

ENGAGING
COMMUNITY

ADDRESSING SEX TRAFFICKING
IN EDMONTON

FINAL REPORT

Acronyms Used

ACT Alberta – Action Coalition on Human Trafficking Alberta

BC OCTIP – British Columbia Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons

CBSA – Canadian Border Services Agency

CCR – Canadian Council for Refugees

CIC – Citizenship and Immigration Canada

COARSE – Creating Options Aimed at Reducing Sexual Exploitation

CSS – Catholic Social Services

CWF – Canadian Women’s Foundation

DECSA – Distinctive Employment Counseling Services of Alberta

ECLC – Edmonton Community Legal Clinic

EISA – Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

EPS – Edmonton Police Service

EASIS – Edmonton Alliance for Safe and Inclusive Spaces

GOA – Government of Alberta

HT – Human Trafficking

IAAW – Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women

LGTBQ+ – Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual, Queer, Questioning, and any others who identify with this community

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

NET – Neighbourhood Empowerment Team

NGO – Nongovernmental Organization

NVCAW – National Victims of Crime Awareness Week

PSECA – Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act

PICS – Police Information Check Service

RCMP – Royal Canadian Mounted Police

SEWG – Sexual Exploitation Working Group

Note On The Language Used

Throughout the course of this report, various terms are used to refer to a trafficked or previously trafficked person, including “victim,” “survivor,” and “trafficked person.”

There is a dynamic debate around the use of these labels, with various arguments made advocating for and against their respective use. Although examining this debate is outside of the scope of this project, the authors note that they are aware of it and its importance. In this report, labels were chosen to reflect each particular context with an emphasis on accuracy and simplicity.

The term “Aboriginal” is used throughout to refer to the first inhabitants of Canada and their descendents: First Nations, Metis, and Inuit. The authors recognize that this term is not without contention and is unable to adequately encompass the rich variety of languages, cultures, and histories of the peoples referred to. However, this term was chosen as the most commonly used.

To the extent possible, the language used by stakeholders has been maintained throughout.

Acknowledgments

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ACT Alberta would like to acknowledge all of the people and organizations who have made this collaborative project possible. We have been overwhelmed with the support and interest from both the community and our partner organizations, often in the face of limited time and resources. The density of information and the weight of the topic notwithstanding, working on this Community Action Plan has been an inspiring and invigorating process, primarily due to the people we have had the honour to work alongside. We have watched the ideas generated through the Needs Assessment gain traction and become feasible action items due to the receptive and action-oriented culture within organizations in Edmonton. Our expectations have been surpassed

at every phase of this project with the quality of the contributions and the level of commitment we have found.

We gratefully acknowledge the essential contributions of our research participants, forum participants, dedicated staff members, and community stakeholders whose experiences and insight form the basis of this report, including the previous Research Coordinator, Davina Rousell. We thank the various volunteers who contributed their time and efforts, including Veronika Illich, a student researcher at MacEwan University who worked on a project that examined sex trafficking of men and boys as a complement to this project. We would also like to thank Dr. Julie Kaye who acted as the project Research Advisor. Additionally, we are particularly grateful to the survivors of trafficking who took the time to share their stories.

We also acknowledge the following partners who have contributed time, expertise, and resources to the project and without whom we could not have created this Community Action Plan.

Core Team

*Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation
Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
YWCA Edmonton*

*ASSIST Community Services Centre
City of Edmonton – Community Services*

City of Edmonton Councillor Scott McKeen

Edmonton Immigrant Services Association

Edmonton Police Service

Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women

REACH Edmonton

Sarah Chan, Honorary Chair

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Amy Wilson, Project Manager & Karen McCrae, MA, Research Coordinator

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Endorsement

We, the undersigned, hereby formally endorse this Community Action Plan to Prevent Sex Trafficking in Edmonton.

Kathleen Quinn
Executive Director
Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation



Fion Lee
Executive Director
ASSIST Community Services Centre



Karen Smith
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Edmonton Immigrant Services Association



Jan Fox
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REACH Edmonton



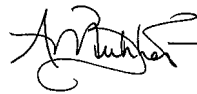
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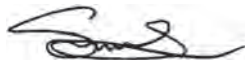


Rachelle Venne
Chief Executive Officer

Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women



Sarah Chan
Honorary Chair





Contents

2	Acronyms Used
3	Acknowledgments
4	Endorsement
8	Executive Summary
10	Introduction
16	Phase One: Community Needs Assessment
16	Demographics
18	Community Readiness
20	Human Trafficking in Edmonton
26	Literature Review
30	Research Project
54	Phase Two: Community Action Plan
59	Priority One: Increase Awareness, Education, and Training
64	Priority Two: Focus on Children and Youth
67	Priority Three: Improve Services through collaboration and Community Engagement
73	Priority Four: Address Underlying Structures and Systems
78	Phase Three: Implementation
79	Priority One: Increase Education, Awareness and Training
84	Priority Two: Focus on Children and Youth
86	Priority Three: Improve Services Through Collaboration And Community Engagement
89	Priority Four: Address Underlying Structures and Systems
91	Conclusion
92	Appendix A – Areas for Further Research
94	Appendix B– Works Cited

The project began with a Needs Assessment which provided the context necessary to develop a comprehensive and relevant Community Action Plan. The Needs Assessment included an analysis of Edmonton's demographics, a literature review, and a community-based participatory research study involving participants from a variety of sectors, including survivors of sex trafficking. To complement the formal research and stay connected with the community, we continued to consult with stakeholders throughout the duration of the project. Stakeholders and research participants provided feedback in interviews, focus groups, surveys, meetings and forums. We were impressed throughout the project by the level of interest from the community and the depth of the insights generated.

Stakeholders identified both strengths and gaps in the current response to sex trafficking in Edmonton and provided suggestions for how we, as a community, can prevent and reduce sex trafficking locally. When we compiled the data from all of our

consultations, four clear priorities emerged: (1) increase education, awareness and training; (2) focus on children and youth; (3) improve services through collaboration and community engagement; and (4) move beyond crisis intervention to address underlying inequalities in systems and structures. These four priorities provided the structure and scope for the Action Plan. We took these recommendations and priorities and developed strategies that were implementable and fit within the parameters and scope of the project. We also tried to create a plan that would not compete with, but rather build upon the work already happening in the community. By collaborating with partners, we were able to embed the Community Action Plan strategies into many existing projects and programs.

The Action Plan includes both short- and longer-term actions. ACT Alberta worked closely with Core Team members and other community partners to complete the short-term implementation projects before the end of the project in September 2015. As

increasing awareness, education, and training was the first priority in the Community Action Plan, we focused on training and awareness initiatives. For example, ACT Alberta staff provided training to Edmonton Police Services Police Information Check Section (PICS) and other service providers. We also conducted a public campaign challenging individuals and organizations to participate in a free, online human trafficking training opportunity.

To ensure the sustainability of the Action Plan, we also laid the foundation for the long-term action items to be implemented after the formal project end date. Our stakeholders will carry much of this work forward. As this is a community-led project, there are opportunities for organizations and individuals to contribute to the implementation phase. Established and new community partners have taken ownership of this plan and are working to implement it within their own organizations and spheres of influence.



Amy Wilson, Project Manager

INTRODUCTION

About ACT Alberta

The Action Coalition on Human Trafficking Alberta Association (ACT Alberta) is a nongovernmental organization (NGO) mandated to identify and respond to all forms of human trafficking, a crime that affects women, men, and children. ACT Alberta's programs include coordinating services for victims of human trafficking, providing training to front-line service providers, engaging and educating the public, researching and collecting data on human trafficking, managing a Victims Assistance Fund, helping to develop policy provincially and nationally, and creating community-based responses to human trafficking. In addition, ACT Alberta works collaboratively with government agencies, law enforcement, and NGOs to identify the needs of victims and respond

Project Description

In the fall of 2013, ACT Alberta received funding from Status of Women Canada (SWC) to develop a Community Action Plan to prevent and reduce sex trafficking of women and girls in Edmonton. This collaborative project was conceived of and organized by four organizations (Strategic Partners): ACT Alberta, the Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation (CEASE), the Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton (SACE), and YWCA Edmonton. The project was guided by Public Safety Canada's Local Safety Audit Guide: To prevent trafficking in persons and related exploitation (known hereafter as the Audit Guide). Based on the

structure outlined in the Audit Guide, the project was divided into the following four phases: (1) conducting a Needs Assessment, (2) creating a Community Action Plan, (3) implementing one priority item, and (4) evaluating the project.

The Strategic Partners reached out to other partners to establish a Core Team that would guide the project, as recommended in the Audit Guide. This Team is composed of a diverse group of stakeholders that bring a wide range of perspectives and expertise to the table. In addition to the four Strategic Partners, Core Team members include: the

Edmonton Police Service (EPS), the City of Edmonton, Edmonton City Councillor Scott McKeen, the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW), REACH Edmonton, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association (EISA), and ASSIST Community Services Centre. Sarah Chan sits as the Honorary Chair, where she acts as the media spokesperson for the project and champions it to a wide audience.

These Core Team members represent key organizations in Edmonton and bring a vast array of expertise to the table. The support of these respected organizations

will ensure that the Community Action Plan has both the resources and authority to move forward after the project ends. Core Team members have provided essential links to related groups and initiatives such as the Body Rub Task Force, the Sexual Exploitation Working Group (SEWG), and the Canadian Women's Foundation (CWF) Human Trafficking Task Force. They have also provided valuable connections through their staff, clients and networks. This helped to situate the project within the wider context of what is happening in Edmonton and ensured the work was done collaboratively and built on existing initiatives with minimized duplication. Core Team members are working with their organizations and networks to establish buy-in for the project and incorporate it within existing initiatives where appropriate. The Core Team further contributed to the project through planning and logistics, information sharing, consultation on the Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan, supporting community

engagement, and championing the project in the community. They also contributed resources from their organizations, such as staff time and access to venues for meetings.

The first phase of the project, the Needs Assessment, was undertaken to order gain a fuller understanding of the context of sex trafficking in Edmonton and the experiences of women who have been trafficked. The Needs Assessment included an analysis of Edmonton's demographics, a literature review, and a community-based participatory research project. Data was gathered through face-to-face interviews and focus groups with individuals from various sectors, including survivors of trafficking.

To complement and verify the formal research, we consulted with a wide range of organizations and individuals in the community, including organizations that provide services to survivors of trafficking, youth-serving organizations, government bodies, researchers,

victim services units, criminal justice professionals, and law enforcement. We also held two public forums to get feedback on the project and a variety of smaller stakeholder meetings on specific topics. Throughout the document, "research participant" refers to an individual who participated in the formal research portion of the Needs Assessment. "Stakeholder" refers to all of the individuals and groups consulted, including research participants.

The information gathered through the Needs Assessment was used to develop a Community Action Plan to prevent further sex trafficking of women and girls in our community. The Core Team and other stakeholders began implementing short-term action items in early 2015. Strategies for implementing mid- to long-term actions were developed and are outlined in the Implementation section below.

Definition of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a concept that has evolved and changed considerably over the years. It was initially narrowly conceived solely as international sex slavery; although this definition has broadened considerably, it is still frequently conflated with a variety of issues and is understood differently (sometimes tremendously so) by various individuals, organizations, and bodies.

In 2000, the United Nations (UN) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children¹ was finalized, providing a universal framework for understanding human trafficking. This Protocol has been broadly accepted by both governments² and NGOs and was the definition relied on throughout the course of this project.

According to the UN Trafficking Protocol, human trafficking refers to:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability

or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at 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 (United Nations, 2000).

In brief, according to this definition, human trafficking occurs when one of each of three major components is present, namely: (1) Action (such as recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt), (2) Means (such as threat or use of force, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power), and

(3) Purpose (exploitation through sexual exploitation, forced labour, or removal of organs). Refer to Fig. 1 on following page.

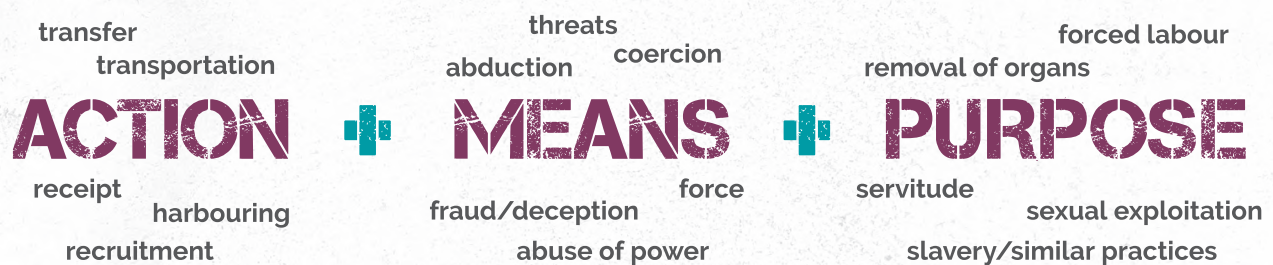
Trafficking can occur either internationally (when an individual is trafficked across an international border) or internally (when all the stages of the crime occur within the borders of a given country). Notably, the UN Trafficking Protocol does not require the movement of a person; transporting an individual is only one of several possible actions.

Although Canada has ratified the UN Trafficking Protocol, definitions used in the country by nongovernmental organizations, law enforcement bodies, and government agencies often

Fig. 1

Definition of Human Trafficking.

Adapted from the UN Trafficking Protocol (image created by ACT Alberta, 2015)



Traffickers undertake ACTION using MEANS for the PURPOSE of exploiting people.

differ, sometimes in significant ways. For example, the definition that exists in the Criminal Code differs from the UN Trafficking Protocol in several key ways. Under section 279 of the Criminal Code, **Every person who recruits, transports, transfers, receives, holds, conceals or harbours a person, or exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of a person, for the purpose of exploiting them or facilitating their exploitation is guilty of an indictable offence.**

This definition not only includes additional actions (exercising control and direction or influence over the movements of a person), but does not include a requirement to establish means, as in the UN Trafficking Protocol. However, establishing purpose (i.e. exploitation) under this section of the Criminal Code requires that the accused engage in conduct that “could reasonably be expected to cause the other to believe that their safety or the safety of a person known to them would be threatened.” According to Kaye and Hastie (2015), this “fear for safety” provision has resulted in an implicit expectation of means. According to these and other scholars, this in turn restricts the

applicability of the legislation to instances of nonsexual labour trafficking. Some would argue that issues of interpretation and application of this definition by law enforcement and legal professionals have resulted in inordinately low numbers of charges and convictions, while others say that this accurately reflects the gravity and rarity of the offence. This is only one example of the various human trafficking definitions that have been adopted, formally or informally, across Canada.

According to data provided by ACT Alberta, human trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, and the removal of organs has been reported in Alberta. However, this project is concerned exclusively with human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation.

¹ This document will be referred to throughout this report as the “UN Trafficking Protocol.” It is also commonly referred to as the Palermo Protocol, for the city in Italy in which it was signed.

² As of August 2015, there are 167 parties to the UN Trafficking Protocol.

Project Limitations

Creating an Action Plan that is implementable, community-based, and effectively works to address sex trafficking in Edmonton is an ambitious goal, particularly considering the limited time frame available for the project. The most relevant project limitations encountered included:

RESOURCE LIMITATIONS AND INSECURE FUNDING

One of the realities of the NGO sector is a lack of resources. Throughout the project, a number of stakeholders mentioned that high work-to-staff ratios and organizational resource limitations acted as a barrier to full participation. Furthermore, many stakeholders are competing for funding and may perceive participation in collaborative projects as potentially endangering their own funding opportunities. Time-limited and project-based funding dependent on funder mandates curtails the abilities of service providers to adequately respond to social issues and turn their experiential knowledge to best use. This resulted in some stakeholders being unable to participate fully, despite interest in doing so. Alberta's boom and bust economic cycle brings further instability, as the economy inevitably affects the work of this sector. Although we cannot foresee the consequences of the current economic slowdown, it brings uncertainty and most likely reduced funding to some NGOs.

UNCERTAIN SUSTAINABILITY

Although many of the strategies developed are medium- and long-term in duration, the project funding formally ended in September 2015. We have attempted to build sustainability into the Community Action Plan by aligning it with existing projects and building relationships with community partners. However, implementing the Action Plan requires significant resources, and not all organizations have the requisite funding to take this work on. While we have had

success in getting support and resources for many of the action items, there are a number that remain unfunded. Without committed funding, it is impossible to guarantee the long-term viability of the plan as a whole.

VICARIOUS TRAUMA AND BURNOUT IN THE SECTOR

The trauma supports that are available to individuals who have directly experienced violence are markedly insufficient, let alone the trauma supports for those service providers who engage with survivors. The limited funding available to NGOs and community-based initiatives can lead to overwork, burn out, compassion fatigue³ and vicarious trauma⁴ among staff and volunteers. This, coupled with comparatively low wages, can reduce an organization's capacity to participate in unfunded community initiatives and results in high staff turnover in the sector.

MISCONCEPTIONS SURROUNDING THE ISSUE OF SEX TRAFFICKING

Community engagement in this project included education about the UN Trafficking Protocol definition of sex trafficking and its relevance to the work of service-providing organizations. This proved challenging at times, as there is no common consensus around the definition and concept of this issue. This is due in part to sex trafficking being frequently conflated with other forms of exploitation. In particular, the lines between trafficking and other forms of exploitation are relatively grey and conducive to varying interpretations. Individuals victimized by trafficking may or may not wish to identify as being trafficked, and, further complicating this issue, the definition of sex trafficking is often influenced by ideological perspectives. For example, some stakeholders consulted in this project contended that all prostitution is sex trafficking while others argued that such beliefs infringe on sex workers' rights. This issue is of critical importance, as politicized arguments about what is or is not trafficking can interfere with the

treatment and services provided to individuals and potentially produce further harm. Additionally, as the bulk of the stakeholders and research participants consulted in this project were service providers, the full scope of the issue and range of definitions used in Edmonton remains undetermined. As the range of definitions used in Edmonton was not formally explored in this project, it is important to note this as a limitation we frequently encountered.

SCOPE CREEP

The underlying factors that contribute to the existence of sex trafficking in our community are broad and not necessarily specific to trafficking. For example, poverty, gender inequality and racism are deeply entrenched social inequalities that result in various harms to individuals, including – but not limited to – sex trafficking. While we have attempted to keep the scope of the project clear, it has at times been necessary to expand the discussion to related issues. Stakeholders emphasized that prevention strategies must ensure the complete and overall protection of individuals victimized by a variety of structural forms of violence and stressed that an effective preventative approach cannot exclude those who have not met the sometimes contentious definition of human trafficking.

INFLUENCE LIMITATIONS

Many of the recommendations suggested by stakeholders were outside of the scope of what NGOs alone are able to influence and progress in these areas would require significant cross-sectoral collaboration. For example, the changes necessary to combat deep-rooted structural inequality require systemic and policy change in all three levels of government, the private sector, and the community at large. While the community can take some steps forward, these efforts would be much more effective if supported by complementary policy changes. Some of the necessary

structural changes identified by research participants, stakeholders, and the Core Team include such things as: addressing poverty and income disparity, increasing supports for families and improved income and child care supports, implementing policy changes in group care and the child welfare system, changing immigration policy, increasing support for Aboriginal peoples, reducing societal insensitivity toward victims and survivors, reducing barriers to services, addressing the lack of resources in the NGO sector, addressing racism, and reducing gender inequalities.

PERSPECTIVE LIMITATIONS

Although the Core Team, Project Manager, and research team tried to be as inclusive as possible throughout the duration of this project, there are inevitably a number of voices missing. In particular, we recognize individuals directly involved in sex industries, those that support sex workers through labour-based advocacy, LGTBQ+ individuals, and disabled women are not adequately represented in the project. While it was fairly easy to engage with the community members who are already part of existing collaborations in these areas, marginalized individuals and groups who are not connected to these existing response networks were difficult to reach. This was a critical limitation as each participant's knowledge was deliberately included and added significantly to the final findings; if more diverse voices were reached, the findings of the study would have likely differed in significant ways. The importance of including diverse voices in informing responses to sex trafficking cannot be overstated and this limitation must be addressed in future studies and collaborative work.

3 Compassion fatigue describes the overall experience of emotional and physical fatigue that social service professionals experience through the chronic use of empathy when treating clients (Newell & MacNeil 2010).

4 Vicarious traumatization refers to a process of cognitive change resulting from continuous compassionate engagement with trauma survivors (Pearlman 1999).

PHASE ONE

Community Needs Assessment

Demographics

Edmonton has unique demographic considerations that make it ideally situated for a project of this nature. According to the Statistics Canada 2011 Census, the city is currently the fifth-largest urban area in the country and the second-largest in Alberta,⁵ itself the fastest growing province in Canada.



1.2 MILLION in metro

877,926 THOUSAND in core

Edmonton's core population grew 7.4 percent between 2012 and 2014, adding an additional 60,000 people to the city. Many of these individuals are newcomers to Canada. In 2011, migrants to Edmonton made up 20.4 percent of the population. Of these, 21.5 percent – nearly 50,000 people – had arrived within the past 5 years (Statistics Canada, 2011). The Pembina Institute (2013) has reported that this quick expansion is putting strain on Edmonton's resources and infrastructure. Furthermore, many of Edmonton's citizens are young; the median age in the city is 37 and the largest single age group consists of 20-39 year olds. Indeed, Edmonton is home to Canada's youngest workforce (City of Edmonton, 2014).

⁵ As of 2014, Edmonton has a metro population of 1.2 million and a core population of 877,926 (City of Edmonton 2014)

Edmonton's fast population growth is largely explained by an economy that is dependent on the boom and bust cycles of the resource industry. Revenue from oil and gas extraction has fueled a series of economic booms in recent decades, but the economy can also suffer from unexpected recessions; although the Conference Board of Canada identified Edmonton region as Canada's major economic engine in 2014, economists reported that Alberta was in the midst of a province-wide recession by the summer of 2015 (Johnson, 2015).

Fast population growth and a resource-dependent economy have resulting challenges. At 1.4 percent, vacancy rates in the city are among the lowest in the country and average rental costs have grown by nearly 10 percent since 2013. Roughly a quarter of Edmontonians struggle with finding affordable housing and homelessness remains a challenge: the 2014 Homeless Count found 2,252 homeless Edmontonians, an increase of 3.5 percent from last year (Homeward Trust, 2014).

Edmonton has the second largest⁶ urban Aboriginal population in Canada, accounting for over 5 percent of the total population. However, the city has come under scrutiny for particularly poor treatment of this population. According to a 2010 Environics Institute report, individuals within the urban Aboriginal population in Edmonton are less likely to have completed post-secondary education and generally have lower incomes, higher unemployment rates, and a higher proportion of single-parent households in

comparison to the general population. The same study reports that a majority of Aboriginal people indicate that they are viewed negatively by non-Aboriginal peoples in Edmonton – more so than in other major Canadian cities. This population is overrepresented in homelessness figures, with nearly half of the homeless individuals in Edmonton identifying as Aboriginal (Homeward Trust, 2014). Particularly troubling, 64 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls have had either their last known whereabouts in the Edmonton region or their remains have been found in the Edmonton region (Edmonton and Area Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women & Girls, 2015). At least 15 of these cases remain unsolved (CBC, 2015).

Edmonton has also come under criticism for particularly glaring citywide gender disparity. Edmonton was identified as the worst city in Canada to be a woman in a 2014 study conducted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. This study ranked the largest metropolitan areas in the country according to economic security, leadership, health, personal security, and education for women. Edmonton fared poorly, with the report noting an especially egregious wage gap between men and women, high levels of domestic violence, and low female political representation. Furthermore, of the 6 largest urban centres in Canada, Edmonton has the highest rate of sexual assault; in 2013, Edmonton's sexual assault rate was 74.2 per 100,000, dwarfing the next highest, Calgary, at 49.5 per 100,000 (VitalSigns, 2014).

⁶ Winnipeg currently has the largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada (Environics 2010).

Community Readiness

Stakeholders emphasized the many individuals, organizations, and networks that value collaboration and that have historically been doing commendable work on related issues in Edmonton for several decades. For example, many service providers spoke exceptionally highly of the professionalism and integrity of the EPS Vice Unit, identifying that this unit has worked hard to build trust in the community and has strengthened partnerships with NGOs across the city. Other notable initiatives include:

Body Rub Task Force: In response to concerns raised by community groups, the City of Edmonton created a task force to investigate the impacts of body rub parlours on the community and to develop recommendations for the City on how to better regulate existing body rub parlours⁷. The final report included many recommendations, including one to provide more training about human trafficking to City of Edmonton licensing and compliance staff.

City Council Initiatives: Edmonton City Council champions initiatives that are related to issues concerning quality of life in Edmonton. Relevant initiatives include:

- › **Gender Based Violence Prevention Initiative:** In December 2014, City Councillors proposed an initiative to combat gender-based violence in response to the high rate of violence against women and girls in Edmonton.
- › **Urban Isolation/Mental Health Initiative:** This initiative is based on the observation that daily contact with others in Edmonton currently fails to achieve a sufficient level of human connection and this has ramifications for mental health in the city.

- › **Child Friendly Edmonton Initiative:** The Child Friendly Edmonton Strategy is based on the International United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Child Friendly Cities Initiative and aims to produce the best possible outcomes for children and families.
- › **Women's Initiatives:** This work explores issues and opportunities for enhanced leadership roles and involvement in civic and community life for women. It addresses an array of gender based issues important to Edmonton women.

Edmonton Alliance for Safe and Inclusive Spaces (EASIS): EASIS is a grassroots coalition of community organizations that developed in response to the issue of street harassment in Edmonton. In particular, a number of group homes reported that men were harassing girls who live in group homes while they walk to and from community bus stops. Recognizing the connection to what stakeholders were suggesting in the Needs Assessment, the Project Manager met with this group to discuss ideas to increase safety in Edmonton's public spaces, including the UN Safe Cities Initiative. This group has decided to pursue the idea of the UN Safe Cities Global Initiative for the City of Edmonton.

Edmonton Temporary Foreign Worker (TFW)

Support Coalition: This group is a coalition of individuals, community organizations and unions that support and advocate for the rights of TFWs. This group is interested in exploring the possibility of applying “Sanctuary City” principles in Edmonton. The Sanctuary City concept is based on the idea that all people living in a city should be able access all public services regardless of immigration status. We heard from stakeholders that immigration status can be a barrier to accessing services, and an initiative like this would decrease barriers to services for sex trafficking victims.

Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW) Coalition on Increasing Safety for Aboriginal Women:

The IAAW has engaged a group of stakeholders who meet monthly to work on issues related to safety for Aboriginal women. Through this work, they are developing a provincial plan to increase safety for Aboriginal women. Many of their findings corroborate our Needs Assessment and their work aligns with the Community Action Plan and offers many opportunities for collaboration.

Protection of Sexually Exploited Children Act

(PSECA): Alberta’s PSECA legislation is unique to this province and provides important protections for children and youth who are at risk or are being sexually exploited.

Sexual Exploitation Working Group (SEWG): This is a coalition of organizations who meet regularly to address issues related to sexual exploitation in Edmonton. SEWG actively works to engage the public and plans events such as conferences, speaker panels, and video screenings on topics related to sexual exploitation. ACT Alberta and a number of Core Team members are members of SEWG, and these relationships offer many opportunities for collaboration.

- › **SEWG Group Home Task Force:** In partnership with Edmonton’s Downtown Neighbourhood Empowerment Team (NET), SEWG has formed a task force to respond to the issues surrounding Edmonton’s group homes. SEWG members have reported instances of sexual exploitation and potential sex trafficking cases in group homes. This information corroborates what our stakeholders identified in the Needs Assessment.

In addition to these local opportunities, there are a number of regional and national initiatives that contribute to a strong sense of community readiness to respond to human trafficking in Edmonton. Notable initiatives include:

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR): a national umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees and other vulnerable migrants in Canada. They support and coordinate anti-trafficking activities and networking across the country through their pan-Canadian Anti-Trafficking Network.

The Chrysalis Anti-Human Trafficking Network: a national telephone counselling service for trafficked people in Canada. Chrysalis hosted quarterly national human trafficking roundtables, with representation from several Edmonton-based organizations (including ACT Alberta), up to December 2014.

⁷ A body rub centre, as defined by the City of Edmonton, is “a personal Service Shop development where services are provided that involve the physical external manipulation of the soft tissues of the human body that are performed, offered or solicited for a fee in a manner that appeals to or is designed to appeal to erotic or sexual appetites or inclinations” (Edmonton City Bylaw 12800).

Human Trafficking in Edmonton

ACT Alberta has been tracking information on individuals victimized by trafficking in Alberta since 2008. As of April 2015, 54.3 percent of the survivors of trafficking assisted by ACT Alberta were trafficked for sexual exploitation, 35.9 percent for labour exploitation, 8.7 percent for both sex and labour exploitation, and 1.1 percent for organ trafficking. About three-quarters of the trafficked people assisted by ACT Alberta are women and girls.

Of those trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation, 81 percent have been trafficked internally within Canada (from British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia), and 19 percent have been trafficked into Canada from abroad (from China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Fiji, Hong Kong, North Korea, Pakistan, Saint Vincent, the United Kingdom, and the United States). Notably, many of those assisted by ACT Alberta are foreign nationals who entered Canada through legal means (such as through the TFW program) and were subsequently trafficked.

To date, all of the individuals whom ACT Alberta has assisted who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation have been women or girls. However, ACT Alberta has received unconfirmed reports of men being trafficked for purposes of sexual exploitation and of young men and boys being groomed by older men for the potential purposes of sex trafficking.

The following graphics reflect information on cases of human trafficking that have been reported to ACT Alberta. Please note that these statistics are only reflective of cases reported to ACT Alberta within the province between 2008 and 2015 and are not generalizable.

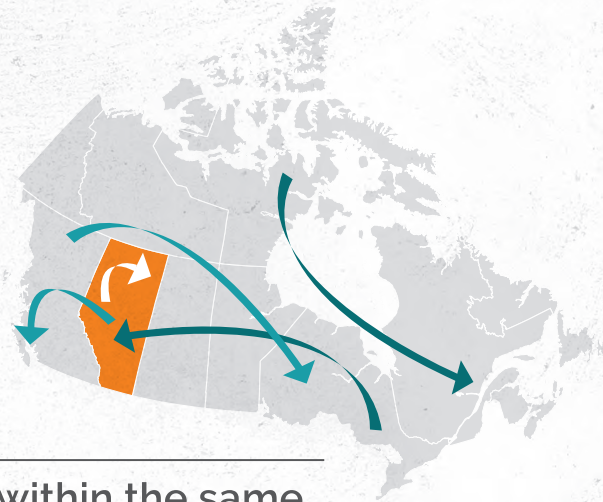
Fig. 2

Myths vs. Realities Infographic

Image created by ACT Alberta, 2015

Almost

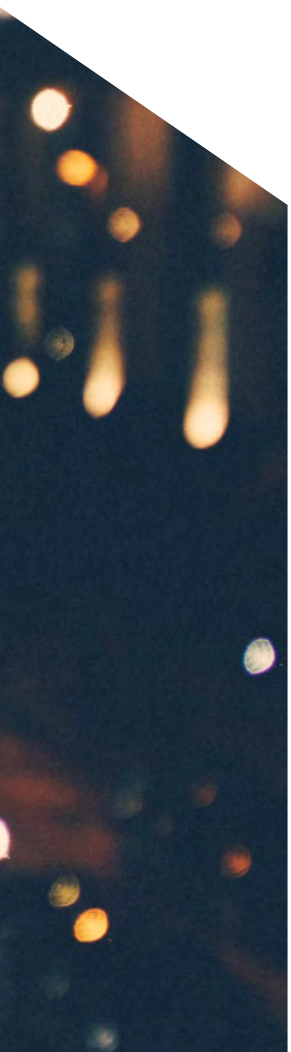
HALF of the **VICTIMS**
ACT Alberta assists
ARE CANADIAN
CITIZENS



Someone can be trafficked within the same country, province, or even city.





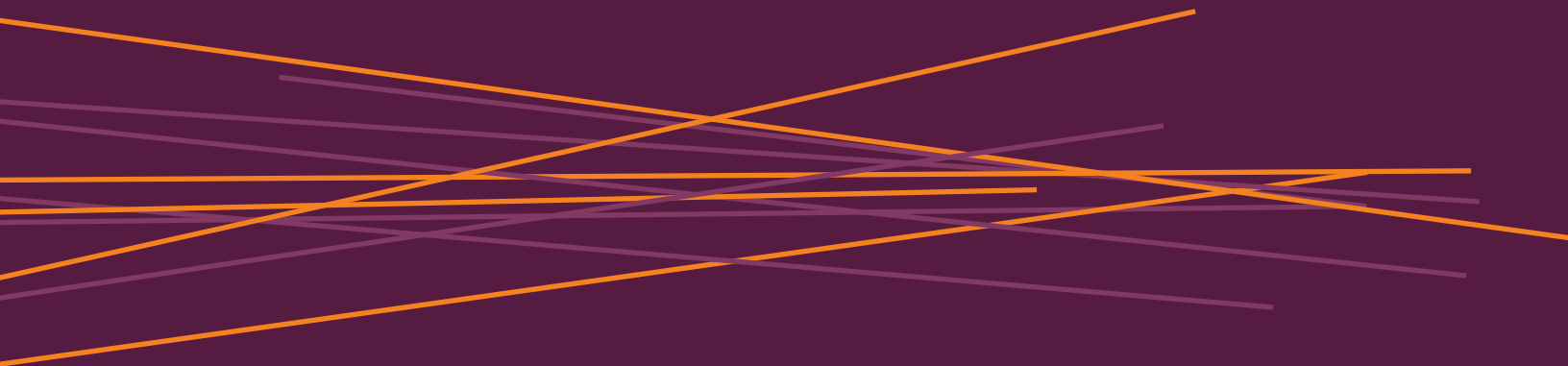


HUMAN TRAFFICKING CHARGES LAID IN EDMONTON

The first human trafficking charges in Edmonton were laid in 2009. The following chart summarizes human trafficking charges laid in Edmonton from that year until 2014.

Violations	Statistics	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Trafficking in persons	Actual Incidents	3	1	0	1	4	0
	Total Cleared	2	0	0	1	4	1
	Total Persons Charged	3	0	0	0	5	2

Table 1. Statistics Canada, 2015. CANSIM Table 252-0080: Incident-Based Crime Statistics, by Detailed Violations and Police Services.



“an 18 year-old girl was lured by a 16 year-old girl to a west end motel room where she was forced into prostitution by two men, both of whom were charged with human trafficking”

SEX TRAFFICKING IN EDMONTON – CASES REPORTED IN THE MEDIA

Since the introduction of human trafficking legislation in Canada in 2005, a number of cases of sex trafficking in Edmonton have been reported in the media.

In September of 2009, EPS forces raided the Sachi Professional Massage and Spa in west Edmonton and charged 3 individuals with trafficking in persons and prostitution-related offences. The proprietors of the massage parlour had placed ads in Chinese-language newspapers across Canada recruiting masseuses and offering wages of \$20,000 per month. At the time of the raid, three women (one originally from China and two originally from Fiji) had been forced into prostitution in the parlour. The case garnered nationwide attention and the human trafficking charges were the first ever to be laid in Western Canada. In 2011, however, the trafficking charges were dropped due to issues with witness testimony (Blais, 2011).

In 2010, the news reported on a young Edmonton woman who suffered from fetal alcohol syndrome who was lured to Ontario by a young man she met online. There, she was befriended by another man, who forced her to strip and eventually to engage in sex for pay. He was later charged with human trafficking. The day after she escaped from her trafficker she was trafficked by yet another man, who was also later charged with human trafficking (Cherry, 2010).

It was not until 2013 that human trafficking hit Edmonton's headlines once again. In the first case, an underage age girl was lured to Edmonton from Saskatoon. Once in Edmonton, the girl was given alcohol and drugs, physically and sexually assaulted, and forced into prostitution in a south side motel room. She eventually fled, shoeless in the winter, and was found by a passerby unconscious in the snow. One individual faced numerous charges, including human trafficking (Lazzarino, 2013). In a second and separate case reported by media that year, an 18 year-old girl was lured by a 16 year-old girl to a west end motel room where she was forced into prostitution by two men, both of whom were charged with human trafficking (Lazzarino, 2013). In a third case, a woman was charged with human trafficking after forcing a Korean refugee into prostitution in both Edmonton and Toronto. She was arrested in March of 2013 and eventually pled guilty to exercising control and direction a person to compel her to engage in prostitution – the trafficking charges were dropped (Blais, 2014).

More recently, in February of 2015, two women from Ontario were charged with a variety of offences, including trafficking in persons, after forcibly selling the sexual services of another woman over the course of a year in Edmonton (Metro, 2015). In July 2015, a Toronto man was charged with human trafficking after luring a 22-year old Edmonton woman to Ontario and forcing her into prostitution in a North Toronto suburb (CBC, 2015).

Literature Review

Although the study of human trafficking is relatively young, a rich field of research has already been produced from a variety of perspectives. This project began by reviewing and analyzing the current state of human trafficking literature.

This was not meant to be an exhaustive review and was primarily focused on studies relating to sex trafficking on a national and local level. However, broader studies that focused on areas outside of the Canadian context were also drawn upon when relevant.

The most widely accepted definition of human trafficking was adopted by the UN in 2000 (see Fig. 1, above). This definition has not been without controversy and a wide variety of definitions remain in common use; indeed, a reoccurring frustration expressed by authors is the lack of definitional consensus on this issue (Bruckert & Parent, 2002; Musto, 2009; Roots, 2013; Oxman-Martinez, Martinez & Hanley, 2001). It often remains difficult to differentiate

between human trafficking and related issues with which it is often conflated (including human smuggling, prostitution, sexual exploitation, transnational organized crime, and labour exploitation, among others). What should and should not be considered human trafficking is the subject of enormous contention, with the UN only able to adopt a working definition after years of highly politicized and polarized debates (Kaye & Hastie, 2015). In general, researchers, policy makers, and law enforcement draw a distinction between internal (often referred to as domestic) and international trafficking as well as trafficking for the purposes of labour, sex, and organ exploitation.

The difficulties of studying this issue go well beyond definitional

challenges. Most of the relevant populations (such as traffickers, middlepersons, and victims themselves) are hidden, in part because membership in these groups is highly stigmatized and criminalized. This heightens the difficulties in hearing from these populations directly (Dalley, 2010; Public Safety Canada, 2012; Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005). Indeed, only two studies were found that directly included the voices of trafficked individuals. The first, by McDonald & Timoshkina (2007), conducted interviews with 50 persons, including sex workers, agency personnel, and key informants, to better understand the lives of European women trafficked to Canada. Their findings emphasized the complexity of trafficking, the centrality of human agency, and the need to offer concrete help rather than

punishment. Sarson & MacDonald (2008) conducted a study on the ritual abuse-torture of children in the Canadian Maritimes – human trafficking emerged as one of several types of extreme abuse suffered by the children (now adults) whom they interviewed. The rest of the literature surveyed focused on the perspectives of service providers, law enforcement, and government. As a result, data on human trafficking that includes the perspective of trafficked peoples is frequently difficult to attain.

Despite these challenges, valuable research and analysis has been and continues to be produced on this issue. Researchers have paid considerable attention to the global and national contexts that create an environment conducive to human trafficking, including the overarching context of socioeconomic globalization and structural inequalities (Kaye, 2013; Oxman-Martinez, Martinez & Hanley, 2001; Musto, 2009). Migrants often leave situations of unemployment, conflict, instability, and discrimination in search of better lives in industrialized, urban areas that promise economic opportunity. However, restrictive migration controls force migrants into criminalized migration channels, creating a unique set of vulnerabilities amongst this population (Kaye, 2013; Hodge & Lietz, 2007). Authors emphasize that these challenges disproportionately affect women due to deep-set gender inequalities. Hampered by violence and discrimination, large numbers of women are unable to find adequate social and economic opportunities or are encouraged by governments to work abroad in order to contribute remittance payments into their national economies

(Kaye, 2015; Oxman-Martinez, Martinez & Hanley, 2001; Hodge & Lietz, 2007).

Authors writing about the Canadian context emphasize that women in Canada suffer from various forms of discrimination and gender-based violence that create situations of inequality and vulnerability (Department of Justice Canada, 2005; Parliament, 2007). Furthermore, studies have found that certain migration channels within the Canadian immigration system (such as the TFW program and the Spousal Sponsorship Visa) exacerbate gender inequalities and erect barriers that are difficult for migrant women to overcome (Langevin, 2007; Oxman-Martinez, Martinez, & Hanley, 2001). The 2007 Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women further emphasizes the difficulties faced by migrant women, especially women who do not qualify for the skilled worker point system. Migrant women, in many cases, are forced into criminalized channels or their ability to leave negative employment situations is curtailed.

Anti-trafficking advocates argue that Aboriginal women and girls are at particular risk of being trafficked in Canada (Boyer & Kampouris, 2014; Public Safety Canada, 2012; Department of Justice Canada, 2005; Roos, 2013; Sethi, 2007; Sikka, 2009). The effects of colonialism, the fracturing of family units due to residential schools, the intentional dispossession of identities and culture, and the violence and racism that this population continues to experience today results in deep-set inequality and marginalization. Many anti-trafficking scholars and advocates argue that Aboriginal

peoples, as a result of this, are particularly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation – including sex trafficking (Sikka, 2009; Boyer & Kampouris, 2014).

Interestingly, Sanghera (2005) notes that “these factors [poverty, lack of sustainable livelihoods, structural inequalities in society, gender discrimination ...] are not in themselves the causes of trafficking; they merely exacerbate the vulnerability of marginalized and disadvantaged groups and render them increasingly more susceptible to a variety of harms.” She argues that the constant search for maximized profit under a competitive economic regime creates strong demand for the most vulnerable, exploitable, and controllable workers, and is ultimately the cause of human trafficking.

Human trafficking has not gone without a response in Canada, which has typically centered on a criminal justice framework. In addition to ratifying the UN Trafficking Protocol in 2002, Canada has criminalized human trafficking in both the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. In 2006, the Canadian government began issuing specialized Temporary Resident Permits (TRPs) for victims of human trafficking. Holders of this permit are eligible to access health-care benefits, trauma counseling, and legal status in Canada for 180-days with the possibility of renewal. Furthermore, the Government of Canada released a National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking in 2012 and continues to support anti-trafficking efforts nationwide.

In Edmonton, NGOs, government, and law enforcement have been working together since the early 1990s to

discuss and counter sexual exploitation and prostitution (Mahaffy, 2007). Many of these same groups are now working together to address sex trafficking, with a number sitting on the Core Team (see above for a list of Core Team members).

Beyond this, ACT Alberta, founded in Edmonton in 2010 after working informally in the community for several years, specifically addresses all forms of human trafficking across the province. ACT Alberta coordinates and provides services for victims of human trafficking, provides training and education to stakeholders, researches and collects data on human trafficking, helps develop policy provincially and nationally, and builds capacity for community-based responses to human trafficking.

Although the study of human trafficking is not new, there is much that remains unknown. This study – the first of its kind in the city and one of three projects nationally⁸ – seeks to understand sex trafficking in Edmonton by building upon previous work and creating a body of local, community-based, and critical research. This is a necessary first step in creating a collaborative Action Plan that works to prevent and reduce sex trafficking of women and girls in Edmonton.

For the full Annotated Literature Review, please refer to the ACT Alberta website.

⁸ The other two projects were undertaken by PACT-Ottawa and York Women's Network, both in Ontario.



RESEARCH PROJECT

Research Design

METHODOLOGY

In 2013, Public Safety Canada published the Local Safety Audit Guide: to Prevent Trafficking in Persons and Related Exploitation. In addition to providing context on human trafficking globally and nationally, it outlined recommendations for conducting a sound local Needs Assessment and developing a corresponding Action Plan that could adequately respond to human trafficking. The Audit Guide provided the basic framework for this project and was followed whenever possible and appropriate. It can be found on the ACT Alberta website.

This project has also followed Community Informed Participatory Research principles (Israel, Parker & Becker, 1998), which value partnerships, power

sharing, and benefiting the community. This approach works to build community capacity and focuses on community strengths and resources. These principles have been evident throughout the duration of the project, particularly in the establishment of the Core Team which guided the project's development, implementation, purpose, and objectives.

The research team gathered data primarily through in-person interviews and focus groups which were recorded and subsequently transcribed. This method was determined upon as interviews and focus groups are an effective way to gather rich data on individuals' ideas and experiences.



Each participant was asked the following questions that were adapted from the Audit Guide:

- › What are the root causes of sex trafficking of women and girls in Edmonton?
- › What population of women and girls are at greater risk of being trafficked in Edmonton? Why?
- › Who are the sex traffickers in Edmonton?
- › What are the strengths of existing policies and services in Edmonton?
- › What are the gaps of existing policies and services in Edmonton?
- › What needs to occur to improve these policies and services in Edmonton?

Interviews and focus groups were semi-structured and kept open-ended in order to leave conversational space for participants to guide the discussion. In this way, research participants could determine what was and was not important to discuss.

Surveys were also used to gather a limited amount of data. The preliminary research results were released during a public forum in October 2014, during which retrospective and self-reflective surveys were disseminated amongst forum participants. The purpose of these surveys was to gauge changes in forum participants' awareness and knowledge of sex trafficking in Edmonton, identify and understand the forum participants' experiences, gain feedback on the proposed Community Action Plan, and reflect upon the research process. A second forum was held in June 2015. Please visit the ACT Alberta website for the summaries of these forums.

RECRUITMENT

Research participants were recruited between March and July 2014. Convenience sampling, facilitated through the Core Team's partnerships and relationships, allowed the researchers to reach a wide variety of potential participants. Invitations to participate⁹ were made available through ACT Alberta's Edmonton office and were distributed to Core Team members. The Project Manager and Research Coordinator worked with each organization to schedule an information session on the project; Core Team members were also asked to make invitations available to employees and individuals who access their services. The invitations also provided contact information so that interested individuals could contact ACT Alberta directly, if they so chose.

The Executive Director of ACT Alberta privately contacted previously trafficked individuals who had been assisted by ACT Alberta and who may have been interested in participating to request permission for the release of their contact information to the Research

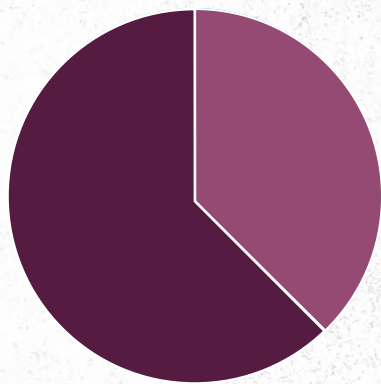
Coordinator. Once the Research Coordinator received this contact information, she provided follow-up to interested individuals.

In order to participate in a focus group or interview, an individual needed to (1) have experience in responding to sex trafficking or have experience participating in the sex industry in Edmonton, and (2) be 18 years of age or older. In order to participate in this project as a survivor of trafficking, an individual needed to (1) self-identify as female, (2) be 18 years of age or older, and (3) self-identify as a sex trafficking survivor. The majority of those who participated in interviews and focus groups did not work primarily in the field of anti-trafficking, but chiefly assisted those victimized by related crimes and forms of exploitation.

Sixteen interviews and five focus groups were conducted, ranging in size from two to eleven participants. In total, 34 individuals, including 5 survivors of sex trafficking, participated in providing insight into the realities of sex trafficking in Edmonton.

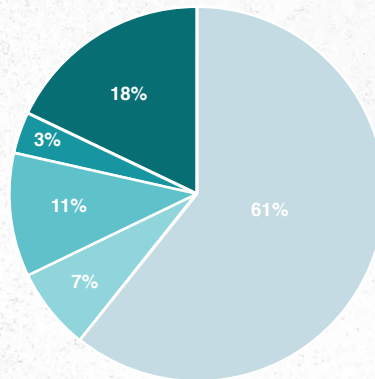
⁹ Please visit the ACT Alberta website to view these invitations and all other research documents.

Fig. 3
Type of participation from
research participants



■ INTERVIEWS N=14
■ FOCUS GROUPS N=21

Fig. 4
The different sectors research
participants were from



■ SOCIAL SERVICES
■ GOVERNMENT
■ LAWE ENFORCEMENT
■ INDEPENDANT SEX WORKER
■ SURVIVOR

ETHICS

This project was approved by the Health Research Ethics Board of Alberta in March 2014. The ethics process emphasized the safety, confidentiality, and anonymity of research participants. As per the stipulations of the ethical review, each interview and focus group was conducted in a private location that was mutually convenient, safe, and confidential. All communications with research participants were conducted using easily understood language and every participant was given access to their transcripts to ensure their comfort with the information they had provided. Participants were encouraged to add, amend, or retract any information they provided as they saw fit.

Perhaps most importantly, the confidentiality and anonymity of research participants have been rigorously protected throughout the course of this project. The identities of participants are known only to the Research Coordinator, Research Assistant, and professional transcribers, all of whom signed confidentiality agreements. No names or identifiers of any of the research participants have been, or will be used in any reports or presentations related to this project. All hardcopy and electronic documents will be kept in a locked cabinet for seven years after the project end date, at which time they will be destroyed.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND ANALYSIS

The interviews and focus groups were analyzed using a Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens (GBA+) from an intersectionality perspective (Crenshaw, 1991). GBA+ is an analytical tool used by the federal government to “assess potential impacts of policies, programs, and initiatives on diverse groups of women and men, girls and boys, taking into account gender and other identity factors” (Status of Women Canada website). This framework emphasizes how various factors intersect to create vulnerabilities. It is an important tool in the work to identify and respond to oppression in research, policy, and practice.

Intersectionality deepens and expands the GBA+ tool by highlighting how a range of socio-cultural categories and identifiers (such as gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, education level, class, etc.) interact with one another to create layers of vulnerability and discrimination. Intersectionality brings attention to the fact that women experience oppression differently dependent on whether they experience other forms of oppression simultaneously, such as homophobia, racism, or economic discrimination. It shines a light on how forms of oppression are interrelated and bound together in complex and nuanced patterns and systems.

Analyzing the interview and focus groups using GBA+ and intersectionality theory gave the research team the tools needed to begin to peer into the social and structural layers that affect sex trafficking in Edmonton. Themes and patterns began to emerge from the data

STUDY LIMITATIONS

Limitations in this study typically centered on reaching potential research participants. The sample size of the project was relatively small (34 individuals participated, including 5 previously trafficked women). In part this was by design; as a qualitative and community-based study, the importance of collecting detailed and nuanced information outweighed that of reaching a large number of individuals. However, as gathering in-depth data through interviews and focus groups can be time intensive, it was sometimes challenging to recruit as many research participants as we would have liked. This is partially a result of the fact that many potential research participants were faced with time and resource constraints and it was challenging for them to carve out the necessary time to participate.

Notably, the bulk of the participants in this study (over 60 percent) came from Edmonton’s service providing community and many were part of previously established collaborations working in the area of sexual exploitation. Given the rather homogeneous nature of the participants involved, this research provides important insight into their perceptions and understanding of actions needed. However, it also has the effect of biasing the results to the perspectives of those consulted.

Also, as expected, there were specific challenges associated with recruiting previously trafficked participants. Survivors of human trafficking may wrestle with the long-term repercussions of being trafficked and often struggle mentally and emotionally with recounting their stories. It is not simply a matter of finding those who are willing to tell their story, but also of ensuring that these individuals can be adequately supported throughout the duration of their participation. Those who participated were provided with support resources, including referrals for emotional, psychological, and spiritual support services.

PERCEPTIONS OF SEX TRAFFICKING IN EDMONTON

Research participants used varying and shifting definitions of human trafficking that ranged from the extremely narrow to the very broad. For example, while some expressed their view that human trafficking only occurs when an individual is forcibly confined, smuggled over a border or moved city-to-city, others took a much broader view, affirming that various issues, including prostitution and sexual exploitation writ-large, must also be considered under the umbrella of sex trafficking. Rather than relying on the UN Trafficking Protocol, each participant tended to draw their definitional line at a different place and spoke fluidly about human trafficking and related issues, including pedophilia, migrant abuse, forced labour, and prostitution.

These definitional issues seem to largely rest on the difficulties in distinguishing between various forms of exploitation. Research participants spoke to a “continuum” or “scale” of abuse, in which sex trafficking is only one of many forms of harm. Trafficking was recognized as neither separate nor distinct from various other issues; in many cases, these issues share root causes and the individuals affected come from similar backgrounds of vulnerability. One form of abuse can shift into another, and it is often difficult, if not impossible, to unravel the tangle of cause and effect. Some research participants spoke to the dangers of even trying; as one service provider said: “I’d hate to exclude somebody because they didn’t meet a certain criteria for trafficking.”



Part of the challenge lay in differences of ideology, particularly in regards to sex work. Some research participants conflated sex trafficking with sex work entirely and did not draw a distinction between the two in their discussion. Conversely, the self-identified empowered sex worker interviewed did draw this distinction, stating that she herself had never been trafficked and had seen signs of exploitation but never trafficking in the sex trade industry in Edmonton. This perspective, although underrepresented in Edmonton, is not uncommon amongst sex workers and sex worker advocates across the country; indeed, Benoit et al. reported in 2014 that the majority of sex workers interviewed in a national study of the Canadian sex industry do not feel exploited and have never been trafficked. Sex workers are important allies in the response to human trafficking and attempts to engage, listen to, and collaborate with this population must continue.

Several research participants expressed concern over the language of human trafficking. Some noted that human trafficking, as a “hot topic,” in the words of one service provider, may be siphoning funding away from longer-standing issues such as assisting victims of sexual exploitation. Additionally, several research participants expressed concern that those victimized by human trafficking receive compassion that victims of other forms of exploitation do not. “There’s a sense sometimes that with the population we work with that they’re making a choice, versus someone who’s trafficked who’s being forced into something,” expressed one service provider. Existing research on sex industries in Canada discuss the complex nature of sex workers’ choices, which represent a variety of experiences and can occur within a context of constrained choice (Benoit et al., 2014). However, such constraint cannot be conflated with trafficking, where an individual coerces another individual into engaging in an activity for the purposes of exploitation. Nonetheless, the hesitation around the use of human trafficking terminology is not unique to the service providing community in Edmonton and is well-documented within the existing literature.

The ambiguous definition of human trafficking is often shared by those victimized by this crime. According to research participants, trafficked persons rarely self-identify. It was argued that this definitional confusion is exacerbated by the stigma that surrounds the term, which is often tied up with notions of extreme forms of slavery. Many trafficked persons only begin to experience a change in perception after they are given the label of trafficking by police or service providers. This finding reinforces a local study on human trafficking that was conducted in Calgary in 2012, in which the effects of sensationalizing human trafficking were found to create challenges for appropriately identifying those victimized by this crime. In the words of that study, “sensational media reports and awareness raising campaigns have created a stereotyped image of trafficked persons, which restricts law enforcement, service providers, and the general public from accurately identifying and understanding the lived experiences of trafficked persons.”

Throughout the course of this project, the research team took the research participants’ definition of human trafficking at face value. The results, as outlined below, are reflective of the perceptions of human trafficking of research participants, and may or may not be reflective of the UN Trafficking Protocol definition.

Results

Research participants spoke on many topics related to human trafficking and addressed a wide variety of issues and concerns. Their responses are broadly broken down into the following categories: structural inequalities in Edmonton, who is being trafficked and who traffickers are in Edmonton, and the perceived long-term effects on survivors.

STRUCTURAL INEQUALITIES IN EDMONTON: AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO SEX TRAFFICKING

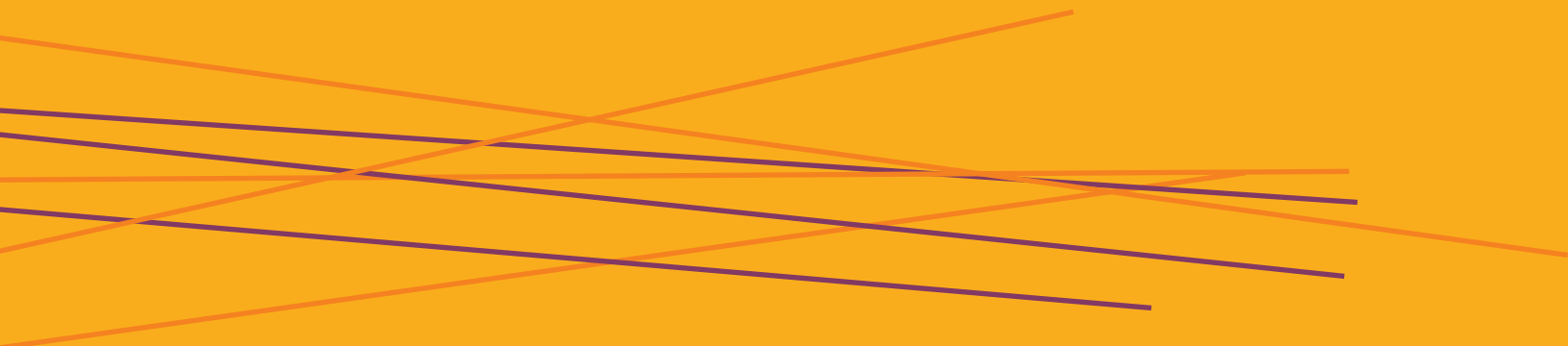
Research participants drew attention to a variety of systems, institutions, and social norms that ensure that inequality and discrimination remain entrenched in Edmonton and create a context that is favourable to sex trafficking. Structural inequalities in Edmonton are rooted in poverty, gender inequality, isolation, normalized violence and abuse, and discrimination, all of which will be discussed at length below. These structural inequalities exacerbate and intersect with one another, creating layers of injustice based on the social location of individuals in society. One person can experience multiple forms of oppression that intersect and combine with one another in nuanced and complex ways, contributing overall to an environment that is conducive to sex trafficking in Edmonton.

POVERTY

Research participants overwhelmingly emphasized the important role poverty plays in sex trafficking. In the words of one service provider: “the core issue is about poverty and about resources.” Poverty, in this context, refers to extreme economic distress in which the basic survival of an individual or their loved ones is threatened. Impoverished individuals may be forced to scramble to provide basic needs such as housing, food, transportation, and childcare for themselves and their families. Extreme poverty can result in homelessness or unsafe housing situations and can make it challenging to afford even the most basic transportation costs (such as bus tickets). Financial want can also limit childcare options and put severe constraints on the time and resources of child caregivers.

Poverty, according to both research participants and authors on sex trafficking (see Boyer & Kampouris, 2014; Public Safety Canada, 2012; Department of Justice Canada, 2005; Sikka, 2009) disproportionately affects migrants, Aboriginal populations, and women in Canada. The specific context of Alberta exacerbates this tendency; several research participants drew attention to a social safety net in Alberta that is unable to adequately protect and support already marginalized and struggling individuals and families. Specifically, research participants drew attention to inadequate childcare benefits and insufficient price subsidies for food, public transportation, and housing. Furthermore,

“Edmonton has the largest gender gap in employment incomes of any city in the country, with women earning a mere 60 percent of male wages.”

An abstract graphic consisting of several overlapping lines in shades of orange and blue, positioned at the bottom of the page. The lines are of varying lengths and orientations, creating a layered, geometric effect.

despite the challenges that many impoverished individuals face in Edmonton, research participants perceived a widespread lack of sympathy amongst the general population. As one service provider noted, “in Alberta, it’s [common] to say that if you’re not doing well in life it’s just because you haven’t tried hard enough, you haven’t pulled yourself up by your bootstraps.” This frustration with the lack of sympathy from the general public also reflects many service providing organizations’ dependence on the public for support – little sympathy translates to fewer donations and funding opportunities, and thus a curtailed ability to provide assistance.

Poverty is not an issue that is easily overcome; one service provider drew attention to the fact that jobs that generate an adequate income often require a certain level of education, which is dependent on time and resources that many simply do not possess. The added burden of debts can also exacerbate situations of poverty; individuals who are either already impoverished or on the verge of becoming so can be crippled by unexpected legal, drug, gambling, or family debts.

GENDER INEQUALITY

Anti-trafficking advocates widely report that women are disproportionately affected by sex trafficking and research participants repeatedly confirmed this. This stems in part from the particularly burdensome (and gendered) economic hardships women face in our society. Women tend to have fewer economic opportunities and resultantly work lower paying jobs. A 2014 report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives affirms this, noting that Edmonton has the largest gender gap in employment incomes of any city in the country, with women earning a mere 60 percent of male wages. One participant argued, “we live in a patriarchal society ... men have more opportunity to make money and have jobs.” Women, particularly those with addictions and other physical and mental health concerns, may lack economic opportunities due to their

gender and be unable to access a means of adequate income generation.

Research participants perceived that poverty is especially prevalent amongst women who head single-parent households and are saddled with the bulk of childcare costs. As one survivor noted, “usually women walk away [from a relationship] with nothing. So then if you have children, you think ‘how are [my children] going to suffer?’” Faced with high childcare expenses, some women may engage in sex work as a viable alternative to poverty, leaving them, according to some research participants, at heightened risk of exploitation and trafficking. While not all sex workers are trafficked or inherently at risk of becoming so, certain circumstances, such as poverty, can intersect with other vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit. In the words of a service provider, trafficking “is a highly gendered issue. Girls and women having to do whatever they need to do to either survive or provide for their children.”

The economic inequality that women face is mirrored by damaging gender norms. Research participants argued that women and girls are portrayed in our society as passive and weak – blank slates waiting to be acted upon. Rape culture, societal expectations, and derogatory attitudes deny female sexual desire and agency, oftentimes effectively removing their ability to make empowered sexual choices. Research participants expressed the strong perception that women are sexually objectified and their bodies commodified, while female sexual needs and desires are ignored. In the words of one service provider, “we still see 51 percent of our population oftentimes as objects.”

This tendency is aggravated, in the eyes of many research participants, by a perceived hypersexualization of our society. As one service provider argued, “we live in this vamped up sexual culture that just puts sex on this crazy pedestal. It’s everywhere we look.” According to several research

participants, this often feeds into a societal expectation that women are constantly sexually available – regardless of whether they have consented or desire to engage in a sexual act. One service provider expressed that “we have a culture where ... to treat a woman as a sex object first before being a person is normal.” Female desire and consent is overridden, leading in some cases to normalized abuse and exploitation. Perhaps most concerning is the tendency, pointed to by several research participants, to sexualize young women and children. One service provider was extremely concerned by the fashion trend amongst some junior high aged girls to wear bracelets to advertise how sexually active they are; trends like this, in conjunction with the barrage of sexual imagery in mass media, put pressures on young women and girls to become sexually active at ever younger ages regardless of whether they desire to be or not.

Research participants coupled their concerns over hypersexualization with an unease regarding both the high cost of living in Edmonton and a perceived increase in materialism. An environment in which young women and girls are pressured into engaging in sexual acts, combined with the need for costly expenses such as cell phones, clothes, and housing, leads many of these individuals, according to research participants, into engaging in sex for pay. Once they have entered the sex trade, they become, according to some participants, increasingly vulnerable to sex trafficking.¹⁰

Although research participants expressed concern over hypersexualization and female commodification, some also cautioned against stigmatizing women for expressing sexuality. Many authors on this and related

issues argue for the importance of empowering women so that they have control over their own bodies and exist in a context where they can make real choices. Rather than blaming and attempting to stop women from employing sexual agency, many authors advocate for correcting the damaging social norms and structural inequalities that hurt women to begin with.

Importantly, gender norms and expectations also negatively affect men. In the words of one service provider, “you need to be tough, you need to be strong, you can’t be emotional, you can’t be weak, you can’t have things hurt you, you just need to suck it up. That’s the message that’s given to men.” These attitudes cause various forms of psychological harm, including the harm that stems from expectations of how men and boys should respond to trauma. Although not all traffickers are male and not all have experienced trauma, research participants repeatedly argued that many of the traffickers they have come into contact with are men who have acted out gender expectations through violence and emotional detachment.

¹⁰ Not all participants agreed on this point; as previously noted, the self-identified empowered sex worker clearly stated that she had never seen signs of sex trafficking in Edmonton.

NORMALIZED VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

Research participants repeatedly discussed the role played by long-term violence. Childhood abuse, familial neglect, intergenerational trauma, and domestic violence all play a part creating an environment where control, violence, and manipulation is normalized and accepted. One survivor noted that “if you have a history of being mistreated you’re already used to abnormal behaviours or manipulations being normal,” while a service provider argued that “it starts off with neglect or abuse in the home and then it starts to snowball from there.”

Child abuse and neglect is often tied to poverty and gender inequality. As early as 1970, Gil persuasively argued that child abuse is largely caused by poverty and material deprivation (Utech, 1994). Many others have lent considerable support to this view. Parton (1985) stated that “child abuse is strongly related to class, inequality and poverty both in terms of prevalence and severity” and located this problem in socio-structural factors. The structural inequalities that contribute to child abuse and neglect, according to research participants, open the space for sex trafficking; in the words of one service provider, “often the prior abuse or neglect creates the vulnerability to being exploited or trafficked.”

Violence and control can also become normalized through domestic abuse by boyfriends, husbands, and other romantic partners. One service provider recounted talking to a young victim of sex trafficking: “I remember asking her, and she said, ‘well I love him.’ So, I said to her, ‘what does love look like?’ Well, the only picture she’s had of love has been one of where people treat each other like shit.”

Research participants also discussed the violence that is commonly faced by sex workers from pimps, sex purchasers, law enforcement, and others. Many argued that the extreme violence some sex workers experience on a regular basis numbs them to it and makes it more difficult for these individuals to recognize when trafficking is occurring. In the words of one survivor, “if you have a history of being mistreated, you’re already used to abnormal behaviours or manipulations being normal. You easily submit to things.” Communities can also play a role in normalizing violence against sex trade workers. One service provider noted that “[sex workers] ... will tell stories of hurt and shaming, like someone threw a penny [their] way. Because for some reason that struck them more than being battered by a bad date or something. Just the sheer meanness, the gratuitous meanness and disrespect is devastating.” Another service provider lamented that communities focus their attention and blame on the “woman on the corner” rather than the “man in the shadows” who is controlling her. These behaviours and negative attitudes can dissuade sex workers from coming forward for assistance after they have experienced violence.

*“...sex trafficked women and girls
are “just looking for a sense of
belonging and attachment””*



ISOLATION

Research participants argued that human trafficking is far more likely to occur when individuals are emotionally or physically isolated. One service provider noted that sex trafficked women and girls are “just looking for a sense of belonging and attachment. They just want to be loved and accepted.” The desire to feel loved and needed convinces many individuals to remain in abusive situations, including human trafficking. In the words of one service provider, “having someone there, no matter how bad things are, is better than having nobody there. Because if you have nobody then you’re on your own. And that’s a far scarier thing when you’re in the pit of despair. That being there makes up for all the abuse.” In the view of one survivor, “most women would rather be harmed than be alone.”

The literature on domestic violence has amply shown that social isolation is an effective means of controlling and assaulting women with little fear of detection. Women in abusive relationships often have had contact with friends and family either cut off or severely curtailed. Additionally, they may have limited access to community resources. In these circumstances, women with abusive partners have few people they can turn to for help with the abuse (Sullivan & Bybee, 1999). The parallels with those victimized by sex trafficking are striking; research participants noted repeatedly that social and physical isolation is a cause of sex trafficking and a barrier to receiving assistance.

Individuals, particularly youth, can feel isolated from their families and friends through abuse, neglect, bullying, or weak community and family ties. Research participants voiced concern that isolation is a particular concern in Alberta, which is home to large community of transient workers who have migrated to Alberta for employment but have few family and community supports in place. Some research participants recognized this as of key concern, with one service provider noting that “it’s just the way society is following where the jobs are and the splintering of families and not having neighborhood support, family support easily accessible.” This sense of emotional

isolation can have drastically negative effects. “Lack of support systems, isolation, depression, lack of transportation, lack of money. You strip that all away from a person and they get desperate,” noted one service provider.

DISCRIMINATION

Although many groups and individuals experience discrimination in our society, research participants drew particular attention to the discrimination faced by migrants, Aboriginal peoples, those with mental health concerns and addictions, and sex workers.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MIGRANTS

Several research participants drew attention to the unique challenges faced by migrants to Canada, which is confirmed in the literature on this issue. A variety of authors have discussed the structural vulnerabilities that migrants face at length and have argued that the Canadian immigration system has been structured in a way that maintains a “particular gendered and raced neo-colonial Canadian identity” (Jeffrey, 2005). Certain migration barriers ensure that marginalized individuals are only able to enter Canada through low-skilled or irregular migration channels that lack oversight and safety mechanisms, increasing their vulnerability to being exploited (Oxman-Martinez, Martinez & Hanley, 2001). In particular, research participants referred to limited or nonexistent translation services, a lack of multilingual information on Canadian employment laws and regulations, and weak oversight mechanisms within law enforcement and government.

One participant recounted an experience he had with a potentially trafficked woman who was able to receive a license as a body rub practitioner despite being unable to speak English. This encounter highlights the gaps and inconsistencies within the City of Edmonton’s existing body rub licensing system and the limited language resources available for practitioners, a finding that has been confirmed by the Body Rub Centres Task Force Final Report (2015). Another trafficked person

was awarded an open work permit by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) after she came forward to law enforcement; however, she was unable to find employment due to insufficient language skills, again highlighting the lack of structural accommodations for migrants and internationally trafficked women facing language barriers.

Service providers who commonly work with newcomers and migrant populations noted that the Canadian migration system tends to be exclusionary and immigration authorities tend to deport by default.

These practices lead to legitimate fears of deportation, giving traffickers an additional source of power over victims. It places exploited individuals in a position where they cannot actualize a variety of rights under Canadian law. One participant recounted working with a victim of international trafficking who was coerced by her trafficker into fraudulently applying for refugee status and was correspondingly rejected. However, the participant went on to outline how when she later applied for a Temporary Resident Permit (TRP) as a trafficked person, she was not believed by skeptical immigration authorities who assumed that she was once again trying to scam the system. Another participant noted, “The threat that the trafficker uses is that you have no papers, you’re here illegally, you will be deported if you’re discovered. The sad fact of the matter is it’s true. If the Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] gets involved, their mandate is to remove people who are here illegally ... We’re trying to tell people not to call CBSA.” Additionally, Kaye, Winterdyk, and Quarterman found that government agencies in Calgary (including CBSA and CIC) may overlook trafficked people who arrive through legal channels due to a lack of understanding of human trafficking and how to interpret and apply definitions appropriately (2014).

Research participants emphasized that even those individuals who are not deported are often unable to access services such as health care and settlement services in Edmonton, if they have tenuous status. Several were particularly disappointed at the difficulties in accessing TRPs for victims of trafficking in persons.

Even once an individual has received a TRP, it can be difficult or impossible to access needed services.

For example,

RESPONDENT: If somebody's got a TRP or if they're an Alberta resident, they are entitled to [healthcare services].

INTERVIEWER: Do you see them being provided?

RESPONDENT: No. No, I see huge massive waiting lists.

These waiting lists effectively block trafficked people from accessing desperately needed services. Research participants expressed their certainty that allocating resources to migrants is not a priority for the Canadian government. These structural inequalities ensure a systematic bias against migrants that increases their vulnerabilities to being criminalized, exploited, and trafficked.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Research participants repeatedly and strongly emphasized that Canada has a long and ongoing history of oppression of Aboriginal peoples through colonial policies and practices by government, religious institutions, and society at large. One service provider argued that “residential school had a lot to do with a lot of Aboriginal women being on the street. They were treated like dirt their entire lives and then they’re kicked out at a young age and they have to fend for themselves, and they’ve been used and abused and they have no support.” This history of colonization, violence, resource extraction, and the intentional destruction of the culture of Aboriginal peoples has created situations of marginalization and criminalization, which are further compounded by ongoing racism and discrimination. One service provider put it bluntly: “We certainly have a legacy of racism and discrimination that is still present and creates that vulnerability.”

Although research participants noted that some positive measures have been taken, such as the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Declaration and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, trauma and abuse remain unsolved issues. For example, many Aboriginal people are unwilling to engage with law enforcement due to both historical and ongoing negative experiences. Boyer and Kampouris (2014) document various abuses perpetrated by law enforcement against Aboriginal women (particularly Aboriginal sex workers) across Canada, resulting in a deep mistrust of law enforcement by this population. One service provider deplored that “we know that racism and discrimination are facts ... [Aboriginal people] aren’t welcomed into the city of Edmonton.”

Research participants emphasized that Aboriginal women and girls face unique struggles due to the layering effects of racism, colonialism, and sexism. Many service providers recounted stories in which the sexual consent of Aboriginal women and girls has been ignored by members of the male population in Edmonton, who seemed to not know or care that the women they were approaching were not interested in engaging in sexual acts. Traffickers know and understand the vulnerabilities faced by Aboriginal women and girls; as one service provider noted, “the individuals who are doing the recruiting know how our society is structured.”

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THOSE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS AND ADDICTIONS

Research participants recognized that those who have mental health concerns and addictions find it difficult to access, use, and navigate systems and institutions in Edmonton. For example, individuals who have mental health concerns and addictions struggle to upgrade their education or find and maintain gainful employment. While sympathetic employers and colleagues can ease the way, social and structural systems tend to be established for individuals who do not have mental health concerns. Indeed, one service provider in the city argued that the main vulnerability to

both sexual exploitation and sex trafficking in Edmonton is having mental health concerns: “[Victims] have not made it to the top of the socioeconomic ladder so they’re struggling with poverty. Why are they struggling with poverty? Often they didn’t go to school, they washed out of school. Why didn’t they go to school? Because they had major depression, they had mental illness onboard.”

Sociocultural norms around mental health and addictions also contribute to the difficulties individuals face in accessing assistance. One survivor of trafficking recounted an incident in which she reached out to law enforcement: “I must have looked like I was freaked out and probably mentally unstable. The thing is, if they think you’re mentally unstable then they just write you off.” In this case, law enforcement did not respond to her call; she was unable to access the criminal justice system due to an appearance of mental instability and she remained in her trafficking situation for some time thereafter.

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SEX WORKERS

Research participants emphasized that sex workers also face particular discrimination, cruelty, and hostility by a wide variety of populations. Although this is a problem in Edmonton, it is certainly not limited to the city; as Amnesty International reported in 2015, “sex workers are one of the most marginalized groups in the world who in most instances face constant risk of discrimination, violence, and abuse.” Although receiving payment for sex can never be considered as consenting to disrespect, violation, and violence, this nonetheless is often what is assumed. Not only do many sex workers experience severe physical and sexual assaults on a regular basis in the city, but many research participants reported instances of police not taking reports of rape and assault of sex workers seriously. Although this situation has, according to service provider participants, reportedly improved in recent years, it remains a problem. Sex workers face discrimination and attacks that many other groups do not, leaving them more exposed to negative effects of structural inequalities.

WHO IS BEING TRAFFICKED? PERCEPTIONS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The factors discussed above create an environment that is conducive to sex trafficking in Edmonton by interacting in the lives of individuals in complex and subtle ways that have long-lasting repercussions. This creates layers of vulnerability and structural inequality that strengthen conditions amenable to human trafficking. As Sanghera noted in 2005, “issues of migration, trafficking, and sex work are peppered with constructs of sexuality, gender, and vulnerability, threaded through with categories of victim and agent, consent and coercion, and stirred together in a cauldron.” In sum, vulnerabilities to human trafficking are the result of intersections of various social categories, power relations, and experiences that act on individuals in intricate and nuanced ways, resulting in some populations being more heavily affected by sex trafficking than others.

Critically, individuals who are trafficked in Edmonton have been oppressed by various forms of intersecting structural inequalities, rather than as a result of inherent vulnerabilities. Due to this, certain populations tend to be more targeted by traffickers, particularly those living in poverty, women, those who suffer from normalized violence, those living in isolation, and those who suffer from various forms of discrimination.

Although many youth are able to effectively cope with stress and challenging life situations and adapt quickly to change, research participants repeatedly identified that youth who are affected by the structural inequalities listed above are more at risk to sex trafficking than adults. According to research participants, this is due in part to inexperience, a false sense of power and control, and undeveloped powers of resilience. For example, although both adults and youth often seek a sense of belonging and love, participants argued that youth are particularly affected by this, in part due to misguided and fantastical notions of what relationships should look like that are untempered by experience. This is particularly prevalent amongst youth who come from abusive households where violence is normalized. Research participants expressed concern that the promises of traffickers and gangs are more tempting to youth, and youth shelters and group homes were repeatedly spoken of as places where drug use is rampant and safety and security sorely lacking. Despite what are oftentimes the best efforts of understaffed and under-resourced shelters and group homes, sexual predators (including traffickers) often know the location of these facilities and prey upon the young people who reside therein. In the words of one service provider, “they’re so vulnerable already, and come in with so many huge barriers, and then they’re all clumped together in a group home with rotating staff ... and then we’ve got predators that are sitting right out in front.” Although many children and youth are able to effectively cope and adapt to challenging situations, there is little written outside of academic circles on the qualities that help make young people resilient (Barankin & Nazilla, 2007).

TRAFFICKERS IN EDMONTON

Research participants identified a broad spectrum of traffickers, including pimps, gang members, family members, romantic partners, friends, and employers. Notably, respondents indicated that most individuals who are victimized by sex traffickers know the person who is trafficking them. This pattern is similar to that found in other forms of sexualized violence, where perpetrators are predominately known to victims (Department of Justice, 2015).

According to research participants, traffickers in Edmonton tend to be driven by three major types of motivation: (1) previous trauma, (2) greed, and (3) coercion. These motives are not exclusive; one trafficker may be motivated by all three simultaneously.

Previous trauma. Participants noted that many traffickers come from backgrounds of abuse and neglect. These individuals may be affected by mental health issues as a result of past experiences; one service provider in the city noted a line of research “that shows that psychopaths can be made and it actually comes from ongoing neglect, violation, and betrayal that pushes a child into such a numb state that they actually become incapable of feeling empathy because they can’t actually feel anything at all.” Research participants argued that exploiting other people is a way for these individuals to self-medicate and feel in control. In the words of one survivor, “they say you switch between being an abuser or being a victim. Maybe he felt like a victim when he was a child and then became the abuser, the manipulator, and it worked for him.” Another survivor perceived the men who trafficked her as “broken human beings looking for love and acceptance wherever.”

Greed. Traffickers in Edmonton may also be motivated by greed and guided by misogynistic expectations. In the words of one service provider, “they’re looking for a quick fix, they’re looking for a quick buck” and they see vulnerable women as an expendable means to that end. For example, employers who traffic their employees for sexual

exploitation (such as families who traffic their nannies or body rub owners who traffic practitioners) see their employees not as individuals, but as an avenue of profit. Research participants argued that traffickers value the “marketable services” that a potential victim can provide, rather than seeing them as people. In one service provider’s words, “even as the trafficker is watching that woman, I don’t think they see a person. I really don’t.” These individuals may be overtly cruel or they may be simply indifferent to the suffering they cause. One service provider argued, “In my experience ... malice is actually not all that common. It’s more indifference, which is in my estimation scarier, right? Because malice suggests some kind of investment in the human that you’re trying to harm, whereas indifference suggests that you don’t really get that they’re human.”

Coercion. Sex traffickers may also be trafficked themselves; some individuals (particularly females) may be forced to traffic others in order to ease their own situations. Several service provider participants argued that some traffickers believe that certain women and girls trust other females more easily than a male. Therefore, in order to gain control, these traffickers force one of their current female victims into procuring these potential victims. To illustrate this, one service provider recounted this experience: “[the trafficker] said ‘you go out and bring two girls to this party,’ and she does, and then the girls get raped. I said to her: ‘well, don’t you feel bad?’ And she goes ‘no, because if it wasn’t them it would be me.’” Another service provider pointed to the same pattern: “If the girl is being pimped out, [the trafficker] says you have to make \$500, but if you bring your friend in you only have to make \$250.”

Research participants reported that traffickers in Edmonton often get close to their potential victims through a fairly consistent grooming pattern. First, they identify individuals who are lonely, desperate, or have past histories of abuse, and then forge a friendship or a romantic relationship with them. Next, traffickers create economic and physical dependencies. Research participants noted that traffickers do this by providing

luxurious gifts such as cell phones, expensive clothing, extravagant vacations, and, crucially, drugs. One survivor discussed how the individual who trafficked her deceived her into becoming addicted to crack cocaine: “He didn’t tell me that I was smoking crack. I didn’t even know that that drug existed until I was already hooked.” Finally, the trafficker will force the victim into engaging in sexual activities without their consent and will take all or most of the financial proceeds. Research participants also identified peer recruiting, in which individuals lure friends and acquaintances they know through school, social media, or group homes into trafficking situations through deception.

Not all traffickers undertake a grooming process; family members and employers, for example, typically abuse pre-existing power differentials and are able to coerce individuals into sex trafficking through means other than grooming.

Notably, although research participants did not argue that technology is a cause of sex trafficking, there was widespread recognition that human trafficking and other forms of exploitation is facilitated and eased through technology. Having access to mobile phones and the Internet enables traffickers to sexually exploit victims at all times of the day and in any location by advertising and arranging sales of sexual services.



Mechanisms of Control Used by Traffickers

In the words of one service provider, “even though she has her cell phone and she can move around and go to the mall and go buy her own groceries, she has no sense that she can leave.” Research participants stressed the extreme difficulties that victims face in getting out of trafficking situations due to the mechanisms of control exerted by traffickers, discussed below.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

Several research participants discussed how traffickers will psychologically and emotionally manipulate victims in order to maintain control, often through ties of romance or friendship. Sex trafficking can also result in deep feelings of shame in victims, which traffickers exploit by threatening to disclose details to families or cultural communities. One survivor stressed that “the shame keeps you there. Blame, guilt, blame, and shame keep you there.” Another service provider noted that, “The victim is so frightened that it would get back to their parents. It is a huge shame to let people know what they have experienced.” Traffickers exploit these feelings to maintain a rigid control over the women and girls whom they are trafficking.

PHYSICAL ADDICTIONS

Research participants identified that traffickers often deliberately ensure victims become addicted in order to exert control over them. “They’re addicted. They need their drugs,” expressed one service provider. Since the trafficker is often also the drug supplier, trafficked persons often stay in order to ensure a steady supply. Even if the victimized person is able to escape from her trafficking situation, the need for money to pay for addictions often keeps these individuals entrenched in the sex trade well after they want to leave. Addiction also diminishes the credibility of survivors, should

they ever contact law enforcement. In the words of one service provider, “as soon as they’re doing drugs, then their credibility is just shot to shit. So you know [the trafficker] just needs to get them addicted on a substance.”

PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL ISOLATION

Traffickers in Edmonton frequently work to ensure that the individuals they victimize remain both physically and emotionally isolated. They may physically move victims from location to location, or from party to party, to limit the connections and relationships they develop, or they may physically confine an individual to a hotel room or house. One survivor described being repeatedly taken by her trafficker to parties in remote locations where she was forced to engage in sexual activities. If she refused, she was forced to walk home for hours in the night. Traffickers may also keep victims socially isolated by intentionally destroying their sense of self-esteem. As one survivor recounts, “[being trafficked] is what I believed I was good for.” It is particularly hard for trafficked people to seek help when they do not believe they are worth saving.

In order to make a lasting break with their trafficker, survivors and service providers stressed that a trafficked person must feel cared about and supported. This is difficult to do without some kind of support network. One survivor described how leaving her

situation left her “absolutely isolated.” Another stressed the aversion that humans have at the thought of being alone. “We all look for that acceptance and love, and we just want to be loved and needed. That’s how we’re designed.” Having some kind of safe support network can make all the difference in permanently leaving a trafficking situation. One service provider explained that “the youth that I see more success with have supportive family involvement ... and they have a safe home to go to when they need it.” Supports can also be found in supportive colleagues and friends, front-line workers in service providing agencies, mental health care supports, and law enforcement officers who take a personal interest and concern.

FEAR AND COERCION

Coercion is a key form of control that traffickers levy over victims. In the words of one service provider, “there is a level of control, aggression, and coercion that seems inherent in the relationship.” She went on to remark on the “gratuitous violence, disrespect and harming going on. Slapping people for no reason, disrespecting them, calling them down.” This kind of violence and harm forces individuals into submission. Research participants also spoke to the fear that many trafficked people have of being deported and how traffickers exploit this fear to their advantage. “The threat that the trafficker uses is that you have no papers, you’re here illegally, you will be deported if you’re discovered. The sad fact of the matter is its true,” says one service provider. “It’s a huge mechanism of control for the trafficker.” Even if a trafficker does not explicitly threaten a victim with deportation, this fear may still keep women in situations of exploitation and trafficking. For example, if an individual has been sponsored to immigrate to Canada by her spouse, she may remain in an abusive or trafficking relationship out of fear of deportation.

Traffickers also threaten and harm the victims’ loved ones to ensure compliance. One service provider recounted an incident where a trafficker poured gasoline on the front door of the mother of a trafficked person and threatened to light the house on fire if she

did not do as he told. Another incident was recalled in which a trafficker took an individual’s children and refused to allow her to see them until she agreed to his terms. These types of threats can be extraordinarily effective in ensuring the compliance of a victim of trafficking, although if the trafficker goes too far a victim may seek assistance from law enforcement. As one law enforcement officer noted, “I think that’s another big reason people talk to us, because they want to remove that threat from their loved ones.” Although threats of harm to family can be a mechanism of control, loved ones can also be the motivation for leaving a trafficking situation. “I didn’t want my son to get caught up in the same pattern ... I really needed to break it for him,” described one survivor. Another expressed that “my children were my reason to want to change. I wanted to break the chain of intergenerational trauma because it had been passed on from one generation to the next, and so I wanted to make sure that my daughter didn’t end up where I am.” A third woman described her mental process immediately prior to leaving her situation: “I’m thinking ‘who am I?’ My kids are gonna come looking for me and I’m gonna be dead. Like, I don’t have a right to do that to my kids.”

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Critically, several noted that victims may lack knowledge on how to leave a trafficking situation and be unaware of the options that are available to them, oftentimes due to the intentional withholding of information by traffickers. One survivor strongly stressed her perception that more victims of trafficking and sexualized violence would come forward if they knew they could find help: “I don’t think this woman or this child would [remain in a trafficking situation] if they knew there was a number to call. I don’t think they will sit quiet. They will come.”

Several service providers expressed frustration at the misinformation that many migrants and newcomers have about available supports in Canada. “Lots of times, most of our clients say that ‘Canada is such a humane country, once I get here I don’t think they will deport me. They will find a way to help me to stay,’

which is totally untrue,” said one service provider. This kind of misinformation can potentially lead these individuals into situations of trafficking, as they grasp at any way to stay in the country. Even when trafficked people come forward, they may be discounted; one service provider expressed that many women who come to her for counselling say that they “tried and tried and tried to tell, nobody would listen.” **It is difficult for trafficked people to leave their situation if they are not heard or believed by those they turn to for help.** Without this most basic level of validation, the barriers to leaving a trafficking can indeed seem insurmountable to a trafficked person.

Perceived Long-Term Effects of Sex Trafficking

Human trafficking is a particularly extreme form of abuse and one that has long-lasting repercussions. In the words of one survivor, “it’s this big scar that will never, ever go away. Even though I bury it, it’s always there.”

Each individual who experiences sex trafficking does so in a unique way and the effects and implications vary accordingly. However, one of the most commonly discussed repercussions of being sex trafficked is long term difficulties in making and maintaining relationships or experiencing trust in any real way. This can result in debilitating loneliness and isolation. One survivor noted that “I have a problem making friends or trusting relationships or understanding intimacy in a normal way.” Another individual expressed that “men’s hands cannot touch me. I’m so afraid, they cannot come closer.” This individual went on to further express how her inability to experience intimacy has resulted in lost relationships. A third individual highlighted her inability to trust after years of abuse and trauma. “If somebody was nice to me, whether it was man or woman, I said ‘what do you want from me? I have no more to give. I’m empty.’” Indeed, in this individual’s view, “inside, we’re still beasts. Most people are not good.”

Experiencing human trafficking can destroy an individual’s sense of self-esteem due in part to the extreme degradation they often suffer. For example, one survivor noted that her situation diminished her self-esteem and confidence to the point where she felt she could not have relationships with individuals who existed outside of her trafficking world.

According to research participants, trafficking can also cause severe and long-lasting mental health concerns, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and multiple personality disorder. One survivor, in describing the debilitating anxiety she still wrestles with years following her experiences, expressed that “I feel like I’m faking it most of the time. There’s so much that you can’t say or explain.” Another woman described how she felt after she fled her situation: “I was very depressed, like to be dead, and feeling abandoned, ashamed, all those bad things you can think. I was thinking to myself that ... I’m not good for anybody, I cannot be better.” A third individual talked about how her trafficking experiences affected her mentally:

“You don’t want to show any sign of weakness, because you’re ate up. So you become tough and hard and rugged and [believe you’re] okay with it, when you’re not, you’re so not.”

Sex trafficking can also have long-lasting physical effects on an individual, both from drug abuse and from the experiences of long-term violence. One survivor described herself during her trafficking experience: “cold, hungry, starving, wore out, cysts from shooting up, and I have committed crimes just so I have a place to stay for the wintertime.” A second survivor noted that “even the doctor was like, ‘I cannot believe you’re even here, the amount of drugs we took out of you.’ I was 73 pounds, I had seven drug habits. Medically I shouldn’t be here.” Victims of trafficking also often suffer physical injuries that may never fully heal. One survivor learned after her trafficking experience that her physical injuries made it impossible to have children naturally, a painful and permanent reminder of her traumatic experiences.



CONCLUSION

Responses from research participants added significantly to a local body of knowledge about sex trafficking in Edmonton. These responses, coupled with existing work that has been done on this issue, highlighted that sex trafficking in Edmonton is a crime that is made possible by intersecting structural inequalities that disproportionately affect marginalized populations. It is an extreme form of abuse that results in long-lasting harm for survivors and requires a concerted community response. The knowledge gained through this formal Needs Assessment, in conjunction with forums and ongoing consultations with varied stakeholders, was used to create the Community Action Plan, outlined in the following pages.

PHASE TWO

Community Action Plan

This project generated hundreds of suggestions for how to better prevent and reduce sex trafficking in Edmonton. Although we tracked and considered all of this rich data, it was not feasible to include every idea in the final Action Plan. Activities were selected based on the following criteria: (1) the relevance to the identified priorities listed below, which were carefully chosen to reflect the feedback provided by stakeholders and research participants, (2) whether the strategy was considered implementable, and (3) whether it fit within the scope of the project. At times it was impossible to focus solely on sex trafficking, as this issue overlaps with a wide variety of other intersecting and related concerns. We thus attempted to strike a balance between maintaining the focus on sex trafficking and incorporating related issues where relevant and necessary.

To ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the Community Action Plan, we employed the following strategies based on stakeholder feedback:

Maximize touch points:

Stakeholders argued that there are limited supports for survivors as they attempt to make lasting breaks with traffickers. In part, this is because trafficked individuals experience coercion and have limited opportunities to access appropriate supports. However, there are many locations within the community where these individuals may come into contact with resources or support. We have called these contacts “touch points.” Many of the strategies in the plan are designed to maximize these points of contact in the hope that the community will be prepared to respond quickly and effectively when survivors are in a position to receive assistance.

Accentuate collaboration: We

strove to create a comprehensive Community Action Plan that would address sex trafficking on a number of fronts. As a result, there is no one organization that could possibly take on the breadth of the project moving forward. Rather, it will require stakeholders working together in concert. Broad participation in both the creation and implementation was essential to ensure a well-informed plan that reflects the wisdom and experience of those who contributed. Although we

attempted to consult as widely as possible, inevitably some voices are missing – we will attempt to address this by continuing to reach out to marginalized groups during the implementation phase.

Build on existing work:

Edmonton’s history of community engagement and collaboration on issues such as crime prevention and sexual exploitation has resulted in complementary and sometimes overlapping mandates and objectives. It is essential to remain connected with past and current work and to weave the response into projects that are already underway to take advantage of existing momentum. By consulting widely, we hoped to ensure that this project is embedded in and builds upon existing community efforts.

Highlight the voices of survivors of trafficking:

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of keeping the rights and voices of trafficked women and girls at the forefront of all prevention efforts. For example, the perspectives of the self-identified survivors of sex trafficking who were consulted during the formal research were prioritized.

Provide support for marginalized populations:

Marginalized populations in Edmonton (see Structural Inequalities section above) are especially vulnerable to the conditions that permit trafficking to exist. Particular care was given to the perceived needs of these marginalized groups throughout the course of the development of the Community Action Plan. Efforts to reach out to these groups and open streams of dialogue will continue after the end of this project.

Based on these strategies and the feedback generated through all of our consultations, we identified the following four priorities:

PRIORITY I,

INCREASE AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

Although stakeholders identified a vast number of groups and individuals who could benefit from increased understanding of sex trafficking, three main populations were identified: (1) service providers who may come into contact with trafficked individuals, (2) women and girls who may be targets of traffickers, and (3) the general public.

PRIORITY II,

FOCUS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH.

We heard strongly from the community that youth are extremely vulnerable to traffickers, particularly youth in care facilities such as group homes. Furthermore, many of the vulnerabilities that lead to sex trafficking have roots in childhood; effective prevention efforts must start there.

PRIORITY III.

IMPROVE SERVICE PROVISION THROUGH COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

Although Edmonton has many services available, there are a number of gaps and barriers that could be addressed through increased collaboration and communication among NGOs, law enforcement agencies, and government departments.

PRIORITY IV.

ADDRESS UNDERLYING STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS.

Community members recognized the need for structural change in order to effectively prevent and reduce sex trafficking in Edmonton.

Ten goals were created that corresponded to these priorities, and a number of corresponding activities were developed to support the furtherance of these goals. The goals and corresponding activities will be outlined at length to the right of this page.

Note that short-term activities were completed by the formal project end date of September 28, 2015. Mid- to long-term activities were longer in duration, and completion dates vary from project to project.

Priorities	Goals	Strategies
I. INCREASE AWARENESS, EDUCATION AND TRAINING	1. Provide Training And Education to Service Providers	<p>1. Deliver training targeted to front line service providers</p> <p>2. Challenge organizations to commit at least one staff member to take the BC OCTIP training</p> <p>3. Embed sex trafficking information into existing trainings and systems</p> <p>4. Continue to disseminate Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan</p> <p>5. Conduct further research</p>
	2. Improve Access to Information about Services	<p>2.1 Provide training and supports to women and girls working in industries where sex trafficking has been identified</p> <p>2.2 Improve accessibility of information about support resources</p>
	3. Increase Public Awareness about Sex Trafficking in Edmonton	<p>3.1 Develop and disseminate educational materials about sex trafficking to the general public</p> <p>3.2 Provide education to community groups</p>
II. FOCUS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH	4. Create and Disseminate Education for Youth	<p>4.1 Embed information into existing youth programs</p> <p>4.2 Provide public educational opportunities for youth</p>
	5. Develop Robust Response Mechanisms for Youth	<p>5.2 Develop protocols with youth serving agencies</p> <p>5.3 Support a task force to research and lobby for changes to group care policies</p>
III. IMPROVE SERVICE PROVISION THROUGH COLLABORATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	6. Streamline Collaboration	<p>6.1 Develop a comprehensive list of service provider programs and how to access these services</p> <p>6.2 Facilitate relationship and network building among agencies</p> <p>6.3 Develop and implement universal screening tools for partner organizations</p> <p>6.4 Develop protocols with partner agencies for working with trafficking victims</p> <p>6.5 Develop a regional response to trafficking</p>
	7. Target Communities for Engagement	<p>7.1. Target specific marginalized communities for engagement</p> <p>7.2 Create an advisory group of survivors of trafficking that ACT Alberta can consult with on training and awareness materials</p>
	8. Address Service Gaps and Barriers	<p>8.1 Build community capacity to make TRPs more accessible</p> <p>8.2 Find opportunities for free or reduced legal services</p> <p>8.3 Find alternate ways to meet needs of victims and reduce barriers within the community</p>
IV. ADDRESS UNDERLYING STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS	9. Develop Safe and Inclusive Systems	<p>9.1 Explore options for making public spaces safer for women and girls</p> <p>9.2 Explore the possibility of instituting Sanctuary City policies in Edmonton</p> <p>9.3 Reduce tacit support in surrounding industries such as hotels, taxis and car service, buses</p> <p>9.4 Develop collaboration between organizations to develop strategies to make the process of testifying safer for victims</p>
	10. Strengthen and Support Existing Initiatives Advocating for Structural Change	<p>10.1 Work with stakeholders to strengthen and support existing organizations, coalitions, and initiatives that advocate for positive structural change</p>



PRIORITY ONE

Increase Awareness, Education, and Training

Stakeholders stressed the importance of expanding the education on human trafficking and related issues currently being delivered in Edmonton. The general lack of awareness in Edmonton about sex trafficking, sexual exploitation, and the realities of the sex trade were repeatedly discussed throughout the project by all stakeholders consulted. As noted above, the concept of human trafficking is not well understood, cases of trafficking are complex, and trafficked persons may be difficult to identify. This confusion can lead to misidentification of trafficking cases, missed opportunities to assist victims, and inefficient use of resources. Furthermore, both survivors and service providers may not be able aware of all the community resources available.

Increasing knowledge and understanding of sex trafficking in Edmonton may also decrease the stigma victimized people experience. Education and training was recognized by stakeholders as an essential first step in changing attitudes and fundamentally shifting the realities in Edmonton. As one service provider noted, “changes in legislation are great, but until you have the attitudes that support that in society, people and the criminal justice system itself will subvert any piece of legislation they don’t support.”

Goal One

PROVIDE TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO SERVICE PROVIDERS

Stakeholders often requested more training on sex trafficking in Edmonton on how to better identify, support, and refer potential trafficked people as many did not feel equipped to appropriately do this. Understanding the long-term impacts of trauma on a victimized individual is also essential to ensuring she is appropriately supported. According to stakeholders, service providers should receive consistent and mandated training on both human trafficking and what resources are available in order to better equip them to handle sex trafficking cases. Individuals and organizations that are most likely to come in contact with trafficked persons are prioritized, including law enforcement, health care practitioners, front-line

service providers (such as women’s shelters), legal professionals, members of victim service units, school resource officers, teachers, health care professionals, and municipal employees in key roles.

Goal One - CONTINUED...

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
<p>1.1 Deliver training targeted to front line service providers</p>	<p>Provide targeted training to service providers who may come into contact with trafficked individuals or those at risk of being trafficked</p>	<p>Short-term, ongoing: Reach out to existing and potential stakeholders to offer training on HT.</p> <p>Deliver training to PICS, Distinctive Employment Counseling Services of Alberta (DECSA), and CSS staff members.</p> <p>Mid- to long-term, ongoing: Develop a training strategy that targets key organizations in Edmonton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › A Safe Place <p>Partner organizations conducting and/or coordinating training on related issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › CEASE › SACE › REACH Edmonton 	<p>ACT Alberta staff and training materials (currently supported through funding from Government of Alberta (GOA) Human Services)</p> <p>Staff time of service providers receiving training (EPS Vice, PICS, DECSA, CSS)</p>
<p>1.2 Challenge organizations to commit at least one staff member to take the BC OCTIP training</p>	<p>The BC OCTIP has created a free, online training about human trafficking. Challenging organizations to take the training would increase the capacity within the community to understand and respond to sex trafficking.</p>	<p>Short-term: Ask organizations in Edmonton to commit at least one staff member to taking the BC OCTIP training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › Core Team 	<p>BC OCTIP training</p> <p>Community partnerships</p> <p>Honorary Chair Sarah Chan, who issued the challenge</p>
<p>1.3 Embed sex trafficking information into existing trainings and systems</p>	<p>Coordinate with targeted groups to embed information on sex trafficking to existing trainings and systems to increase community capacity. This process will begin with bringing education and awareness to people in positions of influence.</p>	<p>Short-term: Reach out to key decision and policy makers in order to provide information about sex trafficking in Edmonton</p> <p>Present Community Action Plan to Edmonton WAVE committee and Edmonton Police Commission (EPC)</p> <p>Mid- to long-term: Research which organizations are doing training for target groups</p> <p>Connect with groups who create training and education for target audiences</p> <p>Develop relationships and agreements with these partners about incorporating HT content</p> <p>City of Edmonton Community Services to support exploration of opportunities to embed training into existing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta (consult on content with partner organizations) › CEASE › SEWEG Group Home Task Force (group home training) › YWCA Edmonton › EPS › EPC › City of Edmonton Community Services › REACH Edmonton › SACE 	<p>ACT Alberta training materials</p> <p>Time and resources of ACT Alberta and partner organizations</p>

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
<p>1.4 Continue to disseminate Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan</p>	<p>Stakeholders have indicated that they would like to stay informed about the project as it moves forward. It would also be valuable to continue to raise awareness in Edmonton about this project.</p>	<p>Short-term: Plan a one day workshop for stakeholders to discuss the Needs Assessment and Action Plan</p> <p>Submit abstracts to present project information at relevant conferences</p> <p>Create and disseminate final report to stakeholders and general public</p> <p>Ongoing: Have documents available via ACT Alberta website and distribute at community events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › Core Team › Community Partners 	<p>Existing training Staff time needed to coordinate activities</p> <p>Graphic design to make documents accessible and engaging</p> <p>Needs Assessment and Action Plan</p>
<p>1.5 Conduct further research</p>	<p>To ensure credibility, any education we provide the community must be based in research. In the Needs Assessment, we identified a number of areas that require further exploration.</p>	<p>Mid- to long-term: Explore opportunities to conduct further research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › See Appendix A for more details 	<p>Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan</p> <p>Funding for research</p> <p>Academic expertise</p>

Goal Two

IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES

Stakeholders identified the importance of widely disseminating information about support resources, as women and girls who are in, at risk of, or exiting trafficking situations may not be aware of these resources. Stakeholders also suggested that both broad (ex. life skills training) and targeted (human trafficking specific) training should be delivered in a more cohesive and practical fashion to women in industries where sex trafficking has been identified.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
2.1 Provide training and supports to women and girls working in industries where sex trafficking has been identified	<i>Providing information and training to women who are working in industries where sex trafficking has been identified may help to prevent trafficking and/or help those victimized.</i>	Mid- to long-term, ongoing: Provide training for staff and owners of body rub parlours, exotic dancers, and escort agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › CEASE in partnership with the Sustainable Development Department › City of Edmonton and GOA Employment Standards 	<i>Funding for project</i>
2.2 Improve accessibility of information about support resources	<i>It is essential to have broad information about services to be made widely available. Thus will maximize potential touch points in the community.</i>	<p>Mid- to long-term: Work with existing services such as The Support Network to disseminate information widely.</p> <p><i>Develop posters and cards for targeted locations, such as health care centres.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › CEASE › ACT Alberta › EPS › E4C Crossroads 	<p><i>Partially funded project.</i></p> <p><i>Partner organizations such as CEASE and E4C have existing programs to provide safety information to women on the street</i></p> <p><i>Existing Support Network resources</i></p>

Goal Three

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT SEX TRAFFICKING IN EDMONTON

One of the priorities identified by stakeholders was the need to better educate the general public about the nature and scope of sex trafficking in Edmonton. Because of the sensitive nature of sex trafficking cases and the stigma experienced by trafficked individuals, public educational materials must be well designed and appropriately researched. In order to develop a common understanding in the community, public awareness needs to begin with basic information.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
<p>3.1 Develop and disseminate educational materials about sex trafficking to the general public</p>	<p><i>Disseminating basic information about sex trafficking in our community to the general public will increase the understanding of the issue and correct misconceptions.</i></p>	<p>Short-term: Disseminate existing Myths vs. Realities human trafficking infographic</p> <p><i>Develop and disseminate case studies booklet that provides context about sex trafficking in Edmonton</i></p> <p>Mid- to long-term: Work with Crime Stoppers to create an HT edition of their magazine</p> <p><i>Build on existing infographic to create a series</i></p> <p><i>Continue to use ACT Alberta and partner organizations to disseminate information and increase community awareness</i></p> <p><i>Explore potential of City of Edmonton Community Services assisting in disseminating materials to the general public</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › Core Team › Crime Stoppers › Community partners 	<p><i>Crime Stoppers resources</i></p> <p><i>ACT Alberta staff time</i></p> <p><i>ACT Alberta volunteer time</i></p> <p><i>Funding for dissemination</i></p> <p><i>Myths vs. Realities infographic (created through funding from National Victims of Crime Awareness Week (NVCAW))</i></p>
<p>3.2 Provide education to community groups</p>	<p><i>Many community groups, including faith groups, students groups, and service clubs have expressed an interest in the issue of sex trafficking. Providing education to these groups is an efficient way to disseminate information to the public.</i></p>	<p>Mid- to long-term: Provide an educational training to the local Amnesty International Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › Core Team 	<p><i>Existing training</i></p> <p><i>ACT Alberta volunteers</i></p> <p><i>Funding for dissemination</i></p>

PRIORITY TWO

Focus on Children and Youth

Stakeholders focused attention on the challenges faced by youth and the need to expand and strengthen services for this population, with several calling for dynamic conversations and research to continue to grow. We also heard about the need to increase funding for existing child protection programs, youth-specific addiction facilities, and mental health supports. Stakeholders focused attention on living conditions for youth; many advocated for increased funding for semi-independent living programs, more placements in safe foster homes, and accessible youth shelters. This focus largely reflects the high representation of service provider participants, with responses reinforcing social service and intervention models.

Structural inequalities that create an environment conducive to sex trafficking strongly affect children and youth. Stakeholders stressed the importance of addressing this as early as possible in a child's life. In the words of one service provider, "any time that we can create healthier human beings right from the beginning, then we'll see a change in possible outcomes."

Goal Four

CREATE AND DISSEMINATE EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

The importance of educating youth was emphasized consistently throughout the project by a wide variety of stakeholders. Many argued that various important topics are currently being taught inadequately, if at all, in our education systems. Repeatedly, stakeholders identified the need to develop and expand on existing educational programs in areas such as human trafficking, minority rights, healthy relationships and sexuality, mutual and self-respect, consent, sexual exploitation, grooming, and the realities of the sex trade. Many advocated for the incorporation of more practical life-skills training in schools so that children

are more equipped to face the realities of adulthood. As there are a number of organizations currently providing education for youth in many of these topic areas, there are opportunities to support and expand existing work.

It must be emphasized that although it is important to empower youth with information, no one should ever be held responsible for acts perpetrated against them. It bears repeating that awareness education should never take responsibility for a crime away from the perpetrator.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
4.1 Embed information into existing youth programs	<p>ACT Alberta will work with community organizations to develop, coordinate, and disseminate educational curricula for youth.</p> <p>This information will be included in ACT Alberta presentations and partner organization such as SACE and YWCA Edmonton youth programs.</p>	<p>Short-term: Develop a list of existing educational programs</p> <p>Meet with educators to develop partnerships and advise on content</p> <p>Present ACT YEP! program at the Nellie McClung Program in Avonmore Public School</p> <p>Mid- to long-term: Continue to present ACT Alberta's YEP! program as requested by community members</p> <p>Partner with youth serving organizations to develop relevant content and embed it into existing youth programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › SACE › CEASE › PSECA › YWCA Edmonton › iHuman › REACH Edmonton 	<p>ACT Alberta staff</p> <p>Existing partnerships</p> <p>Community Needs Assessment</p> <p>PSECA expertise</p>
4.2 Provide public educational opportunities for youth	<p>Engaging youth in public education helps to empower them. It also highlights the issues youth are facing to the general public.</p>	<p>Short-term: Include youth-oriented material in public events such as NVCAW programming</p> <p>Ongoing: Circulate links to youth videos</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › SEWG 	<p>SEWG resources</p> <p>Justice Canada NVCAW funding and community programming</p>

Goal Five

DEVELOP ROBUST RESPONSE MECHANISMS FOR YOUTH

Stakeholders drew special attention to the gaps in supports for at-risk and exploited children and youth, particularly in regards to housing and living conditions. Group homes were repeatedly discussed as dangerous places where youth are targeted by traffickers and drug use is rampant. Staff in group homes may not be trained to deal with complex trafficking situations and policies often differ from home to home. Activities in group homes are often hard to monitor due to high staff-to-youth ratios and limited budgets. Outside of group homes, the ratio of caseworkers to youth is simply too low and wrap-around supports¹¹ are often

unavailable. Furthermore, stakeholders noted that housing options for youth transitioning out of group homes is limited and there are an insufficient number of youth shelters, particularly outside of the city's core. Consistent training and policies across group homes could help mitigate some of these concerns and better supports for families and kinship care opportunities may prevent youth from entering care to begin with. Discussions at SEWG meetings have inspired SEWG and Downtown NET to form the Group Home Task Force, which aims to examine the issues surrounding group care in Edmonton and lobby for changes.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
5.1 Provide training to youth serving agencies	<i>Provide training to youth-serving organizations to increase awareness of sex trafficking and how to respond to sex trafficking cases</i>	Mid- to long-term: Develop relationships with youth-serving organizations Ongoing: Provide training to youth serving organizations that may come into contact with sex trafficking cases as requested.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT Alberta 	<i>Needs funding for research and development</i>
5.2 Develop protocols with youth serving agencies	<i>Although ACT Alberta does not work directly with youth, developing protocols with youth serving agencies for information exchange will help to track data and better support our community response to youth trafficking</i>	Mid- to long-term: Reach out to youth serving organizations to develop protocols to serve youth victims of sex trafficking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACT Alberta Community Partners 	<i>Current Network and Victim Assistance program (funded through GOA, Victims of Crime Fund) can support this in part</i>
5.3 Support a task force to research and lobby for changes to group care policies	<i>SEWG has convened a task force to examine the issues surrounding group care in Edmonton and to lobby for changes.</i>	Short-term: Research best practices and trainings in well-run group homes in Edmonton Mid- to long-term: Lobby government for standardized policies and better regulation of group homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEWG Group Home Task Force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEWG Group Home Taskforce resources Downtown NET resources REACH resources

PRIORITY THREE

Improve Services through Collaboration and Community Engagement

There are many opportunities to improve services through strengthening existing collaborations. Stakeholders expressed interest in resources that would support these collaborations, such as an assessment tool that provides clear and agreed-upon definitional guidance, response protocols, and reduced bureaucratic barriers to services in government, law enforcement and service providers.

¹¹ *Wraparound care generally includes a team of individuals who work collaboratively to develop a comprehensive, individualized plan of care and then implement, monitor, and evaluate that plan (National Wraparound Initiative 2014).*

Goal Six

STREAMLINE COLLABORATION

Encouragingly, supports for trafficked people in Edmonton are often built on a collaborative case management approach. As mentioned above, streamlining these collaborations will lead to better services for victimized people, reduce service duplication, and reduce bureaucratic barriers.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
6.1 Develop a comprehensive list of service provider programs and how to access these services	<i>Developing a list of resources will help ACT Alberta and partner organizations respond to trafficking victims more efficiently. A comprehensive list may also help identify services and fill gaps. Keeping information updated and accessible will help service providers assist victims in a timely manner.</i>	<p>Short-term: Plan a facilitated resource discussion amongst agencies to determine what services are available</p> <p>Mid- to long-term: Develop an information hub or database to collect, share and update information about services, networks and initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta, with information from community partners › Core Team 	<p>ACT Alberta staff</p> <p>The Support Network resource lists</p> <p>EPL resource lists</p>
6.2 Facilitate relationship and network building among agencies	<i>Building stronger relationships among stakeholders by providing opportunities for networking and consultation will increase awareness about programs and resources that are available, increase collaborations among agencies, and provide more opportunities for referrals.</i>	<p>Short-term: Conduct ongoing consultations with stakeholders to keep Action Plan updated and relevant through ongoing conversations. Provide networking opportunities at project events such as forums</p> <p>Ongoing: Build on existing ACT Alberta network and other existing community networks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › Existing networks, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › CEASE and Creating Options Aimed at Reducing Sexual Exploitation (COARSE) client support networks › SEWG › The Support Network 	<p>ACT Alberta Edmonton Network</p> <p>June 11th Stakeholder Forum</p>

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
<p>6.3 Develop and implement universal screening tools for partner organizations</p>	<p>Screening and assessment tools will assist organizations with identifying and referring sex trafficking cases. Any screening tool would need to be accompanied by training and evaluation to make sure it is used effectively.</p>	<p>Short-term: Participate in the CCR assessment tool development.</p> <p>Mid- to long-term: Disseminate CCR screening tools among partner agencies with training support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › CCR 	<p>CCR assessment tool project</p> <p>ACT Alberta staff time (funded by Government of Alberta and Justice Canada)</p>
<p>6.4 Develop protocols with partner agencies for working with trafficking victims</p>	<p>Formalizing the relationships between organizations and the developing protocols for serving victims will make responses to trafficking consistent across the city and between individual service providers. This will ensure all identified victims get consistent support and organizations have a clear understanding of their role. Protocols may also help address service gaps.</p>	<p>Short-term, ongoing: Formalize relationships with stakeholder organizations</p> <p>Develop information sharing agreements and Memorandums of Understanding with partner organizations</p> <p>Work with partners to create protocols for assisting victims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › EPS › ACT Alberta network members 	<p>Existing collaborative relationships</p> <p>Funding</p>
<p>6.5 Develop a cohesive regional response to trafficking</p>	<p>Developing regional protocols for handling human trafficking cases would ensure consistent support for victims across jurisdictions.</p>	<p>Mid- to long-term: Develop protocols with local and regional partners to create a province wide response to sex trafficking</p> <p>Look to examples in other jurisdictions, such as British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › EPS 	<p>Funding</p>

Goal Seven

TARGET COMMUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Throughout our consultations, stakeholders repeatedly affirmed the importance of building relationships and trust with marginalized populations that have difficulties accessing needed services. Such groups include migrants, Aboriginal populations, sex trade workers, and those affected by poverty (see Needs Assessment above). Each of these populations has different needs and vulnerabilities and different levels of expertise on sex trafficking. It is essential to engage with these populations to ensure that responses to trafficking are respectful and reflect the needs and desires of each community. This requires an approach based on targeted engagement and specialized outreach, rather than traditional top-down approaches that are ineffective and damaging. For example, outsiders have often attempted to engage with the Aboriginal community using such top-down approaches. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of trusting the wisdom that currently exists in Aboriginal

communities, supporting Aboriginal-led initiatives, and sincerely listening to and consulting with local Aboriginal groups and leaders rather than imposing expectations from above.

Several of the self-identified survivors of trafficking who participated in the formal research requested opportunities to contribute to anti-trafficking work, and many other stakeholders also emphasized the importance of including these voices in developing human trafficking responses. ACT Alberta aims to create an advisory committee composed of self-identified survivors that would contribute to ACT Alberta's anti-trafficking work by advising on the creation of training and awareness materials. The role of this group could expand with time depending on the interest of committee members. Supports, such as counselling, would be made readily accessible to committee members.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
7.1 Target specific marginalized communities for engagement	<i>Under-served and marginalized communities require specific, targeted outreach in order to build trust and partnerships.</i>	<p>Short-term: Plan a workshop to present the findings of the Needs Assessment to leaders in the Aboriginal community</p> <p>Mid- to long-term: Develop resources in multiple languages</p> <p>Establish working relationships and trust with community groups who have not been well served</p> <p>Assess and respond to community needs as identified through the engagement process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › IAAW › ACT Alberta › EPS › Community partners › REACH Edmonton 	<p>ACT Alberta and IAAW staff time</p> <p>Venue rental</p> <p>Refreshments</p> <p>ACT Alberta has received a grant that will support a project to target marginalized groups</p>
7.2 Create an advisory group of survivors of trafficking that ACT Alberta can consult on training and awareness materials	<i>An advisory group will provide opportunities for survivors to tell their stories, participate in prevention efforts, and provide input on training materials</i>	<p>Mid- to long-term: Look to best practices in other organizations for incorporating the voices of survivors in anti-trafficking work. Develop a strategy to implement at ACT Alberta.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta 	<p>Funding</p>

Goal Eight

ADDRESS SERVICE GAPS AND BARRIERS

Many organizations in Edmonton are working both individually and in unison to serve victims of sex trafficking in areas such as short- and medium-term shelter, counselling, case management, court support, addiction treatment, and other services. However, stakeholders identified a wide variety of service and policy shortcomings.

One of the most commonly recurring grievances was the shortfall in long-term services. Most of the available services and programs available to exploited and vulnerable people are focused on responding to crisis situations, but harm can result when clients have to leave programs before they are ready simply because they have used up their time in a given facility. Stakeholders emphasized shortcomings in long-term addictions resources; as one service provider expressed in frustration regarding the lack of long-term detox beds: “people need time to heal. They need time to learn new skills and new behaviors and build new social networks.” There is similarly a lack of long-term case managers who can help support and advocate for trafficked women throughout their healing process. This is particularly concerning as survivors often have difficulties trusting and have limited access to social and community supports. Without an advocate with whom they can build a relationship over a long period of time, it can be nearly impossible for survivors to navigate systems and access needed supports. There also remains a need to streamline information and resource sharing in collaborative networks in order to strengthen communities of support.

Stakeholders stressed the need for an expanded shelter system in Edmonton, both as a way to decrease vulnerability and to help survivors recover. While emergency shelter¹² tends to be readily accessible in Edmonton¹³, stakeholders noted a conspicuous lack of second stage shelter and affordable long-term living spaces. Additionally, women who have criminal records of less than 3 years are excluded from many housing situations, forcing them into unsafe living conditions. Stakeholders also drew attention to low vacancy rates and ever increasing costs of rent in Edmonton and advocated for more publically funded permanent housing options.

Stakeholders stressed that there is a shortage of accessible, affordable, and trauma-informed mental health supports for victims of sex trafficking and other vulnerable individuals. They noted that wait lists are unmanageably long for free mental health supports and financial barriers for paid mental health care services are often insurmountable. This gap is particularly noticeable for international victims of sex trafficking, who are often not able to access Alberta Health Care. Some suggestions for bridging this gap included a free walk-in mental health care clinic.

Trafficked migrants also struggle in other ways to access services. Indeed, stakeholders noted that it is hard, if not impossible, for those with tenuous migration status to receive services of any kind, including TRPs. These permits are issued by CIC to victims or potential victims of human trafficking in Canada. They provide legal immigration status in Canada for a limited time and entitle holders to health-care benefits and trauma counselling. However, stakeholders criticized how difficult it is to get a TRP, as the permits are issued in an extremely limited fashion and typically only to those who have suffered extreme violence in their trafficking experience. According to US Department of State Trafficking in Persons' Reports, only five TRPs were issued across Canada in 2014, down significantly from 14 the previous year, 26 in 2012, and 53 in 2011. Furthermore, even when TRPs are issued, many noted that it may take weeks or months for victims to receive them, leaving them unable to access any services in the interim (including access to health care, trauma counselling, translation services, and the ability to work in Canada). Legal services are also difficult for trafficked migrants to receive, as legal aid is only available to those who have lived in Alberta for a minimum of one year. Additionally, as a common tactic of traffickers is to seize a trafficked person's documentation, many are unable to prove their identity, further exacerbating the challenges of accessing services.

¹² Stage 1 shelter is available for up to 21 days in most facilities.

¹³ In particular, A Safe Place, an emergency shelter for abused women and their children (including female victims of human trafficking), was repeatedly mentioned by stakeholders as a positive response model. A Safe Place has been instrumental in assisting victims of both internal and international human trafficking find safe shelter in Alberta.

Gaps in services may be somewhat mitigated by some of the strategies already discussed. For example, building protocols and improving collaboration may shorten wait times, reduce bureaucratic red tape, and mitigate barriers to service and developing relationships and updating resource lists could bring to light existing

but underused programs. However, some gaps (such as limited spaces in addictions treatment programs), are dependent on funding and cannot be addressed at a community level without resources for new or expanded services.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
<p>8.1 Build community capacity to make TRPs more accessible</p>	<p><i>The process of accessing TRPs is not well understood; this one reason why this potentially valuable service is underused. Increasing community capacity in this area would help trafficking victims without status avoid deportation.</i></p>	<p>Short-term, ongoing: <i>Provide training and supports for agencies and community groups who may assist victims with accessing TRPs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta 	<p><i>ACT Alberta staff knowledge and experiences</i></p>
<p>8.2 Find opportunities for free or reduced legal services</p>	<p><i>Many trafficking victims need legal services for a variety of reasons but cannot access services due to financial or language constraints.</i></p>	<p>Short-term, ongoing: <i>Build relationships with existing free or subsidized legal services</i></p> <p>Mid- to long-term: <i>Develop relationships with lawyers who are willing to do pro-bono work</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › Edmonton Community Legal Centre (ECLC) › ASSIST Community Services (translation) 	<p><i>ACT Alberta</i></p> <p><i>Edmonton Community Legal Centre (ECLC)</i></p> <p><i>ASSIST Community Services (translation)</i></p>
<p>8.3 Find alternate ways to meet needs of victims and reduce barriers within the community</p>	<p><i>By seeking out and connecting with existing programs that could extend services to sex trafficking victims, we may be able to find existing supports and address some of the gaps in services. For example, there may be long-term counselling opportunities in the community that are not targeted to sex trafficking victims but which they may be able to access.</i></p>	<p>Short-term: <i>Develop a database of services for victims. Disseminate this information to partner organizations (See Goal 6.1)</i></p> <p>Mid- to long-term: <i>Look for opportunities for long-term trauma informed mental health support</i></p> <p>Ongoing: <i>Develop relationships with partner organization to develop referral pathways and protocols to address service gaps. Examples: emergency housing options, inclusive health care opportunities, etc.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › CEASE 	<p><i>Existing ACT Alberta network</i></p> <p><i>Time and resources of organizations currently providing mental health support such as SACE and CEASE</i></p> <p><i>Project funding</i></p>

PRIORITY FOUR

Address Underlying Structures and Systems

Stakeholders recognized that lasting and significant change can only happen by addressing underlying inequalities within our society. Although crisis interventions are effective in emergency situations, they are, in the words of one service provider “really a bandage, superficial.” However, despite the need to address entrenched structures and attitudes, doing so in a community-based Action Plan is challenging as the required changes must happen concurrently at all three levels of government, in the private sector, and in society at large. Therefore, this project proposes local changes that could mitigate structural inequalities specifically for Edmonton residents. Some of this work is already happening through existing initiatives such as Racism Free Edmonton and End Poverty Edmonton and through community advocacy groups such as the Quality of Life Commission.

Goal Nine

DEVELOP SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SYSTEMS

As systemic environments contribute to an individual's vulnerability to exploitation, corresponding changes can reduce this vulnerability. There are a number of ways Edmonton can create safer, more equitable, and more accessible systems and spaces in Edmonton. For example, many stakeholders expressed particular frustration with the legal system, which they argued is stacked against victims of all forms of sexualized violence. The burden of proof tends to rest almost entirely with the victimized person, who may not be seen as credible due to addictions and mental health concerns. Traumatized victims who have suffered from years of exploitation may be combative in court, further damaging their credibility, and may suffer from attacks on their character by attorneys and

judges. Furthermore, courtroom proceedings often take a great deal of time and resources and it may be emotionally difficult for victims to face their abuser in a court room. One research participant noted that traffickers are well aware of the challenges faced by victims in the legal system in Edmonton and that they intentionally draw out the process in the hopes (often verified) that the victim will be unable to see the process through. Stakeholders advocated for more private courtroom proceedings that protect the rights and privacy of victims of sexual violence (some recommend measures included the use of a screen for victims while providing testimony). In this case, systemic changes could make the legal system more accessible and equitable for those victimized by sexualized violence.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
<p>9.1 Explore options for making public spaces safer for women and girls</p>	<p>Stakeholders talked about the need to increase public safety for women and girls in Edmonton. Harassment and targeting of women and girls for the purposes of sexual exploitation is known to happen in public spaces.</p>	<p>Mid- to long-term: Support the creation of a comprehensive plan to make Edmonton's public spaces safer</p> <p>Engage with the City of Edmonton to get municipal endorsement of the plan</p> <p>Engage with the UN for endorsement and recognition under the UN Safe Cities Global Initiative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › EASIS › City of Edmonton Community Services 	<p>Volunteer time and expertise</p> <p>Councillor's Initiative to Combat Gender-based Violence</p> <p>UN Safe Cities Global Initiative</p>
<p>9.2 Explore the possibility of instituting Sanctuary City policies in Edmonton</p>	<p>Policies that ensure access to service regardless of immigration status will reduce barriers to service. Canadian cities that have instituted Sanctuary City policies include Hamilton, Winnipeg and Toronto.</p>	<p>Mid- to long-term: Community members will explore Sanctuary City policies and the feasibility of instituting them in Edmonton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Edmonton TFW Advocacy Coalition › City of Edmonton 	<p>Volunteer time and expertise</p> <p>Existing policies in North American cities</p>
<p>9.3 Reduce tacit support in surrounding industries such as hotels, taxis and car service, buses</p>	<p>Traffickers rely on existing infrastructure, such as taxis and hotels. These businesses may be supporting criminal activity inadvertently and, with awareness and training, could introduce policies to prevent or reduce trafficking.</p>	<p>Mid to long-term: Targeted education for related industries</p> <p>Develop protocols and codes of conduct for businesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › EPS › YWCA Edmonton › SEWG › City of Edmonton 	<p>Existing hotel training and resources</p> <p>Responsible Hospitality Edmonton</p>
<p>9.4 Develop collaboration between organizations to develop strategies to make the process of testifying safer for victims</p>	<p>Some HT victims are unwilling or unable to testify because of safety issues and stigma. Victim advocates can work with Crown Prosecutors and others in the system to make the testifying process as safe and comfortable as possible. This will serve to reduce trauma for victims. Improvements in the testifying process may also result in an increase in convictions on trafficking related charges.</p>	<p>Mid to long-term: Develop a coalition of organizations to develop protocols and supports to better serve witnesses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › EPS › Crown Prosecutors › CEASE Victim Advocates › ACT Alberta 	<p>Time and resources of organizations</p> <p>Existing Domestic Violence Court models</p> <p>Translation services</p>

Goal Ten

STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT EXISTING ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

As noted above, the community cannot directly address some of the structural elements that contribute to an environment conducive to sex trafficking. We can, however, identify and advocate for change by working with community and government leaders. To do this, we must identify what is currently being done, explore possible policy recommendations, and develop strategies for collaboration. Some of the structural changes and policy priorities identified by our stakeholders include: addressing poverty and income disparity, increasing supports for families

(such as increased income and child care supports), creating policy changes in group care, child welfare, and immigration policy, increasing supports for Aboriginal peoples, addressing gender disparity, reducing societal insensitivity toward victims, reducing barriers to services, addressing the lack of resources in the non-profit sector, and addressing racism. The diversity and scope of these issues illustrates the complexity of the underlying structures and institutions, further reinforcing the need for a comprehensive and cross-sectoral approach.

Strategy	Strategy Details	Recommended Activities	Confirmed lead agency and agency partners on strategy	Resources Required
<p>10.1 Work with stakeholders to strengthen and support existing organizations, coalitions, and initiatives that advocate for positive structural change</p>	<p><i>Addressing the structural inequalities that create an environment conducive to sex trafficking is outside of the scope and influence of this project. However, there are organizations, coalitions, and initiatives already working on these issues. We recommend supporting work that already underway.</i></p>	<p>Mid to long-term: <i>Explore existing advocacy organizations, coalitions, and initiatives that work in related areas, such as victim’s rights and domestic violence, learn how they are working toward creating positive structural change, and support those efforts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ACT Alberta › Core Team 	<p><i>Existing relationships, collaborations, and initiatives</i></p> <p><i>Existing HT research</i></p> <p><i>Needs Assessment</i></p>



PHASE THREE

Implementation

After the Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan were finalized, the project entered the final phase – implementation. Notably, this project was only required to implement one activity for the purposes of evaluation. However, due to the strong interest and support this project has received, ACT Alberta and the Core Team were able to implement seventeen activities, outlined below. This accomplishment highlights Edmonton's readiness to take action on sex trafficking and the strong collaboration and support of the community.

PRIORITY ONE

Increase Education, Awareness and Training

Goal One

PROVIDE TRAINING AND EDUCATION TO SERVICE PROVIDERS

STRATEGY 1.1

Deliver training targeted to service providers

As training was continuously emphasized throughout this project as a strong priority for stakeholders, the Core Team chose to focus on it for the purposes of evaluation. We selected three organizations which were likely to come into contact with either trafficking victims, individuals leaving trafficking situations, or those at risk of being trafficked. We began with the EPS PICS staff. We also conducted two other training sessions with DECSA and CSS Foster and Kinship Care department.

SHORT TERM IMPLEMENTATION

(MARCH 1, 2015 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)

Training for EPS PICS staff members

Date: April 10, 2015

Details: ACT Alberta staff presented human trafficking training and administered surveys for evaluation.

As noted in the Needs Assessment, body rub parlours have been identified as a possible location for sex trafficking in Edmonton and human trafficking charges have been laid in connection with them in the past. According to Edmonton Bylaw, body rub practitioners must receive a criminal record check in order to get a license to legally practice in the city. This provides an opportunity for a point of contact with potential human trafficking victims. Although ACT Alberta has received reports of suspected suspicious activity from Police Information Check Section (PICS) staff, PICS does not have a clear method of identifying and communicating about possible problem files. Working with EPS, ACT Alberta developed training for PICS staff to help them understand and identify possible sex trafficking victims and report these issues to the EPS Vice section for investigation. After piloting and evaluating this training, ACT Alberta and EPS will work together to train additional EPS staff and departments.

Outcome: PICS staff members have increased capacity to identify and respond to potential trafficking situations. EPS has instituted internal policy changes to better monitor body rub licensing. Specifically, security clearance forms now mandate that any translators who accompany the applicant must be identified.

Training for DECSA Staff Members

Date: May 26, 2015

Details: ACT Alberta staff presented human trafficking training and administered surveys for evaluation to DECSA staff members.

DECSA's barrier-free programs provide employment, education and skill-based training for vulnerable individuals and are a key partner in supporting women exiting the sex trade. Front line staff may encounter women who have experienced trafficking or who are at risk of being trafficked.

Outcome: Training increased DECSA staff member's capacity to identify potential trafficking cases and support women who have been or are at risk of being trafficked.

CSS Foster and Kinship Care Department

Date: June 23, 2015

Details: ACT Alberta staff presented human trafficking training and administered surveys for evaluation.

Social workers who support families and children who have been apprehended by Child Welfare have the opportunity to identify risk factors and support children and families to both prevent and identify human trafficking situations. This action item also falls under Priority Two: Focus on Children and Youth.

Outcome: CSS staff members received training on human trafficking, increasing their capacity to identify and respond to potential cases.

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta staff will continue to offer general and specialized training to interested organizations and stakeholders.

STRATEGY 1.2

Challenge organizations to commit at least one staff member to take the BC OCTIP training

SHORT TERM IMPLEMENTATION

(MARCH 1, 2015 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)

Training for EPS PICS staff members

Date: April 10, 2015

Details: ACT Alberta staff presented human trafficking training and administered surveys for evaluation.

BC OCTIP Training Challenge

Date: March-June 2015

Details: The Core Team challenged organizations to commit at least one staff person to take the free online BC OCTIP training.

Our honorary chair, Sarah Chan, created a series of three promotional videos to create awareness about the challenge that were circulated to the community via social media.

Outcome: 32 individuals from 11 unique organizations completed the training. Since the end of the challenge, interest in the training has continued, including interest from the City of Edmonton. At the June 11 workshop, an additional 43 individuals from 28 unique organizations committed to take the training. YWCA Edmonton is planning to issue an internal challenge to YWCA staff this fall. Comments about the training were positive and participants felt it increased their understanding of human trafficking. One individual remarked "I had to do the course in small chunks because it affects me a lot ... even more I admire the work you and the others in the field do every day and wish you much personal care."

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will continue to encourage organizations and the general public to take the BC OCTIP training.

STRATEGY 1.3

Embed sex trafficking information into existing trainings and systems**SHORT TERM
IMPLEMENTATION**(MARCH 1, 2015 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)**Presentation to Police Commission****Date:** July 16, 2015**Details:** A presentation was given to the Edmonton Police Commission to expand their knowledge on the findings of the Needs Assessment, the goals of the Community Action Plan and current collaborations with EPS.**Outcome:** Police commissioners and senior EPS officers are aware of the Community Action Plan and the issues surrounding sex trafficking in Edmonton. The presentation generated media interest in the project, resulting in more public awareness of the Action Plan and sex trafficking in our community.**MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

ACT Alberta has applied to present at the next WAVE committee meeting in November 2015. ACT Alberta will continue to build relationships with organizations for possible partnerships. The SEWG group home task force will continue to look into opportunities to improve training for staff in group homes. ACT Alberta will continue to provide information about sex trafficking and the Community Action Plan to key leaders in the community and advocate to embed the Plan into key initiatives.

STRATEGY 1.4

Continue to disseminate Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan**SHORT TERM
IMPLEMENTATION**(MARCH 1, 2015 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)**Needs Assessment presented at Provincial Knowledge Exchange:
Environmental Scans of the Sex Industry and Human Trafficking in Alberta****Date:** March 11 and 12, 2015**Details:** The Research Coordinator presented a summary of the Needs Assessment to Government of Alberta employees during a provincial knowledge exchange.**Outcome:** Employees in the Government of Alberta learned about the Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan and are able to apply the information to their work as appropriate. Some participants remained engaged in the project and attended the June 11 workshop.**Community Action Plan presented at SEWG meeting****Date:** May 7, 2015**Details:** The Project Manager presented the Community Action Plan to SEWG members**Outcome:** SEWG members are aware of the Community Action Plan, provided important feedback, and are aware of opportunities for engagement in the future Implementation phase.**Project summary presented at Harm Reduction Conference****Date:** June 3, 2015**Details:** The Project Manager presented information about the Community Action Plan and Needs Assessment to approximately 45 front-line service providers at this conference.

Outcome: Service providers learned more about the context of sex trafficking in Edmonton, the Community Action Plan, and how this issue applies to their work. A number of new relationships were generated during the follow up discussion.

Public workshop: Sex Trafficking in Edmonton: Research and Action¹

Date: June 11, 2015

Details: Presented and discussed Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan with stakeholders

Outcome: Stakeholders learned more about the context of sex trafficking in Edmonton and received updates about the Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan. Stakeholders were given opportunities to provide input into the Community Action Plan and participate in implementation. In all, 150 stakeholders attended.

This final report will be disseminated widely to stakeholders and general public and are available via the ACT Alberta website.

MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will apply to present the Needs Assessment and Community Action Plan at relevant conferences and other venues.

STRATEGY 1.5

1.5 Conduct further research

MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will continue to explore opportunities to conduct further research. See Appendix A for more details.

Goal Two

IMPROVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES

STRATEGY 2.1

Provide training and supports to women and girls working in industries where sex trafficking has been identified

MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

CEASE will explore possible grant options for a future project.

¹ Referred to throughout as the "June 11 Workshop"

STRATEGY 2.2

Improve accessibility of information about support resourcesMID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will explore possible grant options for a future project.

Goal Three

INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS ABOUT SEX TRAFFICKING IN EDMONTON

STRATEGY 3.1

Develop and disseminate educational materials about sex trafficking to the general publicMID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will work with Crime Stoppers to develop content for a human trafficking edition of their magazine. This edition is expected to be published in January 2016. ACT Alberta will create and disseminate public awareness materials as resources become available.

STRATEGY 3.2

Provide education to community groupsSHORT TERM
IMPLEMENTATION

(MARCH 1, 2015 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)

Presentation to the Edmonton chapter of Amnesty International

Date: September 22, 2015

Details: Present and discuss information on human trafficking in Edmonton.

Outcome: Stakeholders learned more about the context of human trafficking in Edmonton.

MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will continue to respond to requests for presentations to community groups.

PRIORITY TWO

Focus On Children And Youth

Goal Four

CREATE AND DISSEMINATE EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

STRATEGY 4.1

Embed information into existing youth programs

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Stakeholders are working on developing a strategy for streamlining and coordinating existing youth educational programs. Further meetings are planned before the end of 2015.

STRATEGY 4.2

Provide public educational opportunities for youth

SHORT TERM IMPLEMENTATION

(MARCH 1, 2015 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)

Presentation at Nellie McClung Program in Avonmore School

Date: March 6, 2015

Details: ACT Alberta staff presented ACT Alberta's existing Youth Empowerment Program (YEP!) at the Nellie McClung program at Avonmore School in Edmonton. This is a human rights based educational presentation about human trafficking for youth.

Outcome: Approximately 50 girls in the program learned more about sex trafficking. We also began a relationship with the Avonmore School that could lead to further opportunities to provide educational programs.

National Victims of Crime Awareness Week (NVC AW) event

Date: April 22, 2015

Details: Presented information about the project at a NVC AW youth event sponsored by SEWG.

Outcome: Community members learned more about the Community Action Plan and how it applies to youth in Edmonton. Approximately 100 people attended the event.

Facilitated discussion among education providers

Date: July 29, 2015

Details: There are a number of organizations in Edmonton who provide education to youth on topics such as consent, respect, healthy relationships and healthy sexuality. Although there is general agreement that all children and youth should receive this education, organizations have varying degrees of access to various populations of children and youth in the city. ACT Alberta facilitated a discussion amongst these groups on opportunities for collaboration and the possibility of embedding sex trafficking information into existing presentations.

Outcome: 17 participants attended the meeting. Participants learned more about the Community Action Plan and what is happening in the community on the topic of youth education, and were provided with networking opportunities. The group developed a number of ideas for further 8 exploration and collaboration.

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will explore possible grant options for a future project.

Goal Five

DEVELOP ROBUST RESPONSE MECHANISMS FOR YOUTH

STRATEGY 5.1

Provide training to youth-serving agencies

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will continue to provide training to youth-serving organizations on request.

STRATEGY 5.2

Develop protocols with youth-serving agencies

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will develop response protocols with youth-serving organizations.

STRATEGY 5.3

Support a task force to research and lobby for changes to group care policies

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The SEWG Group Home Task Force is meeting regularly to develop a strategy to address issues in group care. ACT Alberta and other Core Team members will continue to support this Task Force.

PRIORITY THREE

Improve Services Through Collaboration And Community Engagement

Goal Six

STREAMLINE COLLABORATION

STRATEGY 6.1

Develop a comprehensive list of service provider programs and how to access these services

SHORT TERM IMPLEMENTATION

(MARCH 1, 2015 - SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)

List of services and programs

Date: September 2015

Details: ACT Alberta created a Sex Trafficking Resources List in order to centralize information about what resources are available to those victimized by sex trafficking in our community. This comprehensive document of resources can be disseminated to stakeholders.

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will continue to make the Sex Trafficking Resources List accessible to stakeholders.

STRATEGY 6.2

Facilitate relationship and network building among agencies

SHORT TERM IMPLEMENTATION

(MARCH 1, 2015 - SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)

Facilitated networking

Date: June 11, 2015

Details: During the small group discussions at the June 11 workshop, participants shared their organization's projects and programs and discussed opportunities for collaboration. This data was tracked and incorporated into the Sex Trafficking Resources List.

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will continue to facilitate relationship and network building among stakeholders.

STRATEGY 6.3

Develop and implement universal screening tools for partner organizations

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The CCR is currently developing and refining a human trafficking assessment tool that will be disseminated nationally. ACT Alberta will implement and champion the tool once it is complete.

STRATEGY 6.4

Develop protocols with partner agencies for working with trafficking victimsMID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN*ACT Alberta will explore possible grant options for future projects.*

STRATEGY 6.5

Develop a cohesive regional response to traffickingMID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN*ACT Alberta will explore possible grant options for future projects.*

Goal Seven

TARGET COMMUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGY 7.1

Target specific marginalized communities for engagementSHORT TERM
IMPLEMENTATION(MARCH 1, 2015 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)***Workshop with IAAW******Date:*** May 13, 2015***Details:*** During this workshop, the findings of the Needs Assessment were presented to leaders in the Aboriginal community. Potential opportunities for collaborating on Community Action Plan strategies were discussed.***Outcome:*** ACT Alberta shared information about the research and Community Action plan with key Aboriginal organizations and received input that has been incorporated into the final Community Action Plan. Strategies were developed to collaborate on implementation strategies in the future.MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN*ACT Alberta will shortly initiate a project that will, in part, engage marginalized communities.*

STRATEGY 7.1

Create an advisory group of survivors of trafficking that ACT Alberta can consult on training and awareness materials

MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will explore possible grant options for a future project.

Goal Eight

ADDRESS SERVICE GAPS AND BARRIERS

STRATEGY 8.1

Build community capacity to make TRPs more accessible

SHORT TERM
IMPLEMENTATION

(MARCH 1, 2015 -
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015)

Workshop on TRPs with ECLC

Date: September 18, 2015

Details: ACT Alberta staff received training from ECLC on human trafficking specific TRPs, alternative options for stabilizing the immigration status of a victim of human trafficking, and on CIC practices and policies.

Outcome: ACT Alberta has significantly increased capacity and knowledge on TRPs.

MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will continue to build expertise on human trafficking specific TRPs and share this expertise with stakeholders.

STRATEGY 8.2

Find opportunities for free or reduced legal services

MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will partner with ECLC to help victimized people access legal services.

STRATEGY 8.3

Find alternate ways to meet needs of victims and reduce barriers within the community

MID- TO LONG-TERM
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta will use its existing network and partnerships to develop strategies and protocols to address service gaps for trafficking victims. ACT Alberta will explore possible grant options.

PRIORITY FOUR

Address Underlying Structures and Systems

Goal Nine

ADDRESS UNDERLYING STRUCTURES AND SYSTEMS

STRATEGY 9.1

Explore options for making public spaces safer for women and girls

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Edmonton Alliance for Safe and Inclusive Spaces (EASIS) has begun to pursue a strategy to make Edmonton's public spaces safer for women and girls and have Edmonton designated as a Safe City under the UN Safe Cities Global Initiative. ACT Alberta will support this initiative.

STRATEGY 9.2

Explore the possibility of instituting Sanctuary City policies in Edmonton

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The TFW Advocacy Coalition has begun developing a strategy for pursuing the concept of Sanctuary City in Edmonton. ACT Alberta will support this initiative.

STRATEGY 9.3

Reduce tacit support in surrounding industries such as hotels, taxis and car service, buses

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta and SEWG will reach out to industries such as hotels and taxi services to provide education and training. ACT Alberta will pursue potential funding for a future project.

STRATEGY 9.4

Develop collaboration between organizations to develop strategies to make the process of testifying safer for victims

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

ACT Alberta and SEWG will reach out to industries such as hotels and taxi services to provide education and training. ACT Alberta will pursue potential funding for a future project.

Goal Ten

STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT EXISTING ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

STRATEGY 9.1

Work with stakeholders to strengthen and support existing organizations, coalitions, and initiatives that advocate for positive structural change

MID- TO LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

YWCA Edmonton will pursue the potential of providing leadership on advocacy through its advocacy team. The City of Edmonton will continue to explore opportunities for alignment between goals identified in the Community Action Plan and related council initiatives. The Core Team will continue to monitor efforts and develop a strategy for further advocacy.



CONCLUSION

This project has been instrumental in creating a local body of knowledge on sex trafficking in Edmonton and how best to respond to this issue. In Phase One, we learned that a variety of systems, institutions, and social norms ensure that inequality remains entrenched, in turn creating a context that is conducive to sex trafficking. Structural inequalities rooted in poverty, gender inequality, isolation, normalized violence, and various forms of discrimination intersect and combine with one another in complex ways to contribute to a layering of vulnerability. Marginalized and disadvantaged people are thus made susceptible to a variety of harm and slip through systemic gaps.

The Community Action Plan took this local body of knowledge and adapted it to inform a collaborative response that consists of short-, medium- and long-term activities. A number of items were implemented, largely as a result of the outpouring of support from the community. This project would not have been possible without the invaluable assistance and participation of the Core Team, research participants, forum attendees, stakeholders, and dedicated staff and volunteers who worked on this project.

We look forward to continuing to implement this Community Action Plan and are confident that it will be effective in addressing the sex trafficking of women and girls in Edmonton. Together, we can create a safer and more equitable future for our community.

Appendix A – Areas for Further Research

Strategy	Details	Who
Identify the elements that allow individuals to get out of HT situations	Explore the resiliency, strengths and resources that make it possible for individuals to leave trafficking situations and how we can build on these strengths.	CEASE DECSA E4C
Explore the impact of sex trafficking on men and boys in Edmonton.	Examine the experiences of trafficked men and boys in Edmonton.	ACT Alberta MacEwan University student researcher
The impact of domestic and international migration patterns on trafficking	Examine the migration routes of trafficked individuals, both within and into Canada. Examine the factors in country/community of origin that may have contributed to migration and eventual trafficking, and how state policies may contribute to either increasing or decreasing the likelihood of trafficking situations.	
Explore policies and procedures related to harm reduction and prevention at the municipal, provincial and federal levels	Examine what we can learn from, tweak and build on in current tools, protocols, and processes Ex. Domestic violence processes re: prevention, intervention, prosecution and aftercare	
Look to successful movements for effective methods for systemic change on root causes	Learn from successful or emergent movements such as the environmental movement, anti-bullying, and the domestic violence awareness movement	
Issues in group care	Explore the conditions of group care in Edmonton, what is working and what is not working, the unique vulnerabilities of youth in care, and best practices.	SEW/G Group Home Task Force (potentially)
Grooming and recruitment strategies	Much of what we know about grooming and recruitment strategies is anecdotal. More comprehensive research is needed.	

Explore Canada's HT legislation	HT laws are relatively new in Canada and there is very little case law for prosecutors to draw on for successful convictions. This makes it difficult for law enforcement to effectively respond to HT cases, allowing traffickers to act with relative impunity. More information on why charges are laid and why some convictions are more successful.	
Engage with sex workers to learn more about their experiences with trafficking	Engagement with women working in the sex industry would provide valuable insight into the context of sex trafficking in Edmonton	
Impact of economic considerations on sexual behaviors	Economic considerations are a strong factor in sex trafficking, both for victims and perpetrators. What effects do economics have on sex trafficking?	
Comprehensive data collection on HT victims	Data collection on sex trafficking victims is not comprehensive, so it is difficult to understand the full scope of the phenomenon.	
Explore the relationship between survival sex, sex work and sex trafficking	Although sex trafficking, survival sex and sex work are not the same, there are parallels and overlaps between the phenomenon that warrant further exploration.	
Explore the impact of age on a victim's experience with sex trafficking	The experiences of sex trafficking affect women and girls differently at different ages, as do the age of entry and exit.	
Explore service barriers and best practices in reducing these barriers	Service barriers and best practices both locally, provincially, and federally must be examined in comprehensive detail.	
CIC's application of the human trafficking specific TRP policy	CIC's issuance of human trafficking-specific TRPs is increasingly spotty. More comprehensive understanding of the process is needed.	CCR

Appendix B – Works Cited¹⁴

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