

Developing Capacity for Change



Cooperative Development Exploration Report

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With Support of the BC Coalition of Experiential Women

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Executive Summary

The BC Coalition of Experiential Women was funded to explore working conditions of off street municipally licensed massage parlors and escort agencies. A series of three focus groups were conducted with individuals employed in these venues as well as those who work primarily on street. The first focus group included an exploration of working environments, structure, management, fees, fines, hours of work, security and health and safety practices. The second group consisted of Cooperatives 101 training. This facilitated dialogue reviewed cooperative business structures and functions, governance models and development. The third focus group provided an opportunity for participants to choose a cooperative structure and determine how this kind of a business model would support their needs around orientation, training, service provision, marketing and operations of a sex worker run venue.

Highlighted Findings:

The focus group yielded a wide range of areas in need of development, particularly pertaining to human rights, labor standards and health and safety. Some of these findings are as follows:

We found that existing licensed venues are managed without input from workers. Workers are excluded from marketing decisions, fees for services, types of services offered, hours of work, etc. Additionally, there were labor violations in which workers were expected to spend hours on-call without pay or to remain on-call for extended periods of time. A structure of fining workers for a wide range of “violations” was wide spread. Although some fines were deemed acceptable by participants, many had experienced entrapment as well as usurious interest applied to fines for situations that were beyond their control. For example, in an outcall service where employers book customers over the phone and send a worker out to meet the customer, if the customer refuses to answer the door the worker is fined and expected to pay the agency money that would have been earned. The kind of extortion was experienced by all participants and appears to be wide spread in the industry. Workers wanted to establish codes of conduct and collectively determine what would be deemed a violation and set the rates for breach.

The marketing strategies of some agencies that promoted unsafe sex practices put workers at greater risk of violence. For example, if an agency marketed the Girlfriend Experience (GFE), where intimate contact without the use of condoms is promoted, a worker would be forced to perform sexual services as advertised or try to negotiate her way out of providing these services, alone in a customer’s residence/environment. This kind of marketing does not consider the health of workers and their rights to exercise personal boundaries and preferences. Also, customers have negotiated a service with someone other than the worker (usually the booking girl) and expect to get what they pay for. In these instances participants in our sample have had to choose between refusing the service and experiencing situational violence from angry customers or conceding to high risk activities avoiding customer violence and agency fines. Unfortunately, most chose the latter option as leaving the transaction without money is the worst possible outcome. This kind of forced surrendering to customer requests instigated by agency structure and greed and further enforced by a system of fines

and humiliation creates environments of survival sex or forced labor. Workers experience reduced freedom and choice.

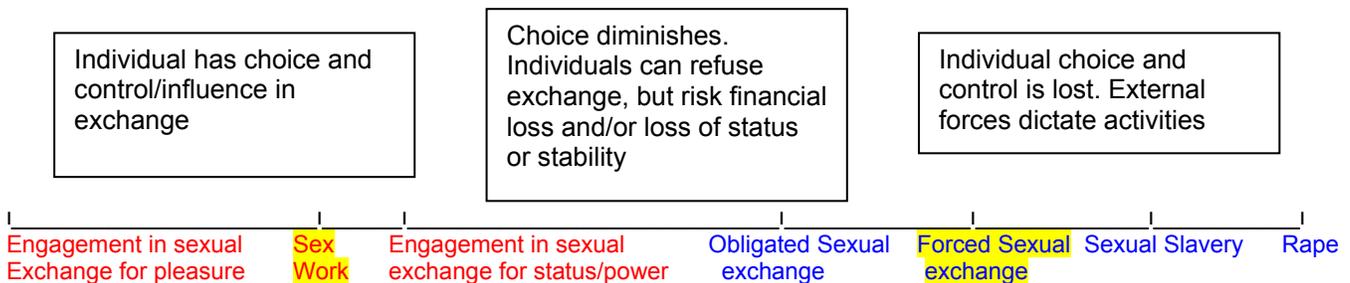
Definitions:

Sex Work: Sex Work is defined as the exchange of sexual services for remuneration where parties consent and negotiate the details of the transaction.

Survival Sex: Survival sex is defined as a state in which an individual lacks the opportunity to refuse work. Consequently, a survival sex environment is one that minimizes or eliminates workers rights to refuse work and otherwise imposes emotional or psychological pressure forcing the surrender of will. Self determination is subsequently lost.

As illustrated in the Continuum of Sexual Exchange below, transactions with customers in the above example move from ‘sex work’ where the worker has choice to ‘forced sexual exchange’ where worker rights are reduced.

The Continuum of Sexual Exchange: The BCCEW has developed the Continuum of Sexual Exchange (draft) below intending to acknowledge where projects supported are focused and to illustrate the breadth of sexual exchange.



Off street workers also experienced favoritism, ageism and racism among other discriminations. We found a lack of orientation for new workers who as result were forced to learn how to interact with customers and with the agency they worked for through trial and error or enlisting the support of a more seasoned co-worker. There was an expressed need for training packages and support with conflict de-escalation, safer sex practices and negotiation skills.

In light of the rates and risk of violence when working on street and the abuses workers experience in some off street venues, there is a clear need for an off street environment that is managed by the workers themselves. Sex workers that take all the risks and generate revenue for existing agencies through the deliver of services and paying fines deserve to create an alternative working environment where they can ensure that their health and safety is prioritized.

A multi purpose, multi stake holder cooperative was chosen as the best fit and would provide opportunities for a wide range of active and former sex worker run services and activities. We recognize the legal implications in regards to sections 210, parts of 211 and 213 of the

Canadian Criminal Code that may impede our initiative. However, we endeavor to work with the community, policy makers and law enforcement to obtain exemptions and support to ensure the prioritization of the health, safety and rights of sex workers.

Harm Reduction

We acknowledge that:

- Sex workers do not experience equal treatment under the law, inclusion as active and productive members of community, nor do they fully benefit from social protections, civil liberties, labor standards or charter rights;
- The abolition of sex work through various strategies increases harm to workers by charging or displacing paying customers. This compounded by enforcement tactics and legislation forces workers to engage in higher risk behaviors in more dangerous environments. These kinds of strategies do more to eliminate sex workers than to eliminate sex work.
- Ultimately a world without sex work does not exist; conversely, we do not live in a world where involvement in sexual exchange is a personal and free choice for all.

A harm reduction approach reconciles the extreme view points expressed in Abolitionism- the elimination of sex work and sex workers and the Sex Worker Rights movement- the acknowledgement of sex work as work. A cooperative run by sex workers will address the harms within the sex industry, some of which are prohibited under section 212 of the Canadian Criminal Code. A cooperative will ensure that although involvement in the sex industry may not be a “free” choice for all, the context and environments in which sex work takes place can be safe, sex worker directed and free from harm.

A sex worker run cooperative work space will ensure that:

- Sex workers as a community can self-determine;
- Sex worker experience “sex work” as defined above;
- Sex workers manage and control their own working environment;
- Training and support with health and safety are provided through community partners;
- There is support for workers to transition out of sex work if desired;
- There is assurance that recruitment, coercion, extortion, violence and youth will not be involved in the industry;
- Marketing strategies reflect collective agreements among workers;
- Management of existing establishment be made accountable to workers through a complaints process and sex worker influence over municipal licensing;
- Sex workers and customers have a place to access and exchange information;
- The destination of funds/profits generated will be under the control and stewardship of a board of directors comprised entirely of coop members. Revenue can be directed to a wide range of supports, some include a health benefits package for sex workers, coop improvements, security and expansion, a scholarship fund for sex workers, anti-violence and community education strategies, contributions to selected community initiatives or investments.

Foreword

We, the members of the BCCEW, together with sex workers from around the world, endeavor to improve working conditions, increase human rights protections and support workers in achieving their personal and professional goals. These goals range from autonomy and ownership of the sex industry; support transitioning to less harmful conditions within the industry and support to transition out of the industry.

With that in mind, the focus of this project was to support sex workers in transitioning to less harmful conditions and environments, more specifically supporting the move from on street sex work to off street work. Off street venues are known to be safer than on street work, however, workers are subject to labor and human rights violations in some off street locations. In order to explore these issues and identify principles and guidelines for a future cooperatively run venue we brought sex workers together to: discuss barriers to gaining access to indoor sex work venues; occupational health and safety issues within the indoor venues and co-operative development training.

This document consists of the findings and ideas that came out of focus groups with sex workers, the results of our literary review and recommendations for the next steps. We plan to share this document among stakeholders and sex workers worldwide for the purposes of improving conditions in existing licensed venues; educating and increasing the capacity of workers who wish to transition from the dangerous street level trade into indoor venues. This document will primarily be used as an advocacy tool to gain community support for safe working environments for sex workers and garner support for our vision to open and operate Vancouver's first sex workers' cooperative.

The BCCEW acknowledges the significant barriers to creating a safe work place for sex workers. This will require exemptions from all related sections of Canada's criminal code, a business plan, operating guidelines, a code of conduct and many other policies. We encourage you to read this report with an open mind and consider the reality of the lives of sex workers and not what some would call 'ideal circumstances' of abolition or liberation. We endeavor to reconcile the two philosophical positions with a balanced approach of human rights and harm reduction. The BCCEW looks forward to collaboration with stakeholders and to the challenges ahead!

Acknowledgments

The BCCEW would like to thank the sex workers who shared their knowledge and insight with us during this project. We would also like to thank Van City Community Foundation for their generous support of these focus groups and workshop.

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Section One: About the British Columbia Coalition of Experiential Women

The British Columbia Coalition of Experiential Women (BCCEW) is a consortium of sex worker activists who work to eliminate the oppressive systems and forces that create harm for individuals in the sex industry. We operate under the principle that members commit to creating an environment of inclusion.

We support diverse perspectives and experiences except where they contribute to harm of sex workers. The BCCEW does not support enforcement or rehabilitation models that either promote the continued criminalization of sex workers or sex worker dependency on social programs.

Our Mission

The BCCEW is a mechanism for the voices of experiential women to:

- influence legislation and policies that pertain to sex workers to become inclusive of their goals and desires;
- advocate for a continuum of peer driven programs, initiatives and services.

The BCCEW may also serve as a:

- consultative body of expertise on sex work issues;
- Host organization for sex worker workshops, events and initiatives; and
- Research and data collection body.

Philosophy and Guiding Principles

The BCCEW:

- Supports and promotes experiential leadership;
- Supports development of essential services and a continuum of services for active sex workers through class advocacy, media response and public awareness;
- Creates a supportive network for sex worker activists to have opportunities for leadership and action on issues that impact their lives and the well being of their communities;
- Works to ensure the fundamental recognition of human rights for sex workers including dignity, safety, equality, and empowerment;

Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles reflect the collective and longstanding activism of BCCEW members who have worked and will continue to work to eradicate racism, poverty, sexism, and violence by every practical means possible. BCCEW principles are built on our experiential analysis of sex work issues and are intended to advance dialogue and activism within the coalition and within our communities.

We value, embrace and mobilize the authentic experiential knowledge, leadership and skill sets of women in the sex trade as the vehicle towards change;

We work to ensure opportunities for self-advocacy among women in and from the sex trade;

We work to open dialogue for the reduction of harm and the elimination of the social, economic, and political conditions that lead to the survival sex trade, sexual slavery and trafficking in persons;

We provide access to our expertise and our published materials to stakeholders in the BC/Yukon region and beyond!

Section Two: Project Background: Developing Capacity for Change

This project came about because sex workers have increasingly expressed concerns about exploitation in city licensed venues. Some of the concerns are based in racism and the denial of employment as only particular individuals are deemed to be marketable within the industry, based on the discretion of agency owners.

Other concerns include are based in harmful operating practices, exploitation and rights violations and include:

- Agency ownership and politics that exclude workers from decision-making;
- Financial management and exorbitant fees charged by agencies;
- Fines levied on workers for business transactions that are outside of their control or fines for trivial “infractions”, e.g. Not wearing the right make-up or attire;
- Weekly book-on fees that are due before the worker has an opportunity to make any money that range from \$100 to \$350 per week;
- Working hours and conditions (workers must be available 24 hours a day, regardless of their other obligations);
- The lack of control workers have in refusing to engage in sex work with intoxicated, violent or unhealthy dates;
- The licensing policy from the City of Vancouver attaches individual licenses to particular agencies. If workers desire to leave an agency, they also lose their licenses.
- The marketing practices of agencies that promote the Girlfriend Experience (GFE), which requires workers to engage in unsafe vaginal, anal and oral sex with customers; practices not traditionally offered by workers. Not only is this a concern for workers with regard to health, workers marketed in such a way that do not wish to perform these acts are left to negotiate their way out of these agency commitments while alone in a customers’ residence/room, thus increasing worker’s risks of situational violence.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this consultation was to capture and summarize the labor and human rights violations that exist in licensed venues in order to develop best practices and health and safety guidelines for indoor sex work for future co-operative development. Sex workers also participated in co-operative development training to increase knowledge of co-operative business design and to determine whether this kind of business structure would address the violations and limitations of existing venues as well as provide an opportunity to increase sex worker control over their work environments.

The dangerous and exploitative conditions which exist at the street level also manifest in off street venues. These venues, although perceived to be safer, are highly competitive, limited and in some cases breeding grounds for extortion. To date, sex workers have had little opportunity to try to improve their working conditions and have rarely had community support for such improvements. Safe and healthy work places guiding by human rights and employment standards are an entitlement for all Canadian workers. This project is the first step toward ensuring that sex workers fall under the same protections.

Methodology

This project was designed, delivered, documented and disseminated by workers in and from the sex industry. A series of three focus groups were designed and implemented by the BCCEW. The first explored conditions within existing venues and the barriers to finding work in these locations. The second was a seminar on co-op design provided by the BC Co-operatives Association, which included knowledge development and a question and answer period. The third focus group provided opportunities for sex workers to more fully explore co-operative business structures and based on their lived experiences; determine whether a cooperative business structure would be a good solution to their issues.

The focus groups were conducted as facilitated discussion in response to questions developed by the BCCEW. The focus groups took place after office hours at PACE Society and WISH Drop In Center Society. 20 sex workers were consulted for the focus groups. They were recruited through word of mouth as most were in fear of their current employers finding out about their involvement in this project. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 55 years of age from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds and with a wide range of experience in the on-street and off-street sex industry. 50% of the participants were currently working in off-street venues; 30% were working on-street with goals toward moving off street and 20% were formerly involved in the sex industry or work as independents.

Ethical Considerations

This investigation was conducted in keeping with research principles. The document entitled "Research Ethics: A Guide for Community Organizations" Bowen et al. was used to ensure that participants in this process would be protected¹.

Informed Consent

All potential participants were briefed on the background of the BCCEW and the purpose of the consultation. Information about the project funding and the intended use of the information collected was also shared. Individuals were also advised of the potential risks and benefits of participation. Additionally, participants were informed of their right to withdraw consent at any time during the project.

Confidentiality

To reduce the potential risks related to participation, no names or identifying information was collected. For this reason, participants were not required to sign a consent form, however verbal consent was obtained from individuals before engagement in the focus groups and as part of the group guidelines a confidentiality agreement was established, signed by all participants and then ceremonially destroyed at the first focus group session.

¹ This document was created by sex workers and is based on the work and support of Drs. John Lowman and Ted Palys and is available at www.bccewc.ca

Additionally, to increase protection, all names of agencies and massage parlors were excluded from this report. Focus group responses were not shared with any person or entity outside the BCCEW.

Remuneration

Participants were paid for their time in focus groups. Payment was provided in advance to ensure that participants were free to withdraw their consent rather than “holding participants hostage” and violating this research principle. Nutrition was also provided.

Section Three: Focus Group One Findings

The proceeding shares the focus group questions followed by summarized responses from sex worker participants. These questions initiated deep discussion among sex worker participants. Each subsection concludes with a summation which captures additional contributions from the focus group participants and is the basis for report recommendations and preliminary guidelines that will appear later in this report. Sex worker quotes were not amended or censored in any way.

Existing Structures and Sex Worker Orientation

1. *How the licensed venues that you have worked in were structured? Who is in control and who sets the rules?*

Participant Responses:

- “Workers are only in control when they work independently”;
- “There can be two owners, management team that sets the policies and corporate owner/operator”;
- “Women’s roles in management were mostly owners that were former or active sex worker and men would provide security and handyman duties.”
- “Owners are in control of every aspect of the work.”

2. *Who educates or orients new workers? Does anyone tell them about their rights? The law (210, 213 of the Criminal Code)? Who instructs them about what they are and are not allowed to say or do?*

Participant Responses:

- “Two respondents received training at Agency X in health, safety, how to ‘work’ a trick in a room. One participated in 3-day training and the other participated in a week long training-got a bag of supplies, rubbing alcohol, condoms, Kleenex was also provided. This participant was oriented to cleaning routines for showers and facilities.”
- “Others learned from other girls and watched what they said, how they talked;”
- “Worker with acne was almost not hired, they wanted appearance of cleanliness”;
- “Most participants were orientation to policies of agency”;
- “Some were told not to mention the word sex because of the laws”;
- “All participants were told that if the policed raided the establishment, they were on their own to answer to police”.

3. *Who sets the rates for services/time? Do workers contribute to decisions made about agency rates, fees or fines?*

Participant Responses:

- “Agency owners set the rates;”

- “Participants shared that they were never able to contribute to decision-making and there was no mechanism for suggesting changes to services, rates or fines;”
- “Tips that were earned by workers are kept secret, if discovered will be taxed 15%.”

Summary

Sex workers had mixed experiences in various indoor venues and attributed this to the attitude or demeanor of the business owner. Owners who had addressed worker concerns and provided health and safety training were viewed positively by workers. Some participants expressed that the orientation to sex work and training that they had received by agency owners had carried them through dangerous situations at other times in their careers; however this experience was in the minority.

Most workers noted that most of what they had learned with regards to orientation to their roles, agency structures and expectations came from social learning. They watched other workers find what behaviors were acceptable and which were sanctioned and behaved accordingly. All workers in our sample had no control over rates, services that they were expected to provide or any other company policies within licensed venues.

Health and Safety

1. *When you became employed at an off street venue, were you informed about safer sex practices? Techniques to put on condoms or negotiate condom use?*

Participant Responses:

- “No participants were provided with skills to negotiate condom use with customers;”
- “Four participants were told by their agency that condom use was up to the customer;”
- “One participant stated that her agency made it known that they did not want workers to use condoms”.

2. *Did you receive any training or advice to deal with angry customers or those refusing to pay for services? Any de-escalation skills?*

Participant Responses:

- “Some participants shared that they were taught to threaten dates if they refused to pay them or the worker would be fined if money was not received”;
- “Others were told to be nice and to ask for extra money or to threaten to call the police”;
- “No participants in our sample received de-escalation skills”;
- “Some learned techniques to calm customers down through dialogue with more experienced co-workers”;

- “All participants noted that getting the money was the bottom line and they would employ any tactic to secure funds for services rendered.”

3. *Were you informed as to how to stay healthy or protect yourself physically?*

- “No participants in sample were oriented to safer sex practices or taught how to protect themselves from physical assault within their working environment”;
- “One participant took a self defense program at a sex worker community organization.”

4. *Knowing what you know now about the industry now, what kind of information or support do you feel could have made you safer at work?*

Participant Responses:

- “Working in pairs”;
- “Negotiation skills”;
- “Self defense”;
- “Police support”;
- “Legal support for us as workers with knowing the law and knowing when customers are crossing the line”;
- “Spotters-people to be outside the call, security in incall or a person taking license plates”;
- “213 law and advertising- We need to know what can be said on the phone and in person or in email”;
- “Selective enforcement as police decide which agencies to raid but sex work is not illegal in Canada”;
- “Safety in your home-How to trick proof your house- cameras, what kinds of things can be left out and what I should put away”.

Summary

Workers all agreed that an orientation health and safety training package for those interested in entering the industry would reduce harm to workers during this dangerous period of their careers. The package would also provide an opportunity to decide what environment would best suit their career goals and what their rights and opportunities are within work environments.

Workers reported being misled about safe sex practices and being given no self defense training. Negotiation skills that were acquired through mistakes made in the past where workers were abused by customers. One worker spoke of being ‘set up’ by agency owners with a difficult customer and had to rob the customer in order to avoid being fined.

Workers expressed that training in the following areas would be welcomed and would reduce the instances of exploitation: Training to navigate the existing laws; worker’s rights, negotiation skills, self defense customized to work environments like small rooms, sexual health and environmental safety.

Security

1. *Does your employer (s) provide security? In what form?*

Participant Responses:

- “Cameras”;
- “Security-buddy systems”;
- “Out call services have drivers that act as security”;
- “In call services have Booking girls who check in on workers and their customers”;
- “Participants that work independently had a friend hidden in another room. Code words are spoken when the worker is in danger.”

2. *If you have ever needed security for an emergency was it effective?*

Participant Responses:

- “Almost half of our participants have had cause to need security during the course of their work”;
- “The presence of a man in the venue and a male voice was effective to de-escalate violence;”
- “For In call services violence is minimized and security is rarely necessary because there are other people around at all times”;
- “Out calls services relied on security more as transactions take place in a customer’s environment. Workers have to negotiate out of dangerous situations and must be more accommodating to customer requests”;
- “Some participants relied on pimps as paid security, but noted that they were rarely available or willing to protect them from immediate harm.”

3. *Are you charged for this security when you use it or charged whether you use it or not?*

Participant Responses:

- “Participants shared that they were charged for security as well as charged extra if there were any confrontations or defense necessary”;
- “Others stated that they paid for security with sexual favors.”

Summary

Workers reported different levels of security throughout the industry and their varying degrees of effectiveness. Workers felt safest working in their own homes or in venues where they had control over their environments. While on “outcalls” to the customers’ hotel rooms or residences, workers shared fears of being in unfamiliar environments and having no plan of defense. The need for security is paramount for sex workers, but due to the criminalization of sex work the pool of honorable and qualified security is non-existent. Workers are forced to rely on the same people that exploit them to defend them. This lack of adequate and qualified security puts workers at increased risk as existing security charges exploitative rates for ineffectual or non-existent protection.

Fines

1. *What kind of things are people fined for?*

Participant Responses:

- “Being late for shift”;
- “Not being available to work a shift no matter the reason”;
- “If a call with potential customer fell through”;
- “Showing up for work intoxicated”;
- “Instances where customers refuse to pay”;
- “If in an out call service the customer provides the wrong address and meeting never takes place”;
- “If date doesn’t answer the door”;
- “Instances where a worker is unable to pay the book on fee she will be taxed daily”;
- “If for any reason the service is not completed by the worker or customer”;
- “Bra not match g-string”;
- “Leaving session early”;
- “Fighting with the Booking Girl or having disagreements with agency owners”;
- “Defending yourself or questioning policies, fines or agency practices and operations”;

2. *What percentage of the money you make is used to pay fees?*

Participant Responses:

- “Depends on how much money you make, but the percentages that are paid to the agencies can change”;
- One participant averages \$1500 a week on fines,
- “Sometimes a worker can be charged all of her money”;
- “Interest is accumulated daily on fines until all fines are paid off”;
- “Worker ended up homeless and living in the agency due to her inability to pay her fines because the daily taxes made this impossible”;

3. *Do you know where the money from fees goes or how it’s spent?*

Participant Responses:

- “Booking girls have been known to make up stories about calls that were missed and workers would be fined by the agency”;
- “Booking girls would get a cut of the money as an incentive to find reasons for people to get fined and generate money for the agency”;
- “Agency gets money and does not account for it”;

4. *Have you ever been charged a fee for choosing to protect yourself?*

Participant Responses:

- All participants in our sample had been fined or otherwise punished for choosing to protect themselves instead of providing services to a customer.

5. *Have you ever been fined for things that are outside of your control?*

Participant Responses:

- Participants have experienced being fined for things out of their control and at times when business was slow in the agency. They felt that the fining system is used just to generate funds for owners;
- Participants shared stories of being humiliate on a board at the agency even after paying her fine.
- Participants expressed anger and viewed the fining system as a major violation and an abuse of power.

Summary

Workers reported being fined on a regular basis when working for both agencies and parlors and for a variety of reasons. Some of these reasons were legitimate while others were unwarranted. Overall fines are used to humiliate and control workers financially and control their conduct. Workers reported having no way to contest fines and even reported being fined because business was slow.

Workers clearly stated that while a fine system is necessary, fines and penalties needed to be attached to policies that are clear and agreed upon by workers. Additionally, arbitrary fines and fines for thinks that are outside of their control should not be permitted. Workers deserve the right to challenge allegations against them in a way that is fair to all involved. No other sanctioned business is permitted to exploit its workers in this way.

Agency Fees

1. *What are the fees associated with your work day/week? How much are they?*

Participant Responses:

- "I pay \$60 for advertising per week";
- "I give the booking girl \$20 per call";
- "Customer pays \$35, worker gets to keep \$5";
- "Where I work, if the worker has sex with customers they keep the money";
- "\$200 per customer and give the agency \$80 per call"
- "Book on fees \$60-\$350 per week depending on what the owners want to charge";
- "Outcalls are 50% to agency, driver fees are extra";
- Within an in call service: "customers paid for the time and the room and workers pay an additional \$20 to the agency for laundry, hot oil, Kleenex".

2. *Are they the same for everyone, or different?*

Participant Responses:

- Participants noted that fees levels were dependant on individual status within the agency;

- Some participants stated that agency owners play favorites and young girls, especially if they are new didn't have to pay fines as they were being 'romanced' by the agency. However, fines would eventually be instituted.

3. *Do you feel that the fees are fair and justified?*

Participant Responses:

- Participants felt that fees were not justified because workers do not have a say in their advertising campaigns and overall rates for their services.

4. *Where do you think the money goes?*

Participant Responses:

- Participants believed that agency fees pay for business expenses, marketing and operations and profits go directly to the owners.

Summary

Workers reported having paid a wide range of fees however there exists no standardization of fee levels within or among agencies. Workers agreed that fees were necessary for an agency to operate and to cover business expenses but that current fees were arbitrary and unreasonably high.

Shifts / Hours

1. *How many consecutive days do you work on average?*

Participant Responses:

- "6hour double shifts seven days per week"
- "Must work 24/7 to get time off"
- "Worked every day for 37 years"
- "5 days on but I pick the days"
- "Your on call for your whole fucking life"
- "I was taken to an isolated community and left there to work for a week and a half"
- "If you slept through a call or something you could be fined and then actually working more days a week as you would have to make the fines in the weeks to follow!"

2. *What were your average daily hours when you were booked on? Were you paid for every hour that you were booked on?*

Participant Responses:

- "Workers receive no pay for time on-call";

3. *Were you ever called to work on your days off or when you were not able to work?*

Participant Responses:

- “Yes, even during moon time”
- “Yes, black-listed when you couldn’t work”
- “Yes, you’re shunned if you don’t work, they will starve you”
- No workers in our sample were provided with a sick day.

4. *Do you believe that workers should be paid for hours that they are on call?*

Participant Responses:

- “Yes, must have a minimum per hour”;
- “We should also get hazard pay”;
- “All other employment gets paid an hourly for being on call”

Summary

Sex workers described working 7 days per week and being expected to be on call for the entire week. Those that did work shifts worked 10 to 12 consecutive shifts in any given week. Participants reported working 24 hour days and a missed call during that period would result in a fine and then being forced to work additional 24 hour days in order to pay the fines.

All workers in our sample were paid for costumers serviced and completed transactions only. None were financially compensated for time spent on call and available for work. In fact workers all laughed at the question and described having to work while sick or injured. If they physically could not work the agency/parlor would punish them by not sending them any costumers. This is known as “being starved” by workers and seemed to be a common experience.

It should be noted that those who had worked independently also kept the same kind of grueling schedule in order to afford enough advertising to compete with the larger agencies and parlors.

Customers

1. *How were you encouraged to treat the costumers?*

Participant Responses:

- “Encouraged to be nice to costumers so that they will tell their friends and bring more business and return costumers”
- “Taught to minimizes confrontation”
- “Taught to manipulate and be what the costumers wants”
- “Taught how to assess dates, see who has money and who doesn’t”
- “Taught how to rob dates”
- “Told to leave if I didn’t get a tip”
- “Take money and run without completing call”

- “Threaten them with humiliation and threaten to tell neighbors”

2. *Did you receive any training or advice on how to negotiate with customers?*

Participant Responses:

- Most respondents did not receive any formal advise from the agencies, but some were taught by other workers

3. *If a customer refused to pay or wanted something more than what was agreed upon, would the agency cover your expenses?*

Participant Responses:

- “No, Never”
- “If customer’s didn’t pay, I had to pay”
- “Customer’s always want more, you just gotta talk them out of it, but if I do what he asks that agency wouldn’t pay me for it”

4. *Were you ever blamed or held responsible for the actions or inactions of customers?*

Participant Responses:

- “Yes, always”
- “Also get in trouble if you didn’t get regulars or call backs you would be fired”
- “Non white workers experienced the worst calls at the worst time of night, they have to come back with the money or else”
- “We are Forced to do more for less so that customers will call you back”
- “Leads to turnover and that’s what agency wants, so whatever happens its never the customer’s fault, it’s yours”

Summary

Workers agreed that the exploitation and criminalization of the customers was in turn harming workers. They also noted that robbing, extorting, or harming legitimate paying customers in any way is absolutely unacceptable but at times encouraged. Workers were expected to treat customers the way the agency’s desired from robbing them to providing free services.

Workers are never compensated for expenses associated with calls that don’t go through and sometimes ended up losing money in this way. Also, workers were often subject to penalties if they failed to complete a call or generate repeat business.

Participants also noted increased incidents of racism and agency encouraged competition among workers.

Licensing

1. *Do you have an individual license? How did you get it? How much did it cost?*

Participant Responses:

- 2 of the 20 workers in our sample had individual licenses for which they paid \$110 each.

2. *Do you agree with the city licensing process that ties your license to the organization you are working for or do you believe that the license is the property of the worker?*

Participant Responses:

- “Licenses should be the property of the worker”
- “Criminal records checks should be eliminated”
- “The Vice Department called a worker to see if she wanted her licensed renewed”
- “If I want to leave I can’t, my license should go with me so I am not forced to stay with my agency”

3. *What would you like to see change?*

Participant Responses:

- “Open up licensing to all that want them”
- “End biased licensing process”
- “End police control over licensing process”
- “Complaints process for agencies should be set up so that we are protected”
- “Decriminalize our work”
- “Get rid of male exploiters”
- “workers should be empowered and there should be respect for the industry”
- “should be sex worker centered”

Summary

The high number of workers that did not have a city business license noted that the process is inaccessible and inherently flawed. Workers experienced barriers caused by criminal records and police control over this process. Workers also expressed feelings of humiliation at having to go to the business licensing desk at Vancouver city hall in person to apply for their license.

Workers called for a community based process that would create a less biased, worker-based licensing process as well as a complaints process. Workers also noted that there should be a rating system so that others are aware of which venues to avoid and which provide consistent safe work places for sex workers.

Environment

1. *Do you work inside your licensed venue or on out calls?*

Participant Responses:

- Participants worked both inside in-call services and for out-call services.

2. *What are the elements of a safe working environment for in calls? For out calls? (management, security, other workers, physical environments)*

Participant Responses:

- In calls: “cameras, better customer screening, team work and a limit to competition”

- Out calls: “drivers who do not exploit workers”
- “We need clean facilities and free supplies”
- “There should be a Bad date list and a good date list shared among agencies”
- “A client log and profile should be shared with workers before they engage with the customer”
- “We want responsible management and safety procedures”
- “We deserve fairness and justice because we work hard”
- “Fairness in fee process”
- “Empowerment for workers”
- “Grooming standards and hygiene for workers and for customers”

3. *Describe the best working environment you have ever worked in*

Participant Responses:

- “Worker controlled supportive environment”
- “Independent and autonomous, all the workers took pride and it was equitable”
- “Drug free- work-ready”
- “More choice and control over process and everything”

4. *Describe the worse working environment you have ever worked in?*

Participant Responses:

- “Where I felt isolated, there was high competition with workers and lots of sabotage”
- “When ads that I am in get cancelled”
- “Places where there was fines, fees, extortion”
- “Where there were drugs available and violence”
- “Environments where I have been shunned, stigmatized and threatened”
- “Where there is pressure to do things I don’t want to and I am forced to wear certain kinds of clothes”
- “mandatory attire”
- “where there were a lack of respect for boundaries- physical and emotional”
- “Where there is favoritism by owners”

5. *Do you think that there should be a complaints process for workers to share concerns about where they work with the City licensing department? What should the city do to help?*

Participant Responses:

- “We want to be able to file complaints about bad agencies”
- “We should have a process that workers can develop”
- “The city should not give licenses to agencies that exploit us”

Summary

Workers shared experiences from all areas of the industry indoors and out and components for safer work places began to emerge. Environments that support security, hygiene, and worker input as well as fair and respectful treatment of workers and collaboration were ideal environments. The demand for high volume, high competition environments have affected workers who describe incidents of extortion, sabotage, lack of choice and violence. Workers agreed that there should be a complaints process in order to stem the damage caused by these harmful environments.

Marketing

1. *Does your agency put ads out or do you put out your own?*

Participant Responses:

- Agency puts in ads for most participants in our sample; others were allowed to put in their own ads.
- Some shared that they could be fired if they ran their own ads as it would be seen as competition for the agency and they would not get their cut of the money.

2. *Does your agency advertise the “girl friend experience?”*

Participant Responses:

- Some agencies that participants worked for did advertise the GFE, others promoted it when customers called to book a worker and others did not advertise this approach

3. *Do you agree with the way you are marketed?*

Participant Responses:

- “No, advertised for things I don’t do or don’t want to do”
- “They false advertise for race, body type, age, so when you get to the customer you don’t look like what the booking girl said you do”
- “The advertising is not the worker’s choice, we either have to do what they advertise or try to talk the customer out of it”.
- “I got sent out as a different race and the customer was pissed and I didn’t get the money. Then I went back and they fined me for it”.

4. *What would you like to see change?*

Participant Responses:

- “Workers need to control the advertising”
- “They should market the services offered and not things that we don’t want to do”
- “There should be freedom in advertising”
- “We shouldn’t have to lie about our services to compete with other agencies and girls because workers lose out not agencies, they don’t pay the price”

Summary

Workers expressed a desire to have more control over the way they are marketed as well as the freedom to advertise for themselves. They shared experiences of supportive marketing as well as false advertising which put them in harms way. Some agencies advertised services that were unsafe for workers and left the workers to negotiate their way out of transactions with customers who may be angry or has been lied to outright.

The Future

1. In your agency, how can workers gain more control over all of the above (Structure, Health and safety, security, fines, fees, shifts and hours, customers, licensing, working environments and marketing?)

Participant Responses:

- “The structure is set up in a way that keeps workers out”
- “Workers have no control, licensing needs to favor individual”
- “Workers live under threat of excommunication and face working on street. That has to change.”
- “Licensing- We need to approach the city about licensing- vice also needs to be a smaller part of the process.

Summary

Workers recognized the need to address issues within the city’s industry control systems. The faults within the licensing process have created an almost exhortative environment in which the business owners have all the power and it’s difficult for workers to operate independently. Expensive fees, commercial space protocols and the perception that you’ll be hurt or even die in the street level trade all keep workers from determining their own fate. This environment also, gives the businesses the power to push the workers harder or even into things beyond their personal boundaries. Workers fear loosing a relatively safe job and being forced to work in the more dangerous street level trade. Workers decided that addressing the faults with in the licensing process would be a good place to start.

2. How can we support businesses that do provide safe and healthy work places for sex workers?

Participant Responses:

- “Build training packages for new workers so it’s easier for businesses to uphold industry standards”
- “Better Business Bureau for Hookers-we should build one!”
- “Places that are approved and have traditionally provided safe work places for sex workers should hold a seal from a sex worker review Board acknowledging their efforts to support our safety and health.”

Additional Issues:

- The group wanted to be sure that confrontation management training was made an important part of the “orientation package” for new workers.
- Also, negotiating skills were thought of as a fundamental part of the business and that some sort of basic introduction to the principles should be included.

Summary:

Workers agreed that not all businesses were equal and that some manner of distinguishing the good from the bad needed to exist. The idea of a trade association and standards that businesses, consumers and workers could all agree on and live with emerged as a way to achieve this as well as it could serve as a way for the industry to commit to change. If all stake holders were consulted and had input, adopting the principles would come naturally. The idea of a self policing industry was very appealing too all.

END OF FOCUS GROUP ONE

Section Four: Coop 101 Development Training Summary

Melanie Conn, BC Cooperatives Association, came and gave the group a seminar on cooperative business design. The group discussed cooperative business structures and 7 different types and examples of coop businesses:

Consumer cooperatives such as the East Side Food Coop where they developed a system to order food in bulk and save money; *Worker coops* such as BC's homecare workers who formed their own company after the provincial government cut off their funding; *Housing coops* such as Grandview where maintenance duties and building expenses are shared and rent is based on income. The ownership and sharing of duties resulted in pride and respect for the property and a nicer place for everyone to live.

Other coops explored include: *Financial coops* such as West Jet where the employees rallied and all purchased stock to prevent the airline going under and the loss of their jobs; *Marketing/producer cooperatives* such as Sun Ripe where fruit growers share expenses to promote their product as a group and profit as a group; *Shared service cooperatives* such as the car cooperative where people come together to ease the burden for paying for the upkeep and maintenance of a car fulltime. They share insurance and maintenance costs and all save money.

The group then had an opportunity to ask questions about issues specific to what we're trying to do.

1. What do we need to do?

Participant Responses

- "Address health and safety";
- "Create a worker controlled business/environment";
- "Create a business plan for a multipurpose cooperative";
- "Maybe a bath house business could work, we could rent private rooms for the lowest possible price";
- "The space could be shared by many different actions, businesses or tasks making rent less of a barrier";
- "People need to take on different roles and spread the work load around";
- "Set up the business, first in the DTES where the situation is the most desperate but work towards a coop on every traditional stroll within the city. The workers and consumers are all comfortable with each other and the areas where they meet. Workers cluster organically and the group felt it was best to support these naturally forming groups";
- "The coop should supply educational materials and lead by example."

2. How will this worker coop be different from what exists off street now?

Participant Responses:

- "The room rates won't have to be constant and these rates can reflect usage";
- "Members will own, profit, and self determine as a group";

- “It will be easier to work with us as we won’t be screening people based on marketability”;
- “As an individual, workers cannot compete easily with the big businesses. Together workers can afford the level of business support necessary to compete for clientele”;
- “Members will be supported in working within their own personal boundaries and won’t have rules, fines, fees, un-safe sex acts and bad business practices forced upon them.”

Summary

The session was interesting and the group seemed to take to the idea of cooperative businesses on many levels and began to see the possibilities for all kinds of different businesses and applications. All participants agreed that together we are stronger in any business we engage in.

The conversation then turned to cooperative business governance, development, incorporation and the benefits of non-profit vs. for profit business structures.

The end result of the discussion was the group realizing we needed a core group of at least 5 and we should have a consultant who has experience with these types of decisions. Tasks by committee were also seen as a way to share the responsibilities.

Next Steps:

The group closed the workshop by discussing some possible next steps:

Participant Responses:

- To develop a strategic plan and logic model inclusive of timelines, actions, and resources and short, intermediate and long term outcomes;
- Seek out funding sources for development planning;
- Develop a terms of reference
- Engage external expertise from the Harm Reduction movement for guidance and support.

Summary:

Workers agreed that there was a lot of work ahead but that cooperative business structure has the potential to stabilize the industry and increase choice as well as health and safety for workers. The meeting was adjourned with everyone agreeing to think hard on the type of cooperative that would best suit us before the next meeting.

Section Five: Is a Co-operative Business Structure a Good Fit?

The meeting began with the group discussing a federal grant application to the Canadian Cooperatives Initiative Fund. Participants discussed barriers, pros and cons of the idea and how to proceed.

Canadian Cooperative Initiative Fund Application Guidelines:

Participant Responses:

- A clear and concise plan of what you are intending to do;
- Explain why cooperative was selected as an idea;
- Should there be an investment from members;
- Must demonstrate grassroots approach;
- A cooperatively run safe work place for sex workers has never been tried;
- Maybe we can get matching funds for the coop;
- Benefits to the community must be made clear.

Summary

The group ended this discussion by acknowledging that it was along road ahead and that the grant was only one step. It was agreed that it was a little premature to be discussing future funding without this final report.

The remainder of the session was spent discussing the various ways a cooperative business model could support many actions in particular safe work spaces and the health and safety of sex workers. The type of cooperative business we should choose was also discussed

What Kind of Coop should we choose?

Structure and Membership Issues:

1. *Can coop structure support this kind of business?*

Participant Responses:

- It depends on the structure and how diverse the vote is
- Do non members get a say or have control
- Control of rules, orientation, rates
- Peer driven
- Need to develop policies

Summary

It became clear that in order for all people who access the coop to have a vote, a multi level system of membership was needed. It also was noted that a business plan and policies needed to be developed. The core group agreed that workers outside of the group should be consulted and included in the development process to ensure that a broad-based plan emerges and all perspectives are considered.

Existing Structures and Sex Worker Orientation

2. *Can coop design improve the treatment workers experience in other existing venues?*

Participant Responses:

Venues where sex work takes place should be designed by the workers themselves. Sex workers employed within existing venues should also be engaged in decision-making related to services, fees for service, marketing and collectively establish a code of conduct and fining systems.

Summary

It was decided that leading by example will affect the treatment of workers in other venues. Sharing knowledge may also empower workers to stand up for themselves or to look after new employees who may be exploited. It was noted that it may be hard to get the existing venues on board as they've had it so easy for so long and have gotten use to treating their employees unfairly. The group however felt that over time these places would have to comply and should be forced to compete for employees.

Health and Safety

3. *How will coop business design support the health and safety of sex workers?*

Participant Responses:

- Set standards for coop and orientation;
- Lead by example;
- Support safe sex;
- Empowerment: work in a safe place;
- Don't have to negotiate condom use;
- creating non negotiable policies for members, customers and staff;
- Building bridges referrals, street nurse visits;
- Don't have to negotiate price as minimums are collectively established;
- Confrontation Management to de-escalate situations;
- Conflict Resolution;
- Share experiential knowledge- materials, networking and education are shared. "the True Skinny";
- Dispel myths;
- Angry customers won't be able to be violent because worker is not alone;
- Need to get along as community and define good communication;
- Conflict resolution: prevention, intervention, education and awareness;
- New Members: members new to the coop will be orientated;

Summary

Workers agreed that cooperative business design that supports sex worker run establishments will have an incredible impact on the health and safety of workers. Condom use, safety from violence and the opportunity to share knowledge in particular with new members or people interested in entering the trade would all be under worker control.

Participants recognized an opportunity to support people who are in the trade for the wrong reasons or entering out of desperation. We could be a bridge to support agencies and exiting programs. The group also agreed that developing relationships with nurses, street nurses in particular and perhaps having them take part or visit the coop on a regular basis could allow access to medical treatment/advice for workers who feel unable to access or unwelcome in traditional emergency rooms and clinics.

Security

4. How will coop business design support the security of sex workers?

Participant Responses:

- Code of conduct for Customers in the form of (matches, condoms with the code stickers on them, cards, info posted in establishment etc);
- Customers must acknowledge rules;
- Cost sharing for security costs;
- Not alone in the space;
- Coed- Male, female and transgendered members as a policy and a practice;
- Reception can be trained to observe and document characteristics of each customer;
- Cost goes up if more than one security method is used;
- By us- makes us comfortable and open to change;
- Hours of operation need to be determined and will be by licensing;
- Police –have positive relationships so we fall under their protection;
- Potential violence through retaliation from pimps and disengagement of workers from organized crime;
- People will be walked to their cars;

Summary

Cooperative business design supports improved security for workers, fair treatment/screening of security personnel and an incredible opportunity to be protected from violent predators. The education of customers will go a long way in reducing violence. Best practices, safe sex info and general rules of engagement could be communicated to the customers to affect how they treat workers even outside of our business. Workers believe that we have to teach people how to treat us. Collectively the group acknowledged that the cost of security would be reduced for the individual if we are able to hire security with pooled funds. It's hoped that this would mean workers could afford to pay a little more for security and therefore get higher quality and qualified people in the jobs.

Also, workers who may have been entrenched within organized crime but wish to join the coop or become independent workers could be protected by the group as there is strength in numbers. Workers also expressed a desire to ensure the safety, security of the customers in that together we could have public policy which would include not robbing or harming the customers. The group hoped this would result in other agencies/parlors following suit.

Economics

5. *How will cooperative business design support sex workers economically?*

Participant Responses:

- Safety net- sick leave (paid sick leave);
- Profit sharing;
- Support other worker business activities (e.g. Art);
- Fund for sex worker driven initiatives (scholarships etc);
- Afford staff (support etc);
- Other economic opportunities for workers e.g. attend global conferences, community education;
- Being paid for hours on call;
- Eliminate extortion and collective decisions on fees, rates etc;

Summary

Workers agreed that together the economic burden of running a business could be shared and that success and profit would be more easily attainable as a cooperative style business. Participants had all experienced hardship while injured or ill on the job and remarked that as a group they could implement some kind of medical leave with pay or worker compensation. The ultimate goal here would be for workers to pay into Employment Insurance and benefit from supports like all other workers in Canada.

Fees

6. *How will cooperative business design address issues around agency fees?*

Participant Responses:

- Fees that are charged will be voted on and negotiated based on the will of the Cooperative Board;
- Fees for membership and rooms etc will be flexible and according to the economy and how much staff are making;

Summary

It was recognized that without a business plan and an idea of what rent will be, it's difficult to know what sort of fees will be charged and how much they will cost. However, cooperative business design could support lower fees as the shared economic burden should lower the fees over all. The group asserted that fees should be voted on and justified. Also, that the fees should be adjustable or flexible according to the changing business conditions.

Profits and revenue generated by fees and fines would be shared among workers.

Shifts and Hours

7. *How will cooperative business design address the long hours that sex workers put in?*

Participant Responses:

- Should be according to labor standards;
- Flexibility (within the workers schedule and needs);
- Scheduling of shifts;
- No exploitation of any member's labor;
- Shared labor for operating, maintenance, up keep and administration ;

Summary

Cooperative business design would lessen the burden of time spent doing administrative activities on individual workers. Task sharing in this regard would also provide mentoring or capacity building opportunities among workers.

Also, the individual's needs and availability can become the priority allowing workers to work when they want to or when they can.

Facilities

7. *How will cooperative business design support having a safe work place?*

Participant Responses:

- Workers may have their own room but there will be fairness about usage times;
- Together workers could maintain cleanliness standards of the space;
- It could be an opportunity for community development in that all the workers will get to know and respect one another as diverse workers will access the space;

Summary

A discussion ensued about some workers having member's only rooms but committing to having rooms for any and all workers who need a safe place to work who are not members of the coop. It was clear to the group that this would be a complex part of the coop design. The potential of the safe work space as a community gathering point or an organizing space was also discussed.

Awards

7. *How else can we support safe work ethics?*

Participant Responses:

- **Scrooge award** (Rating system for sex worker and customer frequented establishments including bars and clubs)
- **Ho of the year** (an award given to active or former workers that promote the human rights, health, safety and equality of sex workers. This award is called the Raven Bowen award as she is it's first recipient);

- **Agency of the year award** (for non exploitive city licensed venues who prioritize the health and safety of workers, adopted guidelines and include workers in decision-making);

Summary

The group decided that it would be good to have awards for workers who do a lot for their community or agencies that adhere to specific good business practices. The need for accountability and motivation towards best practice for agencies through an award system was seen as a fun or non-threatening way to support workers and agencies/massage parlors in prioritizing the needs of workers.

Customers

8. *How can cooperative business design reduce violence to customers?*

Participant Responses:

- No rip offs (how do we enforce this? This will be determined);
- Support good service;
- Extend time in the room or multiple hour call;
- Have fantasy rooms;
- Suggestion box for customers to improve service and accommodate their needs ;
- Code of Conduct- educate customers on proper edict;

Summary

Everyone agreed that violence towards customers is unacceptable and causes violence against sex workers. Cooperative business design could allow workers who already maintain good practices to band together behind good service and mentor or educate other workers on how to reduce violence to other workers by being good to the customers. Workers together establishing standards for the treatment of their customers will affect this relationship in a positive way. The group felt this was an important element in stabilizing the industry.

Members

9. *How can cooperative business design support mutual respect amongst members?*

Participant Responses:

- Code of conduct for workers;
- No ripping off dates;
- Confidentiality for members and policies;
- Criteria for membership;

Summary

The group realized there may be some growing pains and that these considerations as well as other issues were bound to arise. The group agreed that policy development, a code of

conduct, confidentiality, and many other policies would need to be collectively established. Cooperative business design supports this collaboration in that all participants will get to have their say and have their concerns addressed. Afterwards they will all own it together and will abide by the policies and the process. We will learn to get along.

Licensing

10. How can cooperative business design address licensing issues?

Participant Responses:

- Do members have to have licenses?
- Coop will have an occupancy permit, etc.;
- Can membership in the coop be enough and abiding by the rules
- The coop can have the license and we all pay for it;
- Do workers need to have a license to use the rooms?

Summary

The group felt that licensing would be supported by cooperative business design in that the individual would not have to go through the uncomfortable, public and somewhat humiliating process as individuals and could remain anonymous or at least maintain discretion. Also, the obvious benefit of sharing the cost of the license was discussed as the fee can be upwards of \$7000 dollars a year.

Environment

11. How can cooperative business design support a positive work environment?

Participant Responses:

- Pride, cleanliness;
- Support, community based;
- Organizing space;
- Reduce competition;
- Human side of sex and pleasures;
- Safety

Summary

Workers shared many ideas about their work environment and came up with some preliminary thoughts on how to build a safe environment. This included physical environments and sex positive supports for workers and support in working within their own personal, physical and emotional boundaries. Coop business design will support this type of environment through its community based principles. We'll be able to affect the health and safety of the workers who take part through defining our environment together.

Policies

12. *What policies could be supported by a cooperative business design?*

Participant Responses:

- Health and safety;
- Confidentiality;
- Code of conduct for members, staff and customers;
- Mentoring/ education policies;
- Ethics;
- Labour standards (dress code, etc);
- Non member polices;
- Conflict resolution and management;
- Media and public relations ;
- Legal/ police/ city;
- Staffing (job descriptions);
- Hiring policies/ job sharing;
- Volunteer policies;
- Financial management and records keeping;

Summary

Once again, it was clear to participants that the development of a cooperatively run establishment for workers would be extensive. Conflicts which have traditionally prevented sex workers from organizing will have to be addressed among workers in addition to garnering supports from community stakeholders and allies.

The group discussed consumer cooperatives and the benefits of shared purchasing and/or marketing could allow members to share the expenses and the savings of buying in quantity whether that purchase was advertising space or towels for instance. Worker cooperatives were also discussed in a particular the idea of a shared infrastructure and office support. This would allow workers to pursue other endeavors like going to school while the administrative aspects of sex work could be handled by a core staff. The story of home care workers who had lost government funding and then formed a coop which is now self-sustaining sparked a discussion on how a coop would mean financial freedom on many levels. The freedom to collectively invest funds, to buy supplies or even to attend conferences on sex work issues and coop development was very appealing. The desire for self determination was shared among all participants.

All of the group members expressed an interest in art. An artist's coop could support all kinds of things from theatrical productions and dance companies to Saturday afternoon arts and crafts and poetry readings where members could work together on projects that the coop members could sell. The idea of the artist's coop also included making things to donate to other good causes in the community. Sex workers are community minded and care about the people around them. (For example, a member of the BC Coalition puts on a Dancer's for

Cancer event. Although hotly debated in recent press, the goal of dancers is to donate to individuals living with cancer and the organizations that support them).

Housing coops were also talked about as some participants lived within them. Shared duties and maintenance creates pride in the housing coop and the same sentiments will come from sex worker ownership of a safe work space.

The benefits of a marketing coop were obvious. Together, if the coop desired they could develop business cards, web site, logo and all the other marketing tools necessary for the success of the greater group while the financial burden on the individual would be greatly diminished. Shared service coops could support many aspects of the sex trade. Security or drivers could be hired for out call services.

The responsibilities of membership may be more then some workers are willing to take on. However, they should still have some say in the direction of the business and how or when any profits may be spent. Different levels of membership with different levels of responsibility could facilitate input from all patrons of the coop space.

In the end it was decided that a multi purpose, multi stake holder cooperative would be the best fit and would allow for business growth on many levels. Members could ultimately run a number of different businesses and engage at whatever level they are comfortable with. All levels of membership would have a say or a vote.

Other Comments

Participant Responses:

- Support for outcalls?
- Competition leads to risky behavior and there needs to be polices to address this;
- Stories from a member about bad experiences;
- Coop membership will be sex workers, community educators and justice workers;
- This is a legacy that will be left for future workers;

Summary

The community of sex workers is divided infiltrated by different factions including those who believe in the abolishment of sex work completely. All areas of the industry are separated and are forced to compete for customers. This coop will unify the community and bring the underground businesses above board making them accountable to workers and the community at large. Ultimately reducing harm and improving the quality of life for sex workers in the years to come.

Section Six: Preliminary Health and Safety Guidelines

From discussions on working conditions a preliminary framework for health and safety guidelines and “best practices” for existing businesses emerged.

Health and Safety

- **Safe sex practices-** with specific diseases (eg. HIV/AIDS) and practices (eg. Bare back or condomless sex acts) was highlighted. An FAQ section will help workers and agencies understand the necessity of safe sex practices.
- **Confrontation Management-** How to deal with angry customers, with each other and with the community at large. There are already programs available in this area provided by PACE Society and the VPD. Collaboration with these agencies will increase the physical safety of workers.
- **Hygiene-** How to properly clean one’s “tools” and body. An integral piece of safe sex is cleanliness and more experienced workers know that prevention is better than cure. Knowing some key points of hygiene can save a worker from potentially losing time at work or even being unable to work.
- **Empowerment-** Information about the sex worker rights movement can give workers the support to demand fair treatment and make safe decisions around their own careers.
- **Legal Information and rights-** The criminal code of Canada’s provisions regarding prostitution and the potential consequences of enforcement needs to be shared with workers so that they are aware of their rights. Additionally, support in understanding labor law and how to have it apply to sex work is a major undertaking. Also, information about the licensing process and its short falls should also be described so that workers know what to expect when they apply to municipalities and the risks and benefits of obtaining such a license should be included.
- **Support groups-** A detailed list of support providers and what types of services they offer must be included in the guidelines to support referrals, counseling for assault and exiting programs for those who want to transition out of sex work.
- **Code of conduct-** To show workers the importance of treating each other with respect as well as their customers. In particular with regard to the systematic robbery of customers and how it causes violence to other workers. Bullying and robbery tactics inspired by some agencies results in increased violence toward sex workers.
- **Wellness-** the importance of eating right, exercise and emotional health should be included. Sex workers keep insane hours and need to recognize when they’re too tired and need a break. Samples of wellness plans could be included.
- **Work options-** the different types of sex industry work and venues should be included. The pro’s and con’s of each should be described in plain language so that workers can make informed decisions about how to navigate within the industry.
- **Work Safe tips-** more experienced workers could develop tips and best practices in relation to prevention, health and safety. For instance, sexual positions that allow greater control over the movements of customers and how to prepare your home for a customer by hiding valuables and anything that could be used as a weapon should be included.

Summary

These different factors which define health and safety for workers need to be fleshed out by workers. External expertise in from health departments and law enforcement as well as input from customers will be prioritized in future projects.

Section Seven: Legal Issues and Recommendations

Canada: Criminal Code- Prostitution

BCCEW along with other academics and advocates call for the repeal of sections 210, 211 and 213 of the Canadian criminal code. In this section we review the implications of the law as it relates to the opening of a safe work space for sex workers.

Section 210

1. Everyone who keeps a common bawdy house is guilty of an indictable offense and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 yrs.

2. Everyone who

- a. Is an inmate of a common bawdy house
- b. Is found, without lawful excuse, in a common bawdy house, or
- c. As owner, landlord, lesser, tenant, occupier, agent or otherwise having charge or control of any place, knowingly permits the place or any part there of to be let or used for the purposes of a common bawdy house, is guilty of an offense punishable on summary conviction.

Implications

This section makes any workers who are members of the coop and therefore owners of the coop vulnerable to criminal charges. And also makes anyone who accesses the coop (workers and customers), works for the coop, or rents space in the coop vulnerable to criminal charges. We will need federal exemption in order to operate legally and for the membership to be protected from legal repercussions.

Section 211- Everyone who knowingly takes, transports, directs, or offers to take, transport or direct, any other person to a common bawdy house is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Implications

This section means we can not tell workers or customers about the coop. No one can be transported to the coop and this will incriminate hired drivers and cab drivers as well. Advertising may be illegal under this section as well. We will have to seek federal exemption on this section.

Section 212

1. Everyone who

- a. Procures, attempts to procure or solicits a person to have illicit sexual intercourse with another person, whether in or out of Canada,
- b. Inveigles or entices a person who is not a prostitute to a common bawdy house for the purpose of illicit sexual intercourse or prostitution,
- c. Knowingly conceals a person in a common bawdy house,

- d. Procures or attempts to procure a person to become, whether in or out of Canada , a prostitute,
 - e. Procures or attempts to procure a person to leave the usual place of abode of that person in Canada, if that place is not a common Bawdy house, with the intent that the person become an inmate or frequenter of a common bawdy house, whether in or out of Canada,
 - f. On the arrival of a person in Canada, directs or causes that person to be directed or takes or causes to be taken, to a common bawdy house
 - g. Procures a person to enter or leave Canada, for the purposes of prostitution,
 - h. For the purpose of gain, exercises control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in such a manner as to show he is aiding, abetting, or compelling a person to engage in or carry on prostitution with any person or generally
 - i. Applies or administers to a person or causes that person to take any drug, intoxicating liquor, matter or thing with intent to stupefy or overpower that person in order thereby to enable any person to have illicit sexual intercourse with that person, or
 - j. Lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person, is guilty of and indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.
2. Notwithstanding paragraph 1(j) and sub-section (2), every person who lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person who is under the age of 18 yrs. is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.
 3. Notwithstanding paragraph (1) (j) and sub-section (2), anyone who lives wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person under the age of eighteen years and who,
 - a. for the purposes of profit, aides, abets, counsels or compels the person under that age to engage in or carry on prostitution with any person or generally, and
 - b. uses, threatens to use or attempts to use violence, intimidation or coercion in relation to the person under that age, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 yrs, but not less than 5 yrs.
 4. Every person who, in any place, obtains for consideration, or c communicates with anyone for the purposes of obtaining for consideration, the sexual services of a person who is under the age of 18 yrs. is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term of not exceeding 5 yrs.

Implications

This section appears to focus on abuses and recruitment of individuals in the sex industry. The coop goal is to eliminate these kinds of abuses and will uphold this legislation. However section J-living off the avails may affect the destination of pooled resources. It is not clear if this section will apply to workers who invest their funds into the operation of a cooperative. Clarification on subsection j will be necessary.

We will not need exemption from this section as youth or people under the age of 19 years are too young to consent to involvement in sex work. It is the opinion of the BCCEW that these

young people are not sex workers but are in fact exploited youth. The coop will not engage or offer membership to youth; however, policies for referral of youth that disclose involvement in the industry will be created. The coop will endeavor to support youth in exiting the industry so that they can safely live out their childhoods.

Section 213

Every person who in a public place or place open to public view

- a. stops or attempts to stop any motor vehicle,
- b. impedes the free flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or ingress to or egress from premises adjacent to that place, to
- c. stops or attempts to stop any person or in any manner communicates or attempts to communicate with any person

For the purpose of engaging or of obtaining the sexual services of a prostitute is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.

Implications

The coop's advertising campaign will not differ from ads placed by existing agencies except that the coop will not take part in exploitative marketing campaigns and workers create the public face of the coop. Coop members who work on street will be vulnerable to charges while trying to meet potential customers and bring them to the safe work space.

City of Vancouver Municipal By-Laws

City of Vancouver License By- law number 4450 applies to the following businesses;

- Dating service
- Escort service
- Massage Parlor
- Health Enhancement Center
- Body Rub Parlors/Body Painting Studios/Model Studios

1. Dating Service (by-laws-5283, 6038, 6646)

Every person operating a dating service shall;

- a) supply the License Inspector with the name, age, address, and description of every person proposed to be employed or engaged in the business;
- b) notify within 72 hrs. of any change in personnel; and
- c) maintain a written record of all persons registered with the dating service showing the name and address of the person and the name and address of the person to whom they have been referred for a social engagement.

4. Social Escort Service (by-laws-6373 and 6466)

- d) Every applicant for a license to operate as a Social Escort Service shall provide the trade name or names under which such a business would operate and advertise.

- e) Every person who intends to operate or advertise a social escort service under a trade name other than that specified in the application for a license shall notify the Inspector in writing of the intended trade name at least 14 days prior to its use
- f) No person carrying on the business of a Social Escort service shall offer the services or name of any escort, or introduce customers or potential customers to any social escort, unless that escort is at least 19 years old.
- g) No person carrying on the business of a social escort shall offer the services or name of any person required to be licensed pursuant to this by-law unless that person is so licensed.
- h) At all times during which the premises specified in the license application as the place of business for the Social escort service are open for business the operator or a licensee or employee shall be present on the premises
- i) Every person carrying on the business of a social escort service shall
 - maintain on the premises a list of all current employees and person's being handled on an agency basis; and
 - upon request make such a list available to the Inspector or Chief Constable.

3. Steam Bath Massage Parlor (by-laws- 4782, 6038,6646)

- a) No person owning, keeping, maintaining, or operating any bath, steam bath or massage parlor shall allow or permit any person of the male sex to act therein as an attendant or employee in respect of any person customer or patron of the female sex; or allow or permit any person of the female sex to act as an attendant or employee in respect of any person, customer or patron of the male sex; nor shall any person owning, keeping, maintaining or operating bath, steam bath or massage parlor attend, treat or serve any person, customer or patron thereof of the opposite sex
- b) Every person owning, keeping, maintaining or operating and bath, steam bath or massage parlor shall provide and keep therein a written and legible record in journal form of all person's using the facilities of said bath steam bath or massage parlor to record his or her name and address together with the date and time of registration in such register;
- c) No person owning, keeping, maintaining or operating a steam bath shall allow persons of the opposite sex to occupy the same room or adjoining rooms with an inter-communicating door or which have doors opening into a common steam room. Provided, however, that a person may maintain a steam bath a family room intended to be occupied and occupied by members of the same family, if such a room is closed off from the rest of the steam bath by a door.
- d) Every person owning, keeping, maintaining or operating a bath, steam bath or massage parlor shall ensure that the interior of the premises is at all times during business hours illuminated to a minimum of ten foot candles in every part thereof.

3. Health Enhancement Centre (by-laws 6830, 7052)

- a) The Inspector shall not issue a license for a health enhancement centre unless satisfied that the applicant for the license or an officer of the applicant demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the art and practice of reflexology, Shiatsu, bio-kinesiology, hellework, polarity, reiki, rolfing, the trager approach, or any other therapeutic technique, and the Inspector may in that regard require the applicant or officer to take and pass an examination.
- b) All persons carrying on the business of a health enhancement centre shall ensure that all persons hired to administer a therapeutic touch technique are qualified in that respect and have not been convicted of an offence under sections 212 or 213 of the criminal code.
- c) No person carrying on the business of a health enhancement centre shall employ any person to administer a therapeutic touch technique unless that person is at least 19 years of age.
- d) No person carrying on the business of a health enhancement centre shall remain open or administer therapeutic touch technique between the hours of 12.00 midnight and 8 am.
- e) No person carrying on the business of a health enhancement center shall allow any employee or person on the premises to engage in or offer to engage in an act of prostitution.

5. Body Rub Parlor/ Body Painting Studio/ Model Studio

- a) Every applicant for a license to operate a body rub parlor, body painting studio or model studio shall supply the Chief Constable and the Inspector with the name, address and sex of all persons employed by the applicant
- b) No person carrying on the business of operating a body rub parlor, body painting studio of model studio shall,
 - employ any person on the licensed premises unless that person is 19 years of age or older
 - permit any person to be on the licensed premises at any time unless that person is 19 years of age or older
- c) Every applicant for a license for a body rub parlor, body painting studio or model studio shall be accompanied by a floor plan of the entire premises in such detail as may be prescribed by the Inspector, and when any alterations are made to the licensed premises, plans thereof shall be filed with the Inspector forth with.
- d) All rooms used for a body rub parlor, body painting studio or nude photography shall comply with the following;
 - shall not be smaller than 2.4 meters by 2.4 meters
 - shall not be equipped with any locking device
 - other than a door providing an entrance there to, shall not have any means by which any person may view the interior thereof
 - shall be equipped with lighting of at least 50 candle power which shall remain on when the door is closed.

e) No person carrying on the business of operating a body rub parlor, body painting studio or model studio shall permit any person to enter or remain thereon between the hours of 12.00 midnight and 8 am

f) No person carrying on the business of a body rub shall permit any person engaged in providing a body rub in the licensed premises to perform the same unless the person is wearing clean, washable non-transparent outer garments covering his or her body from the neck to the top of the knee, the sleeves of which do not reach below the elbows

g) No body rub parlor proprietor shall exhibit himself or herself nor permit other persons to exhibit themselves, in any window on or about the licensed premises or exhibit or permit to be exhibited any sign outside of the premises showing any nude male or female body, or any part thereof, nor any printed words that might indicate the licensed premises is a place that offers any form of nude or sexual entertainment.

h) No person carrying on the business of a body rub parlor shall practice or provide or permit the practice or provision therein of a therapeutic touch technique or advertise in any way that a therapeutic touch technique is available or being practiced on the premises.

i) Any club subject to regulation under by-law number 2647 providing any services similar to a body rub parlor, body painting studio or model studio shall, in addition to any other licensing requirement, obtain a body rub parlor, body painting studio or model studio pursuant to schedule A and shall comply with the regulations set forth in this section.

Implications

The city by-laws seem to support safe work spaces but they also have some unclear sub-sections. These laws need to be more concise and clear about the rules around licensing and address the power of business owners over their employees. However, for the purposes of a cooperatively run safe work spaces a body rub parlor seems to provide a “private space” where two consenting adults could legally engage in the exchange of sex for money. The clause which excludes any person who was ever guilty of crimes under 212 and 213 of the criminal code is a barrier to workers in accessing a safer work environment and higher paying jobs.

The community at large would like to see the industry off the street but the city has closed the door to workers who most likely have a criminal history and won't qualify for a license. We will need special exemption from the city of Vancouver by-laws to operate legally.

Section Eight: Preliminary Literary Review

It should be noted that the authors could not find any reference to cooperatively run brothels or massage parlors anywhere. It seems that workers defining their own interpretation of safe work spaces and collectively sharing profits and business expenses are completely underground.

Project participants shared experiences of working cooperatively with other independent workers and agreed that those were the safest and fairest working conditions they had ever experienced.

Canadian Guild for Erotic Labor

-are a national organization of workers and allies who have come together to promote labor rights and organizing for all people engaged in erotic labor within Canada. Their definition of erotic labor is broad and inclusive of dancers and pornography however some things are obviously missing. Although training on different aspects of the trade were mentioned, health and safety training for those interested in entering the trade and advocacy for safe or worker controlled work spaces weren't mentioned.

As it is with many initiatives, the participation of workers in leadership roles is not mandated or even mentioned rather workers are referred to in the third person and cast as needing support or incapable of leadership. It seems a well meaning initiative but contains some omissions and flaws.

EMPOWER

Although not a cooperative business, this groups mobilizes the assets of workers and collaborate on an actions. Empower-Education means protection of women engaged in recreation- is based in Thailand and has branched out into multiple locations as their success continues. They believe that every worker has the right to choose her job and work safely without exploitation, with livable wages, and without harassment.

Education is viewed as power and the group actively provides information and classes on everything from HIV prevention to computer skills. The education centers are also used as organizing space where workers can share experiences and challenges and feel safe doing so within a group of their peers.

DMSC

The Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee is a forum of sex workers and their children which has grown to over 65,000 members in West Bengal, India. Workers in India experience many of the same barriers to improved quality of life as Canadian workers. Like us, people consistently trying to rescue, reform, rehabilitate, discipline, control, or police them. Sustainable incomes are never discussed and police are constantly raiding their safe work places in an effort to tax or fine workers. It's almost a form of government sanctioned

extortion in that it's a money grab and under the guise of policing corrupt officials have basically cart blanche to treat workers however they want and fine of charge them whatever they want.

The members of the DMSC took bold action to stabilize the lives of workers and registered a consumer cooperative called the Usha Multi-purpose Cooperative Society Ltd. This coop took on many roles such as coop day care for workers children, coop marketing of condoms and a coop credit and savings plan. The DMSC views the registering of this coop as a victory in their struggle to re-frame attitudes about sex work and improve quality of life for its members.

A letter from Bharati Dey, program director of the DMSC, by the Network of Sex Work Projects and was shared with our group. He shared words of wisdom and encouragement and wished all workers engaged in the fight for sex worker rights success in our struggle.

Komal Gandhar

The DMSC produced an off shoot in a cultural cooperative. Sex workers, male, female, transsexual, and their children joined together and created art through all kinds of mediums such as writing, drawing and dance. Together they build strength within the sex workers community as well as increase awareness about all aspects of the trade and its stigma.

This is yet another example of the potential of sex workers when they come together. Community development on the cultural front as well as the political front has benefited and empowered workers in Kolkata and across India.

Debbie Doesn't do it for FREE!

The Debbie's are another example of a cultural cooperative based this time in Australia. This trend of education through art shows how peaceful sex workers are and embraces art as a bridge between sex workers and the community at large. The Debbie's have performed all over the world and continue on fueled by the strength they draw from one another. The name Debbie is used by all performers so as not to reveal their identities and to unify workers and the problems they face.

XXX Guide- A Canadian Example

A group called STELLA based in Montreal, Canada, produced a set of health and safety guidelines for people in or entering the trade in Quebec. The guide is funded by the Ministry of Health and includes all kinds of useful info for workers. Services and words are used to describe services are defined in plain language and different approaches to where and how to work are described in detail. Support and exiting services are listed and the rights of the individual worker in a legal sense are defined.

The guide is complete and addresses all concerns of workers entering, exiting, or currently engaged in the sex trade. An off shoot of this guide is a guide for customers called “dear Client” which answers commonly asked questions and outlines best practices for customers. This is a great resource and template. It addresses education for sex consumers around how to engage workers in a way that’s not harmful to either the consumer or the worker.

Section Nine: Next Steps

We plan to:

Seek community support/ funding to design and form a multi-stake holder cooperative and to develop a terms of reference for the coop development group. Safe work spaces, education/training packages, art and community education services (currently provided by BCCEW members to support sex worker friendly organizations develop policies and programs) could all exist within the cooperative together but as separate initiatives. The other activities could move forward while the more controversial safe work space is explored and designed.

Consult with buyers and workers on the design and operation of a cooperative safe work place. A safe work place is needed immediately and workers agree that it was the most important element as far as increasing the health safety and quality of life for all workers but especially those entrenched in the street level trade. Consumers and workers should both be consulted in the process to ensure all sides get to voice their concerns. This process should include policy development in particular around drug use, Health and safety, confidentiality, Code of conduct for members, staff and customers, Mentoring/ education policies, Ethics, Labor standards (dress code, etc), Non member polices, Conflict resolution and management, Media and public relations , Legal/ police/ city, Staffing (job descriptions), Hiring policies/ job sharing, Volunteer policies, financial management and records keeping.

Consult with key developers of safe injection site for support and guidance.

Consult with allies in academia inclusive of criminologists, researcher and law students to determine the best legal course of action and to assess the feasibility of obtaining special exemption from the federal government. Action here will be identified and time lined.

Develop Health and safety Guidelines, operating policies, handbooks and training packages inclusive of safety and prevention tips.

Investigate the potential of an industry wide trade association with certification for workers in all areas of the industry in particular with regard to health, safety.

Explore the implementation of a sex worker’s complaints process to make accountable agencies that currently exploit workers.

Engage with community partners. Workers need a gathering place where they can feel safe coming together with their peers to discuss strategies or simply to socialize in an open

environment with like minded people. Social club by-laws should be amended to support the socialization of sex workers within the coop. Sex workers are currently excluded from being in social clubs.

Seek a community-based revision of the municipal by-laws in regard to the sex industry. Only through the lived experiences of the people affected can we address issues and barriers within the current system.

Ask the City of Vancouver for a cease and desist policy with regard to safe work spaces for sex workers. Recent “brothel busts” and targeting of strip clubs is unacceptable and is putting workers at risk. We ask that the community members affected must be consulted before city inspectors and police arbitrarily disrupt safe sex work venues and income for workers.

The Sex Worker Liaison position which was requested by PACE Society and sex worker’s a Police Services Board meeting in 1999 and appears to be currently staffed and needs to be defined and expanded. A police officer, while an asset in this position, should be supported to work in partnership with sex workers and community organizations. The lack of trust among sex workers and enforcement continues to exist, however hiring an active or former sex worker to work in collaboration with this officer will create a true liaison, where sex workers and community members can air concerns and seek support for harm reduction and initiatives. Additionally, individuals in this role will be accountable to the City of Vancouver, the VPD, community members and most importantly to sex workers.

Notes from a Colleague: Review of Academic Literature

Canadian Prostitution Laws

I agree with your assessment of the laws. We will need an exemption from s. 210, s. 211 & parts of 212. This should not be too onerous an obstacle to overcome in light of the safe injection site in Vancouver. A Cooperative could be marketed in the same way.

Brief review of Academic literature

In England, sex workers are able to run small cooperatives (up to 3 women but must be out of their own homes) without incurring criminal liability. Whittaker & Hart (1996) and Sanders (2005) have both examined the experiences of women working in this capacity. Some of their main findings were that violence is reduced when women are permitted to work in partnerships, off-street. Other findings included the fact that working out of a home space is not always the best solution as it may not be practical and it requires women to give up their privacy. Sanders (2005) found that landlords typically charge high rents of women who open such businesses and she found that there were considerable start-up costs that may be a major barrier for those who do not have access to funds to cover costs such as advertising, telephone, condoms, etc.

Kuo (2002) found that women who were to work in small cooperative arrangements in the Netherlands reported higher satisfaction with their work and increased levels of independence and control over their work. In the same article, Kuo cites a Netherlands study by Vanwesnebeeck which concluded that women who work out of small cooperatives seemed to be in better economic and social positions than non-sex-working women.

Harcourt et al (2005), after examining the sex industries in the various provinces in Australia, concluded that the ideal situation for female sex workers is to have the option to work in small cooperatives. They found that decriminalizing the industry was necessary in order to reduce violence and stigmatization, and that licensing can cause additional problems if not administered effectively.

I'm afraid that this is about all I could find on cooperatively run sex providers.

For more information on the impact of the various municipal and criminal laws, see Pivot Legal Society (2006). See Benoit & Millar (2001) for more information about the off-street industry in general and the forthcoming O'Doherty (2007!!) regarding violence in the off-street industry in Vancouver. John Lowman, Fran Shaver, Jaqueline Lewis and Eleanor Maticka-Tyndale are other Canadian academics who have written and researched extensively in this area.

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