workers’ time was stretched to capacity, and it was felt that a number of children and youth were not having their needs met. Prior to increasing outreach staff, existing services could not consistently provide beneficial services. For example, Egadz now has a staff person who accompanies youth to court and provides them with information and support through the process. Street outreach workers’ hours are far from conventional because they attempt to address the needs of children in the sex trade in their own environment. According to proponents of community psychology, it is essential to provide services to disenfranchised groups in their own environment (Duffy and Wong, 2000). One respondent reported that “it is very important that we are mobile and ‘go out’ to where children are. Our hours are not conventional office hours. When they are out and about, we have a better chance of making contact.”

Working Group members reported that increasing outreach on Egadz’s service delivery and street involved youth “has deepened the amount of work they are able to do with each child/youth. One of the struggles I experience [as an outreach worker] is that I have contact but struggle to find more time for follow up and to accompany children. [Being an outreach worker] has enabled them to increase support and be out more to help children.” Furthermore, added support has enabled Egadz to provide consistent service by spending more time on the streets with youth and children. The overburdened workload is now shared with another person, decreasing risk of burnout. In short, increased outreach translates into expanded hours of operation and more in-depth follow up.

Street Outreach Public Health Services funding had a number of positive effects. It served to reintegrate one survivor of the sex trade into the workforce and provide her with confidence to pursue her goals and dreams. This work “got this woman involved in Working Group and she has been active since then. We were able to bring [this] survivor into workforce, [and provide] work experience for resume which has led to more jobs more contacts with government service providers in community.”

Although increased outreach effects are seen as beneficial, there is no assurance that the increased position will continue to receive financial support. Not only is funding precarious, but outreach workers are underpaid and their work undervalued. Despite increases, interview respondents reported a dire need for more outreach. Increased coordination of services pertaining to children exploited by the sex trade is also necessary. As one Working Group member reported, further integration of services and funds is needed: “We need to use ‘wrap around’ processes. Informal and formal supports have to pool budgets if we are going to effect change. Budgets and efforts need to be decompartmentalized. There needs to be a global budget for projects.”

It has also been recommended from multiple sources that youth survivors be more actively involved in efforts such as peer support. Children on the street regularly request “more people [who] have lived that kind of life [because] only they really understand.”

The Safe House outreach was considered as an option to increased outreach and to serve as liaison between street children and The Safe House. An outreach worker affiliated with The Safe House increases its safety and salience. Conversely, a new outreach effort takes time to gain children’s trust and credibility within the system. Further funding and infrastructure is necessary to implement these services. Furthermore, children and youth report trusting services presently available. Duplication of services should be avoided, while enhancement of existing services to encompass The Safe House should be encouraged.

#### *Recommendations*

- **Continue existing support to outreach efforts** (Egadz and Street Outreach Public Health Services Street Outreach, Public Health). This recommendation is based on mutual agreement with these organizations. It is further recommended that providing information to children and youth on the street about The Safe House become a part of their mandates. Services between The Safe House and outreach services should be integrated more fully as both seek to meet the needs of sex trade children. If such integration of services is not possible, The Safe House should pursue its own self-contained outreach program. Many children and youth reported that they knew little or nothing about The Safe House.
- **Outreach workers with street experience should be recruited.** Youth reported that although outreach workers were caring, without first-hand knowledge work-

ers could not fully understand the difficulties. Gay and lesbian workers should also be available to serve as role models and provide guidance and support.

- **Children and youth in the sex trade, past and present, should be consistently involved in outreach activities and planning committees to better meet the needs of the children that the programs are intended to serve.**

### *THE SAFE HOUSE AND HEALING*

A primary obstacle to children's leaving the streets is that they have no place safe to go. The Safe House provides children involved in the sex trade with an escape from the streets and a transition service. Children are invited to stay up to 30 days in The Safe House, where they receive three meals per day and are encouraged to (re)establish healthy patterns, such as sleeping at night rather than the day. Children do not have numerous regulations or activities imposed on them. They are free to participate in activities with staff, such as playing cards, yard work, or housework. Books, videos, and art supplies are also available. Voluntary involvement is paramount. Children come to the house of their own accord and are free to leave when they wish. Some Working Group members see this flexibility as an asset; others see it as a liability. For children who have lived on the streets with little or no structure, imposed rules may deter them from accessing beneficial services.

It has generally been recognized that The Safe House provides a safe place for "kids who would not otherwise have anywhere to stay." The Safe House has been reported to have good police protection via a police car patrolling the area. Police protection, however, has been identified as a possible barrier to accessibility for street children who do not trust, or perhaps are hiding from, police.

Consensus on The Safe House's strengths and weaknesses was difficult to achieve. Some respondents reported that it was too far from the stroll and therefore not easily accessible, while others reported that it was too close to the stroll and that children were unable to "leave the stroll behind." Some regarded the flexibility and freedom that youth and children have in The Safe House as a strength, while others argued that more structure and treatment should be a component. Yet an excellent indicator of The Safe House's success is that children and youth refer friends and acquaintances because it had helped them.

Safe House staff reported the following benefits to youth: "They have benefited in terms of regular meals, sleeping patterns, cleanliness, hygiene, learning to interact with and trust adults, seeing what a normal home should be like."

According to respondents, The Safe House's benefits have been manifold. Street Outreach Public Health Services and Egadz are provided with a resource for children who do not seem to fit within the confines of existing services. Mental Health and Social Services have referred children and youth to The Safe House as an intermediary

and safe place to stay. Respondents also commented that The Safe House is especially valuable during colder weather because children have greater residence options at night during the summer.

Involving youth has been difficult given limited resources. While youth have been involved from the beginning, the current group are not those who began. Involvement fluctuated as a result of insufficient money for transportation and childcare. Although youth were involved in The Safe House's planning stages, it was felt by some that children and youth could have been more integrally involved. Therefore, this group's needs may not have been adequately addressed. Furthermore, in order to increase the likelihood of successful social programs, the target population should be included in all phases of implementation to instill a sense of ownership or empowerment (Duffy and Wong, 2000). Conversations with youth confirmed that they did not feel involved in the Working Group's initial stages. This drawback, however, has improved and more youth are becoming involved in the planning and activities of the Working Group. It is important to acknowledge that youth involvement in planning is integral, not a fringe benefit. By fully involving children and youth, The Safe House would be move closer to create trust and safety, and to facilitate access and utilization.

Capacity was another identified Safe House limitation. It was reported that one night two sisters arrived to a nearly full Safe House. Only one would have been able to stay; instead they both left. Staff salary was also identified as a limitation. Low pay leads to frequent staff turnover, making programming and trust-building difficult. On the other hand, as one respondent reported, the more people who work with The Safe House, the more who are educated and aware of the issues.

The Safe House's age access limit—16 years and younger—is also viewed as prohibitive. Some respondents felt that more youth would access The Safe House if the target age were raised. Another difficulty is that staff must notify Social Services when children under age 16 years arrive. Many children do not want anyone to know where they are and feel their privacy violated when Social Services are notified. Notification, however, is necessary in compliance with the Child Protection Act. Further conversations should seek to obtain “exception to the rule” status for The Safe House.

Older youth are also in need of follow up services. Currently, however, the Working Group's mandate is those up to age 15 years. Increasing the target age is an issue under consideration and alternate proposals are being developed for presentation to SCC's Steering Committee.

Long-term healing needs are also an issue. Satellite homes (similar to foster homes) are longer-term homes for youth who wish to “straighten out.” Staff have specialized training to aid youth formerly involved in the sex trade. Eight Satellite homes were proposed and one was funded. Therefore, this component has not been implemented as initially intended. The Saskatoon Tribal Council Urban First Nations Services Inc. is

currently in negotiations with Social Services to clarify details pertaining to payment and classification.

*Recommendations*

- **Discuss the “Alberta law” with Working Group members.** This ensures that the Group has reached consensus and helps to develop rationales and explanations for its position *vis-a-vis* the “Alberta Law.” Issues should be revisited occasionally to ensure maintained consensus when there is high membership turnover.
- **Increase the maximum age of youth allowed to stay in The Safe House from sixteen to eighteen until appropriate facilities are established for older youth.** Needs of the current target age, however, should not be neglected—priority should be given to children under sixteen.
- **Provide more information about The Safe House in an appropriate format to children and youth in the sex trade.** Many children and youth either have no information about The Safe House or are misinformed as to its nature. Information in the style of business cards could be handed out to youth by outreach workers.
- **Pursue conversations with Social Services (or responsible bodies) regarding reporting requirements of the Child Protection Act.** Such conversations would be intended to enable children to access The Safe House while maintaining their confidentiality. Involving youth in these conversations is strongly recommended.
- **Work in partnership with Addictions Services and support programs.** The Safe House could serve as liaison between youth and services, such as rehabilitation, to more easily access such services.
- **Provide transportation to and from The Safe House if requested.** Explore various options (e.g. a taxi account) to ensure accessible transportation.
- **Consider engaging volunteers and practicum students to expand services to enable more “off site” activities.** Volunteers and students would enable two people to remain at The Safe House and another to transport youth or attend activities and meetings.
- **Develop proactive strategies to inform and involve survivors of the sex trade in The Safe House.** Roles could include staff, peer supporters. Such youth could serve as role models, ensure that programming is appropriate, and empower youth and themselves.
- **Develop policy to manage Safe House over-capacity by developing partnerships with other agencies (e.g. YWCA, Satellite homes).**
- **Continue to evolve and be receptive to change at The Safe House.** Policies, how-

ever, should be created to address issues in the future to ensure consistent service delivery. For example, if entry age changes, implement new policies to reflect change in admission age.

- **Support negotiations between the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Department of Social Services to develop and implement Satellite homes.**

### ***PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS SUBGROUP***

Education and awareness of this societal problem is woven into all other subgroup activities. The myth that this is an “inner city” issue needs to be dispelled. Racism, sexism, and poverty are at the crux of child exploitation. Clarifying myths, identifying causes, and assessing and advocating victim populations’ needs is necessary to effect social change. A poster/sign campaign was initiated to discourage sexual predators and johns from the strolls, to increase awareness that child sexual exploitation was an issue in Saskatoon, and to convey that sexual exploitation of children was not tolerated. These signs were posted in the area of the stroll. Such messages are also intended to deter both johns from seeking services and children from entering the trade.

The sign campaign was devised to reach perpetrators and potential perpetrators, children on the streets, and the general public. At present, there is no way to monitor the campaign’s effectiveness. However, some respondents felt that the signs were deterring johns. One respondent reported that the johns felt watched and uncomfortable. Community Associations have become more empowered and actively take on anti-john campaigns. The media has also become interested and more aware of issues and activities. As a result of the signs, three articles were published in the Saskatoon *Free Press*, the Saskatoon *Star Phoenix*, and the Calgary *Herald* (Saskatchewan Edition).

The sign campaign, however, faces obstacles to optimal implementation. Messages on the signs must be changed regularly to maintain novelty otherwise they fade into the background and go unnoticed. Finding a location for signs has also been very difficult because of city by-laws that limit sign posting and vandalism to signs on private property. It was also reported that signs needed to be posted on areas outside the stroll to reach the broader community and johns who generally do not live near the stroll. Cost of producing signs is also prohibitive. Finally, only a small part of the original sign campaign was implemented.

A poster campaign was introduced as a provincial initiative coordinated through Social Services and the Justice Department. This initiative has been re-introduced and is seeking funding. Members of the Working Group supported this initiative.

Parent Patrols, organized through advice from community organizations in the inner city area, are a group of concerned citizens who walk the stroll during evenings. It was hoped that neighbourhood safety would increase for children and residents. A second intent of the patrols was to “put on notice to the broader community that the average

citizen would be intolerant of children or anyone targeted for violent purposes.” A third hope was that, by partnering with police, a partnership between community and police would develop to address the pressing needs of children. The police supported these patrols by providing volunteers with first aid training. Volunteer patrollers also check-in with police before and after each shift, and police are called in the event of a disturbance or “situation.” The Patrols do not attempt to intervene or prevent crime. Respondents reported that they had been encouraged to initiate similar programs across the city to make Saskatoon a safe place to live, particularly at night. The model employed is not new, having been adapted from existing park patrols that received positive feedback and support.

This program, however, is not without limitations. Because of the inner city population’s transient nature, there is a fluctuating supply of volunteers on hand. Each year new volunteers need to be recruited and trained because those from the previous year have moved out of the area or become too busy. Recruitment occurs in the local schools and through community associations. Limiting recruitment to inner city residents may overlook those outside the downtown core who may be willing or interested in volunteering. Community Associations are also less involved than originally planned, slowing progress. Although volunteerism remains a deficiency, those involved are strong leaders and the training is beneficial. One participant summed up the state of the Parent Patrols: “we just need more people.”

Another activity to increase awareness of the Working Group and child exploitation was a one page information sheet explaining that child sexual exploitation is not prostitution. This page was inserted into 78,000 Saskatoon home and business utility bills in spring, 2000. However, few, including Working Group members, recalled the information sheets. Therefore, the success of this effort is uncertain.

Education efforts have been undertaken to inform the public about child sexual exploitation, including production of a video, *It’s Not Child Prostitution, It’s Child Sexual Abuse*. The video was created to increase community understanding that children are being sexually abused on Saskatoon’s streets, and that the children are not there by choice. The video was intended to recognize children as victims and survivors, not deviants or criminals. The video was part of a community awareness initiative to build support and lay groundwork for programs to aid survivors. It was hoped that the video could be used to reach a broad audience through television, schools, workshops, and presentations.

Working Group members reported that responses to the video were very positive, in part because there are few resources dealing with the issue of child sexual exploitation by pimps and johns. Most who viewed the video did not realize that there was such a problem in Saskatoon. Students have undertaken class projects on the issue, thereby informing themselves, their teachers, parents, and classmates. Working Group members

felt that those who viewed the video took away the intended messages, namely, “that it is intolerable, it is exploitation of children, and that sympathy and empathy are needed for survivors.”

Because the first video was intended to be short and introductory, The Working Group plans to develop a “second stage” video. This would address underlying issues of child sexual exploitation, such as poverty, discrimination, and unhealthy families. The first video cost approximately \$25,000 to produce. A comparable amount needs to be raised to produce another video. Presently, no funding is available.

Working Group experiences regarding the video were positive. Relationships with the University of Saskatchewan’s Audio Visual Department were developed, and the virtues of collaborative efforts were reinforced. One fault was identified, namely insufficient opportunity to debrief with youth who shared their stories in the video. Therefore, it was difficult to ensure that all youth’s experiences were positive. Although the ramifications for all youth cannot be known, one requested a copy of the video, while another requested a reference letter regarding her involvement.

Another limitation was that, although youth were interviewed, no pimps or johns (current or past) were willing to come forward to speak. On the other hand, there was concern that pimps might glorify their lives and muddle the message. Involvement by legal and Justice representatives was inconsistent. Consequently, edits were necessary because of dissatisfaction with initial versions.

Members felt that the Working Group benefited from increased exposure of its work. The video also identified sympathetic community groups and agencies. Regarding the community, one member reported that, “The video had such general information that there has been a slow shift in people and their beliefs that children on the street are victims. In the long run, the children will benefit.” The following was reported pertaining to the video’s effects on youth involved in the sex trade: “[C]hildren have benefited in the sense that the public is not so judgmental. If they’ve seen the video, they’re not as harsh.”

The video has been aired twice on the television program “Indigenous Circle,” and on Aboriginal Peoples Television Network and CFQC-Saskatoon. The video has also been presented to church groups, classrooms (university and high school), a teacher’s conference, service clubs (e.g. Kiwanis and Optimist Women), and public showings. The video is also used for Social Services training. Police were supposed to use the video for training, but this has not transpired. Target audiences who were not reached include individuals in legal and justice sectors, adult males (who are the majority of perpetrators and pimps), areas of the city that appear to be “less affected” by child sexual exploitation, and school children (elementary and junior high age). One Working Group member reported that, “We thought the schools would be happy and willing to embrace. They don’t want to have a negative effect on the students. [We have] shown it to teachers, but still not in the schools per se.”

*Recommendations*

- **Change signs regularly (approximately every six months) to maintain their novelty and increase the likelihood of being noticed.**
- **Post signs throughout the city to increase awareness for those not in the stroll's immediate vicinity.**
- **Seek funding to fully implement the sign campaign as intended.**
- **Seek funding to implement a new poster campaign.**
- **Consider honourariums for volunteers to increase and maintain volunteer participation in Parent Patrols.**
- **Assign a coordinator to organize Parent Patrols and maintain momentum.**
- **Recruit volunteers from throughout the city.** This could be of value because people with higher incomes are more “able” to volunteer time, and people in other areas of the city would become more aware of the issues and take a vested interest in what happens in all areas of Saskatoon.
- **Identify a home base for Parent Patrol volunteers.** Identifying a safe and warm meeting place would provide incentive to volunteers if a social atmosphere and sense of community were created.
- **Seek funding to develop a series of more specific videos.** For example, such videos could deal with issues such as child sexual exploitation or existing services in Saskatoon.
- **More formal and comprehensive debriefing with youth after interviews or experiences with the Working Group is needed.**
- **If videos are developed, include youth input throughout the process when possible and appropriate.**
- **Seek funding to continue circulating the video, *It's Not Child Prostitution, It's Sexual Abuse*.** Focus on target groups who may most benefit (e.g. school teachers, service clubs, police officers, counselors, policy makers).
- **Continue to pursue this strategy, promoting the video in the public and Catholic school systems.**
- **Contact the Parent Council to discuss showing the video in schools.**
- **Continue to pursue other public awareness efforts, such as public service announcements and media campaigns.**

## **WORKING GROUP ADMINISTRATION**

### ***WHAT DO YOU THINK HAVE BEEN THE GREATEST STRENGTHS OF THE WORKING GROUP?***

Many respondents identified as a strength the Working Group membership's diverse backgrounds because decisions are informed by people from many levels directly and indirectly affected by those choices. One member commented, "With representatives from government and community, we have more access to decision and policy changes because we have a direct voice to government."

An advantage of the inter-agency approach is that numerous organizations collaborate, rather than compete, for limited resources. Partnerships, such as those with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, Department of Social Services, and the Justice Department, also enable a more representative understanding of issues. In short, many voices are stronger than one. Participation by community agencies and government is integral to achieving goals pertaining to social change. Involvement by multiple perspectives should continue to ensure efficiency. For example, one respondent reported, "We duplicate services if we are not talking to each other."

An extension of the multi-sectored approach is genuine caring and concern expressed by this diverse group. Furthermore, inclusion of youth formerly involved in the sex trade is a strength. Without the voices of those who have been exploited, programs and interventions may not meet the target population's needs.

Another identified strength is the decision-making model based on consensus. Consensus decision-making enables stakeholders to provide their position, discuss issues, and execute decisions when all are in agreement. This process is often critiqued. Working Group members, however, find it valuable because all members will support a decision and work towards achieving the goal. The fruits of this labour are a common vision and informed decisions. Consensual decision-making becomes difficult when stakeholders are not present at meetings or uninformed of upcoming and previous discussions.

### ***WHAT DO YOU THINK HAVE BEEN THE GREATEST WEAKNESSES OF THE WORKING GROUP?***

Many identified weaknesses were also results of the group's strengths. For example, it was reported that the diverse backgrounds and responsibilities of those involved makes scheduling and time commitment a problem. Although meetings are chosen for late afternoon, no time can accommodate all.

Membership turnover is another difficulty associated with community and government involvement. Without consistent membership and attendance, decisions can-

not be made nor proposed activities initiated. Community and government agencies should commit one consistent member to the Working Group to maintain its momentum.

Many government and community agencies send representatives to the Working Group as a task related to their positions. However, for community members such as youth, attending meetings is an accrued expense. They need to secure child care and incur costs of transportation to attend meetings. For this reason, the Working Group hopes to continue to reimburse childcare and transportation costs and provide honourariums for youths' time. The Working Group needs to continue to support youth in terms of literacy levels, create a safe environment at meetings, and encourage youth-driven initiatives.

Along the same lines, decision-making is complicated because different organizations have varied mandates. For example, police are committed to crime prevention. Therefore, they apprehend girls involved in the sex trade because they are breaking the law. The Working Group, however, is opposed to criminalizing sexually exploited girls. This conflict can only be addressed through upfront communication and brainstorming regarding alternatives to incarceration and creative methods for apprehending or deterring johns. Trust is essential to facilitate such conversations. One member reported that, "we need to build more trust within the group. Things would go more smoothly if everyone trusted that [we] all were committed to the same thing." Therefore, it is important for each member to voice the agenda or mandate that they bring from their parent organization to avoid suspicion and foster trust and understanding at the table. Although differing mandates render co-operation difficult, it is essential to highlight that the many organizations involved are well intentioned and working toward the same ultimate goal.

Another shortcoming that results in potential imbalance of voice is youth underrepresentation, particularly those involved or formerly involved in the sex trade. Only a small number of girls are involved with the Working Group. Representatives who work with youth have stated that change without the direct input of those involved is disempowering. Furthermore, programs may miss their target if youth are not consulted. Involvement with the Working Group could provide empowering experiences for youth who have left the trade but may also help youth currently involved to feel that there are people who care and are trying to help. Lack of youth involvement may account for why one respondent felt that the Working Group was "too government-heavy."

One identified weakness could be remedied with relative ease. Multiple members reported that monthly meetings could be more productive but for membership turnover and poor attendance. When members miss meetings, discussions, and decisions, it is necessary to update them to have fruitful discussion. This is time-consuming and repetitive for those who have attended previous meetings.

Meetings are also too long and tend to get off topic. These difficulties could be remedied by providing minutes and agendas from previous meetings approximately

one week before an upcoming meeting. Furthermore, more directed facilitation of meetings would aid in maintaining discipline. An introductory kit has been suggested to brief new members regarding organization structure, goals, activities, and recently discussed issues. This kit would be advisable if it could be created at minimal cost, so as to not displace needed funds elsewhere.

A final weakness, inadequate funding, is not an internal shortcoming, but nevertheless influences abilities to provide an information kit to new members, provide honourariums to participating youth and community members, and the extent to which activities can be successfully implemented.

### *Recommendations*

- **Review meeting procedures and clarify meeting expectations at an upcoming Working Group meeting.** In particular, meeting length, times, and more directive facilitation should be addressed. This does not preclude flexibility, but honours needs of busy people.
- **Request that member agencies appoint one representative to regularly attend meetings.** Time allowance for meetings with the Working Group should be calculated into the individual's workload. Members who attend only sporadically detract from the efficiency and morale of the Working Group.
- **Prioritize issues at the beginning of each meeting in the event that some members have to leave early.**
- **Provide minutes from the last Working Group meeting one week before the next meeting.** This should allow people sufficient time to review and remember contents of the minutes.
- **Create an orientation kit for new members.** This should include minutes of previous meetings, a description of Saskatoon Communities for Children and the Working Group's position therein, a description of the sub-groups and their activities, and clearly defined expectations of members and meetings. Much of this information could be extracted from this report.
- **Continue with consensus decision making processes.** Procedures, however, should be created to deal with decisions where consensus cannot be reached.
- **Engage in "trust building" activities.** Such activities should include divulging organizational mandates or agendas and open communication (e.g. active listening).
- **Continue to foster youth involvement.** Youth involvement has been identified as a strength. Therefore, planning and activities in all areas of the Working Group should seek to involve youth.

- **Review recommendations to develop an action plan to guide future activities.** Reviewing recommendations and assessing priorities enables the Working Group to direct efforts more efficiently, demonstrates its progress, and may renew members' commitment.
- **Secure funding for additional staff and administrative supplies.** These recommendations cannot be acted on unless more staff is available. More administrative dollars are necessary for the group to be run more efficiently and effectively.
- **Where appropriate, work in collaboration with other Saskatoon Communities for Children Working Groups.** Other Working Groups may be addressing similar issues. Coordinating efforts with these Groups avoids duplication of services and create a greater sense of community.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This section describes the process by which the evaluation was conducted and the questionnaire and interview questions were constructed. A series of meetings were organized to refine research objectives, target audiences, and relevant questions. The first meeting was semi-structured. An interview guide was created to gain insight into program components and the best methods to conduct the evaluation. Primary activities to be investigated were the poster campaign, The Safe House, the video and other educational presentations, and the Parent Patrols. These activities were investigated because outcomes and activities were tangible and thus measurable. Working Group members' experiences were also captured by this research.

From this information, a public awareness questionnaire was created. It was decided that general public awareness of Working Group activities would be more meaningful than improved attitudes because there were no previous responses for comparison. The questionnaire's primary intent was to determine the extent to which the public was aware the Working Group's activities. This awareness could indicate implementation effectiveness. The membership wanted to learn the demographics of people receiving information about the Working Group's activities, and what areas needed further attention. A draft of this questionnaire was created and provided to a number of people (representatives of the Working Group, a colleague, and a community member) for revision. These efforts aimed to ensure that the questions represented what the Working Group wanted to know, were soundly constructed, and were user-friendly. The questionnaire was modified according to feedback.

There was a very low return on the initial mail-out. The questionnaire was shortened and sent out again to the same sample, along with a new cover letter. Results of the revised questionnaire will appear in a future report.

The second method of evaluation was interviewing members of the Working Group.

A database of interview questions was created relating to each program component. This method was chosen because different Working Group members were involved in varying degrees. Therefore, interviews were individualized based on each member's primary areas of familiarity. These interviews were conducted by telephone or in-person, based on participants' schedules and inclinations. To ensure validity, the same above described verification procedure was used for the interview question database.

A third evaluative component was in conducting a group meeting (focus group) with former youth sex trade workers involved with the Working Group. Again, questions were prepared and reviewed by the means described above. Suggestions by Ennew (1997) and Van Beers (1999), who have conducted extensive research with "street and working children," were considered. This meeting was conducted in a comfortable setting with food supplied. The setting was informal and participants received an honourarium for participation. A portion of this meeting was set aside to discuss interviews that these young women would be conducting with children involved in the sex trade. Results appear in **Appendix A**.

The final mode of evaluation was to interview children and youth on the streets to determine the role that the Working Group plays (or does not play) in their lives, discuss obstacles to leaving the streets, and determine what services would be most helpful. Interviewers, the young women mentioned above, were taught methods and aided with question construction. Interviews were conducted in person or by telephone. Results are summarized in **Appendix B**.

## **DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

The flexibility and needs-driven nature of the Working Group is demonstrated through activities that have risen from recommendations by the population that they are intended to serve, as well as the governing bodies to whom they are accountable. In March, 2000, the Legislature met to discuss the issue of child exploitation through the sex trade. The Working Group was invited to speak to this matter. In July, an interim report (Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, 2000) was released, addressing the issue as serious and drawing attention to areas that should be considered, such as follow-up (or longer term) service provision. In response to this inquest, The Safe House advisory committee, which includes members of the Working Group, began discussions regarding how children might be accommodated after an initial 30 days at The Safe House. The Working Group has already begun to consider additional recommendations and hopes to implement them to devise an action plan for the upcoming year. This intent, however, is restrained by financial shortages. In order for the Working Group to optimally meet the needs of sexually exploited children, they need more administrative support, operational funds, and must develop a concrete and manageable working plan. This document should serve to guide priority setting and decision-making, thereby facilitating the planning process.

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## Appendix A. Focus Group Results.

A focus group was conducted with three young women formerly involved in the sex trade, aged 16 to 27. The young women described the activities of the Working Group, helpful services, unhelpful services, obstacles they faced in leaving the streets, and proposals to improve services. This focus group was conducted in one woman's home, and we met for supper. The young women were given the questions before the focus group met and presumably had a chance to reflect on their answers. The meeting lasted two hours and accomplished a great deal. The following are the young women's categorized responses.

Questions were asked about specific activities of the Working Group to Stop the Sexual Exploitation of children. Each activity was discussed separately and is presented below.

*The Sign campaign.* "Signs have no effect. The guys who pick [us] up have no remorse, no conscience, they don't realize they're taking someone's child. It brings awareness into the community, but it should be on the East side, where the guys come from, so they see that they are sexually abusing someone. It would be more effective if they had to see it everyday."

*Increased outreach.* "There should be outreach through The Safe House. There should be referral and assessment [through The Safe House]. There should be outreach to establish more personal rapport with girls so they don't feel stupid going. There should be referrals to counseling and more coordination between organizations out there. They all need to pull together to help exit the trade, but there is no network. There should be services available 24 hours to get needles, condoms, something like shoppers that is always open. Outreach efforts should employ more survivors, not only educated PhD's. We've been there and we understand, you can't really help if you don't understand."

*The Safe House.* "The time to stay at The Safe House should be longer. They should have someone who is specifically there to talk to. It is running pretty efficiently, [but] it needs to go onto the street through outreach. Age should be increased to 18. Otherwise, they're doing a great job."

*Legislation.* "Legislation needs to be changed to make prostitution illegal. Men who commit the crime should be charged with a minimum of 6 months and not a maximum of 6 months. And not just fined. Men who commit rape get years, [and] this is rape. More funding is needed to support exit and a plan to help, rather than criminalize. We need training, employment, and school. We need to create a home [for children and youth leaving the streets]."

Survivors reported the following effects of working with the Working Group: "The Working Group helps me to recover by working and helping. [It] helped me to grow

[by] working with others, expressing my ideas. It makes me feel better.” Survivors also felt that more children and youth should be involved. One survivor described her first encounter with the Working Group: “The first time I went, they didn’t explain things to me, and they didn’t respect my feelings at first.” She reported, however, that this changed with time, and she now feels that she is a member of the Group.

As these women were no longer involved in the “trade,” they were asked about reasons for leaving it. These three young women reported the following reasons for leaving the sex trade: pregnancy, Egadz, treatment, outreach van, the researcher, having someone to rely on, and God. Things that did not help were forced treatment, police (“they belittle and treated me like an offender when I was a victim”), social services (foster homes, insufficient money to live on), and poor information reaching the streets.

The young women reported that when they were trying to leave the streets they came up against the following barriers: they lacked friends, not enough money from Social Services, loneliness and helplessness, a need to get off of drugs, and little or no support from family. Simply put, they felt alone and had little or no access to help.

In light of the many barriers that youth face, the young women were asked to suggest improvements to benefit other youth. Teachers, social workers, and police need to be educated and learn to talk to kids to find out why they need money, to provide support, and to be sympathetic. Social Services should provide more money to live on. One young woman added, “Stop taking children away. You should look at the problems in the home and not take away what we’re living for.” Frontline workers (outreach workers) should also be provided with more information and go into homes with information and perform counseling.

**Appendix B. Results of Interviews with Youth in the Trade.**

Four young women formerly involved with the sex trade interviewed forty-six youth. These women received brief training on interviewing and were asked to contact and interview youth currently involved in the sex trade. The young women contacted youth and interviewed them in person or over the telephone. Of those who reported their age, 21 of 32 participants, were under the age of 18 (66%), while 16 were under the age of 16 (50%). Five were males, and one was of unknown gender.

**Table 2. Characteristics of Youth Interviewed (n=46).**

Ages	Male	Female
11		1
13		4
14		3
15		4
16		2
17		2
18	1	4
19	1	2
21		1
25	1	1
26		1
27		1
36		1
42		1
Total	3	28
Grand Total	5	41

Of 32 participants who reported their age, twenty-one were under 18 years (66%) and sixteen under 16 years (50%). In the sample of 46, five were males and one was of unknown gender.

Youth were asked about the Working Group activities of which they were aware. Many youth (n=14, 30%) reported they that knew of The Safe House. One girl (age 13) reported that, “she knows that The Safe House is a safe place to be. She knows about 72 hours lock up at The Safe House and doesn’t agree. Says that she would do it again anyway, and she would hate anyone, including The Safe House, if they held her against her will.” Twelve (26%) knew of the sign campaign. One Aboriginal woman (age 26) reported that, “the sign campaign is good because kids can read it and understand what kind of an environment they are living in.” Legislative changes were identified by three (6%) youth. It is important to note that nearly a quarter (n=11, 24%) reported that they knew nothing of the Working Group’s activities. Interestingly, many (n=9, 20%) confused other agencies’ attempts with those of the Working Group. This indicates that youth

may not differentiate between services. Future efforts should seek to utilize as many services as possible.

Youth were asked about the effects that they felt Working Group activities had had on them and others. Many (n=10, 22%) felt activities should continue. For example, one youth reported, “If they’re doing something positive and helping the communities, then I say go for it. Just keep helping people get off the streets.” According to these youth, more efforts should be placed on advertising and the sign campaign, particularly on Saskatoon’s East side. One boy reported that, “He has seen the signs and said they need to be all over the city [because] he said that he has been picked up 8<sup>th</sup> Street and at the Husky [gas station] on Circle [Drive].” It was felt by 13% (n=6) that increased outreach had been beneficial. Again, other existing services (Egadz and Public Health) were mentioned by 13% (n=6) as helpful and should continue. For example, one male (age 18) reported, “Egadz has helped because they care no matter if I’m stoned or drunk. But they need to be out there more, more hours, longer, but they say they don’t have the money for it.” The Safe House was mentioned as being helpful but too far away. One youth said, “Yes, I heard of The Safe House. Kids can stay at The Safe House. [It] has no effect because all you do is sleep there and eat there. They should be talking to you.” Finally, four (9%) felt that Working Group activities “have no effect on me whatsoever on me. If you continue, it will eventually affect someone.”

Youth were asked, “What would you need to get out of the sex trade?” Many (n=17, 37%) reported that they needed more money. For example, one Aboriginal girl (age 16) said, “I need money for my baby because I don’t hardly have any papers or baby wipes or baby food. More money, get a job, and get paid [for] going back into school.” Furthermore, seven (15%) specified that they needed more money from Social Services. “Social Services should have a meeting for more money because they only give you 130 [dollars] for one month and [it] is supposed to buy you everything.” Others (28%) also wanted personal support in the form of counseling, peers, or simply someone to listen to their problems and “give me emotional support and maybe a hug.” “Better, more affordable housing out of the area” was mentioned by 20% (n=9) of participants. Housing problems included living near or on the stroll, living in unsafe areas due to limited income, or having no safe place to stay. Others (n=7, 15%) wanted help returning in to school. One girl (age 17) stated, “She wants to go to school maybe get a job, but, having to work, she has no time [because] she doesn’t get Social Services. She says that more support and another good source of money would be better than Social Services, and would be the best help.” Another 15% (n=7) reported that drugs were a problem and that they wanted detoxification programs to address their issues. Three (7%) reported that getting a job would help them to get out of the trade. Two youth did not know what they would need.

Youth were asked, “What keeps you involved in the sex trade?” Many (n=17, 37%) reported that they were “in it for the money.” They reported that they did not have

enough money to survive: “I need money for my baby because I don’t hardly have any diapers or baby wipes or baby food.” Many (n=12, 26%) also reported that their addiction to drugs and alcohol kept them in the trade. Pressure from peers, family, pimps, and friends kept youth involved (n=11, 24%). Ten (22%) reported that the excitement, fun, and ease of the streets kept them involved. Police and jail were identified by seven (15%) as reasons why they stayed in the trade. Youth felt that Police and Social Services had failed them.

Youth were asked, “What changes would you like to see in services?” Youth felt that current services were on the “right track,” but that there needs to be more and better services (e.g. outreach, places to hangout and stay, more accessible and free detoxification programs, with increased hours of operation, a better location, and more people with street experience or who are Aboriginal). Furthermore, it was reported that people providing these services (police, counselors, detoxification workers) need to be more understanding and educated about relevant issues. Other changes were requested in terms of “see more guys getting arrested for picking us up, and less of us getting arrested,” better places to live, and more money.

CUISR Resource Centre  
University of Saskatchewan  
289 John Mitchell Building  
118 Science Place  
Saskatoon SK S7N 5E2 Canada  
Phone: 306-966-2121  
Facsimile: 306-966-2122  
E-mail: [cuisr.oncampus@usask.ca](mailto:cuisr.oncampus@usask.ca)



CUISR Web site:  
<http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/>

CUISR Community Liaison Office  
St. Paul's Hospital Residence  
230 Avenue R South  
Saskatoon SK S7M 2Z1 Canada  
Phone: 306-978-8320  
Facsimile: 306-655-4956  
E-mail: [cuisr.liaison@usask.ca](mailto:cuisr.liaison@usask.ca)