



Native Women's
Association of Canada

Sexual Exploitation of Aboriginal Children and Youth

Environmental Scan And A Meeting of Experts

**NWAC Health
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For

Health Canada
CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Ottawa, Ontario Canada

This report identifies and provides a basic assessment of programs and services available in Canada that focus on addressing issues related to the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth. It explores markers of success, issues around program and project sustainability, and the effectiveness partnership approaches in dealing with the phenomenon of sexual exploitation of children and youth in the Aboriginal community.



Abstract

If the prevention of violence against children, including the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation is to be addressed, the root causes must be addressed. The root causes of child sexual exploitation can be seen as intergenerational trauma and the residential school experience, racism and systemic discrimination, low socio-economic status, and ingrained societal attitudes of Aboriginal women. The very nature of commercial exploitation, with the majority of the predators being non-Aboriginal males, and over 80% of the children suffering this abuse being of Aboriginal descent, is indicative of larger societal, cultural and gender issues (Saskatchewan Children's Advocate Office. *A Voice for Youth*, 2006, p.7). Sexual abuse of children on the streets is simply the tip of the iceberg of what are much deeper problems in our society (adapted from a statement made by the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children through the Sex Trade, 2001, p.3 and cited in the document, *Beyond 'At Risk' Children. Systemic Issues Report Regarding Sexually Exploited Children and Oyate Safe House*).

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Executive Summary

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is indebted to Health Canada's Aboriginal Head Start Program for providing support and capacity to carry out activities in the development of this report. The *Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth Project* is aimed at addressing this most important issue for both sexes; the NWAC is mandated to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal women in Canada and believes that the issue of sexual exploitation warrants examination from a gendered perspective. Hence, the recommendations and Action Plan found in this paper focus on the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls. This project is considered to be a vital step toward facilitating NWAC's leadership role in addressing sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls.

A meeting of persons with expertise on the issue of sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children took place March 27, 2008. The meeting was dynamic; it reinforced the environmental scan findings, and created a sense of urgency around which the set of recommendations should be considered. Many participants have long been committed to the issues and indicated their intent to work collaboratively with NWAC and other stakeholders to explore the trends and underlying issues, and to better meet victims' needs.

The March meeting assisted in identifying existing programs and services to maximize access to documents and resource materials. Despite time constraints, seven participants came together to articulate facts about sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth as a common starting point, and to prioritize action items. Participants played key roles in providing linkages and documentation that contributed to the environmental scanning process.

The environmental scan was designed to identify programs and services that assist sexually exploited Aboriginal children in Canada and describe them in relation to their sustainability, effective partnerships, and markers of success.

Introduction and Background

Given its vision of Aboriginal women's health and safety, and track record in dealing with complex and sensitive issues, the Native Women's Association of Canada has deemed it necessary and timely to approach the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls strategically. This project is consistent with the mandate of NWAC which includes visioning Aboriginal women's well-being through the examination of social, economic, cultural, political, and civil issues that breed violence. In order to envision Aboriginal women's health and safety, it is imperative to establish a baseline of the extent and causes of the current situation. It is from this baseline that NWAC can work with Aboriginal communities, government, and stakeholders in establishing the ideal vision of health and safety for girls, women, and future generations.

The intent of the environmental scan is to identify programs and services targeting sexually exploited Aboriginal children in Canada, explore their sustainability and ability to foster effective partnerships, and to identify markers of success. The analysis of findings will form the basis for an Action Plan ([draft on page 29](#)) to address the problem of sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls in Canada; the Native Women's Association of Canada playing a key role.

Sustainability can be measured by the level of predictable, regular funding for programming, and retention of capacity and expertise in program and service delivery. While there is decidedly a lack of data and information on the extent Aboriginal children and youth are involved in sexual exploitation, the effect of this has been a lack of support for related programs overall. Hence, until the research occurs and an accurate picture emerges, needs will go unmet. *Need*, then can be measured by the rate at which available/current programs are utilized.

Research shows that Aboriginal children and youth are over-represented in sexual exploitation.¹ In some Canadian cities, up to 90% of the street-involved sexually exploited youth are Aboriginal. The majority are Aboriginal females between 15 and 18 years of age, some are 10 to 12

¹ Child, Family and Community Safety Sexual Exploitation Toolkit Retrieved December 15, 2007 from <http://jibc.ca/seytoolkitsp.htm>

years or younger.² Many sexually exploited Aboriginal youth face realities of poverty, drug use and abuse, homelessness, violence and abuse, racism, and other impacts of colonization. Impacts of colonization are intergenerational and can be magnified in children and youth.

Definitions and Terminology

Commercial sexual exploitation of children³ can be defined as: “*Children, both male and female, engaging in sexual activities for money, profit, or any other consideration due to coercion or influence by any adult, syndicate or group*”. The profit could go either to the child or to any third party involved in the transaction.

The dividing lines between commercial and non-commercial exploitation are difficult to draw. The sex trade can take on more indirect forms such as loose arrangements where the children offer adults a range of services, some sexual, in exchange for food, clothing, shelter, or protection. There are also relationships that are not overtly commercial, where adults such as parents, teachers, priests, or youth workers who have authority over children offer gifts to encourage them to keep quiet about abuse. Regardless, both commercial and non-commercial exploitation occurs when adults use their superior power, physical or financial, to ensure that children comply with their demands.

The United Nations defines trafficking in persons as,

“... the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction or fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payment or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over other persons, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include,

² Assistant Deputy Ministers’ Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Youth. (2000) *Sexual exploitation of youth in British Columbia*. Retrieved December 15, 2007 from http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/publications/youth/sex_exploit.pdf

³ UNICEF, For all the World’s Children. Health, Education, Equality, Protection Retrieved February 26, 2008 from http://www.unicef.org.uk/campaigns/campaign_sub_pages.asp?page=5

t a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”⁴

Methodology

The environmental scan and meeting of experts were the main components of the methodology. Experts on the issue of sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children were assembled to provide input into program and service identification. They assisted in the documentation of exiting crisis intervention and prevention programs, and available family support services. An Internet search and a review of published literature were also completed. The literature review revealed few evaluations of program and services that could have brought insight as to the success indicators.

The limited and fragmented labyrinth of regional databases related to the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth presented some challenge, however once the network of key individuals was convened, navigating the system was made easier. Some individuals had national and international linkages; these were explored as time permitted.

Context

While reliable data is almost nonexistent, experts agree that Aboriginal children, the majority of which are girls, are being sexually exploited in high numbers in Canada. In a report⁵ where Canadian Aboriginal children and youth spoke out about sexual exploitation, Kingsley and Mark assert that Canadians must put aside notions that the sex trade is ‘no big deal’ or that it affects only a ‘marginal population’: The average age of entry is a shocking fourteen years.

⁴ This is the definition of the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish trafficking in Persons especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime found in United Nations Crime and Justice Information Network, 2000.

⁵ Kingsley, C and Mark, M. (2000) *Sacred Lives: Canadian Aboriginal children and youth speak out about sexual exploitation*. Retrieved December 27, 2007 from <http://www.savethechildren.ca/en/whatwedo/pdf/sacredlives.pdf>

The Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Youth⁶ estimate the percentage of sexually exploited youth in British Columbia who are Aboriginal ranged from 14 to 60 percent depending on the community consulted, supporting the assertion that Aboriginal youth are over-represented. This Committee also reported that the average age of Aboriginal sexually exploited youth in BC is fifteen years. Some communities estimate the age of entry is as young as eleven years.

The number of sexually exploited Aboriginal children and youth in Canada and their numbers in relation to the different venues in which they work are not known. However, these two reports have given voice to the issue outlining the types of approaches and services required to meet the need.

The main predictors to Aboriginal youth becoming involved in the sex trade are the disruption and discord in their lives, accompanied by low self-esteem.⁷ Low self-esteem coupled with cultural and familial fragmentation, lack of life skills and education, substance abuse, poverty, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and racism and discrimination create an environment in which many Aboriginal youth become predisposed to being marginalized and in vulnerable positions. It is extremely difficult for exploited, marginalized and/or addicted youth to feel self worth and be contributing members of society. The realities for some include violent death, suicide, overdose, and HIV/AIDS.

There is a lack of published literature about the quantity and quality of programs and services serving sexually exploited youth.⁸ In view of these gaps, approaches for the provision of services for sexually exploited Aboriginal children and youth were obtained directly from the youth themselves. The following considerations were raised:

- Services need to be designed specifically for youth in order to meet their particular needs and circumstances;
- A multi-service agency approach is a more effective delivery mechanism;

⁶ Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Youth. (2001) *Sexual exploitation of youth in British Columbia*.

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Regina Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (2007) *Learning together: A final report. A summary of the community forum on sexual exploitation in Regina, Saskatchewan May 8th and 9th, 2007.*

- Youth should be involved in program development;
- Youth need peer support;
- A continuum of services would better meet needs during involvement and through the process of exiting and reintegration;
- Cultural, historical, and economic factors affecting Aboriginal youth and children require Aboriginal focused research, programs, and policy designed for youth-at-risk;
- Youth, governments, community groups, bands, tribal councils, friendship centers, national Aboriginal organizations, and concerned individuals need to collaborate on the development of innovative community-based initiatives;
- Both sexually exploited youth and community members should be brought together to discuss the issue of commercial sexual exploitation. Participants should include teachers, parents, leaders, youth and people with direct experience delivering community development programs. Education needs to focus on the realities which sexually exploited children and youth face;
- Those who purchase and profit from commercial sexual exploitation must be shown the consequences of their actions;
- There is a need for cultural connection for youth; ‘some place to go’ such as drop-in centers, emergency shelters, support groups;
- Community friendship centers, drop-in centers and emergency shelters should have flexible and late-night hours and service providers should have experience working with children and youth in the sex trade;
- Youth need viable economic alternatives;
- Crisis Intervention/Harm reduction, 24-hour centers, safe housing, crisis lines, and experiential youth and counselors staffing these interventions; and,
- More education about existing resources is needed.

Literature Review

No national data base is available that records the pathways of the transient Aboriginal population and their involvement in trafficking in the sex trade.⁹ An evaluation of a Winnipeg-based program, TERF (Transition, Education, and Resources for Females) states that exploitation in the

⁹ Sethi, A. (2007) “Domestic sex trafficking of Aboriginal girls in Canada: Issues and implications.” *First Peoples Child and Family Review. A journal on innovation and best practices in Aboriginal child welfare administration, research, policy & practice*. Retrieved January 10, 2008 from <http://www.fnfcfs.com/pub/vol3num3/Sethi57.pdf>

sex trade begins in childhood and Aboriginal youth are at particular risk.¹⁰ Twelve (12.4) years is the average age TERF youth report having had their first experience with sexual exploitation. TERF represents one of the most promising practices found during the preparation of this report. 89% of the youth involved with TERF are of Aboriginal descent.

While there is limited information available on domestic trafficking of Aboriginal girls in Canada, a study conducted in Saskatoon reported the average age of youth forced into prostitution is eleven to twelve years.¹¹ This two phase study polled grass roots agencies in attempt to distinguish *sexual exploitation* from *sex work*. The first phase involved interviewing key informants from non-government organizations, women's organizations and other community-based groups dealing with sexually exploited youth. Five key informants were interviewed from four regions: Quebec, Prairies and Northwest Territories, Ontario, and the Atlantic. The second phase brought together outreach and counseling service providers, researchers and advocates for a one day roundtable in Vancouver in July 2006.

The study revealed that movement of trafficked Aboriginal girls follows a pattern of interconnected city triangles spanning the prairies: Saskatoon – Edmonton – Calgary and Saskatoon – Regina – Winnipeg. There is an emerging trend that services the flourishing oil and mining industries in Alberta. Root causes that affect at-risk Aboriginal girls identified include:

- Legacy of colonization and the residential school experience;
- Lack of awareness, knowledge and understanding of sexual exploitation - *sexual exploitation* continues to be viewed as or conflated with *sex work*;
- Stereotyping and racism - Aboriginal girls are perceived as “willing” and “easily available”;
- Cycle of violence stemming from within communities leads to girls being more vulnerable to becoming victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking;
- General disinterest in talking about the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth in Canada;
- Aboriginal girls feel isolated and look for a sense of belonging - gangs play an increasing role in the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls;
- Substance use;

¹⁰ Ursel, E. J., Proulx, J., Dean, L. & Costello, S. (2007) *Evaluation of the TERF Youth and Adult Programs*.

¹¹ Ibid, 8

- Gaps in service provision, and the way in which services are provided promotes a cycle of power, control and systemic oppression;
- Discriminatory policies and legislation including the absence of clear policies around matrimonial real property rights on reserve.

The Alternative Report of Civil Society on the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children¹² child prostitution and child pornography in the Convention on the Rights of the Child has initiated a study. This study aims to collect information about services currently being offered by community or governmental organizations in relation to the reintegration of child victims of sexual exploitation for commercial purposes.

A British Columbia study¹³ assessed youth service access issues related to mobility. The close proximity of First Nations communities to urban centers in BC means that youth are accessing services from both urban and rural settings. Given the high rate of Aboriginal youth being sexually exploited in that region, it was suggested that increased dialogue, outreach, and integrated case management occur. It was also revealed that more culturally relevant resources be utilized such as Elders and traditional healing approaches; and cultural competence training would also strengthen existing services.

There is little information on males involved in sexual exploitation. The *Under the Radar*¹⁴ study produced information for use by health and criminal agencies working toward the development of planning social services.

There is a need for skills and capacity building. According to a study on violence in the lives of sexually exploited youth and adult sex workers in BC, service providers expressed interest in gaining skills to better deal with sexual exploitation and violence in the community, but lack the

¹² The invitation to participate came from Child Trafficking Team, International Bureau for Children's Rights, Montreal Quebec.

¹³ Hunt, S. (2006) *Violence in the lives of sexually exploited youth and adult sex workers in BC. Provincial research final report.*

¹⁴ This research is being done by the Hindsight Group which was founded by Sue McIntyre in 2001

resources to do so.¹⁵ In addition to skill development and information about sexual exploitation, mental health, addictions, trauma, and related issues were flagged for advancement.

The *Manitoba Sexually Exploited Youth Strategy Regional Team Development Project*¹⁶ engaged organizations working directly with at-risk or sexually exploited children and youth. They identified the need for more resources and programs specifically mandated to address issues around sexual exploitation. These included: funding, treatment programs, education and awareness, outreach resources and prevention programs, professional counselors and psychologists, housing and homelessness initiatives, stronger punishments for perpetrators, community policing improvements, partnerships between communities and police, better networking and collaboration between agencies and communities, and stronger support systems for communities and outside resources.

Outcomes from the Meeting of Experts

The following is an itemized list of concerns and facts articulated by the team of experts assembled in March. Each has been incorporated throughout this report and is included in the list of recommendations and draft Action Plan.

1. The majority of children and youth who are missing or on the run are Aboriginal.
2. The majority of sexually exploited children and youth are Aboriginal.
3. Sexually exploited Aboriginal children and youth are involved with the child welfare systems across Canada.
4. There is no evidenced based research on the issue of sexually exploited Aboriginal children.
5. There is a lack of services, especially culturally appropriate services and supports for sexually exploited Aboriginal children and youth. This applies to all of the Aboriginal groups including First Nation, Inuit and Métis.
6. Sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth has not been acknowledged or recognised in Canada.
7. Racism is an integral factor in sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth.

¹⁵ Ibid, 10

¹⁶ Cook, R. & Courchene, D. (2006) *Preventing and eradicating abuse of our children and youth. Regional team development.*

8. Stereotypes around the sexuality of Aboriginal women as being more promiscuous than other Canadian women is an integral factor in sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth.
9. Many members of parliament are unaware of the issues impacting Aboriginal children in their communities.
10. Many members of parliament do not have resources to interact with or support Aboriginal children.
11. Journalists lack informed understanding of issues impacting Aboriginal children.
12. Service providers require education and training about sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth.
13. Not all Aboriginal people are the same – Diversity of the sexual exploitation experience must be acknowledged.
14. The Canadian government provide funding to Territorial and Provincial governments for child and family services (i.e., Foster Care Funding). The solution is to take a child away from immediate family which then places the apprehended child ‘at risk’ for being sexually exploited.
15. Sexually exploited Aboriginal children and youth have criminal charges, have addiction issues, low education attainment, come from low income families headed by one parent where neglect is an issue, are subject to inadequate housing and are hungry.
16. Focus of the current government is on cybersex crimes and international trafficking. The sexual exploitation of children is not considered a priority.
17. Men are not held accountable for sexually exploiting children and youth: It is socially acceptable.
18. Men get a lighter sentence for sexually exploiting children and youth especially when the perpetrator is ‘white’ and the victim is Aboriginal or from a minority group. Perpetrators who provide basic needs to the victim are given lighter sentences as ‘basic needs’ are viewed as a mitigating factor.
19. Judges are swayed by the stereotypes around the sexuality of Aboriginal women as being more promiscuous than other Canadian women.

Initiatives, Projects and Programs

This section identifies initiatives, projects and programs available in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and the Northwest Territories. Representatives from the Yukon and Nova Scotia indicate that Aboriginal child and youth sexual exploitation is not an issue and rarely occurs; child and family services are mandated to deal with any cases that do arise there.

Also, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, a national organization representing the interests of Inuit women in Canada, indicate that sexually exploited Inuit youth do not have access to culturally appropriate services and supports in southern Canadian cities.

British Columbia

Two provincial government initiatives, the *Assistant Deputy Ministers' Committee on Prostitution and the Sexual Exploitation of Youth*¹⁷ and, the *Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions* work in partnership with communities and non-government organizations to reduce the number of sexually exploited children and youth, increase public awareness about sexual exploitation, and improve services in various communities.

The ADM's Committee coordinates provincial government action on issues related to prostitution and the sexual exploitation of children and youth. It includes representation from nine provincial government ministries and is chaired by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. In 2006, the Committee in partnership with the National Crime Prevention Centre offered funding to communities interested in developing and implementing action plans. Of the thirty projects funded, eight Aboriginal specific projects received funding. These projects all focus on education and awareness.

- Self-esteem building for Aboriginal girls aged 11-20 with culturally relevant activities to raise awareness;
- Community Action Teams focus on awareness and prevention strategies for youth, families, educators, and service providers through a number of school based programs providing resources and support for parents and caregivers;
- Community health forums for youth and elders are held to raise awareness of the sexual exploitation of children and youth;
- Curriculum development project focusing on partnership development, the identification of needs for sexually exploited youth and their families and friends, and identification of new strategies;
- A prevention, intervention, and sexual education project focuses on assisting exploited youth with re-integration into the community;

¹⁷ Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, British Columbia. *Working together to promote healing and community safety. Victim Services and Community Programs Division 2005-2006 Activity report.*

- At-risk youth program aimed at increasing resiliency and decreasing risk factors, the development of collaborative partnerships to increase community capacity and address issues and needs related to sexual exploitation of youth;
- A prevention project working toward the protection of women and children by creating awareness of sexual exploitation and the engagement of youth in discussions of prevention of dating violence, contracting sexual diseases and safe sex practices;
- A Vancouver-based project, *A Picture of Healing*, focuses on developing a needs assessment tool kit for at-risk youth, coordinating a strategic and collaboratively-delivered community response to youth sexual exploitation, and creating awareness of the incidence and prevalence of sexual exploitation of youth to the community members.

The Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions funded a project in Prince George to purchase and renovate a single room occupancy hotel with eight shelter beds and thirteen second-stage transitional housing units. The Prince George Friendship Centre operates and manages the project. Homeless youth aged 15 to 18 are provided a range of culturally appropriate services to assist with life skills, employment opportunities, mental health, substance abuse and sexual exploitation issues.

Alberta

The *Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Program* is an initiative designed to provide province wide direction, fund regional initiatives and evaluate the implementation of the Prevention of Children Involved in Prostitution Act. The intended outcome is to improve services available to sexually exploited children and reduce the incidence of youth involved in prostitution. Four programs have been cited as providing programs dealing with sexual exploitation of children and youth. Each of these programs offer services to youth, including Aboriginal youth, involved in prostitution or at risk of being involved in prostitution. There is no indication whether any of the programs are administered by an Aboriginal organization. The Grimmon House in the Hearthstone Child and Family Services Authority is one of these programs.

Grimmon House has a nine bed facility that provides residential care to male and female street youth who are 15 to 18 years of age. The Street Teams/Side Door Program at the Grimmon House consists of four components: Drop-in, Street Outreach, One- on-one Support and Public Education and Awareness.

The Drop-in provides homeless youth with basic hygiene items, hot meals, showers, computers, laundry facilities and emotional support. The primary focus of the storefront location is to provide support for youth who are reluctant to access shelters.

The Street Outreach focuses on areas where there are a high number of homeless youth and where youth are at-risk of sexual exploitation. Teams walk through areas frequented by youth and provide on-street support, intervention and referrals. Teams also provide information on the risk of homelessness and how to increase personal safety on the streets for youth who are not homeless or sexually exploited.

One-on-One Support provides follow-up support and case management to youth on a regular basis, non-intrusive crisis intervention, on-going support, and assistance and referrals to other community agencies. Their emergency needs are assessed through conversation and referrals are made to a network of local social service agencies and hospitals. As the relationship develops, Street Teams/Side Door youth workers begin to challenge and discuss alternatives to street life always recognizing that transition is difficult. For many clients it takes several attempts to leave the streets and maintain a more stable lifestyle.

The Public Education and Awareness component provides presentations for Calgary youth, parents and community groups about the risks and realities of sexual exploitation through prostitution and, or homelessness and street life.

Saskatchewan

In 1997, Saskatchewan developed a comprehensive strategy to protect children from sexual exploitation through the sex trade.¹⁸ Further actions were implemented in response to the June 2001 recommendations of the Joint Special Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. In November 2006, the province announced further enhancements to the strategy including expansion of capacity of police to work closely with community organizations and government agencies to deal with street level sexual exploitation of children. Other enhancements included the establishment of a specialized team to strengthen the provinces' ability to use the National Flagging System to identify

¹⁸ Backgrounder to the Strategy to Address Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth November 14, 2006

long-term offender or dangerous offender cases, and annual funding for a public education campaign aimed at prevention of child sexual exploitation. Law-making changes consisted of the development of Provincial legislation – *The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act* (October 2002) and amendments to *The Highway Traffic Act* (April 2002), *The Victims of Crime Regulations* (May 2002) and, *The Safer Communities and Neighbours Regulations* (May 2006).

Other initiatives that came from this strategy include the following:

Outreach, prevention and crisis intervention services – Since 1997 the province has funded services delivered by nongovernment organizations including the Kikinahk Friendship Centre and EGADZ.

Safe houses – The Department of Community Resources partnered with First Nations to establish safe houses in Saskatoon and Regina. The Saskatoon Tribal Council has operated a Saskatoon Safe House since 1999. Safe house services are no longer available in Regina with the closure of the Oyate Safe House.

Group homes – Community Services has designated 41 spaces in specialized residential and adolescent group home programs as resources for at-risk and sexually exploited children and youth. These homes provide 24-hour care, supervision and counseling for children in crisis, and a range of services, from emergency care and safety to long-term treatment.

SchoolPLUS (February 2002) – Key functions developed for schools are to educate children and youth and to support service delivery. The areas of focus are to nurture and renew commitment to the healthy development of children and youth, to effectively link human service systems to schools, and to become open, inclusive and able to meet the needs of all children and young people.

Cultural services at all custody facilities – Involvement in community based cultural programs is emphasized for reintegration purposes. In-facility programs include sweat lodge ceremonies, one-on-one involvement with Elders, Pow-wows, and drumming and dancing groups. Partnership with Tribal Councils, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and Elders has been established to meet the varying needs of youth in custody.

Saskatchewan's *Strategy to Prevent the Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade* is multi-sectoral in its approach. Two long term projects have been supported through this strategy and these are the *My Home Project* and the *Saskatoon Tribal Council Safe House*.

The My Home Project started in October 1998 at the Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre (EGADZ) through the Street Outreach Program in partnership with the Department of Social Services. The EGADZ is a community based inter-agency group that provides a safe place for youth-at-risk maintaining links to families. EGADZ has strong support from the community. The objective of the housing project is to address the needs of 16 and 17 year old females wanting to exit the street. It is a safe environment where young women have input into how the home operates.

The Saskatoon Tribal Council Safe House established in 1998 provides temporary and emergency shelter and counseling services to child victims or those at risk of being sexually abused or sexually exploited on the street. Financial support for the Safe House is provided by the Department of Community Resources, the Saskatoon Health Region, and Saskatchewan Justice. The primary goal is to provide children and youth with the opportunity to experience an alternate lifestyle to the streets. Children and youth re-establish links to family whenever possible or desired. Clients are provided referrals to appropriate foster placement alternatives such as the My Home Project operated by EGADZ. Services are accessed through self-referral or referrals from other agencies including EGADZ, police, social workers, teachers, Mobile Crisis, judges, counselors, and other social service agencies and workers. The Safe House served 110 children and youth through regular program services during the 2005-2006 fiscal-year. There were 127 drop-ins, 111 children and youth were turned away due to programs and services being filled to capacity. The Safe House provides links to cultural activities such as feasts and round dances and access to Old People for support or guidance and advice as needed or requested. In addition, the Safe House provides access to the Sexually Exploited Youth Speak Out group meetings and support group, counselling and facilitated talking circles, and evening youth group meeting.

Manitoba

Launched in 2002, the *Manitoba Strategy Responding to Children and Youth at Risk of, or Survivors of, Sexual Exploitation* complements the good work already done by community groups active in the issue and fills in services identified by community agencies and current research on child sexual

exploitation. The partner government departments are Justice; Family Services and Housing; Health; Education; Citizenship and Youth; Women's Directorate; Aboriginal Northern Affairs; and Healthy Child Manitoba. The partner agencies are New Direction's TERF Program; Child Find Manitoba; Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre; and RESOLVE from the University of Manitoba.

The objectives guiding the initiatives of the Manitoba Strategy are:

- Increasing general awareness of child and youth sexual exploitation across all segments of the Manitoba population;
- Promoting specialized education and training for those involved with children and youth at risk of, and survivors of, sexual exploitation;
- Supporting approaches that address the underlying factors and root causes of child and youth sexual exploitation;
- Addressing systemic barriers and gaps in services for children and youth at risk of, or survivors of, sexual exploitation;
- Developing effective responses to deter, rehabilitate or contain perpetrators of child and youth sexual exploitation; and,
- Mobilizing and partnering with parents, Aboriginal Elders, professionals, agencies, citizen groups, businesses, governing bodies and communities to develop collaborative and sustainable solutions to child and youth sexual exploitation.

The 8 Partnership Projects are:

- An outreach project aimed at reducing the number of residential care run-away youth who become at increased risk of sexual exploitation. Three outreach positions are at three different organizations in Winnipeg.
- A six bed safe transition home in Winnipeg is in operation at Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. for female and transgender youth, ages 13 to 17, who have been subjected to and at risk for continued sexual exploitation. The safe transition home and program were developed with the assistance of an experiential advisory committee comprised of youth and women who have successfully transitioned, or are in the process of transition. Program goals include providing opportunities for more active involvement with families addressing issues related to drug and alcohol use, building upon individual strengths and connecting youth to relevant community services. Programming includes the provision of family group decision making, cultural opportunities, education, employment, training, mentoring, life skills, and volunteerism. The home officially opened November 2003.
- Residential child care facility to enhance one of Marymount Inc. facilities. Rose Hall enables the delivery of specialized services for young women aged 13 to 17 who have been sexually exploited. Rose partners with the Marymount Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program.

- An intensive training for foster parents and other front-line workers who deal with children and youth who have been sexually exploited.
- Student support research project is a needs assessment project developed by Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth to identify the needs of Aboriginal youth coming from the northern communities to reside in Winnipeg for educational or other reasons.
- Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Resources, a community forum was hosted in Winnipeg in March 2003 and was attended by over 150 government and community leaders. This project was headed by Manitoba Health, in Partnership with Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and assisted by other departments.
- School Learning Resources focuses on the prevention of child sexual exploitation and is to be used by all schools in Manitoba. It was prepared by two community groups: Child Find Manitoba developed personal safety strategies and Ndaawin provided cultural based prevention strategies.
- The TERF Program offers transition assistance for female and transgender youth who are sexually exploited.

TERF is comprised of a Youth Program, an Adult Program and a Mentor Program and has been operating for many years. The demand for its service has increased more recently with the implementation of the Strategy. The continued funding provided by the Strategy, combined with the support from partners has facilitated Program sustainability.

The TERF Youth Program is for females from ages 13 to 18 years who have been sexually exploited through the sex trade. Through a harm reduction model, the program provides holistic personal development and healing in a safe, accepting and supportive environment. It offers skills building classes to allow students to move to a program where they can earn high school credits. Healing and personal development are part of the curriculum and are offered in a client directed model. TERF students are offered many incentives to help them while participating in the program including monetary compensation, bus passes, and gym memberships at the Winnipeg YM/YWCA. High school credits can be obtained through the Program. Transition groups offer the opportunity to explore the experience of being exploited by the sex trade and the effects this has had on the students. TERF will also assist in the selection of a school and program that correspond with the student's needs. Students received continued monitoring and support to facilitate the best chance for success.

The TERF Mentorship Program is for urban Aboriginal children ages 8 to 17 years who have been sexually exploited or who are at high risk of being sexually exploited in the sex trade. Mentors provide leadership, guidance, and support to young people in need by fostering positive self-image, encouraging choices that will lead to a safe, successful future free from sexual exploitation. They offer understanding of the issues related to poverty and sexual exploitation. Participants in the program receive one-on-one support from mentors in recreational, cultural and educational outings, obtaining education on life skills, job skills, and work opportunities. The youth also learn about the serious risks and consequences associated with sexual exploitation, and connect with other community mentors, elders and cultural service providers, participate in Aboriginal teachings, and identify alcohol and drug related issues. Participants ages 13 to 17 can be fast tracked into the TERF Youth Program.

Quebec

The International Bureau for Children's Rights developed a research paper on child trafficking in Quebec as part of the *Strategic Action Plan for the Protection of Victims of Child Trafficking in Quebec Project*. Following this research paper, recommendations were developed with a few focused on internal trafficking (within Canada) and Aboriginal children¹⁹. The recommendations are:

- Educating the public about the trafficking of children from Aboriginal communities in Canada;
- Prevention programs on child trafficking should be offered to primary and secondary students to inform and provide them with necessary tools to avoid becoming a victim of trafficking. These programs should encourage the involvement of youth and community groups, notably those in Aboriginal communities, to participate in the development and implementation of anti-child trafficking programs; and,
- Training – professionals who are likely to come into contact with child trafficking victims should receive training on trafficking that includes education on its definition, a description of the current situation, any applicable legislation, and how trafficking operations function. They should also receive cultural sensitivity training which may help them to assist Aboriginal children.

¹⁹ International Bureau for Children's Rights (2007) *Strategic action plan for the protection of victims of child trafficking in Quebec. Part 1 Recommendations*. Montreal, Quebec: Author

Northwest Territories

There are 11 community-based victim services in NWT. Each uniquely responds to the needs of the community.²⁰ Victims of crime include all victims of any offense; the majority of these are women. Communities enter into a contribution agreement with the Government of the Northwest Territories to enable the provision of information, referrals, assistance and support to victims of crime, both reported and non-reported cases. Sponsoring organizations state that the amount of funding provided is insufficient and staff retention is a challenge. The longevity of these victim services may attest to the need for these services as they have been operating since the early 1980s. Effective partnerships include working closely with the Policy Centre for Victims Issues, RCMP, and sponsoring agencies.

Inuit Initiatives

The Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association advocate for culturally appropriate approaches and strategies for children and youth who are at risk of, or are being sexually exploited. Their goal is to advance the national Inuit residential schools healing strategy, *Sivumuapallianiq, Moving Forward*. The Aboriginal residential school experience is one of the factors that place Aboriginal persons at risk for being sexually exploited. The healing strategy followed the 2001 document, *No More Secrets* which was created to demystify child sexual abuse by providing information on what it is, how widespread the problem is, what to do when a child relates sexual abuse, how to report child sexual abuse, and ways to deal with the problem in the North. Integral to *Sivumuapallianiq*, is the listing of services for Inuit survivors of child sexual abuse in Inuvialuktun, Nunavik and Labrador Inuktitut.

Overview and Analysis

Few projects and programs provide culturally appropriate programming, whether First Nations, Inuit or Métis specific; and there is no evidence to indicate that there are any programs specifically targeting Inuit victims.

²⁰ Email communication with the Coordinator of the NWT Victim Services, March 13, 2008.

Of the eight projects and programs available in British Columbia, six focused on increasing awareness about sexual exploitation among Aboriginal youth, family, teachers, caregivers and, or the community. Five were aimed at prevention and decreasing risk factors among the children and youth. One project focused on developing a needs assessment tool to determine needs of Aboriginal youth who are at-risk or, or are being sexually exploited. Two projects were aimed at developing new strategies around sexual exploitation and assisting sexually exploited youth's re-integration into the community. One project provided transitional housing and provided culturally appropriate social services.

The Alberta projects offered some services to youth however, there was no indication that any of the programs were administered by an Aboriginal organization nor that they offered culturally relevant services. The project profiled provided a safe house for both female and male street involved youth and offered services such as education and awareness, prevention, intervention, and outreach.

The two Saskatchewan projects focused on intervention and were either a transition home or temporary and emergency shelter for 16 and 17 year old females, or child victims and those at-risk of being sexually abused or sexually exploited on the streets. One project is being administered by a tribal council and the second projects client population is primarily of Aboriginal ancestry.

Of the eight projects in Manitoba, one focused on increasing awareness among government and community leaders; three were prevention oriented; and four were intervention oriented. The safe house is administered by an Aboriginal agency. A high percentage of the client population for the transition assistance program is Aboriginal.

The eleven community based victims services programs in the Northwest Territories provide services to all victims of crime. The incidence of sexual exploitation of Aboriginal children and youth was not provided for this report.

Many of the projects and programs presented in this report focused on increasing awareness of sexual exploitation in Aboriginal communities and the prevention services available. Efforts to develop or sustain resiliency among Aboriginal children and youth was particularly evident in programs in British Columbia and Manitoba. Preventing children and youth from becoming sexually exploited was the highest priority among discussion groups partaking in a community forum on

sexual exploitation in Regina, Saskatchewan.²¹ Themes included the promotion of sex education, instilling positive self esteem, self awareness and healthy boundaries, supporting youth to stay in school and participate in employment programs, and making healthy role models/mentors available.

According to the *Strategic Action Plan for the Protection of Victims of Child Trafficking in Québec*, prevention programs on child trafficking should be offered to primary and secondary students to provide them with the necessary tools to avoid becoming a victim of trafficking. The collaborative participation by Aboriginal youth and community groups was encouraged in the development and implementation of anti-child trafficking programs in Quebec.

Long-term transition homes or temporary, emergency shelters were available in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Two safe houses, one in each province, are being administered by an Aboriginal organization.

²¹ Regina Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (2007) *Learning together: A final report. A summary of the community forum on sexual exploitation in Regina, Saskatchewan May 8th and 9th, 2007.*

Sustainability Factors and Indicators

“Do the existing prevention and intervention programs such as drop-in centres, safe houses, emergency shelters, and transition programs have the capacity to assume their role in administering services to Aboriginal children who are at-risk, being sexually exploited, or attempting to exit the sex trade?”

Participants at the Regina community forum indicated Aboriginal youth and children require access to cultural teachings, ceremony, healthy role models, elders, and educational opportunities.²²

Factors that should be considered to best sustain services and meet needs include:

- Culturally appropriate services;
- Knowledgeable, experienced, empathetic, skilled staff who have gone through their own healing journeys; and
- Elders.

An indicator that more programs and services for sexually exploited children and youth are required could be the number of youth being turned away. Drop-in services connected to the Saskatchewan Safe House program established in 1998 received 127 drop-ins; over one hundred children and youth (111) had to be turned away due to programs and services being filled to capacity.²³ An answer to the above question might be answered in the negative as services in Saskatchewan fall short of meeting the demand.

Drop-in services in Manitoba benefit from predictable, regular funding as is provided through the Strategy in that province, along with the extensive network of partners involved. Manitoba might be better able to meet the needs of Aboriginal children and youth because of this situation.

There is a growing and urgent need to build capacity within non-government organizations dealing with the issue of domestic trafficking, through the provision of flexible, adequate, long-term

²² Ibid

²³ STC Urban First Nations Services Inc. (n.d.) *Saskatoon Tribal Council 2005-06 Annual Report for Programs and Services*. Retrieved March 2, 2008 from http://www.saskatoontribalcouncil.com/common/pdfs/stc_urban.pdf

funding.²⁴ Resources should also be targeted at enhancing communication and collaboration between organizations delivering these services to enable better coordination. While initiatives such as those in British Columbia and Manitoba might not be meeting the need, they remain focused both on resource enhancement and partnership development. Capacity, education and awareness should also occur in Aboriginal communities.²⁵

Professionals and service delivery agents who come into contact with child trafficking victims should be properly trained and possess knowledge of the phenomenon, related legislation, and trends.²⁶ They should have cultural sensitivity training to better understand the predispositions of their Aboriginal clients. Based upon this report's findings, there was only one project that provided training as an integral component. The Manitoba Strategy ensures that foster parents and staff dealing with children and youth who have been sexually exploited receive the necessary training.

All of the projects cited in this report are in partnership with a government funding agency and in some instances partnerships exist between some of the projects.

Not many evaluations have been set up for existing programs and services. However, the evaluation of the TERF Youth Program in Manitoba delivered through the New Directions Agency identified key components or success indicators that would point to reasons for their success and/or sustainability.²⁷ The Program received high ratings for the following evaluative components:

- Remarkable cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness was reflected in the high ratings provided by Program participants, graduates, and staff. There is strong match in cultural backgrounds between Program participants and Program staff: 60% of the staff is Aboriginal, which reflects well given that 89% of TERF youth serviced are Aboriginal (including Métis). The TERF's philosophy is traditional and holistic, and the Medicine Wheel Model drives the content and process of the Program. They have a cultural room on site. Culture is integrated into the program through classroom sessions, regular events with an elder, and outings to community activities and events.

²⁴ Ibid, 6

²⁵ Ibid, 6

²⁶ International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) (2007) *Strategic action plan for the protection of victims of child trafficking in Québec*.

²⁷ Ursel, E. J., Proulx, J., Dean, L. & Costello, S. (2007) *Evaluation of the TERF Youth and Adult Programs*.

- A defining feature is the creation of a warm, welcoming, safe and non-judgmental environment. This in combination with the implementation of the program through case management, classroom programming, health and support workers provides an integrated web of information, support and relationship building to ensure that the participants are not alone on their difficult journey.
- The approach used to assist youth overcoming personal challenges in exiting the sex trade include trust and relationship building, identity and self-esteem building, physical health, and a culture of celebration.
- Education is a very significant element. The classroom instructors are certified educators. The goal is to bring the girls up to Grade 8 levels in mathematics, English and classroom skills. Those who have Grade 8 commence to the “Just Learning” program offered by the Gordon Bell Off-Campus School. They are facilitated in their transition from individualized upgrading program to mainstream credit courses.
- Staff receive a core competency training program and learn about sexually exploited youth.
- The Program has incorporated a tracking system to systematically track its accomplishments. They track the number of participants, the number discharged, the number who earned course credits, how many were referred to learning assessment in hope of furthering education, the number who returned to school and obtained employment. They also track enrolment and graduate statistics of TERF staff.
- Primary indicators of TERF’s impact on the youth’s economic circumstances are in the enumeration of the Program’s monetary and resource input into the girls lives. A daily incentive of \$15 and for those eligible, a \$40 per week allowance for groceries and a \$70 per month clothing allowance are concrete ways in which TERF assist in alleviating issues of poverty for the youth. The long term goal is to get the youth back to school so they can improve their opportunities for employment as adults.
- The process of attaining an education, securing stable housing, and pursuing a career are important steps that reduce the need to find illegal means of survival. It has been shown that the longer the participants remain involved in the Program, the less likely they are to be involved in the justice system.

Recommendations

1. The NWAC develop clear, concise mission statements that express commitment to addressing commercial sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls and the need for an Action Plan.
2. A national Action Plan is needed to explore the extent to which Aboriginal girls are falling victim to commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.
3. Increased education and awareness by the Canadian public (Aboriginal and non Aboriginal) of trends and issues related to the trafficking of girls from Aboriginal communities in Canada is needed.
4. Strategic partnerships and collaborative approaches are needed in the development and implementation of an Action Plan.
5. A national data base is needed to track transient Aboriginal populations involved in trafficking in the sex trade.
6. Documentation of trafficking routes set up to meet the demands of the oil and mining industry is needed. Exploratory studies should be initiated to document routes, related issues, and service needs.
7. Girls at-risk, in the sex trade, or trying to exit the sex trade, should be identified according to their Aboriginality and community of origin (i.e., First Nation, Inuit or Métis)
8. Service and program assessment should occur in all Provinces and Territories; data is lacking in Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, Cape Breton, and Nunavut. Networks of programs and promising practices should be expanded that focus on service delivery.
9. The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and the TERF Youth Program (Transition, Education, and Resources for Females) should be considered as a promising practices in servicing the needs of female youth subjected to and at-risk of sexual exploitation.
10. Increased cultural competence within prevention and intervention initiatives aimed at addressing the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls is needed.

Draft Action Plan

Goals

1. Increase public awareness of sexual exploitation of First Nation, Inuit and Métis girls in Canada.
2. Develop sustained relationships among partner organizations that are committed to a steady reduction of Aboriginal girls being sexually exploited.
3. Promote and facilitate the engagement of experiential people at all fora and tables pertaining to the sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls.
4. Promote culturally appropriate, gender relevant approaches in the prevention of sexual exploitation of Aboriginal girls and provision of supports for female youth who are in phases - 'during', 'transition' or 'exiting' and who are within reserve, rural, and urban settings in southern and northern parts of Canada.

Action Item: RESEARCH

1. Promote and foster the development of a Knowledge Network of Aboriginal Researchers in the area of Aboriginal children and youth who are at risk of or are being sexual exploited.

Timeline: September 2008

2. Conduct a Canadian incidence study to determine the number of Aboriginal female youth who are being sexually exploited using a multidisciplinary approach to include child protection agencies; educational and judicial systems; health services; police force; and recreation programming. Research should also explore the extent of the problem of internet luring and sexual exploitation among Aboriginal girls in Canada.
 - a. Potential partners for completing the incidence study:
 - Canadian Centre for Child Protection;
 - Canadian Institute of Health Research;
 - First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada;
 - Health Canada Public Health Agency, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada – Inuit Relations, Pauktutiit Inuit Women's Association, National Aboriginal Health Organization – Inuit Centre. Status of Women Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police to bring the perspectives of Inuit population.
 - Social Science and Human Research Council;
 - Youth in Care Network

- National Child Exploitation Coordination Centre (NCECC) for internet luring and exploitation research.

Timeline: September 2008

3. Conduct a gender-based analysis of child experiences from the perspectives Aboriginal experiential people who are female, transgendered (two-spirited), and lesbian.
 - a. Publish research in the form of journal articles and eventually a book to be sold to the general public.

Timeline: November 2008

4. Determine the cost to do nothing. Specifically, what is the cost to the police force to deal with Aboriginal children and youth who are being sexually exploited and who are partaking in behaviours that are placing them at risk for being sexually exploited? What is the cost to the child protection agencies; educational and judicial systems; and health services? This information is invaluable when applying for funding.

Timeline: September 2008

Action Item: CAPACITY BUILDING AND NETWORKING

Organize a national conference with an Aboriginal focus to increase capacity and foster networking among non-government organizations and Aboriginal communities to prevent Aboriginal girls from being sexually exploited; provide support to those girls who are being sexually exploited; and provide support to those girls who are in varying stages of exiting the sex trade.

- a. Invite presentations from various leading practices within the rural and urban settings including the Hollow Water First Nation to talk about the healing process and the sentencing circle.
- b. Facilitate mentorship program
 - Include the Youth in Care Network as partners to assist in developing mentors.

Timeline: March 2009

Action Item: ADVOCACY

1. Promote the creation of a young women's advocate institute where experiential persons provide training for advocates in areas including research and policy development in all provinces and territories. This body/entity could also be responsible for overseeing research related to the issue of missing and sexually exploited Aboriginal girls and women; developing

information pamphlets; and, tracking statistics across all jurisdictions regarding sexually exploited Aboriginal girls. This institute could also employ or contract a number of young people to be creative in designing a public awareness campaign to bring more understanding and awareness of the issues facing young Aboriginal women and girls who are at risk of being sexually abused and/or sexually exploited.

- a. Include partnerships with organizations such as the National Inuit Youth Council and NWAC's own youth council in the provision of culturally appropriate perspectives.

Timeline: March 2009

2. Promote the Canadian Centre for Child Protection in closing the gaps for Aboriginal girls who are at risk and who are being sexually exploited.

Timeline: September 2008

3. Promote the relationship between the risk determinants of Aboriginal girl's sexual exploitation and determinants of health.

- a. Collaborate with policy makers and researchers using this model to address inequities in the following areas: culture, housing, income, employment, learning and training, and, physical and mental health.

Timeline: September 2008

4. Promote the development of a national First Nation, Inuit and Métis prevention strategy.

Timeline: September 2008

Action Item: PUBLIC AWARENESS

1. Generate more public awareness of sexual exploitation specific to the Aboriginal experience by involving high school children and experiential people.
 - a. Consider developing a partnership with the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.
 - b. Include key messages. For example, the message could be STOP SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF ABORIGINAL GIRLS. The *stop sex with kids* campaign launched by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection in September 2006 is succinctly described in the organization's 2006-07 annual report *21 years of protecting children* and may serve as a prototype.
 - c. Develop a campaign schedule to accommodate multiple audiences. The audiences include:

- i. Perpetrators
 - young males working in the mining and oil industry;
 - predators on the Internet;
 - average, middle-income adults
- ii. Child protection workers; teachers and school boards; judges and lawyers; health care providers; and police force;
- iii. Aboriginal communities; and,
- iv. Aboriginal girls.

Conclusion

Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and those working at the grass roots level have a critical role to play in addressing the needs of sexually exploited youth and children; NGO's can act as the tie needed to bond the collaborative efforts of community and stakeholder. These committed individuals, some of whom participated in the development of this project, are proof of this. They have the practical, on the ground knowledge needed to access the resources and address the issues.

The complex myriad of barriers facing youth in accessing the services they need, is overwhelming, more so for Aboriginal youth. Aboriginal girls in particular require closer attention, assistance and guidance. While the data might be scarce, the broad strokes do exist; research and information collection can bring about a more detailed picture.

Work completed to date represents a first step in broadening our understanding the extent of this issue for Aboriginal women. It is linked to some of the other work NWAC is engaged in with resounding underlying root causes such as systemic discrimination, sexualized racism, and social exclusion. Sexual exploitation is an outcome, and as such should be addressed by targeting the causes.

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Additional Resources

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – is an international human rights treaty that grants all children and young people (aged 17 and under) a comprehensive set of rights. To learn more about this important document access information through the following:

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/uncre/> and http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html

Declaration and Agenda for Action 1st World Congress against Commercial Exploitation of Children Stockholm, Sweden, 27 – 31, 1996 – includes the Agenda for Action which call for action from States, all sectors of society, and national, regional, and international organizations, against the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Priorities for action are listed in the areas of coordination and cooperation at the local/national and regional/international levels; prevention; protection; recovery and reintegration; and, child participation. This document can be retrieved from <http://www.csecworldcongress.org/PDF/en/Stockholm/index.htm>

The Yokohama Global Commitment 2001 provides follow-up action items to the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda. This document can be obtained from

<http://www.csecworldcongress.org/en/yokohama/Outcome/index.htm>

Taking Action – is a series of six handouts for communities addressing sexual exploitation of children and youth which was developed by the Justice of British Columbia with funding provided by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General (Victim Services Division) and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (National Crime Prevention Centre). Individuals and groups wanting to take action in their communities on issues related to the sexual exploitation of children and youth may use these handouts to guide them through the process of setting up a Community Action Network, creating a community action plan, applying for funding, and building awareness. These handouts are part of a larger online toolkit intended to be a one-stop resource for information about the commercial exploitation of children and youth. The online toolkit connects youth and adults to province – wide resources, programs and service agencies that work towards addressing the sexual exploitation of children and youth that will be made available to communities. The toolkit is available on the Justice Institute of B.C. website: www.jibc.ca/seytoolkit/

Children of the Street Society – this website, www.childrenofthestreet.com provides information to learn more about sexual exploitation including recruitment, realities of being in the sex trade, barriers to exiting, and what to do if your child goes missing or is involved in sexual exploitation.

Dealing with Issues of Sexual Exploitation: A Guide for Parents – Developed by the McCreary Youth Foundation in British Columbia, this guide is intended to provide support, hope and helpful advice for parents who are trying to cope with this crisis in their families, as well as caregivers, such as guardians and foster parents. http://www.childrenofthestreet.com/NR/rdonlyres/AA982A0E-2849-4575-9035-FAA5230EC845/25341/myf_sexual_ex_final1.pdf

What Parents and Concerned Adults Can Do – located in the document Protection of Sexually Exploited Children and Youth, an initiative of the Government of Alberta, December 2004.

http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/whatwedo/pse/pdf/sexually_exploited_report_dec04.pdf

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