

*West Coast Cooperative of Sex Industry Professionals*  
*Activity Update*  
*May 7 2009*

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**Executive Summary/Update**

The **BC Coalition of Experiential Communities** and the **West Coast Cooperative of Sex Industry Professionals** would like to take this opportunity to update all of our supporters on recent activities and our directions as far as where our plans are taking us.

A series of political disasters for sex industry workers including a change in federal government, a provincial funding freeze and the economic downturn have all seriously impacted our ability to move our strategic plan forward.

For those of you just joining us, during the “**Trial in the case if the Missing Women**”, I was made the media spokesperson for PACE Society in order to field the hundreds of calls related to sex work as a result of the trial. A group of organizations came together as the trial was beginning to discuss how we would handle the situation as many groups and sex workers reported invasive and unethical reporting during the Baker Trial (he mutilated his victims including one of my friends). During the Baker trial, some workers reported being approached by reporters on the street up to 9 times a day! My status as an active sex worker made it easy for reporters to find a sex worker to interview and we managed to for the most part control media activities in the downtown east side.

During this time I estimate I did over 300 interviews and there was one constant re occurring theme...how did this happen? How did things get as bad as they are in the DTES? We thought, “You’re right! How did this happen?”

As a result we began to attempt to discover what had happened throughout the history of our city to allow the stability of the sex industry to degrade as badly as it has. We learned how the systematic elimination of safe work environments in some misguided attempt to “end the sex industry” in order to “save women” has actually caused the dangerous environment we see today to evolve. With no where left to work and the on going attacks against the sex industry, sex industry workers decided it was time to take things into our own hands and fight back to stop the slaughter.

A number of projects followed;

**History of Sex Work Project-\$20,000.00**

As stated above, the beginning of understanding our history, place in the community and how things got the way they are.

The project yielded a book, multi-media museum installation and scrap book. The book may be purchased from Continuing Studies @SFU Harbour Center and more info on this project may be found at [www.historyofsexworkproject.com](http://www.historyofsexworkproject.com) .

### **Developing Capacity for Change-\$5000- Van City**

This project explored indoor working conditions and cooperative business models in terms of way coops could serve to stabilize the sex industry. The outcome was a general consensus amongst sex industry workers that cooperative business models could indeed be the best way to operate the safe work site so desperately needed by the workers on the street and could support alternative income sources as welcome through the development of social enterprises. Sex industry workers could own and operate their own businesses!

The project report allowed us to access funding for the strategic planning phase of finding stability and self governance.

### **Leading the Way-\$20,000.00-VanCity**

The next step was to sit down and define what exactly this cooperative corporation would look like. We worked with Melanie Conn as our consultant and learned about cooperative business models and ways they have supported community development in the past. The cooperative development team, made up of all genres and genders of sex industry workers worked hard and created terms of reference, membership criteria, code of conduct, etc as well as completed all the necessary documents to become incorporated as Canada's first sex worker cooperative in February 2007.

The team developed a strategic plan including enterprises they felt could support choices and safety for sex industry workers. These enterprises include catering, publishing, consulting, art and the safe work site.

The full report and strategic plan may be viewed at [www.wccsip.ca](http://www.wccsip.ca) .

### **CDI Application-\$70,000.00 and Consulting Enterprise- \$5000- SFU Continuing Studies**

After our incorporation, we sat down with our consultant and discussed where to go next. We decided that the cooperatives development initiatives fund was our best bet and set out to write a proposal. The funding was worth \$70,000.00 a year but with the conservative government coming into power the future of the fund was unclear. We worked for 2 months on the proposal and submitted it in June last year, 2008.

We still have received no official response to our application or any sense of why they chose not to fund us.

SFU Continuing Studies in the mean time had found a small pocket of funding for sex industry workers to explore the development of a standardized presentation and resource package for use in our cooperative consulting enterprise.

The outcome was a presentation and package which can easily be re worked to suit any of the numerous groups who should be receiving training about issues facing sex workers.

The consulting enterprise remains the only cooperative enterprise open for business.

More info can be found at [www.wccsip.ca](http://www.wccsip.ca)

### **December 17<sup>th</sup> Fundraiser- International End Violence Against Sex Workers Day**

In celebration of international end violence against sex workers day, the BCCEC have held events for 4 years in a row. This year we hosted a cabaret night at the royal unicorn lounge in china town.

Mother Nature was against us however and a blizzard seriously impeded attendance. In the end we only lost \$30 and everyone had a great time.

### **WCCSIP Now**

Currently, the cooperative development coordinator is seeking alternative funding sources for the realization of the arts, catering and publishing enterprises as well as a physical location for us to engage in these activities.

We have been meeting with Building Opportunities for Business (BOB) and exploring how we might be able to reach our goals. So far nothing concrete has emerged.

### **Labour on the Margins-\$5000-SFU Continuing Education-Canadian Heritage Fund**

During the Leading the Way project, SFU Continuing Studies were working on a project to bring awareness of human rights and labour law to marginalized workers. The BCCEC were asked to facilitate sex industry workers in taking part and whole heartedly agreed to do so. We were already engaged in strategic planning for the cooperative and the need for a trade association, labour standards and occupational health and safety training had come up several times.

Also, during this time raids on exotic show lounges were compromising the safety of dancers and raids on Health Enhancement Centers were eliminating indoor jobs for escorts/ sex workers.

We held a focus group and invited Jon Weir from the BC Federation of Labour to come and speak to our group about various union models and how we might achieve sex industry stabilization and prevent this on going crisis.

All participants agreed that we needed to give sex industry workers the tools to make safe decisions, we must protect long standing safe work environments/ business owners and that we must find a way to self govern the industry.

It was decided that an Industry Association Model would suit our needs the best. An over bridging organization that could defend the industry as a whole and then craft guilds forming underneath where people working in or business owners in the same area of the sex industry could collaborate, share information of bring concerns/ complaints to the greater /over bridging organization and become a self determining community.

The full report may be scene at [www.wccsip.ca](http://www.wccsip.ca)

### **Liquor Primary By-laws Revision- \$0- volunteer work by BCCEC**

During the raids on the exotic show lounges dancer's rights were violated on many levels. There were reports of being taken outside of the club onto the street in costume and even reports of sexual assault by police.

The Neighbourhood Integrated Services Team (NIST) would enter the club with sometimes as many as 20 police officers in uniform in an attempt to undermine organized crime. The liquor regulations governing dancers at the time were vague and did not allow dancers to take tips while performing (BC is the only place in Canada not allowing tips). This lead to fines against dancers and problems for club owners as their clientele was harassed and began to disappear. 20 show lounges were closed since 1990 creating a number of problems for the sex industry.

The BCCEC went as a delegation to the Vancouver Police Board 5 times that year and one of members who represents the exotic dancing community took it upon herself to initiate a community based revision of the rules governing exotic dancing in bars.

Through consultative process the exotic dancing community revised these laws to better support the health and safety of workers and the stability of a club owner's ability to do business.

We then lobbied the provincial government and held a conference call with the liquor inspectors in charge and saw most of the revisions proposed by the community adopted.

The revisions can be seen at [www.thenakedtruth.com](http://www.thenakedtruth.com) .

### **City By-Law Revisions- \$0 BCCEC Volunteer Work**

During this time the City of Vancouver tried to remove the Body Rub Parlour definition from the city by laws. As this was the definition we felt best supported the opening of the safe work site we were concerned. Also, once again here were people with no lived experience making decisions that would affect the safety of sex industry workers. We had not been consulted and weren't even sure if a "non-licensed" masseuse or massage parlour would be allowed any more.

In response the BCCEC members worked on revising the by-laws in a way that would better support safety for workers and stability for business owners. We attended a community hearing on this issue and were successful in having the body rub parlour definition remain on the books.

Unfortunately the collaborative revisions we proposed to the city were not accomplished. It takes an act of council before the city staff will move forward and so far that has not happened.

### **Trade Secrets- \$30,000.00**

In the "Labour on the Margins" report Sex Industry workers agreed upon an industry association model as the best way to move towards our goal of self governance for the sex industry.

The "Trade Secrets" project to design occupational health and safety training for the sex industry is the foundation of this goal. Currently BCCEC members are working hard to see this project through. A provincial funding freeze combined with a coordinated campaign against our goals caused a shortfall in funding for the project. We had originally hoped to be able to host a broad based series of focus groups with all stake holders and pay people for their time and expertise. Unfortunately this was not possible but the sex industry community stepped up to the plate and volunteered to take part. We have collected a lot of amazing information and the project coordinator is working like crazy to write 2 chapters a week and meet our dead line.

As soon as this document is available, we will share it with everyone.

### **Sex Industry Conference-Budget as yet Unknown**

The sex industry community face barriers at every turn related to their human rights and many community members are under informed as to what those rights are and how their violation has impacted their health and safety over time.

The "**Protection for All**" conference aims to bring together all stakeholders including sex workers, enforcement, academics, media and the main stream community to identify

areas where sex industry workers human rights are not being protected, how that is impacting their health and safety and ways in which we can improve human rights conditions for sex industry workers in Canada.

The conference will also serve as a way to showcase the most up to date research and thinking in this area through static presentations and international, national and local experiences ensuring participants have the tools to design meaningful policies and actions

It is also our intention to bring sex industry community members from all over Canada to take part in the conference. We will host a satellite session with sex industry community members only on the day before the conference starts. We hope to work together to define ways in which our human rights are compromised and the collateral damage that causes.

Also, during the satellite session we hope to formalize Terms of Reference for our National Industry Association. The terms will allow individual groups or collectives to take the basic terms and begin to organize on a localized level and begin to create the networks a national industry association will require.

Trade Secrets will also be ready by then and will be shared with all stake holders for them to take back to their respective jurisdictions and share with their constituents.

The conference is planned for January 2010.

### **Sex Industry Safety Action Group-\$0**

In order to achieve our goal of self governance and a national sex industry association we must gain the trust of the mainstream community and have respect from the police and all others in charge of our protection. Political “buy in” is key to our actions and stability being respected

As a result BCCEC members decided to begin the long process of bridging the divide between all sides.

The BCCEC attended the Vancouver Police Board meetings as a delegation 5 times in one year and subsequently sex industry workers were invited for the first time to take part in the Diversity Advisory Committee to the Chief Constable otherwise known as the DAC Committee.

BCCEC members attended 3 meetings and when a discussion about hate crimes blew up as result of police not acknowledging violence against sex industry workers as hate crimes, it became clear that a separate committee or action group would be needed or the DAC committee wouldn't be able to move forward on issues facing other communities.

Thus the Sex Industry Worker Safety Action Group (SIWSAG) was formed.

The Sex Industry Worker Safety Action Group (SIWSAG)<sup>1</sup> works collaboratively with local police, sex industry workers (SIW), representatives from service-provision agencies and other community stakeholders to address the increasingly dangerous and negative conditions relating to the safety and security of sex industry workers in Vancouver. The action group is currently working in the following key areas:

- Increasing and improving incident reporting
- Identifying predatory offenders
- Self-defence and violence prevention training
- Improvement of communication between sex industry workers and the police
- Creating professional development materials for sex industry workers and new recruits to the VPD
- Facilitating greater success in the prosecution of those who commit violence against sex industry workers
- Improving direct outreach to the sex industry

This group has been working for 2 years now and so far have had limited success finding accountability within the police.

The raids on Exotic Show Lounges seem to have subsided but the officers responsible still refuse to come to the table.

The raids on Health Enhancement centers seemed to subside but then resurged in response to fears around human trafficking. The officers responsible did come to the table once but were confrontational and accepted no responsibility for the harms caused to sex industry workers during these operations.

We are working hard and have proposed several initiatives that have yet to be funded but we remain optimistic. In the end there is no choice, we must implement a way to hold enforcement responsible for arbitrarily de stabilizing our safety and attacking the places where we work.

The following are the proposed actions all of which fall within the current legal framework;

**Community Policing Partnership Car- \$114,680.00**

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<sup>1</sup>The Sex Industry Worker Safety Action group includes members from the following organizations: ASIA/ ORCHID: Asian Society for the Intervention of Aids/ Outreach, Research, Community, Health Initiatives and Development ; BCCEC: BC Coalition of Experiential Communities; Boys 'R' Us; HUSTLE: Men on the Move; MAKA Project: PACE: Prostitution, Alternatives, Counselling and Education Society; Pivot Legal Society; West Coast Cooperative of Sex Industry Professionals; WISH: Women's Information Safe Haven; VACFSS: Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society; Vancouver Police Department.

This criminalization has led to a culture of mistrust between the sex industry community and the VPD. Sex workers are reluctant to report violence against them for fear of being judged and sex workers also fear being seen as working with the police and having to face reprisal from the “street” community.

During the Living in Community Project” we learned that the majority of complaints coming from residents and business owners in communities affected by sex work are nuisance related and cost a lot in police resources.

Developing a community-VPD partnership that brings together both perspectives by hiring one experiential person (victim services trained sex industry representative) and a police officer to focus on the common goal of safety could begin to bridge these issues of mistrust and ensure fair treatment and support of sex industry workers during VPD operations.

The group has agreed on the following goals for the Community Policing Partnership Car Project.

### **Goals**

- To provide specialized sex industry specific policing resources for victimized sex industry workers
- To connect sex industry workers to support services and organizations
- To build alternative strategies and best practices for police and communities to better cope with ancillary issues arising from the sex industry
- To consider the collateral impact on a case-by-case basis on strategies employed by the VPD when engaging sex industry workers.
- To work with residents and business owners in communities impacted by sex work to resolve their concerns

### **Expected Outcomes**

#### **Sex Industry Workers**

- Decreased numbers of assaults on sex industry workers
- Increased feelings of safety for sex industry workers
- Increased trust and understanding between the VPD and sex industry community
- Higher numbers of Sex Industry Workers reporting violence against them.
- Increased numbers of sex workers accessing support services

### **Systematic Outcomes**

- -gaps in services for sex workers identified and a more complete approach to support implemented.
- -Reduction in work load related to sex industry complaints for police officers engaged in regular police operational duties.
- Improved strategies to minimize unintended negative consequences to sex industry workers from police enforcement
- -Increased involvement in prevention programs
- -Increased understanding of best practices for engaging the sex worker community

### **Police Policy and Procedure Manual Revisions-\$15,000.00**

#### **Overall objective**

With support from the Law Foundation of BC, we hope to undertake an evaluation of existing practices that are used to enforce the criminal laws associated with the sex industry (sections 210-213 and any other related offences). Ultimately, we hope to identify the strategies currently in use by Vancouver's Municipal Police Department (VPD), and those recommended by the participants in this project, to create a best practices document and facilitate increased safety for the sex industry community.

Currently there are no policies and procedures for engagement with the sex industry community.

#### **Specific Objectives**

- We will design and host a series of workshops with each stakeholder group (specific divisions within the VPD such as Vice, Div. 2, Diversity, Major Crimes; sex industry workers; the clients; and local businesses) to identify the practices that are currently used to enforce the criminal laws related to prostitution in Vancouver.
- The workshops will outline the practices in use, any challenges faced by officers in enforcing the laws, and any institutional constraints affecting the enforcement of the criminal laws. In addition, we will identify unintended impacts of the enforcement on the sex industry community and provide a venue for discussion on how to address both the needs of law enforcement and the needs of sex industry workers.
- Upon completion of the workshops, we will prepare a discussion document containing the findings for dissemination to all participants.
- A final all stakeholders' meeting will be held to discuss the findings and create a final set of recommendations.
- Finally, we will evaluate the project and disseminate the Best Practices Document to all stakeholders, the Solicitor General, the RCMP and other local municipal police forces. Then, we will seek additional funding to replicate this pilot project with Crown Counsel, Corrections and the judicial branches of the Criminal Justice System.

### **2010 Impacts-\$8000.00**

Recently, a lot of public statements have been made and concerns rose over the potential of an alarming increase in human trafficking in relation to the Vancouver 2010 Olympics

and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. We at the office to combat human trafficking share your concerns.

In response, The British Columbia Office to Combat Trafficking in People and SIWSAG (Sex Industry Worker Safety Action Group- VPD/ Sex Worker partnership), retained Frontline Consulting to produce a background study on the potential impact of the 2010 Olympic Games on the trafficking in persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation and on safety issues for sex workers.

The study explores these issues through the experience of cities that have recently hosted mega sport events. This study represents the first step of a multi-phased 2010 Impact project that is being undertaken by SIWSAG.

The document-Human Trafficking, Sex Work Safety and the 2010 Games: Assessments and Recommendations Regarding Collateral Impacts represents the first step of a multi-phased 2010 Impact project, hopes to increase health and safety for all while decreasing human trafficking and violence against sex workers. This study will be used as a working document to aid SIWSAG and its partners in moving forward into the next phase of the project to develop evidence-based strategies in relation to human trafficking in Canada.

In relation to the Vancouver 2010 Olympics and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, public statements have been made which project an alarming increase in this human trafficking. These claims are inconsistent with the evidence in this research document, that trafficking and mega-events are not linked. Nonetheless, the several recommendations in this report are directed primarily to ensure that prevention, early detection and intervention of human trafficking are indeed maximized, prior to, during and post the games.

### **2010 Phase 2-\$44,635.00**

Phase 2 of this project will use this discussion document for a series of all stake holder planning sessions in order to ensure all sides have a say in the design of strategies to combat human trafficking.

#### **Project Objectives/Goals**

- To provide specialized sex industry specific resources for the victims of human trafficking.
- To connect the victims of human trafficking to support services and organizations
- To build alternative strategies and best practices for all stake holders to better protect and support the victims of human trafficking.
- To work with all stake holders including support services, enforcement services and sex industry community members to design a strategy that allows sex industry

- workers more open and meaningful access to supports and more balance and protection based approaches from enforcement in terms of the victims of human trafficking.
- To increase the numbers of sex industry workers reporting human trafficking.
  - To initiate a balanced system wide shift in policies, practices and procedures towards protection and understanding.

### **Professional Development Package for Police-\$20,000.00**

Through a process of public engagement both the police and the public will become more aware of the issues facing sex workers and the problems faced by police when attempting to address these issues. Officers will become more aware of resources that are available for sex industry workers and a standardized educational package could be developed and used in other jurisdictions. This project offers the potential of creating a best-practices manual for addressing the concerns of other marginalized groups.

The professional development package builds on the success of the Living in Communities Project. By employing a similar focus group approach, we will engage all stakeholders affected by the sex industry: residents in communities, business owners, community police, other police units, sex worker support agencies, and sex industry workers. This strategy will increase public and police and sex worker connectivity and ideally result in higher levels of ownership over, and satisfaction in, the final product.

### **GOALS OF THE PROJECT**

- To provide police officers with the tools to provide meaningful protection and access to resources for all sex industry workers, regardless of gender.
- To increase police officers knowledge of supports available to sex industry workers, issues and barriers facing sex industry worker's, and best practices for engaging with the sex industry community.
- To create a standardized presentation and package of materials for this purpose.
- To ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to these tools.

### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- Increased trust and understanding between the VPD and sex industry community
- Greater understanding of the issues facing sex industry workers throughout the VPD and the community at large
- Awareness about new strategies and best practices will minimize harm caused to sex industry workers during police engagement.
- VPD Members will have increased understanding of resources that will assist them in increasing the safety of sex industry workers.
- A sense of action on these difficult issues through out the entire community.

### **Living in Community**

Living in Community is a 4 almost 5 year city-wide project whose goal is to develop an integrated approach in relation to the impacts of sex work on neighborhoods throughout Vancouver. The project aims to increase the health and safety of all community members, including sex workers, residents and business owners and operators. Living in Community is a collaboration of community, business and government organizations, including sex worker organizations, neighborhood houses, youth and Aboriginal organizations, community policing centers, business improvement associations, the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Coastal Health Authority and the Vancouver Agreement.

The Living in Community project grew out of the recognition by a group of community and business organizations about the urgent need to address the health and safety impacts of sex work that all community members experience. The current situation is not working, and sex work continues to significantly affect individuals, families, communities and the larger social, economic and political systems in a number of ways. Living in Community aims to encourage dialogue among diverse groups, including residents, businesses, sex workers, police and government to build mutually supportive relationships that will promote positive change.

During the fall and winter of 2006, 2007, Living in Community held an extensive community consultation process that included neighborhood dialogues, focus groups, and an online survey. Input was invited from sex workers, residents, community groups, businesses, and others. The result of this consultation process and extensive research is an action plan that includes a series of recommendations. It is our hope that implementation of the recommendations will lead to healthier, safer neighborhoods for everyone.

Members of the BCCEC have been on this committee from its beginning and hold high hopes for its action plan being implemented. Currently the committee is waiting for a \$225,000.00 grant to come through so we can begin to implement the plan.

The industry association and safe work site are a part of this plan.

For more information and a full copy of the plan go to [www.livingincommunity.ca](http://www.livingincommunity.ca)

### **Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder\$50,435.00**

With all of the information emerging about the symptoms of PTSD, addiction as a coping mechanism and the dangers associated with interrupting people's coping mechanisms, it's difficult to find ways to ensure no harm within abstinence based support environments. "Get clean" or off of drugs to receive support policies are compounding emotional harm for trauma survivors and are in direct conflict with the recommended treatment for such injuries. If you interrupt a person's coping mechanisms before they are ready to deal with their psychological injuries, their emotional stability becomes at risk, their symptoms could escalate and at the very least their recovery will be seriously impeded.

Researchers hope that a new diagnosis of complex PTSD will prevent clinicians, the public, and those who suffer from trauma from mistakenly blaming survivors for their symptoms.

A series of focus groups/work shops which engage all stakeholders will work to identify gaps, increase awareness of complex PTSD, increase understanding of factors contributing to PTSD amongst sex workers, and create a strategy which can be embraced by the systems responsible for caring for sex workers ensuring the problems of the past are addressed and eliminated.

The strategies developed during this project could have a far reaching effect on the way supports are delivered to sex workers all over Canada, ensure the most current best practices and procedures are implemented and break down the barriers to meaningful support experienced by sex industry workers in the past.

### **Project Objectives/Goals**

- To provide specialized sex industry specific resources for victimized sex industry workers.
- To connect sex industry workers to support services and organizations
- To build alternative strategies and best practices for all stake holders to better protect and support sex industry workers who have been the victim of a crime...
- To work with all stake holders including support services, enforcement services and sex industry community members to design a strategy that allows sex industry workers more open and meaningful access to supports and more balance and protection based approaches from enforcement.
- To increase the numbers of sex industry workers reporting crimes against them.
- To initiate a balanced system wide shift in policies, practices and procedures towards protection and understanding.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- **Increased trust and understanding** between enforcement, support services and sex industry community will allow gaps in services for protection of sex workers to be identified and a more complete approach to support implemented.
- **Improved strategies** to minimize unintended negative consequences to sex industry workers from enforcement actions.
- **Increasing sex worker access to supports-** Designing a strategy that allows sex industry workers to access supports in a more open, supportive environment and respects all factors will increase numbers of sex industry workers accessing these supports.
- **Increased reporting of violence-** Also it's hoped that with more progressive supports in place sex industry workers will feel more comfortable reporting crimes against them and thus increase the numbers of incidents reported.

- **Harm Reduction-** By embracing grass roots developmental practices and engaging all stakeholders in the design of the strategy, we will increase awareness about symptoms and treatments for complex post traumatic stress amongst service providers, enforcement and the sex industry community and ensure its broad distribution. This will allow a balanced, system wide change to take place and greater success in treating sex industry workers who have been the victim of a crime.

### **JOHN SCHOOL-\$15,000.00**

John School as it is currently known is a diversion program for sex consumers who have violated the communication provisions of the criminal code of Canada related to prostitution.

While diversion is preferable to the consumers of sex bearing the shame of a criminal record, the program as it stands does not give consumers any useful information on how to engage in the sex industry( purchase sex) within the boundaries of the law and within the reasonable boundaries already established by the community at large. Further, information related to safe sex practices, other health issues, legal rights are also not discussed.

Instead, “offenders” are shamed with a barrage of the impacts of violence on sex workers and the reasons why people are forced into the survival sex trade.

The mystery around the sex industry and lack of information for those wishing to purchase services contributes the numbers of consumers acquiring sexual services at street level. The BC Coalition of Experiential Communities is currently designing a set of occupational health and safety guidelines/ minimum labour standards to stabilize our industry. Included in the project will be a tool kit for sex industry consumers to engage in purchasing sexual services in an ethical way that respects age restrictions (no youth), safe sex practices, respect for the workers and explains ways to minimize harm(mess, traffic) to communities impacted by the street level sex industry.

A john school program which took a harm reduction approach to these issues could greatly impact the issues surrounding the sex consumer’s lack of knowledge on how their activities affect the entire community and greatly reduce the numbers of consumers accessing sexual services on the street.

In stead of telling them where they shouldn’t be, tell them where they can be.

### Goals

- To re examine the curricula and determine where there may be opportunities for addition or revision.

- To engage all stakeholders in the design of the program including business owners, residents, police, sex workers, sex consumers and sex worker support agencies.
- To ensure the sex workers experience is honoured and valued and that sex workers who deliver the john school training are compensated and supported.
- To ensure sex consumers are given the tools to make safe, ethical decisions when purchasing sexual services which respect their needs, protects them from further criminal involvement, increases their awareness about the impacts of the sex industry on communities(condom mess etc)
- To ensure that diverse sex worker experiences (male, female, trans) and that all aspects of the industry (exotic dance, male hustlers, adult film, street level, escort, massage, etc.) are represented in the presentation and that workers from all levels have the opportunity to deliver the curricula.

### Expected Outcomes

- Decreased numbers of sex consumers “cruising” in communities, less traffic
- Increased safety for residents of communities impacted by the street level sex industry.
- Decrease in community complaints related to the sex industry( condoms, public sex)
- Decreased recidivism of sex consumers- they will know how to engage within the boundaries of the law.

During the Living in Community Project, residents and business owners in communities impacted by the sex trade indicated that their biggest concerns were;

- Residual mess(condoms, etc)
- Public sex acts
- Unwanted approaches of consumers to women who are not sex workers
- Violence- everyone agrees the level of violence endured by street level sex workers is unacceptable.
- Being faced with sex workers out with their children in the community.

Through communication with sex consumers, it’s our belief that all of these issues would be impacted from one degree to another. By giving the consumer the information they need to engage the sex industry in a way that respects everyone in the community, these points of conflict between sex workers and communities could be eased.

### **VPD Sex Industry Worker Liaison Position-\$0-this position is already funded**

The sex worker liaison position has existed within VPD for some time. The position has never been well defined and this remains a point of concern for all stakeholders. A project which engaged all stake holders in defining the position could ensure that the job description encompasses everyone’s expectations.

## **Vision/Goals**

- -To capture current un official job description, work of past liaison officers, best practices in use and any barriers past officers have experienced.
- -To design a position and terms of reference for that position that reflect the VPD desire to build trust between the Police and the sex industry community.
- -To design clear, concise procedures for engagement of sex industry workers in particular in relation to sex worker support agencies and large scale operations involving multiple officers.
- -To provide specialized sex industry specific policies and procedures that reflect the ideas of all stake holders and do not compromise the operational integrity of police activities or the safety of sex industry workers.
- -To ensure the sex industry liaison position builds relationships with all industry stakeholders inclusive of genre and gender.
- -To increase the VPD understanding of the impacts of enforcement on the sex industry community.
- -To ensure the safety of all community members impacted by the sex industry.

## **Expected Outcomes**

- -Increased trust and understanding between the VPD and sex industry community
- -The identification and establishment of best practices currently unofficially in use as legitimate policy and procedures for all officers.
- -Increased participation in regulation of the industry by sex industry community members.
- -Increased safety throughout the sex industry.
- -Greater understanding of the issues facing sex workers throughout the VPD and the community at large
- -New strategies, best practices and a greater understanding of the sex industry's structure and stability identified through the work of the liaison officer will minimize harm caused to sex industry workers during police engagement and prevent the uninformed actions of the past from reoccurring.
- -A feeling through out the entire community of a move towards change and solutions to the issues facing communities where sex work takes place.
- -Better communication between residents, business owners, police and sex workers in regard to complaints from all sides and hopefully solutions that increase the health and safety of all community members.

## **Conclusion**

The BCCEC and WCCSIP are working as hard as we can to see these objectives through. The systems in charge of our stability and protection are slowly coming around. Many of us find confronting these systems difficult and sometimes even emotional. We remain

committed however to seeing these actions through and ending a century of oppression of the sex industry in Vancouver.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. We welcome all input during this difficult struggle.

Sincerely,

Susan Davis

[www.wccsip.ca](http://www.wccsip.ca)