

## *Running to America in High Heeled Shoes*

*Youth Sex Workers in South Auckland: Telling their stories*

## **This report was prepared by Youthline Auckland for Counties Manukau District Health Board.**

**Youthline** is a regionally focused, nationally linked service promoting community-based youth development. Youthline operates from an integrated model of evidence-based practice within a community development, training and youth development, and clinical services framework. Youth development is about being connected, having quality relationships, fostering participation and being able to access good information.

**Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB)** was established on 1 January 2001 under the provisions of the New Zealand Public Health & Disability Act (2000). CMDHB is responsible for the funding of health and disability services and for the provision of hospital and related services for the people of Counties Manukau (Manukau City, and Franklin and Papakura Districts) as set out in the DHB functions and objectives in the Act. CMDHB's shared vision is to work in partnership with our communities to improve the health status of all, with particular emphasis on Māori and Pacific peoples and other communities with health disparities. Child and Youth health is one of the development areas the CMDHB will be focusing on over the next three years.

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### **Disclaimer**

This review was commissioned by Counties Manukau District Health Board to scope the needs of youth sex workers in South Auckland. The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the official views of Counties Manukau District Health Board, nor Youthline.

**‘Running to America in high-heeled shoes’ refers to a comment made by one of the consultation participants in relation to the difficulty of the life journey each of them was on.**

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# Abstract

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This paper provides a scoping exercise and ‘snapshot’ of the experiences of youth sex workers living and working in South Auckland. A qualitative, youth development approach was employed to tell the stories of youth sex workers and identify their wellbeing needs, so as to inform further research, development and support programmes and services targeting this marginalised population. A semi-structured interview and focus groups were conducted to examine the wellbeing needs, support networks, perceived service provision and future aspirations of six transgender youth sex workers in the Manukau area.

This small consultation concludes that for the wellbeing needs of youth sex workers to be met, there needs to be an increased awareness of the challenges faced by this group and their corresponding needs. Community agencies must work alongside youth sex workers providing support to deflect young at-risk people away from prostitution; mainstream services must be made more accessible and approachable; and communities must work together in the creation of more supportive policies and environments, particularly in providing greater employment and education opportunities for transgender youth.

# Introduction

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Youthline has been commissioned by Counties Manukau District Health Board to identify and report the wellbeing needs of youth and child sex workers in the Manukau area.

The Prostitution Reform Act makes an important distinction between voluntary and involuntary prostitution and this paper will discuss voluntary sex work.

Youthline is a youth and community development organisation, which strives to enable all young people the opportunity to fulfil their potential, regardless of their circumstances. It is fundamental to Youthline’s vision that all young people’s wellbeing needs are identified and

met; therefore this consultation seeks to achieve this objective within the context of youth sex workers.

The notion of wellbeing is discussed by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) as being aspects of life that are, 'important for a person's happiness, quality of life and welfare'<sup>1</sup>. While the MSD recognise that wellbeing needs vary culturally and individually, the Social Report 2008 identified 10 discrete components of wellbeing. These are: health, knowledge and skills, paid work, economic standard of living, civil and political rights, cultural identity, leisure and recreation, physical environment, safety, and social connectedness.

Studies of youth prostitution reveal a complexity of issues surrounding young people's involvement in commercial sex work, all of which impact on wellbeing. Individual histories, disconnectedness from social environments, lack of financial security and perceived limitations pertaining to career options are some of the factors involved in the decision to commence sex work.

The decision to voluntarily prostitute oneself can be considered as an indicator of compromised wellbeing and an action undertaken in an attempt to improve one's circumstances. ECPAT's research project, 'Bridging the Gap' reports the findings of a five year inquiry into the commercial sexual activities of underage people in metropolitan Melbourne. A literature review conducted as part of 'Bridging the Gap' identified family breakdown, histories of sexual abuse, homelessness, and unemployment as some of the factors precipitating a young person's involvement in sex work<sup>2</sup>.

It is also important to establish the motives propelling young people into prostitution initially and retaining them. The financial incentive is ubiquitous, and may be perpetuated by drug habits. A 2004 ECPAT survey of 47 Auckland sex workers (underage and of legal age) revealed that:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.socialreport.msd.govt.nz/>

<sup>2</sup> Fitzgerald, P. (1997) *Bridging the Gap: Commercial sexual exploitation of young people in metropolitan Melbourne*. ECPAT Australia Inc.

Four fifths of the respondents had tried to stop having sex for money but only about one fifth succeeded. Money was the main reason the respondents cited for returning to commercial sexual activity after they had tried to stop.

Paradoxically, prostitution is also cited by some as being a means by which to affirm sexual and gender identity:

A consultation of six transgender sex workers in Auckland's Karangahape Road indicated that they may have become involved with sex work as part of the process of developing their sexual identity<sup>3</sup>

Financial and gender issues may also interact due to the difficulties experienced by individuals identifying as transgender when trying to obtain employment dressed as women.<sup>4</sup>

The issues facing these young people inevitably grow in complexity on starting work in the sex industry. The likelihood of them engaging in associated risk taking behaviours, such as alcohol and drug misuse and engaging in unsafe sexual practices is considerably increased.

Psychosocial factors also affect workers in the sex trade; for example commercial sex workers' exposure to violence, which includes abusive communication, intimidation and bullying, physical abuse and sexual harassment and stalking, is an occupation health hazard of prostitution<sup>5</sup>.

The wellbeing of youth sex workers is further compromised by physical and psychological health detriments, including developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)<sup>6</sup> and dissociation. Hoigard and Finstad (1992) reported that sex workers seek to protect their sense of self from

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<sup>3</sup> Worth, 2000, cited in Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

<sup>4</sup> Boles and Elifson, (1994) cited in Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

<sup>5</sup> Department of Labour - Sex Industry - A Guide to Occupational Health and Safety in the New Zealand (Accessed on June 25, 2009 at: <http://www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/pdf/sexindustry.pdf>)

<sup>6</sup> *Post traumatic Stress Disorder and Under Age Sex Work* - ECPAT NZ 2003

violation by employing techniques such as dissociation and the use of tranquillisers. This implies that prostitution may be injurious to psychological wellbeing<sup>7</sup>.

Underage youth sex workers are especially at risk as they are less likely to work in brothels due to it being illegal. Furthermore, implications of their age include physical immaturity, lack of cognitive maturity and inability to plan ahead<sup>8</sup>.

Although the decriminalisation of prostitution has highlighted the illegality of underage prostitution, the May 2009 edition of ECPAT New Zealand's newsletter stated that, 'this weekend alone, about 200 underage children will be on New Zealand streets selling themselves as child prostitutes<sup>9</sup>.' ECPAT's 2004 survey revealed that in a sample of 47 Auckland respondents, the average age when consenting sex began was 13.5 years old and the range was 9 – 17 years of age. Fifty-nine percent of respondents disclosed childhood sexual abuse<sup>10</sup>.

To accompany laws and legislations designed to reduce the exploitation of children and prevent the occurrence of underage sex work in New Zealand, programmes need to be designed to increase the wellbeing of underage sex workers and demonstrate alternative options to prostitution. Youth development programmes targeting young prostitutes could provide the education, information and essential resources required to further build their resilience. Youth sex workers represent a particularly vulnerable subset of the youth population and for these people feelings of powerlessness are likely to be prominent; empowerment therefore is fundamental when addressing the issues leading to and surrounding the youth sex worker's circumstances.

This is evident in the ECPAT survey, which reports that:

Over half of the respondents advised other young people, who might be thinking about having sex for money, not to do it and to check out alternative options. A third

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<sup>7</sup> Hoigard and Finstad, (1992), cited in *Post traumatic Stress Disorder and Under Age Sex Work* - ECPAT NZ 2003

<sup>8</sup> Blakemore, S.J. & Choudhury, S. (2006). Development of the adolescent brain: Implications for executive function and social cognition. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 47:3/4 pp 296–312.

<sup>9</sup> [www.ecpat.co.nz](http://www.ecpat.co.nz) – May 2009 newsletter

<sup>10</sup> Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

suggested that the young people needed to educate themselves about the dangers in the sex trade. Three respondents suggested the young people get counselling before they considered entering into commercial sexual activity<sup>11</sup>.

This summary projects feelings of regret, entrapment and psychological distress resulting from the respondents' ignorance of the sex trade on entry into it. The statistics also emphasise the need for support systems to exist for young people at risk of entering prostitution, those actively involved in sex work and those who are 'retired.'

Findings that depression (Pyett & Warr, 1996), self harm and risk- taking (Stewart,1994; Tschirren, Hammet & Saunders, 1996) are concurrent with commercial sexual activity in young people further highlights the need for targeted programmes and interventions designed at enhancing the wellbeing of these young people<sup>12</sup>.

To facilitate this, ongoing understanding of this largely neglected field is required to further explicate the wellbeing needs of youth sex workers.

This Youthline project was intended to provide reflections on the lives of youth prostitutes in Manukau and it was conducted outside the usual research paradigms. The narratives relay the stories of the young people involved and the emergent themes can be used to promote the need for more substantial research projects to be conducted and to inform subsequent studies.

This paper will discuss the wellbeing needs of young sex workers as identified by six youth sex workers in interviews conducted by Youthline youth development workers. Definitions of key terms used throughout the report are included as Appendix A.

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<sup>11</sup> Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

<sup>12</sup> Pyett & Warr, 1996; Stewart,1994; Tschirren, Hammet & Saunders, 1996, cited in <sup>12</sup> Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ



# Methods

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## **Recruitment process**

To recruit youth sex workers for this consultation key agencies and networks that could potentially link Youthline to youth prostitutes were identified and contacted. These included:

- ECPACT (Elimination of Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes)
- NZ Prostitutes Collective
- The Center For Youth Health
- Mangere East Family Center
- South Auckland Sexual Health Clinic.

Further to this, fliers were developed and distributed through a range of settings including; Friendship House, Manukau Central; Manukau Cluster Meeting; Otara Youth Workers Forum; Foodtown Hunters Corner; and the Youthline Website.

Consideration was given to enlisting prostitutes on the street however it was deemed unsafe practice. Energy was instead put into building relationships with the small collection of youth sex workers already enlisted in the consultation who were able to draw two more participants to the consultation. In keeping with a youth development approach it was decided to work with the girls in a group setting as they report feeling most safe and comfortable with each other.

## **Participants**

Six young people from South Auckland, New Zealand who were either actively involved in sex work or had a history of prostitution were recruited for consultation. One participant, a former child sex worker, currently volunteers for a community organisation and facilitated the recruitment of the other young people, creating an opportunity sample. The age range was 16 years to 22 years, with 4 of the young people being underage sex workers. [For the purposes of this consultation, all sex workers interviewed are referred to as youth sex workers rather than child sex workers.] The ethnicity profile of the participants was Maori and Pacific Islanders and all identified as transgender.

## **Materials**

A consent form (see Appendix B) and a form collecting demographic details were distributed to participants. A semi-structured focus group script and a semi-structured interview script were used to identify the youth sex workers' wellbeing needs. Data was captured using a Philips Voicetracer 7790.

## **Design**

A qualitative methodology was employed so as to elucidate the wellbeing issues and needs surrounding youth sex workers. A focus group method using semi-structured interviewing was used (see Appendix C) and transcripts were subjected to thematic analysis to extract key themes. A semi-structured interview with the main contact was also conducted and transcribed. The 10 extracted themes were verified by the interviewers and examined within the framework of the Manukau Youth Development Model. To capture the individual experiences of each youth sex worker interviewed, this report presents a case consultation of each participant providing a narrative of their reported experiences. Pseudonyms have been used.

## **Procedure**

Once informed signed consent was obtained from all participants, two Youthline youth development workers facilitated two focus group sessions with 5 of the youth sex workers. The duration of the focus groups was 2 hours maximum. A single face-to-face interview was conducted with the main contact. All sessions were conducted using a youth development approach that engaged young people within a safe environment using appropriate tools to draw out the relevant information. All sessions were voice recorded, transcribed and analysed later. Demographic details were obtained once the interview and focus group sessions were concluded. Post-consultation follow-up meetings have been conducted with all participants.

In keeping with a youth development paradigm the interviews were loosely semi-structured. The young people were invited to tell us only what they were comfortable with and were not asked sensitive questions about their sexual practices or histories. Where this information is given it was volunteered by the participants.

The young people have viewed the final report and approved all quotes and stories. Some details have been changed to further protect their identities.

## Limitations

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This consultation project is not without its limitations. Due to the sensitivity and secrecy of prostitution, the recruitment process proved particularly difficult; this consultation therefore, has a small sample of six youth sex workers. Furthermore, these young prostitutes all identify as transgender, thus results are not representative and cannot be generalised.

The difficulty involved in the recruitment process reflects the complexity of sex work and the underground nature of prostitution in New Zealand. This is particularly the case for underage sex workers who operate outside of the law and for whom confidentiality is an issue. ECPAT's 2004 consultation revealed that most do not come to the attention of professionals.<sup>13</sup>

Time restrictions also limited the amount of data that could be collected during the consultation; therefore conclusions are drawn from two focus group sessions and one interview.

Involvement in prostitution is often precipitated by sexual abuse, as evidenced in several research reports (Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004); Saphira, M. and Read, J, (2004) and Potter Martin & Romans, (1999))<sup>14</sup>. This information is pivotal when addressing wellbeing issues surrounding youth prostitutes; however obtaining details of sexual abuse histories would necessitate the commencement of a therapeutic relationship with the participants in order to protect and support their psychological wellbeing. This is considered beyond the scope of this consultation.

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<sup>13</sup> Saphira, M and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

<sup>14</sup> Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *Victimisation Among Those Involved In Underage Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

Saphira, M. and Read, J, (2004) *Suicidal Ideation among Young people in Underage Commercial Sexual Activities* ECPAT NZ

Potter Martin & Romans, (1999) cited in Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

Distinctions must be drawn around those that use prostitution as a means of survival and those that use it as a means of making extra cash to support their lifestyles. This consultation focuses on both, with two consultation participants identifying prostitution as a means of survival and their primary or sole means of income.

While the findings within this report are specific to transgender youth sex workers, the issues of social disconnection and exposure to significant risk factors at critical stages throughout their lives are not unique to transgender youth, but may be exacerbated by bullying, discrimination and a sense of not fitting.

## Profiles

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Four of the consultation participants gave permission to publish profiles which they have read and approved.

### **Gigi**

Gigi is eighteen years old. She started prostitution in January this year and tends to work the street two-three times a week.

Gigi left school at fifth form due to the discrimination and put downs she was receiving there as a transgender young person.

Gigi comes from a loving, caring, family who accept and support her. She feels safe at home but less so in public. In order to feel safer, she would like to see the creation of a more positive environment, supportive of transgender individuals.

Gigi makes friends out on the streets and likes the fact that she can make fast money. Ultimately, she dreams of getting a job and settling down.

### **Rehanah**

Rehanah is seventeen years old. She worked as a youth sex worker between January and June 2009. On average, she worked the streets four times a week.

At school Rehanah felt segregated and was the recipient of discrimination in the form of mocking, teasing and putdowns from both students and teachers.

Rehanah is only now coming out to her family and does not feel accepted or supported by them. She does feel safe around her family however, but not that safe in public due to her sexuality.

To overcome the lack of safety in her wider environment, Rehanah believes that people need to think about equal rights and the fact that we are all basically the same.

Rehanah likes sex work for the instant money it brings, but feels it is unsafe when under the influence of drugs and the fact that you also run the risk of being stabbed, raped or killed.

Rehanah aspires to become a famous fashion designer in the future and to be accepted by those who don't currently accept their sexuality. She will fight this battle till death!

### **Azure**

Azure is nineteen years old. She worked as a sex worker from January to June 2009. She would generally work from Monday through to Saturday.

Azure found school hard because of bullying and name calling. She joined groups so as to be noticed as a person not as a thing. She left school on a good note, feeling that both students and teachers had learnt to accept her.

Azure comments that she never felt accepted by her family and at one point made a suicide attempt and moved out of home. She now feels accepted by the family and is back at home, but it took time. (Possibly she felt that extreme measures would be the only way to gain acceptance) Her father still struggles with the fact that she is no longer "*his little boy*", but he just tends to ignore her now and does his own thing.

Azure feels safe at home and "*ok*" out in public, although it only takes one person to call her names and it ruins her day. She's not sure how to make things safer in general.

Azure feels happy and accepted working on the streets, around her own transgender people. She dislikes the fact that the whole community is against prostitution and tends to abuse sex workers.

Azure wants to get a job, move out of home and get her own house. She is currently living back with her family.

### **Sandra**

Sandra is 22 years old and worked as a sex worker when aged 15-16, while still at high school. Sandra excelled academically and was a leader, but describes teachers as lacking understanding and being non- supportive. She engaged in prostitution as a means of survival when her parents moved overseas and she was the eldest of the siblings. Money was needed to buy resources for netball and school. Sandra saw sex work as the only means of part time work available to her due to not being eligible for the benefit and the fact that other transgender people she knew had only succeeded in finding work in prostitution.

Originally Sandra was pushed out of family when she transitioned to identifying as transgender, but feels she is now accepted by them.

Sandra worked in a brothel for 6 months before stopping sex work aged twenty as a personal choice having made a positive relationship with a community organisation that encouraged her to move out of sex work. She is now a volunteer for street outreach and advocates for the rights of transgender young people.

Sandra aspires to develop and deliver various transgender awareness training programmes within the community and education sector.

# Key themes

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Disconnectedness and exclusion from society are at the core of this consultation, with key themes of bullying and lack of personal safety repeated throughout stakeholder interviews. However, despite this ongoing hardship and ostracism, the resiliency of these girls prevails. They speak of wanting to be positive contributors to society; to have careers and to fulfil their potentials. The following is a summary of emergent issues from stakeholder interviews:

1. Desire to lead a relatively normal life
2. Family breakdown and self harm
3. Loss of virginity at a young age
4. Schools provide an unsafe environment
5. Lack of options or pathways
6. Feeling accepted on the streets
7. Feeling normal as part of a group
8. Keeping safe
9. Reluctance to access community services
10. Reasons for moving away from sex work.

## **1. Desire to lead a relatively normal life**

Wellbeing depends on young people having a sense of choice and control over their lives. Their ability to take part in society and maintain a sense of belonging and identity depends upon their ability to exercise their civil rights. Consultation participants expressed a desire to be accepted; by straight men, by peers, family, school authorities, employees, tertiary trainers and the general public. They hope to find love and respect and lead a relatively normal life.

*“...they (society) won’t see them (transgender) as disgusting or whatever, they’ll just see them as a normal person .... So I just wish that one day all us here can just like walk on the streets freely.”*

*“You know, we want relationships, we want things, but it’s not accepted. We wanna be able to be with a man on the street and not get called ‘look at that guy he’s with a faggot.’”*

*“And when you’re young getting with a guy, knowing that you like guys, is like a dream come true. That’s like ‘he loves me, he’s gonna call me’ and you’re waiting for him to call you back its like ‘honey, he ain’t gonna call you back – he just used you’.”*

*“I don’t wanna be lonely all my life, to be honest when I look at girls ... I get emotional, like when is my day gonna come?”*

## **2. Family breakdown and self harm**

A number of consultation participants report family breakdown and a lack of acceptance and respect for their sexual identity. Physical and emotional violence within such a significant relationship has placed immense psychological pressure upon the girls.

*“Because we have family breakdowns at home, the only place I feel safe is on the street.”*

This comment refers to feeling safer as a sex worker on the street than as a transgender member of the public on the street where it is normal to experience bullying and discrimination.

*“And I was getting hidings every day. I wasn’t allowed to eat with the family. I wasn’t allowed to talk to my mother...”*

*“When we have family breakdowns and I’ve got nowhere to go to and I just feel suicidal, I just wanna cut myself ... I went to hospital for drinking petrol and that’s when they transferred me to Whirinaki (Child and Adolescent Mental Health centre, CMDHB).”*

*“Same thing; I was in hospital for a week and three days for like I cut my wrists.... Cause like growing up wasn’t easy as well; I lived with my uncle for two years because my whole family know I was gonna be like this (transgender), so the idea was to change and*



*go to a church college and become a boy.... My dad is an alcoholic and he never accepted me for who I was. I used to get beaten up for nothing when he was drunk."*

### **3. Loss of virginity at a young age**

Loss of virginity at a young age is common amongst the girls. Consultation participants talk of losing their virginites as opposed to being sexually abused. This could be an attempt to deny the seriousness of the event, but could also be reflective of their resiliency.

*"I got with this guy when I was seven and he was sixteen... I still didn't know what sex was at that time until like he showed me."*

*"We like lost our transgender virginites at young ages. That affects us as well. Because it's an important thing, your virginity. You don't want to lose it at that time to nobody you didn't know."*

Transgender virginity refers to the fact that the consultation participants lost their virginites as females as opposed to males.

*"I started prostitution.... when I was twelve."*

### **4. Schools provide an unsafe environment**

Consultation participants identified schools as being a particularly hostile environment, providing no role models; no one they could identify with or question about their sexuality; no support and little safety. Schools also exposed the girls to bullying from both teachers and students. None of the consultation participants completed secondary education, nor were they encouraged to by their schools.

*"Even teachers, they like don't understand .... I got a hiding off a teacher just 'cause he called me a faggot and I stood up for myself, but because I was new everyone stuck up for him but I knew where I was coming from, but once my mouth goes it goes and it didn't stop and he wanted to beat me up again. I just think they should go in schools and*

*help teachers understand cause even teachers are picking on us. One little thing just hits us so bad that we don't wanna go back to school."*

*"... I wanted to stay at school. But we (four of the consultation participants) left school because of the bullying."*

*"Even in the toilet. I like asked the teacher if I could use the toilet and she was like 'no sorry – not allowed' so I used to hold my mimi or my number twos 'til I get home because it's not nice going into the boys toilet – or the girls toilet – because they treat you like a piece of meat and they know you're too scared to talk when you're at a young age; 13. We hadn't found our sexuality and they know they give us a name – a poofter, a faggot, a queer – but we don't know who we are really."*

*"I was in the top class third form and fourth form, and then like fifth form I just couldn't take it and I was just like 'fuck school, fuck this, fuck that..."*

## **5. Lack of options or pathways**

Prostitution becomes a viable option when other work or career options are exhausted or shut down. In numerous instances girls report being bullied out of training courses and the workplace.

*"When I was at school, I didn't do part time work cause didn't know any other trannies that had got work successfully – (I) thought prostitution work was all that was available and also couldn't get the (unemployment) benefit because of my age."*

*"I've been trying and trying (to get a job) with my social worker and nothing happens too much and then I find that looking at the job we are now – prostitution – it's most easy to get money like that... you don't need to apply, you just have to know the right people to work on the street, you don't need a birth certificate or anything..."*

*"Even going on a course is hard as well – I was wearing stockings, heels and my skirt stopped there (just above the knee) and a cardigan. She (the course leader) said 'Excuse*

*me, do you know we have a dress code? It's semi-corporate' and I said 'my heels are corporate, my shoulders are covered ....' I felt good and looked good and I just felt really down so I didn't go back."*

*"I've had a job before .... Doing customer service work and it didn't work out for me there because of my gender, which is trans. So I left working there and now I'm working on the street."*

*"The reason I didn't go into any part time work was because I didn't know any other trannies who had successfully gone into part time work or worked at all. As far as I knew all that trannies did was either (go) on the benefit or sex working and coz I was too young for the benefit that (sex work) was the only option I thought was available."*

## **6. Feeling accepted on the streets**

Participants are familiar with the culture of the streets and feel relatively safe and familiar working within this environment because they are together in a group. The streets are the only place where participants feel accepted by straight men, where their sexuality is affirmed and where they feel desired and wanted. In contrast, when alone and not working they feel more unsafe and subject to discrimination and bullying.

*"And I saw it as a way of like getting with a guy but getting paid."*

*"I feel safer on the street because guys accept me, like straight guys accept me for who I am."*

The demand for young prostitutes affords this group some self esteem on the street where they experience being 'chosen' or preferred for the first time. They are able to hold their heads high amongst the other street workers for this reason.

*"It's so desperate that there's girls out there that doesn't want you there... because you're competition, cause guys like young girls."*

## **7. Feeling normal as part of a group**

Consultation participants express a sense of camaraderie and support in hanging out together and working together. While they are together they feel safer, being transgender is 'normal' and they can be themselves and relax with no judgements made about who or what they are.

*"I wake up in the morning and I think I'm a woman I don't see no man and any of us (consultation participants) we know we're men – well, we're half men – but we never see it in one another like you know I don't see a man in any of us and when we get changed it's not like disgusting like it would be disgusting getting changed in a man's locker room it's like we're all getting changed in front of each other freely it's not disgusting it's like normal."*

While the transgender 'sisterhood' provides significant strengths and positive affirmations for each of the girls, they are also the influence that led the girls into prostitution in the first instance, highlighting the ability for a peer group to be both a positive and a negative influence upon the individual, as evidenced in the following statement:

*"As for the prostitution thing, we chose that basically as a group – it was our own decision... I saw it in a positive way instead of a negative way because I saw prostitution as negative .... and then she just decided to come but it was her choice. We knew that we would back her up."*

While consultation participants have experienced a lack of connectedness within family and school environments, they have strong and significant connections amongst their peer group providing them with strength and support.

## **8. Keeping safe**

Consultation participants are exposed to significant risk on a daily basis, where safety is an underlying issue for the girls in most social settings. On the street, they are aware of the risks and incidences of stabbing and violence. They take precautions by working together in a group, by identifying themselves as transgender early in any transaction with a client and by being

mindful of keeping their wits about them and not working under the influence of drugs or alcohol. However, with the best intentions, it is not unusual for the girls to regularly drink before heading out to work on the streets, compromising their safety and exposing themselves to further risk.

*“It’s different when you’re by yourself than when you’re with a lot of trans – when you’re by yourself it’s like ‘watch out for your back, watch out for the back of your head ... always look behind like every ten steps you make.”*

*“And if we do go out drunk, we know that we’re gonna be watched over by each other. Like I could be drunk but I know I’m gonna get home safely because my friends are there.”*

*“That generational tension between sex workers has been there for years and it will always be there. I think it is more heated now going through the recession.....nowadays there are more coming out for drugs and alcohol so there can be anywhere up to 40 girls out at night and of course the ones that are out there for actual money purposes like bills and rent and stuff are going to smack over the ones doing it for drugs. It (racial) is even split as far as the Tongans in one corner the Samoans further up ..... but I think that is mainly coz of the language barrier coz a lot of the girls that come across from overseas can’t find work so they stay in their little groups to communicate in their own language coz they not fluent in English and safer.”*

*“A lot of the girls that go out there, go out not even needing money really, they go out and turn it into fun good times and get drunk and get blown away with your clients and that just throws the sex industry so downhill.”*

*“I’ve been bowled; I’ve been getting a hiding; I jumped out of a car; I got this useless scar on my head.”*

The girls feel safe working in a well-lit busy, open street. A vigilante group has recently been involved in a plot to drive prostitution away from the area. The girls feel this would only move

prostitution underground, into the darker streets and family neighbourhoods where it does not belong and where it is less safe for them.

### **9. Reluctance to access community services**

In general, it is accepted that young people experience significant barriers when obtaining health care<sup>15</sup>. Consultation participants describe their access to health services as being relatively limited with the only positive experience being at the Centre for Youth Health where they go to receive hormone treatment. They describe lack of respect and personal safety in attending other services.

*“(There are) a lot of problems with the younger ones in sex work, the reason why they don’t go into hospitals, doctors and stuff is because a lot of the time they refuse to call them by their preferred name. So you could have someone sitting in the corner looking pretty as, looking female and then they call out a name like Thomas and that person has to get up and go to the doctor as that name, ya know, there is no preferred name option in a lot of them (organizational forms).”*

*“I just don’t think there is enough information out there for those girls that need that. Coz there a lot of girls that have been out there for 5 or 6 years that haven’t even had one single sex check or health check. And that’s scary, not only for clients but it’s scary for them coz if they do have something it’s just gonna worsen”.*

*“If there is someone professional out there saying to them that ‘yes we have a clinic’ and ‘yes, you can come in and get checked up’ and say ‘we are skilled in transgender issues and more than happy for you to come in and see us ‘cause it’s private and confidential’ etc... it will get more girls.”*

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<sup>15</sup> Adolescent Health Research Group. (2003). *New Zealand youth a profile of their health and wellbeing: early findings of Youth2000 a national secondary school youth health survey*. Auckland: The University of Auckland.

Adolescent Health Research Group. (2008). *Youth '07: The health and wellbeing of secondary school students in New Zealand. Initial findings*. Auckland: The University of Auckland.

*“Education to providers (doctors, teachers etc.....) about transgender awareness and issues needs to be (delivered by) a transgender (individual). And it can’t be info given on paper or email it has to be face to face – that way you can’t ignore it and there can be no denying that it exists.”*

The girls want to be treated fairly and with respect within mainstream services, rather than having ‘special’ services set up outside mainstream. Effective training in relating to young people on a personal level can contribute to supporting, quality relationships.

#### **10. Reasons for moving away from sex work**

Four of the six girls interviewed for this consultation moved away from prostitution at some point. Their reasons for withdrawing included reaching an age where they were eligible for the unemployment benefit and identifying an alternative pathway or career option.

*“Meeting the Family Service Centre was a huge influence in stopping prostitution – a positive support/network/connection”*

*“One of my friends turned around and said to me, ‘I saw you out last night what were you doing?’ and I was like oh I was working and I got this real wayward look and was never looked at the same and not that I cared what people thought but it just gave me a second to reflect and look at hang on what are people actually seeing when you’re out there and even though they miss out on the 95% of Sandra that’s great, ya know, it still in some way does reflect and as a coach (netball) and all that kind of stuff it’s not really a good image.*

The ability of the girls to view themselves as role-models to others speaks of their resiliency and their eagerness to contribute to society and connect in a meaningful way with the wider community.

# Youth Development

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A positive youth development approach forms the platform for consistent youth policies and programmes and for improving our ability to achieve better outcomes for all young people. It seeks to foster the ideal environment for young people to learn, grow and contribute, thus supporting them to move into responsible adulthood. It also acknowledges individual young people's evolving capacity to initiate change and the interaction of the wider social and economic factors that either restrict or enable positive outcomes.

## **THE PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

The Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa <sup>16</sup> is based on a youth development approach that has six key principles:

1. Youth development is shaped by the 'big picture'.
2. Youth development is about young people being connected.
3. Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach.
4. Youth development happens through quality relationships.
5. Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate.
6. Youth development needs good information.

In combination, these principles contribute to the desired result of positive youth development, where young people gain a sense of contributing something of value to society; a feeling of connectedness to others and to society; a belief that they have choices about their future; and a feeling of being positive and comfortable with their own identity.

### **Youth development is shaped by the 'big picture'**

The wider social and economic contexts and the dominant cultural values set the big picture within which young people grow up. As a member of the United Nations, New Zealand supports the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC). UNCROC applies to all children and young people up to the age of 18 and combines provisions aimed at protecting

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002.



them through positive action by Government, parents and communities, with the recognition that the child or young person is a holder of participatory rights and freedoms.

**Youth development is about young people being connected**

Healthy development is shaped by young people having positive connections with many social environments. Positive youth development doesn't take place in one social environment alone. The more settings where young people feel welcomed, valued and understood, the better. For this reason, positive youth development is closely linked to healthy families, strong communities, healthy schools and supportive peers.

**Youth development is based on a consistent strengths-based approach**

A strengths-based approach recognises that both risk and protective factors are acquired throughout a young person's development. Risk factors increase the likelihood of difficulties in life and poor health and wellbeing, while protective factors enhance life opportunities and promote good health and wellbeing. Protective factors can reduce the impact of unavoidable negative events and help young people resist risk-taking behaviours.

**Youth development happens through quality relationships**

Healthy youth development acknowledges the importance of supporting and equipping people for successful relationships with young people. Effective training in relating with young people can contribute to supporting quality relationships. Specific training is important for the many adults who interact with young people on a personal level, including parents, caregivers, siblings, relatives, neighbours; and adults who work with young people on a professional level, including doctors, teachers and police officers.

**Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate**

Youth development acknowledges the importance of providing opportunities for young people to increase their control of what happens to them and around them, through advice, meaningful participation and engagement.

### Youth development needs good information

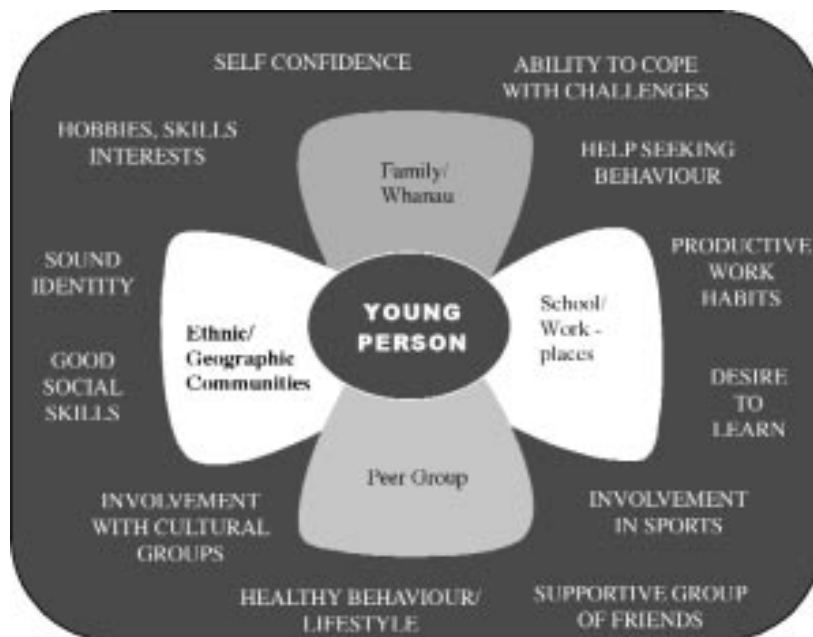
Youth development is continually informed by effective research, evaluation and information gathering. Good information is also needed to train and inform people about applying a youth development approach and to inform young people about youth participation.

## Discussion

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While the limitations of this small consultation focus all learnings and recommendations upon transgender youth sex workers within Counties Manukau, it is important to consider the consultation participants first and foremost as young people who are experiencing disconnectedness and exclusion from society. This disconnectedness has been a significant factor in their turning to prostitution. Any intervention should therefore help to reconnect young people with the four social environments, these being: family, community, school/training/work and peers (see below), as well as encourage caring positive adult role models and provide young people with opportunities to participate in activities around them.

Figure 1. A young person who is connected<sup>17</sup>



<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Youth Affairs. (2001). *Supporting the positive development of young people in New Zealand*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

At a basic level, consultation participants express a desire to be accepted, by straight men, as well as peers, family, school authorities, employees, tertiary trainers and the general public. They hope to find love and respect and lead a relatively normal life. According to the Social Report<sup>18</sup>, being connected to others is at the core of our wellbeing. We are defined by our social roles and relationships and in these we find happiness, support, contentment and a sense of contributing to society. In contrast, feelings of isolation and loneliness undermine overall wellbeing and can negatively impact on physical and emotional health, resulting in stress, anxiety and depression.

Consultation participants have experienced significant discrimination and bullying throughout their lives due to their sexual identity. This level of discrimination is evident within most social contexts including home, school, workplace, training courses and when accessing community services.

A strengths-based approach to youth development recognises that both risk and protective factors are acquired throughout a young person's development. Risk factors increase the likelihood of difficulties in life and poor health and wellbeing, while protective factors enhance life opportunities and promote good health and wellbeing. Protective factors can reduce the impact of unavoidable negative events such as family breakdown, sexual abuse and discrimination; and help young people resist risk-taking behaviours.

For a number of consultation participants, family breakdown and a lack of personal safety both inside and outside the home have been part of their life story. Exposure to this type of risk factor increases the likelihood of poor outcomes for young people. Positive family relationships have a role in fostering social connectedness and wellbeing by supporting individuals and giving them opportunities to interact constructively with others.<sup>19</sup> Brannigan and Van Brunschot<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Social Development. 2008. *The Social Report*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Social Development. 2008. *The Social Report*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

<sup>20</sup> Brannigan and Van Brunschot, (1997) cited in Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

state that disruption of family attachments can lead to early sexual behaviour, with a negative home life and sexual precocity having been found to be significant predictors of prostitution. Several participants speak of the early loss of their virginity. This aligns with previous studies where higher rates of childhood sexual abuse were found among women involved in prostitution (Saphira and Herbert, 2004)<sup>21</sup> and where early sexual behaviour has also been seen as a predictor of underage prostitution (Brannigan & Van Brunschot, 1997)<sup>22</sup>.

Consultation participants talk of their early loss of virginity as opposed to sexual abuse. As a resiliency tool, they may be framing the issue in their own minds as something less serious than sexual abuse, or as Femina, Yaeger and Lewis<sup>23</sup> report, it might be due to an unwillingness to acknowledge sexual abuse, particularly if it is incestuous.

Schools provide a primary developmental context for most children and young people in New Zealand. McNeeley, Nonnemaker, & Blum<sup>24</sup> identify school-connectedness as having an important role in positive youth development. Consultation participants found school to be a non-supportive environment offering them little in the way of positive relationships with either peers or adults. Consultation participants claim that they dropped out of school due to bullying and discrimination. Their resulting sense of exclusion from society is common among young people who drop out, according to Tidwell<sup>25</sup> who attributes feelings of hopelessness and estrangement from school, home, neighbourhood and society in general.

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<sup>21</sup> Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ  
Potter, Martin and Romans (1999) cited in Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

<sup>22</sup> Brannigan and Van Brunschot, (1997) cited in Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

<sup>23</sup> Femina, Yaeger and Lewis, (1990) cited in Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

<sup>24</sup> McNeeley, Nonnemaker, & Blum, (2002) cited in Guerra, N. G., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2008). Linking the prevention of problem behaviors and positive youth development: Core competencies for positive youth development and risk prevention. In N. G. Guerra & C. P. Bradshaw (Eds.), *Core competencies to prevent problem behaviors and promote positive youth development. New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 122, 1–17.

<sup>25</sup> Tidwell (1988) cited in McLaren, K. (2002) *Youth Development Literature Review*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

The Social Report<sup>26</sup> details the role of paid work in providing a sense of social wellbeing, providing not only income, but social contact and a sense of self-worth. Consultation participants felt they had few options or pathways open to them in regard to paid work due to discrimination against transgender. This is supported by the findings of Boles and Elifson<sup>27</sup> whereby transgender girls had turned to prostitution having had difficulty finding paid employment dressed as a female.

Consultation participants have been given little opportunity or power to contribute to their own positive outcomes within the home, school, workplace and wider community. While they identify bullying in schools, on courses, and in employment as a key factor in turning to prostitution, they consider that the streets provide them with a fast and accessible income, an opportunity to be their own boss, and some control over their lives. This in turn provides them with a degree of self esteem.

It would appear that for these girls, entering prostitution was something they undertook as a group as an identified means of making quick money and as one of the few options open to them. They do not appear to be exploited or 'protected' by any sort of pimp, but look after one another on the street. The existence of this key relationship is a significant protective factor for consultation participants.

Quality relationships are important at all levels across society from our personal friendships to our professional interactions with others. Quality relationships provide us with affirmations, good information, a sense of connectedness and opportunities. Consultation participants have experienced little in the way of positive role modeling and respectful relationships in the course of their lives. The significant exception is the relationship they share with other transgender young people who provide them with a sense of relative wellbeing. Other positive relationships have been built with one or two community service providers who have had an impact on the wellbeing of consultation participants offering them a sense of connectedness and opportunity.

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<sup>26</sup> Ministry of Social Development. 2008. *The Social Report*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development.

<sup>27</sup> Boles and Elifson, (1994) cited in Saphira, M. and Herbert, A. (2004) *The Involvement of Children in Commercial Sexual Activity* – ECPAT NZ

The girls want to be treated fairly and with respect within mainstream services, rather than having special services set up outside mainstream. The YDSA<sup>28</sup> identifies effective training in relating with young people on a personal level as a factor that can positively contribute to supporting quality relationships. Culturally competent attitudes and aptitudes are crucial for all marginalised sub-groups, whether based on gender (male, female, transgender, fa'afafine); age (elderly, adolescent); sexual preference (gay, heterosexual, lesbian, bisexual); place of birth (island-born or raised, New Zealand-born or raised, or multi-ethnic); disability; or religion.<sup>29</sup> Cultural safety has been described as an approach that asserts, respects and fosters the cultural expression of the client.

While it would be easy to label youth sex workers solely as being victims of a society that has discriminated against them and failed to provide for them, the consultation participants do not necessarily view themselves in this light. Prostitution does provide transgender youth sex workers with significant positives including a sense some control over their lives and an affirmation of their sexual identity. Consultation participants find camaraderie and support from their peers working the streets. While society has pushed the girls outside of mainstream and into sex work, they remain resilient and desirous of finding meaningful and fulfilling relationships and occupations and leading a relatively normal life.

Recently turning eighteen has also made some of the consultation participants eligible for the unemployment benefit. This significant milestone coincides with those same girls making a concerted effort to move away from prostitution, tending to support the claim that they were only in sex work for the money. It also draws attention to the significant shortfall in financial support available to young leaving school early and reaching an eligible age for Government support.

Consultation participants report having trouble accessing good information during the formative period of discovering and developing their sexuality. Knowledge and skills enhance people's ability to meet their basic needs, widen the range of options open to them in every sphere of life, and enable them to influence the direction their lives take. The skills people possess can

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<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Youth Affairs. 2002. *Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa*. Wellington: Ministry of Youth Affairs.

<sup>29</sup> MOH. 2008. *Pacific Cultural Competencies: A literature review*.

also enhance their sense of self-worth, security and belonging.<sup>30</sup>. Knowledge and skills relate directly to career options and young people's ability to make choices about their lives. They also relate to one's ability to access services and exercise civil rights.

Information is also critical in breaking down negative stereotypes and misconceptions. It is vital in providing a context and understanding for events pertaining to the individual and society. Good information is also needed to train and inform people about applying a youth development approach and to inform young people about youth participation.

Quality relationships with a small collection of social support agencies have assisted in reconnecting consultation participants back into their communities through a strengths-based approach that has facilitated opportunities for them beyond prostitution. As a result of this consultation and the relationship built between Youthline and the consultation participants, three of the six participants have registered to attend a Youthline Personal Development Stage 1 pre-counselling course, having identified a desire to move into counselling as a support for other transgender young people. Youthline will continue to support these girls by providing them with transport to and from the course. The girls have also built a positive relationship with the South Auckland Poets Collective as a result of their connections with Youthline (Appendix D).

Since the interviews were conducted one of the consultation participants has been elected to sit on the Board of the Human Rights Commission and is currently working on Human Rights and Privacy Laws to ensure health and safety for transgender youth in work and school environments. Further to this, one of the consultation participants is working with staff from local agencies and is in dialogue with an anti-prostitution group around working collaboratively to find employment solutions.

These transgender young people have been exposed to sexual abuse from a young age, discrimination, bullying and disconnection. Despite the presence of significant risk factors within their lives they are strong and vibrant personalities who, given the opportunity, are eager to make a positive contribution to society. Youthline will continue to work alongside the

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<sup>30</sup> Ministry of Social Development. 2008. *The Social Report*. Wellington: Ministry of Social Development

consultation participants, enabling them to contribute to positive outcomes for both themselves and other disconnected transgender youth in South Auckland.



# Recommendations

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Transgender young people are generally ostracised by their families and the wider community, pushing them out to the fringes of society and into prostitution as a means of earning a living and maintaining some self esteem. The following recommendations have been considered within the framework of the Manukau Youth Development Model (Appendix E). They provide a means for community agencies to work alongside transgender youth prostitutes to support younger transgender youths and ideally deflect them away from prostitution as a career path; a means of educating the wider community and increasing support for transgender young people; and a means by which these young people can realise their personal aspirations.

Recommendations 1, 3, 4 and 5 were made by the participants themselves. Recommendations include:

**1. Incorporate services for transgender youth within the mainstream, ensuring they are youth friendly and approachable and not separated from the general population.**

This recommendation aligns with Outcome 4 of the Manukau Youth Development Model in which “Young people have positive experiences of being themselves, and being welcomed and accepted as valued members of the community.” Outcome 5 also identifies the need to up-skill people who work with young people by providing training and workshops on working effectively & collaboratively with young people and diverse communities.”

**2. Involve the research participants in any future initiatives stemming from this report, empowering them to be part of the solution.**

This recommendation aligns with Outcome 2 of the Manukau Youth Development Model which identifies the importance of involving young people in community plans and decisions, and in the planning and running of community events, activities, facilities and programmes. This could be actioned by a) identifying and utilising youth and cultural expertise in community projects; and b) establishing youth reference processes and forums for community consultation purposes.

It would also suggest that we a) train and support young people to contribute effectively by participating in research, events, activities, facilities and programmes; (b) provide community with material on best practice for youth involvement; (c) provide robust evaluation processes that ensures youth participation is effective and representative of the community; (d) ensure systems are in place to identify and advocate areas of need and strengths for young people.

**3. Facilitate open and safe discussion between transgender young people and mainstream services including Police, education and primary health care providers, Child Youth and Family, doctors and nurses on how to best support transgender young people.**

This recommendation aligns with Outcome 7 of the Manukau Youth Development Model which sees young people as being able to express their diverse and holistic needs and have these acknowledged and supported. This can be actioned by (a) providing forums & opportunities to encourage all aspects of young peoples' wellbeing; (b) providing opportunities for young people to explore their needs in terms of mental, spiritual and family wellbeing e.g. in health classes; and c) providing training and workshops on effective approaches when working with the diverse needs of young people e.g. HEADSS Assessment Tool.<sup>31</sup>

**4. Provide education and awareness-raising within a mainstream context in schools to normalise transgender and create a more supportive environment for transgender young people.**

The following three recommendations align with Outcome 5 of the Manukau Youth Development Model which is that young people and their family/whanau, peers and significant others have accurate and unbiased information, resources, and support.

This could be actioned by: (a) providing youth-friendly information resources on-line and hard copy and training and workshops on working effectively & collaboratively with

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<sup>31</sup> HEADSS Assessment Tool is a screening tool designed by Dr Henry Berman in the USA and further developed by Drs Goldenring and Cohen to be used to discover the context of a presenting complaint to a health professional. It is also useful to engage young people in a therapeutic relationship and to help form a strengths based management plan with the young person.

young people and diverse communities; (b) linking families with appropriate family-focussed services; and (c) providing guided opportunities for young people to support and inform each other in real and virtual worlds.

- 5. Develop a Helpline for transgender young people to seek information and support for issues confronting them and as an intervention to halt the path towards prostitution.**
- 6. Develop policy solutions and resources for schools in conjunction with transgender young people.**
- 7. Work with the research participants to further develop their individual capabilities and aspirations and assist in the development of career pathways and alternatives to prostitution.**

This recommendation aligns with Outcome 8 of the Manukau Youth Development Model: “Young people have opportunities to develop themselves as leaders of self and others through development pathways.” The model suggests we need to (a) provide and encourage participation in youth development programmes; (b) foster youth participation in all aspects of community development; (c) identify and promote key development pathways for young people; and (d) provide developmental pathways within schools which are easily accessible to a diverse range of students.

- 8. Investigate employment opportunities for the girls within the area providing a local solution to the identified problem of prostitution.**

This recommendation aligns with Outcome 1 of the Manukau Youth Development Model which suggests “Youth services, agencies, groups and clubs will work collaboratively to foster the development of young people.” Local Youth Transition Services could assist with this process.

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# Appendix A: Definitions

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## **Sex work and the law in New Zealand - Prostitution Reform Act:**

In 2003, the Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) changed the laws surrounding prostitution in New Zealand, decriminalising brothels, pimping and soliciting. The PRA creates a framework that safeguards the human rights of sex workers and protects them from exploitation, promotes the welfare and occupational health and safety of sex workers, is conducive to public health, prohibits the use in prostitution of persons under 18 years of age, and implements certain other related reforms<sup>32</sup>.

**Commercial sexual services**, in terms of the Prostitution Reform Act, means sexual services that:

- involve physical participation by a person in sexual acts with, and for the gratification of, another person; and
- are provided for payment or other reward (irrespective of whether the reward is given to the person providing the services or another person)<sup>33</sup>.

**Sex worker** means a person who provides commercial sexual services<sup>34</sup>.

**Youth** is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood and relates to people aged 12-24 years of age. The discussion of youth sex workers in this report therefore, encompasses both legal and illegal prostitution.

**Child** according to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which New Zealand has ratified, a child is a person aged under 18 years of age.

**Underage commercial sexual activity** will be discussed in this report as being any commercial sexual activity occurring under the age of 18 years as decreed in the Crimes Act 1961 section 149A<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> New Zealand Legislation: Acts - Prostitution Reform Act

<sup>33</sup> New Zealand Legislation: Acts - Prostitution Reform Act (PRA)

(accessed on June 25, 2009 at:

<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2003/0028/latest/DLM197815.html>)

<sup>34</sup> PRA

## Appendix B: Consent form

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*Changing lives.*

### **Consent form for focus group/individual Interview**

Project title: Underage Manukau Sex Workers

Project Supervisor: Zoe Hampton

Coordinator: Grace Taylor and Renee Haiu

- € I have asked any questions I need to and had these answered.
- € I understand that I may decide I don't want to do this focus group/interview anymore and may leave at any time.
- € If I decide I don't want to do this focus group/interview anymore I understand that all the information I have given will not be included in the project if I don't want it to be.
- € I agree to take part.
- € I give permission for this focus group / interview to be recorded.
- € I give permission for quotes (word for word sentences of what I say) to be used in the final report. The counsellor will check with me that she has gotten what I said correct and remove anything I said that might let other know who I am from the quote.

I wish to receive a copy of the final report (please circle):      Yes      No

### **Participant information**

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<sup>35</sup> New Zealand Legislation: Acts – Crimes Act 1961

Age:

Gender:

Ethnic group:

Where do you live:

Do you go to (please circle):

School/uni   Alternative education   Other training   Work   Unemployed

**Please sign here:**

Thank you!

**Contacts details if we have agreed to an interview:**



# Appendix C: Interview schedule

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## Interview Question Ideas

Starter Question:

### WELL BEING

- What does it mean to you to be happy?
- What are the most important things in your life and why?
- What are three things you couldn't live without?
- What are three things you'd rather live without?
- Where do you feel comfortable / safe?
- What makes you feel comfortable / safe?

### SUPPORTS

- If you need something where do you go?
- What does support mean to you?
- Tell us about your family/community
- What community do you identify with? E.G. Youth, Ethnic, Transgender, Prostitutes, Your suburb/hood...?

### SERVICES

- If you need something where do you go?
- Tell us of your experience accessing health services?
- Do you feel comfortable/safe?
- Where and who do you go if you need medical attention/health advice? Where wouldn't you go?]

### COMMUNITY

- What would you like your community to do for you?
- How do you think young people are viewed in your community?

### FUTURE

- What would your ideal world look like?
- What are your goals?
- What do you see your future holds for you?

## Appendix D: South Auckland Poets Collective

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### **South Auckland Poets Collective**

Following the first meeting with the group, youth worker and poet Grace Taylor was inspired to write a poem about the young women she had just met and the story they shared. The poem is called 'Smash Stereotypes' and is about someone hearing firsthand the reasons behind young women, like those in this group, working on the streets. "Being honest about the stereotype I held initially about prostitutes, I tried to get a message out to the community about hearing both sides of the story. I also wanted to express through the medium of poetry the message that these girls actually don't like to work the streets and want to be a part of the solution."

Grace Taylor is co-founder for the South Auckland Poets Collective and the collective had a grant to publish a book and film a DVD of work by Creative New Zealand. The poem that Grace chose to feature and film is 'Smash Stereotypes'. "After reading the poem to the girls I asked if they would like to feature in the video for this poem. Three of the girls were keen. We filmed in late April." The girls worked alongside Grace, the director, cameraman and another Youthline youth worker /SAPC co-founder. The girls were comfortable as they were in a familiar environment and had a positive experience as they were doing something different in a space where they usually are working. This also provided them with the opportunity to share with us more about their experience working the streets. We also got to experience firsthand the 'looks' and comments they received from the public. The girls also attended the in-house preview in June where they connected with members of the SAPC. "I think this experience was positive one because the girls were provided the opportunity to connect with other people in the Manukau community, share their story and be involved in a positive project giving them a sense of contribution to a bigger picture."

## Appendix E: The Manukau Youth Development Model

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The Manukau Youth Development Model (MYDM) was created to assist those working with young people, providing a guideline for the practice of positive youth development within Manukau. It is based on specific desired outcomes and outlines what will be seen in Manukau if positive youth development practices and processes are alive in the community. The MYDM acknowledges the diverse values and beliefs, both cultural and spiritual, held by people within Manukau.

The following strategies are recommended:

1. Youth services, agencies, groups and clubs will work collaboratively to foster the development of young people.
2. Young people are connected with community leaders and projects, and participate in community decisions and processes.
3. Young people have positive and strengths-based relationships with peers, whanau/family, school, and the wider community.
4. Young people have positive experiences of being themselves, and being welcomed and accepted as valued members of the community.
5. Young people and their family/whanau, peers and significant others have accurate and unbiased information, resources, and support.
6. Young people have a strong sense of self and are connected to their cultural identity.
7. Young people are able to express their diverse and holistic needs and have these acknowledged and supported.
8. Young people have opportunities to develop themselves as leaders of self and others through development pathways.