

**Prostitution**  
**Perspectives**  
a collection of  
pragmatic and  
authoritative essays

*Collected for this publication by Jean du Plessis  
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# Prostitution Perspectives – a collection of pragmatic and authoritative essays

This publication was made necessary because of the acute shortage of information about the experiential world of those humans involved in buying and selling erotic gratification in South Africa. Whereas this social deviance, since antiquity described as a necessary evil, seems to be inherent in our society, it is ignored by legislators and denigrated by the academic world as the activities of lascivious capitalistic nymphomaniacs. The humans involved in this trade - the children, the destitute women, the exploiters, the pimps, the unbridled erotic needs of the men who offer money for phallic stimulation, the lonely men and women - are not given due consideration in literature.

Most of the papers collected herein were prepared for Conferences and reflects perspectives slightly removed from the usual. All these papers spring from the hearts and minds of academics who work with prostitutes every day - people who spend their time in the back streets, brothels and rehabilitation centres, learning from the women and girls currently involved in the commercial sex trade. What you will find here reflects not any particular philosophy such as Feminism, Humanitarianism or any specific religious perspective but rather a realism borne from the experiences of women and children.

Whilst this collection of essays and papers go a long way toward uncovering more of the experiential world of prostitution - only a comprehension of the sum total of this collection comes close to allowing one a glimpse into the existential reality of the men, women and children captive in its world.

## about the authors

**Adèle & Jean du Plessis**; founded The House in Hillbrow during 1990. They have been involved in retrieving and rehabilitating child prostitutes and old-child prostitutes from this area since then. They have been instrumental in making the phenomenon of child prostitution and intravenous drug addiction an issue for public and governmental discussion in South Africa, and are known activists, both locally and abroad, for the cause of the child prostitute. Both Jean and Adèle hold diplomas in theology and are also completing post-graduate courses in religious studies at Wits University.

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**Melissa Farley**; Ph.D. is a clinical and research psychologist from San Francisco, USA. She collaborated with several South Africans in collecting data which describes the violence experienced by prostitutes in Johannesburg and Cape Town. This information is currently being analysed, and will be available soon. Researchers and activists in Zambia, Thailand, Colombia, and Turkey are collaborating in this ongoing study of violence and post-traumatic stress disorder in prostituted women. Melissa is also a known activist for women's rights.

**Madonna Masemola**; is employed with The House and specialises in therapeutic dealings with clients both on the street and in residential care. She holds post-graduate qualifications in psychology from the University of the North.

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# Prostitution is a Hate Crime

(by Melissa Farley)

Some people believe that women freely choose to enter prostitution from a potpourri of nice job options. Others think that women experience sexual pleasure from prostitution. Another myth is that women become wealthy or "empowered" in prostitution. In spite of the evidence regarding coercion, battering, degradation, and terror in the lives of prostitutes, the myth that prostitution is glamorous or sexy persists.

These myths couldn't be farther from the truth. Norma Hotaling, my co-researcher, and I conducted interviews of 130 San Francisco prostitutes last year and in early 1995. 80% of the prostitutes we interviewed had been physically assaulted since entering prostitution - 54% of those assaults were by customers - 67% of our interviewees had been raped since entering prostitution - 45% of these were rapes by customers. Other research has shown that from 55% to 90% of prostitutes are sexually abused as children, often by more than one perpetrator. We know that members of the commercial sex industry recruit children into prostitution when they are, on the average, thirteen years old. Poverty and homelessness are major contributing factors to entering prostitution. 84% of the prostitutes we interviewed had been homeless at some point in their lives.

Myth also has it that prostitutes who work on the streets are very different from other prostitutes. This is an assumption which has not been adequately studied. For example, research has shown that 75% of women who are escort prostitutes have attempted suicide. In my clinical experience, all prostitutes suffer psychological damage from the harm which is intrinsic to prostitution.

Statistics can't provide a picture of the devastating psychological effects of being prostituted. In order to work as a prostitute, it is necessary to shut down emotionally. The person who is for sale, then, is actually a pretend-self. This provides psychological protection, in much the same way a political prisoner protects himself during torture. The problem is, however, that over time it becomes difficult for someone to switch back on emotionally. The emotionally distanced self takes over more and more of the private self.

Prostitution is not a pleasant sexual experience for prostitutes. In addition to shutting down emotionally, prostitutes must shut off sexually. When they choose to be sexually involved with someone they care about, it is usually impossible to get turned on. Relationship problems are common. Most prostitutes are unable to have orgasms with their chosen partners. Some have told me that it feels like their partners are tricks. Prostitutes experience a systematic destruction of the sexual self.

The hatred and contempt aimed at prostitutes can't be adequately described in words. Prostitutes are treated literally as if they were filth. As one woman told us: "I'm nothing, no one they [the johns] can feel connected to. I'm only the genitals that they use, like a blow-up doll. I'm just a piece of shit." It's not surprising that the level of hatred aimed at prostitutes causes them to hate themselves, to become depressed, and to frequently use drugs in order to avoid these feelings. It doesn't seem to be possible to work as a prostitute and not be emotionally numb or high on drugs.

Like combat veterans, prostitutes suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Symptoms of this disorder are: acute anxiety, depression, insomnia, irritability, flashbacks, emotional numbing as well as being emotionally hyperalert.

In our research interviews, 88% of San Francisco prostitutes told us that they wanted to get out of prostitution. They also told us that what they needed the most were (in order): 1) a home or a safe place; 2) job training; and 3) drug and alcohol treatment. These services must

be offered in an environment which is absolutely free of sexual harassment. Prostitutes also need peer support and crisis-oriented psychotherapy to help them deal with post-traumatic stress disorder.

What must happen in the United States and in South Africa is that prostitution must not be invisible any more. Those of us who are bystanders must recognise the harm done to women and children in prostitution, and speak out about it. Decriminalising prostitution simply makes prostitution invisible. Decriminalisation implies that the "problem about prostitution" is social stigma and needless arrests. In fact, the "problem" is that people in prostitution are raped, battered, and treated like things. We need to end prostitution, not make it easier for people to buy and sell children. We also must ensure that existing programs are funded, and social and medical services are provided to help those who wish to escape prostitution.

*Melissa Farley, Ph.D. is a clinical and research psychologist from San Francisco, USA. She collaborated with several South Africans in collecting data which describes the violence experienced by prostitutes in Johannesburg and Cape Town. This information is currently being analysed, and will be available soon. Researchers and activists in Zambia, Thailand, Colombia, and Turkey are collaborating in this ongoing study of violence and posttraumatic stress disorder in prostituted women.*

# Research which addresses prostitution as a human rights violation

(by Melissa Farley, Ph.D. (January 9, 1996))

Trauma research which focuses on human rights violations rather than clinical and theoretical issues must first articulate the nature of the human rights violation. In the case of prostitution, libertarian ideology obfuscates the harm.

The political and cultural climate surrounding prostitution in the United States:

In the public media of the United States, and even in some mental health circles, prostitution is not considered a human rights violation. This is because prostitution, pornography, strip clubs, massage parlours, and sex tourism are economically entwined, and represent a multi-billion dollar annual industry. In some countries, prostitution is not seen as a human rights violation because a large portion of the national economy is dependent on prostitution. Prostitution is not seen as a human rights violation because to do so would interfere with customers' access to prostitutes. Prostitution is not seen as a human rights violation because if prostitution were seen as intrinsically harmful to women, that awareness would interfere with men's dominance over women. This last idea is so important that I want to quote several expressions of it:

Andrea Dworkin: "*Male dominance means that the society creates a pool of prostitutes by any means necessary so that men have what men need to stay on top, to feel big, literally, metaphorically, in every way...*" (1993, Prostitution and Male Supremacy, Michigan Journal of Gender and Law, 1: 1-12)

Evelina Giobbe: "*Prostitution isn't like anything else. Rather, everything else is like prostitution because it is the model for women's condition.*" (1992, quoted by Margaret Baldwin in Split at the Root: Prostitution and Feminist Discourses of Law Reform, Yale Journal of Law and Feminism, 5: 47-120)

Mick LaSalle: "*[The prostitute] is a victim of every bad thing men do to women: physical and sexual abuse, economic oppression and abandonment.*" (Hollywood is hooked on hookers, San Francisco Sunday Examiner, December 3, 1995).

A primary goal for those of us concerned with the civil rights of prostituted women is to educate the public, about the following. Intrinsic to prostitution are these human rights violations: sexual harassment, economic bondage vulnerability to constant physical and sexual assault, being subjected to torturous body invasions which necessitate dissociation, being contemptuously treated like a thing rather than a person, and lack of access to services which would offer alternatives to prostitution.

Prostitution is frequently defined as a form of sex. From the perspective of the prostitute, prostitution at best might be called a means of survival: if you want a place to sleep, food to eat, and a way to briefly get off the street, you allow someone to sexually assault you. This is a human rights violation since people have the right to be safe, to have food and shelter, and to choose who they do or do not want to have sex with.

"Sex workers" pushed to media microphones by the industry which sells them, state that they are making a "choice" to work as prostitutes in a glamorous job for difficult economic times. So the trauma researcher must ask: how is it "choice" when she has been sexually assaulted and

defined as a whore since childhood, runs away at the age of 13, then gets recruited into prostitution by a coercive pimp, then gets addicted so she doesn't have to feel the pain, then has a child, then gets beaten up by her pimp/old man, and on and on. How is this a "choice?". It's not choice. It's a lifetime of human rights violations.

As in all situations which involve human rights abuse, the perpetrators of harm deliberately obscure the injury which they inflict. The term "sex work" was a media coup which brilliantly obscures the harm of prostitution. To call prostitution "sex work" is like calling lynching "rope stretching." It mystifies the harm, supports social denial regarding human rights violations, and keeps potential allies confused and silent. WHISPER, an organisation devoted to breaking this silence and ending the practice of prostitution, distributed a "job description" which demystifies the notion of prostitution as a pleasant career. (See Appendix A)

Although feminists wrote seventeen years ago about prostitution as objectification, exploitation, and targeting of women as a class in order to maintain men's dominance (Dworkin, 1979, Pornography: men possessing women), and prostitution as a human rights violation (Barry, 1979, Female Sexual Slavery), only recently have psychologists described prostitution as battering, rape and terrorism (Graham, with Rawlings and Rigsby, 1994, Loving to Survive: sexual terror, men's violence, and women's lives).

### **Research which defines prostitution as a human rights violation**

Those of us who view trauma research as intervention in human rights violations, are by definition, political activists. In San Francisco, we formed the San Francisco Alliance of Prostitutes and Health care Workers, which brought together survivors of prostitution, mental and physical health providers, and researchers. Our first goal was education about the harm of prostitution. Survivors and friends made quilt patches for prostitutes who had disappeared or who had been killed. The quilt has been shown at press conferences, used in demonstrations, and used as a community organising tool in several states. When the quilt is shown, the violence and human rights abuses of prostitutes are discussed.

In order to further document the human rights violations of prostitution, we conducted brief structured interviews of 130 prostitutes in San Francisco. We asked 23 questions about incidence of violence in prostitution, childhood physical and sexual abuse, and health problems. We also administered a 17 item PTSD checklist (Weathers, Litz, Herman, Huska and Keane, 1993, The PTSD Checklist (PCL): reliability, validity and diagnostic utility, Paper presented at 9th Annual Meeting of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, Oct. 24-27, San Antonio, Texas). The goal was to obtain more detailed documentation of human rights abuse suffered by prostitutes, including the incidence of PTSD. We also asked our subjects what they needed in order to get out of prostitution. The goal of this phase of the research was to ascertain what direct services were necessary. The results of this work are in press (Farley and Hotaling, Violence, prostitution, and post traumatic stress disorder).

Some of the findings of this study were as follows: 82% of the prostitutes in San Francisco had been physically assaulted in prostitution; 68% had been raped in prostitution; 46% of those raped had been raped by customers; 49% had pornography made of them in prostitution. 88% of the prostitutes we interviewed stated that they wanted to escape prostitution immediately. 84% reported current or past homelessness. 78% expressed a need for a home or safe place; 73% needed job training and 67% needed drug or alcohol treatment. The percentage of prostitutes in this sample meeting DSM-IV criteria for PTSD was comparable to help-seeking battered women and combat veterans with PTSD.

# Prostitution, violence and post-traumatic stress disorder

Melissa Farley and Norma Hotaling

NGO Forum, Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing

**A longer version of this manuscript has been submitted for publication - do not quote without written permission of: Melissa Farley, Ph.D., phone 415-922-4555 address: Box 16254, San Francisco, California 94116-0254 USA**

## **Introduction**

*"I wonder why I keep going to therapists and telling them I can't sleep and I have nightmares. They pass right over the fact that I was a prostitute and I was beaten with 2X4 boards, I had my fingers and toes broken by a pimp, and I was raped more than 30 times. Why do they ignore that?"*

a prostitution survivor, San Francisco, July 1995

In the current psychological and medical literature, discussion of the harm intrinsic to the act of selling one's body for sex is rarely mentioned. We view the experience of prostitution as the experience of traumatic stress. Many of the seemingly pathological behaviours of prostitutes, like hostages, and like other battered women, are survival strategies which make life possible in the next moment.

The experience of prostitution is the experience of being repeatedly sexually assaulted, being dominated, battered and terrorised. The Council for Prostitution Alternatives has reported that prostituted women were raped approximately once a week (Hunter, 1994). A Canadian Report on Prostitution and Pornography found that women and girls in prostitution had a mortality rate 40 times higher than the national average, (Baldwin, 1993).

The experience of prostitution is a series of events which may be categorised as stressors according to the DSM-IV diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). DSM-IV authors comment that PTSD may be especially severe or long lasting when the stressor is of human design (e.g. torture, rape).

Numerous populations who have experienced trauma have been assessed for incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder. Some types of trauma are more likely than others to lead to PTSD. These include homelessness, with its danger of assault and rape; rape; domestic battering; and being a hostage and tortured. Individuals who have experienced multiple stressors (such as prostitutes) are at higher risk for PTSD. We considered the similarities between prostitutes, on the one hand, and hostages and torture victims. Allodi (1994) describes trauma specific to hostages as follows: isolation from contacts with the outside world, including their own families; poor material conditions; inadequate health care; beatings and physical abuse, particularly if one tries to escape or disobey absurd or dishonourable requests; uncertainty about the future; feelings of powerlessness and of being used as a pawn in a game over which one has no control; feelings of worthlessness and dehumanisation; conflicts and ambivalence toward other hostages, one's captors, and one's own government; and displaced feelings of rage and reproach since it is not safe to express these feelings directly to one's captors.

The Stockholm syndrome may explain paradoxical aspects of the traumatic bonding seen

between prostitutes and their pimp-captors. This syndrome is a psychological strategy which permits emotional and physical survival in conditions of captivity. Graham et al (1994) have clarified the complex relationship between captives and their captors by proposing that the following psychological characteristics of the Stockholm syndrome also apply to battered women, including prostitutes: bonding with one's captor; intense gratefulness for small kindnesses; denial of violence and harm; hypervigilance with respect to the captor's needs and his perspective on the world; seeing the captor as protective; extreme difficulty leaving one's captor, even after physical release has occurred; and long-term fear of retaliation.

### **Method**

The researchers recruited subjects from four different areas in San Francisco where prostitutes are bought and sold. Some areas were known to be places where predominantly homeless, drug-using prostitutes worked; other areas were known for youth or transgendered prostitutes; still other areas of San Francisco were known to be locations where women who had been trafficked from other cities worked as prostitutes. We included male and transgender prostitutes as well as women prostitutes in our sample. In order to assess PTSD, we used a 17-item self-rating scale which corresponds to the DSM III-R symptoms of PTSD. Subjects also responded to a 23-item questionnaire designed by the researchers.

### **Results**

Many of these subjects expected a "health survey" or a "safe sex survey." They had been previously interviewed many times regarding their sexual practices. Some expressed surprise that the questions referred to violence in their lives, and that we asked what they needed in order to leave prostitution.

### **Gender, race and age**

Of the 130 subjects recruited for this study, 75% (97) were women; 13% (18) were men; and 12% (15) were transgender. 39% (51) were white; 33% (43) were African-American; 18% (24) were Latina; 6% (8) were Asian or Pacific Islander. 5% (4) described themselves as of "mixed" race or left the question blank. Mean age was 30.9 years. Ages ranged from 14 to 61 years.

The following results are percentages of subjects answering a given question. The number of subjects who answered a given question varied. The actual number of subjects responding affirmatively is given in parentheses.

### **Current Violence:**

#### **Physical Assault**

82% (105) of these subjects reported having been physically assaulted since entering prostitution.

19% (25) reported having been physically assaulted in the past week.

20% (26) reported having been physically assaulted in the past month.

45% (58) reported having been physically assaulted in the past year.

55% (71) reported having been physically assaulted by customers.

30% (38) reported having been physically assaulted by a non customer.

#### **Physical Threat**

88% (115) reported having been physically threatened in prostitution.

33% (37) reported having been physically threatened in the past week.

30% (34) reported having been physically threatened in the past month.

39% (44) reported having been physically threatened in the past year.

83% (102) reported having been threatened with a gun, knife or weapon since entering prostitution.

#### Threat with Weapon

- 18% (21) had been threatened with a weapon in the past week.
- 25% (27) had been threatened with a weapon in the past month.
- 56% (61) had been threatened with a weapon in the per year.

#### Rape

- 68% (106) had been raped since entering prostitution.
- 48% (56) had been raped more than 5 times in prostitution.
- 46% (59) had been raped by "johns" or customers.
- 36% (46) had been raped by a non-customer.

#### Pornography

- 32% (41) reported that they had been upset by someone trying to get them to do what they had seen in pornographic videos or magazines.
- 49% (63) reported that pornography was made while they worked as prostitutes.

#### Homelessness

- 84% (109) reported current or past homelessness.

#### Violence in Childhood:

- 57% (73) reported that they had been sexually abused as children. The mean number of perpetrators of sexual assault in childhood was 2.
- 32% (17) reported that rape was their first sexual experience.
- 26% (19) reported that their first sexual experience was with a relative.
- 16% (12) reported that their first sexual experience was with an adult friend of the family
- 27% (20) stated that their first sexual experience was with a person five or more years older than themselves.
- 27% (20) stated that their first sexual experience was with a "kid my own age."
- 49% (36) reported that as children, they were hit or beaten by a caregiver until they had bruises or were injured in some way.

#### Physical health problems:

- 50% (65) of these subjects stated that they had physical health problems.
- 37% (48) stated that they had no health problems.
- 15% (19) left the physical health question unanswered.

#### Subjects' descriptions of their health problems included:

- sickle cell anaemia - 2% (1);
- arthritis - 3% (2);
- hip replacement from arthritis -2% (1)
- bad hip - 2% (1);
- bad back - 2% (1);
- bad knees - 5% (3);
- fused ankle -2% (1);
- plastic kneecap -2% (1);
- HIV - 6% (4);
- constant threat of HIV - 2% (1);
- heart problems - 8% (5);
- stroke- 2% (1);
- high blood pressure - 2% (1);
- lung problems or asthma 9% (6);

liver disorders- 6% (4) 'chronic hepatitis -3% (2);  
liver cancer -2% (1);  
kidney problems -2% (1);  
pancreatitis -2% (1)  
can not have children -2% (1);  
pregnant 6% (4);  
vaginal spotting -2% (1);  
seizures or epilepsy 3% (2);  
thyroid problem -2% (1);  
hypoglycaemia - 2% (1);  
need glasses because of poor eyesight 6% (4);  
need dental work - 5% (3);  
psoriasis- 2% (1);  
ulcers -2% (1);  
tumour -2% (1)  
abscesses -3% (2);  
scars- 2% (1)  
homeless [defined as a health problem] -2% (1);  
no health problems at this moment - 3% (2);  
too many health problems to go into - 2% (1)

**Many subjects described acute mental distress in response to our question about physical health problems:**

depression -3% (2);  
manic-depression -3% (2);  
bipolar disorder -2% (1);  
attention-deficit disorder -2% (1);  
numbness- 2% (1);  
lack of memory -2% (1);  
nerve problems -2% (1);  
emotional problems -2% (1)  
currently suicidal -3% (2);  
attempted suicide the previous week -2% (1);  
would like immediate admission to a hospital for an acute emotional problems or drug addiction or both -17% (11);

Many health problems were a result of extreme violence.

arm hurts from having been shot several years ago in a drive-by shooting -2% (1),  
scar across her neck and forehead where a john had cut her after kidnapping her -2% (1);  
hips were crushed when she jumped out of a car during an attempted kidnap -2% (1);  
foot was broken from trying to get away -2% (1).

Some respondents commented on the intense misogyny which they were subjected to. One woman said that she thinks about the past all the time: "it started with my brother; there was a lot of hatred of women there. One 27 year old woman told us she had been on the street since she was 9 years old. In this period of time, she had developed the necessary capacity to dissociate from her body, treating her body as a separate self. She told us: "You have to take care of the body all the time - or it takes care of you." Also expressing this somatic dissociation, another woman told us: "the body is physically insane. It does things that I don't have any control of sometimes."

## Drug and alcohol Problems

75% (95) of these respondents stated that they had a drug problem.

27% (34) stated that they had an alcohol problem. The average duration of the drug or alcohol problem was 6.5 years.

## Responses to the question: "what do you need?"

In rank order

88%: leave prostitution

78%: home or safe place

73%: job training

67%: drug or alcohol addiction treatment

58%: health care

50%: peer support

49%: self-defence training

48%: personal counselling or support

44%: legalised prostitution

10.43%: legal assistance

34%: child care

28%: physical protection from a pimp

## Post traumatic stress disorder checklist results

On the average, our subjects scored at PTSD symptom level for 2 of the 4 DSM III-R criteria for persistent, intrusive re-experiencing of trauma. On the average, subjects scored at PTSD symptom level ratings for 6 of the 7 DSM III-R criteria for numbing of general responsiveness and persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma. Finally, on the average, they scored at PTSD symptom level for 6 of the 6 criteria for persistent symptoms of hyperarousal.

41% of the 130 prostitutes in this sample met criteria for a diagnosis of PTSD. We looked at the effects of gender and race on level of violence experienced in prostitution, and on PTSD checklist scores. Women and transgender prostitutes experienced significantly more physical assaults and rapes in prostitution than men prostitutes. We did not discover significant differences in physical assaults and rapes on the basis of race. Neither race nor gender affected PTSD checklist overall scores

## Discussion

Extreme violence was evident in the lives of these 130 people working as prostitutes in San Francisco. The literature to date has not described this aspect of prostitutes' lives. It is important to address not only the violence suffered by this group of people, but the sequel of the violence. 82% reported physical assaults in prostitution; 88% reported physical threats in prostitution; 83% had been threatened with a weapon in prostitution; and 68% had been raped in prostitution. A corresponding 78% expressed the need for a safe place to go to.

Almost half (49%) of this group of prostitutes had pornography made of them while they worked in prostitution. Often, pornography was used in ways that disturbed and frightened them: a third (32%) reported to us that they had been upset by customers' use of pornography in attempting to coerce them into violent sex or torture. 84% of our sample of prostitutes reported current or past homelessness. 88% expressed a desire to get out of prostitution; 73% expressed a desire for job training; and 67% stated a need for drug or alcohol treatment. This group of people obviously do not see prostitution as a freely-made job choice - They wanted to get out. Many reported difficulties in accessing resources that might help them escape prostitution. For example, they did not feel comfortable in drug and alcohol treatment facilities where they were sexually harassed. One woman Said: "We need a place to sit down and talk, like the men have at AA meetings. Just to talk." Some battered women's or homeless shelters

only offer services to those who are not intoxicated, which prevented addicted prostitutes from entering.

Prostitution is almost always a continuation of abuse which began much earlier, usually at home. Almost all prostitutes have history of incest or other childhood sexual assault or both. The 57% incidence of sexual abuse as children reported by these subjects is probably low. Studies have shown that from 55% to 90% of prostitutes report such a history. Several subjects commented that they didn't want to think about their pasts when responding to the Questions about childhood. In the middle of ongoing trauma, it was probably too painful to review childhood abuse.

Many subjects seemed profoundly uncertain as to just what "abuse" is. When asked why she answered "no" to the Question regarding childhood sexual abuse, one woman whose history was known to one of the interviewers, said: "Because there was no force, and besides I didn't even know what it was then - I didn't know it was sex."

Denial may be affecting these subjects' ability or willingness to report their trauma history. The presence of pimps while our data was being collected probably contributed to a minimising of distress.

As Herman (1992) writes of the sexually abused child: "She must find a way to form primary attachments to caretakers who are either dangerous or, from her perspective, negligent. She must find a way to develop a sense of basic trust and safety with caretakers who are untrustworthy and unsafe. She must develop a sense of self in relation to others who are helpless, uncaring, or cruel. She must develop a capacity for bodily self-regulation in an environment in which her body is at the disposal of others' needs, as well as a capacity for self-soothing in an environment without solace. She must develop the capacity for initiative in an environment which demands that she brings her will into complete conformity with that of her abuser. And ultimately, she must develop a capacity for intimacy out of an environment which defines her as a whore and a slave."

And that environment continues to define her as a whore and slave - many women never escape it. Some authors have noted the positive correlation between substance abuse and prostitution. It is not clear whether drug abuse tends to precede prostitution, or whether drugs were used after entering prostitution in order to numb out the pain of working as a prostitute. In many, it is likely that drug and alcohol abuse begins after incest or childhood sexual assault, as a form of self-medication for childhood PTSD.

Male (13%) and transgender (12%) prostitutes may be included in our sample in greater percentage than they are actually represented in San Francisco, however, we wanted their input, since reports of their experiences in prostitution, especially transgender prostitutes', are rarely available. Women and transgender prostitutes experienced significantly more violence (rapes and physical assaults) than did male prostitutes. To be female - or to be perceived as female - is to be more intensely targeted for violence.

We believe that our sample was racially representative of prostitutes in San Francisco. Many of our subjects described their race and ethnicity in great detail: for example, Cuban/Italian; Hawaiian/German; Indian/French/Black; Indian/Italian. Racism is sexualised in systems of prostitution: customers purchase race and ethnicity as well as gender.

41% of the 130 prostitutes in this sample met criteria for a PTSD diagnosis. The incidence of reported PTSD among battered women in shelters or battered women seeking help varies from 45% to as high as 84%. The incidence of current PTSD in male Vietnam veterans is 15%, although the incidence is higher (35%) in men with high war-zone exposure.

Studies of PTSD do not usually measure symptoms in populations in the process of being traumatised, as we did. Because of this active trauma, dissociative amnesia was probably intensified. We predict that if our subjects were offered safety, overall PTSD symptoms would initially increase because it would be safe to allow oneself to experience them. The PTSD symptoms from which these prostitutes suffered could be categorised as complex post traumatic stress disorder (Herman, 1992) which includes a history of subjection to totalitarian control over a prolonged period, with alterations in: affect regulation, consciousness, self-perception, perception of perpetrator, relations with others, and systems of meaning.

We recommend further study of the physical harm of prostitution, its effects on PTSD, and its effects on dissociation and multiplicity. Without an understanding of the psychological harm resulting from prostitution, treating prostitution survivors is impossible. There is an urgent need to more fully articulate the psychological harm of prostitution. A recent medical debate compared prostitution with selling one's kidneys: "The point about buying a pint of blood, or a kidney; renting someone's body for an hour or two; or living off other people's ill-health is that all these are forms of exploitation based on making a commodity of human beings." (Brecher, 1990). Feminists have understood prostitution as exploitation, objectification and targeting of women as a class in order to maintain men's power over women in general (Dworkin, 1979, 1993), and have also understood prostitution to be a violation of basic human rights (Barry, 1979, 1995).

Recently, Pederson (1994) suggested that an interest in controlling the spread of HIV has motivated a trend toward legitimising prostitution as just another job. Legalising prostitution - a process of registering and tracking those who work as prostitutes - results in states or municipalities acting as pimps. Three of the women in our sample had worked in a locale where prostitution is legal. Preferring to work on the streets of San Francisco, they all stated that their lives in legal brothels were unbearable.

Although a discussion of decriminalisation or legalisation of prostitution is beyond the scope of this paper, two comments should be made. First, legalisation of prostitution would further normalise the harm, exploitation, and human rights violations which we have described. We oppose legalisation of prostitution. We do not support legal prosecution of prostitutes themselves. However, we do advocate prosecution, or "criminalization" of traffickers, pimps, and customers of prostitutes.

Normalising prostitution denies the harm caused by prostitution, and facilitates continued harm. Except for discussing STD's, those who wish to legitimise or legalise prostitution avoid discussing the harm caused to prostitutes by their work.

Although HIV has certainly created a public health crisis, we would propose that being sexually assaulted throughout childhood, and being physically and sexually assaulted on one's job, "and having a "job" in which the incidence of attempted suicide may be as high as 75%" (Hunter, 1993, study of escort prostitution) - this too is a public health crisis.

Trauma research has been criticised for pathologising the victim instead of attending to social attitudes and behaviours which cause trauma. We must focus our attention on changing a social system which makes it possible for girls to become prostitutes. We must not only stop the abuse of children, but also the mechanisms of dissociation and denial which collude with that abuse.

Dissociation and denial normalise prostitution. The trend toward normalising prostitution

normalises hatred of women and racism, and trivialises poverty and violence, such as that described here.

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# **The Prostitution Dilemma - International Trends Facing up to it.**

**(By Jean du Plessis - Presentation to the Gauteng Government, October 1996)**

I stand here before you in sympathy for the grave task ahead of you. I will try my utmost to share with you what I have learned in six years working on the streets of Hillbrow, retrieving and healing young prostitutes, burying more than 200 girls, and from years of studying the phenomena both locally and abroad.

I was requested to share with you information about How the rest of the world deals with the issue of prostitution. This information must assist you to make a South African decision that will directly touch the lives of thousands of women and children who will be providing themselves as sexual commodities, to be used by about 2% of our local males, and by scores of tourists.

Seen through the lens of a global perspective, your task to regulate and control this trade in genitals and erotic gratification is a most sordid one.

One thing that you must understand clearly before considering this issue of controlling prostitution is this: You are not tasked to institute control measures for this trade because of the problems caused by women. It is not the women who go and solicit sex for money in areas where men convene - it is the men leaving their areas of residence and work, who come to where the destitute women are. It is not the women who abuse, murder, rape and disfigure the men - it is the men that are the perpetrators. It is not the women who solicit children for sex - the men are the perverts prowling the streets for destitute children. It is the men with the money that prey on the women in need. It is the men with the animal erotic need, who offer women and children payment if they should stimulate his penis until gratified. It is thus a problem caused by a small number of dysfunctional men that bring you here. It is the women and children who are on their knees, pleading for your protection and shelter the depravity of the men in our society and from their destitute state.

Prostitution is the most expressive case of an abuse of power - something South Africa is not unaccustomed to. Many black people in this country have experienced being powerless under the previous regime. Most black people in South Africa knows how power can be abused, and many a black person can remember how they had to prostitute their dignity, values and customs to the previous regime - just to survive.

Commercial prostitution is also a classic patriarchal crime and speaks volumes about the inequality of women and children in our society. See for yourself - how does society view the prostitute? According to society she is a bad woman, devoid of any honour, and she is a capitalistic nymphomaniac - a slut that decided since she likes sex so much that she can at least make money from it. Men and women are culturally conditioned to place all the blame for prostitution on women. Well ... this is like saying that black people were powerless in the previous regime because they liked it. They liked manual labour so much that they decided to

make money from it. It is also similar to saying that all black people steal and that they all look the same - when you say that all prostitutes are bad and like their work.

The patriarchal crime is just this - A man that was with a prostitute is viewed as more of a man, but the woman prostitute is viewed as less of a woman.

The developed world understands that in the games played out in human relationships there will always be some form of a quid pro quo aspect in sexual relations. In many areas it is culturally expected, right or wrong, for a male to flash his peacock feathers (his earning potential) to attract the attention of the female. The female in turn shows off her good childbearing hips, ample milk reserves and strong working legs. In a primitive sense this animalistic game may be understood to be according to the rules of Natural Selection, where the most promising of the species attract and multiply with each other.

This social game is inherent in human nature and is an essential aspect of our ubuntu. It is this social game that has for ages gone by, given rise to the most beautiful love songs, poetry, stories and fables that our children's children will want to hear. The story of love, of a courting couple, of love found and love lost, of romance, passion and lust, is surely one of the most prominent aspects of being human. But when this game goes wrong, and it does, it becomes a danger to society. It finds its expression in certain acts that we label sometimes as crimes of passion - murder, rape, sexual abuse, incest and commercial sex.

What you are tasked to regulate is not the erotic game of life – no, that is a beautiful thing - you are tasked to regulate a taxable commercial activity in human genitals and deviant erotic gratification - a humanitarian crime. Some myths have it that prostitution is a victimless crime, suggesting that no-one is despoiled in this commercial activity. If your child had to tell people that her mother works as a prostitute - then her life, your life, the lives of your brothers and sisters and your family will be adversely affected. If your brother or sister, your wife or husband, or your children, are prostitutes - that crime will render you and many others in the family victims. Anyone here today, whose child has to tell friends and teachers at school that her mother works as a prostitute, you will understand that prostitution is a crime in which the family, loved ones and society suffer the consequences of the crime.

In some Eastern countries where women and children have very little social significance, prostitution is often legal or decriminalised and brothels are a commonplace service for the sexually deviant. The stories of human misery and horror that plays itself out in these places were main features at the recent Stockholm congress against child prostitution. Why is it that there is sympathy and concern with child victims of commercial prostitution - but three years later, when the 15 year old child turns 18, she is called a woman, and is regarded to have consented to the career. Then she is regarded to be the mythical Capitalistic Nymphomaniac, the slut that serves the affluent males who need deviant sex? It is well understood in psychology today that most prostitutes resulted from abusive childhood and that they were victims then and they are victims now.

### **Some international treaties and conventions**

About 70 nations signed 1949 Convention on the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others. In this convention the procurer, rather than the prostitute, is the target. It commits nations to prevent prostitution and rehabilitate prostitutes.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human rights states that - No one shall be held in servitude, and No one be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also states that, - No one shall be held in servitude, and - No one be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The 1981 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women led to the 1995 Beijing platform wherein Art Six states: - State parties shall take appropriate measures including legislation, to Suppress all forms of traffic in women and Exploitation of prostitution of women (and girls).

Generally in the Western world prostitution is regarded as an antisocial phenomenon. Thus, something that does exist but is not regarded as a social good. For these reasons prostitution is still not legal in the Netherlands, or in the USA. In the Netherlands and many other countries the sex trade is only conditionally tolerated and is highly controlled but is not legal. Where prostitution has been successfully decriminalised it is operated under stringent controls with regards to licensing and zoning.

Along with prostitution the peripheral trades of drugs and pornography are always present. Prostitution is a package. It is part of a mind-set. It never comes in isolation and is always wrapped in opaque wrappers of deviant sensual extremes - this is the package you are asked to unwrap, unpack and control. This conference should have included discussions of these peripheral deviancies - the drugs and the pornography, in order to properly inform you of what you are unpacking and what you are about to tolerate.

One thing that is not tolerated and is acted upon by even the most liberal of these states is the ever present distasteful aspect of the vulture - the pimp. This, almost global attitude, of non-tolerance of the middle men, the business people profiting from the degradation of the women and youth, is a humanitarian stand taken by civilised society. These business people are viewed as criminals. Brothels are viewed with major suspicion. Experience has proved that these places potentially harbour children and are abusive to women. It profits only the fat cat pimps. It makes sense that, if prostitution is viewed as less than the ideal, that fat cat middle persons should not profit from the degradation and misery of the women and girls in the trade. This is one of your major challenges - to regulate this deviance in such a way as to reduce the harm and not to profit the unscrupulous and slave traders.

In Australia where prostitution is legal and the Law is so well written that it serves as a muse to some local legal minds - the reality on the street sings a different tune. Australia should be studied - as a mistake, not as an example. In reality the Australian government committed the crime of turning their backs on the women and children in the game. They created a situation wherein the unscrupulous middle men form powerful alliances and control the game as a racket. Sydney is today the pimp heaven, but it is still hell for the women and children. A similar situation is developing in our country.

In Gauteng the agencies and brothels charge the girls on average R250 per day to work on their premises. They rent out rooms at R70 per time. They fine the girls an average of R150 for spending too much time with a client or for not coming to work on time. The full daily rate is charged if the girls do not come to work the day. The customer is also charged a cover charge or an agency fee to be on the premises. The girls end up working off their debts and they get entrapped. They run away owing the agency money, and must move town for her own safety. One girl thus earns her brothel pimp an average of R5 000 per month - just in fees she pays. A brothel with ten girls earns a fortune from the misery of these girls.

Ask the SAP representatives here how difficult it is to bust a brothel. They make so much money that they outwit the police with regards to security measures and they outwit the Law with highly skilled and highly paid attorneys. To retrieve children and abused girls from these places are not only too dangerous but is almost impossible. Why do the agencies have cartel wars? Why do they plant bombs into one another's premises and why is it that Brixton Murder

and Robbery have open (and lost) files on most of these operators and hundreds of girls who died in the course of duty? Because the money is so big that greed drives them overboard. You are charged to tolerate and reduce the harm of a social deviance - the depravity of a trade in erotic gratification, be aware that you guard against the depravity of the vultures burning with greed. It is enough that the State becomes the pimp - taxing the proceeds of the prostitutes' earnings from renting out her soul. Do not allow yourselves to enrich the middle men in the trade and do not start thinking that these mafia-type operators will allow a labour union of prostitutes to function at their cost.

Dr. Melissa Farley, an American researcher concerned with global issues of prostitution has produced (and is still producing), a series of studies regarding the psycho-social experiential world of the prostitute. She has done comparative studies of Turkey, Colombia, San Francisco, Zambia, Thailand and South African prostitutes. Some of her studies are published in THE HOUSE's book available for this conference. I would like to read to you some of her findings, but please study her very important contributions to this topic in the book. Some of the results of the studies show that (and I quote her):

80% of the prostitutes we interviewed had been physically assaulted since entering prostitution - 54% of those assaults were by customers. 67% of our interviewees had been raped since entering prostitution - 45% of these were rapes by customers. Other research has shown that from 55% to 90% of prostitutes are sexually abused as children, often by more than one perpetrator. We know that members of the commercial sex industry recruit children into prostitution when they are, on the average, thirteen years old. Poverty and homelessness are major contributing factors to entering prostitution. 84% of the prostitutes we interviewed had been homeless at some point in their lives.

In view of the abusive nature of this trade many nations have attempted to find regulations and control measures that will sufficiently reduce the harm of this unfortunate social deviance. Of all those systems we have studied and compared, and evaluated for their possible application in a South African context, we have found the Dutch system to be the most humane, the most transparent, dignified and with the least possibility of harbouring abuse. I will briefly outline the mechanics of this system in the following five minutes - but please study the full version of the story in the book THE HOUSE has published for this conference. There I have a translation of a Dutch booklet printed by the Utrecht province on how they control prostitution so effectively.

The Dutch, with their particular pragmatism and realism, understands the fact that there will always be two types of commercial prostitution.

The one is for a client who needs erotic satisfaction that must appear closer to the natural setting. He is prepared to pay more money for the use of a person that dresses sexy and he needs a room with a bed.

The other is the ever present aspect catering for the client who desires a more unpretentious, cheaper, quicker gratification and is prepared to do it in his car - with a person who needs the money more desperately and will provide the service at a very low rate. The women and children involved in this aspect of prostitution are the drug addicts and other very desperate people who cannot muster the discipline to part with the money to rent a room for the day. These destitute people are usually referred to as 'street walkers', and they are the ones doing business in the client's car that is parked in some secluded spot. They are usually the ones being raped, abused and murdered since they are so vulnerable.

The Dutch started, and other countries have followed, to create 'red light zones' where this trade is conditionally tolerated. As was mentioned earlier, it is not legal in the Netherlands, and outside of the limits of toleration these activities are prosecuted with the full force of the Law. To cater for the two areas of need in commercial prostitution two distinct services are provided by the authorities. For the type of prostitution that demands higher fees, a room and hygienic conditions - these rooms are provided at a daily rental. The room is typically about 12 m<sup>2</sup>, is equipped with a shower, hand basin, and a bed. The street front of the room has a large window wherein the solicitor sits in advertising of her commodities. This system allows the prostitute to be self employed and to work in an area where the trade is concentrated. A limited number of rooms may be made available by the authorities and regular health inspections can be maintained. The prostitute may not live on the premises and is placed in a position where she lives outside of the toleration zone and can maintain a normal after hours household and private life. There is no place for a pimp in this system and these would-be operators are left to run strip clubs, porn shops and pubs in the toleration zone. No solicitation is allowed on the streets. It is inevitably in this area that the drug trade will flourish. Strict policing and judicial action limits the trade to the toleration limitations. The Utrecht city provides about 50 such rooms - they have a population of 250 000. This is the most manageable, cost effective and humanitarian system we have studied.

To cater for, and responsibly control, the other aspect of prostitution, that of the street walker, a separate arrangement is made in another zone that suits the needs. A specific street is demarcated to be the tolerated 'beat'. The hours of business are officially regulated to be between 9 o'clock in the evening and 2 o'clock in the morning. More public telephones and more street lights are provided to this street. To control responsible traffic flow, the street is a one way and on a circular route. Anyone who has been in Hillbrow in the early morning hours will know that the traffic jams are a danger to the safety of the girls and the vehicles alike. On a particular spot of the circular route a parking area is provided by the local authority. In the Dutch they officially refer to this place as an Afwerkplaats, to risk a direct translation it could either be a Wanking Zone or a Relief Zone. The Afwerkplaats is equipped with parking bays partially enclosed on three sides. This allows the necessary privacy without compromising safety. After doing business, the client leaves the Afwerkplaats, and following the circular route, passes by the 'beat' again. This adds to improved security.

On the 'beat' where the girls stand, the local authority parks a large truck every night of the week. The truck is equipped with a toilet, shower, lounge, coffee machine, counselling room and is staffed by a social worker and an auxiliary worker. This is the essential aspect of the service.

The Dutch officials we have visited warned us that this system requires strict policing and swift legal action to control. We were also warned that any such a system that takes responsible action will meet with initial opposition from the trade. The benefits of the system are multiple and cannot be explained in this brief overview - but it definitely outweighs the losses. The magnificent results can be seen in almost every Dutch city.

Apart from the Dutch model, which I regard to be an excellent solution that deserves serious consideration, there is one more suggestion I would like you to keep in mind. This simply involves two aspects, licensing and zoning. Since it is the men who are the danger, and since it is almost exclusively a male trade, catering to the needs of a small percentage of males - licence them. To licence only the women would be double discrimination. Licensing those who have proved to be the potentially abusive elements - the purchasers - the men, will provide the local authorities with a searchable database in the event that a crime was committed against a prostitute.

Since the men are the powerful ones, the ones with the money, they can pay a fair licence fee and they can pay for clinical test to prove that they are not carriers of STDs and other

infectious diseases. Licensing of the women should be made easier and must be done with discretion for their vulnerable positions, as is shown in research.

Furthermore, geographical zones must and can be facilitated to contain the trade in a specific area. Brothels and middle men must be abolished, and rooms to work from, and a safe street beat must be provided as the only place where prostitution is tolerated. These must be controlled and rented out by the local councils, to prevent exploitation of the women. The 'prostitution zone' will also become a sex trade area where porn shops and clubs will congregate.

At these licensing offices information can be disseminated about the laws and about the mechanics of indulging in the sex trade. Health issues and welfare considerations can also be discussed with applicants. Fines for men who solicit without a licence should be high enough to fund the local authorities' policing of the trade.

In conclusion

If you regard prostitution to be a normal respectable career and treat it as such - please keep in mind to include career training in the school curricula. Teenage prostitution is a very attractive option for thousands of matriculated girls and boys who will not be getting other employment. The media and unscrupulous traders will downplay the negative aspects of this job created by the government and will emphasise the money that can be made. Movies such as *Pretty Woman* and *Striptease* go a long way to creating a culture of prostitution in our society - but based on dangerous myths, your job would then be to teach the children about responsible prostitution at school.

If you regard a child of 18 year old to be adequately equipped to make such a career decision, also address the issue of emancipation and job creation for our school leaving youth. Remember that a person of 19 years of age is not trusted to engage in a legal contract or get married without parental consent - the question whether this immature person should be given a choice to work on a career that is proved to be emotionally and physically one of the most dangerous, should be considered.

Keep in mind that the average prostitute has deviant sex with at least 1 000 customers per year. If your daughter, sister or mother gets involved in the trade, before THE HOUSE can retrieve her from these traps, in two years she has experienced at least 2 000 acts of deviant sex with about 1 200 different men.

Please do not forget that the current SA scenario fosters a situation wherein the most common, and most abusive pimp, is a lesbian women.

You are not allowed to ask for HIV tests. Some estimates are that about 45% of prostitutes are HIV+. The House distributes about 300 000 condoms each year to prostitutes - but we still see HIV taking its toll. According to Law, no one may say a word about an HIV+ prostitute that continuous to work. In fact, few rational people will expect these poor women to just stop working and suffer in poverty and drug addiction.

You may not consider the registration of the women without giving due consideration to registering the men. Men too can apply to the authorities for a licence to use a prostitute.

You may consider any control measure but not without considering the policing, health, education, justice and welfare resources necessary to make it a humanitarian action.

Do not be misled to believe that prostitutes will form a successful labour union. Nowhere in the world is it successful, the trade is marked with depravity and greed, the weak will always be exploited.

And finally, please do not be misled by pimps who are in the game to benefit financially from the denigration and humiliation of our mothers, daughters and sisters - stand firm to produce a serious humanitarian solution.

Thank You. And God bless on your difficult way forward.

# Translation of the Dutch booklet "Beleid Tippelprostitutie - Utrecht" (Freely Translated, October 1996 by Margaretha de Hilster, Johannesburg)

## POLICY - WALKING PROSTITUTION UTRECHT Police - Utrecht community

### **Introduction**

As for many other (average size) cities walking-prostitution created a sizable problem for Utrecht. Since the adoption of a new policy, whereby a walking-area was allocated to the prostitutes, the situation improved considerably.

From the police and the community of Utrecht as well as inland and from overseas considerable positive interest was shown for the walking prostitution policy of Utrecht. The many forms of enquiries gave rise to put this brochure together. In this brochure an oversight is given as to how this brochure came about, what it contains, how it was legally contained within the law and what the present situation is.

### **Motivation for changing the policy**

According to the General Police Ordinance, street prostitution was formally prohibited - although it was generally known that prostitutes would recruit their clients from the streets in the northern parts of the centre of Utrecht. The street prostitution concentrated around the Van Asch van Wijckskade (see Map 1). It is situated in an area near the existing centre of Utrecht. The problem was with the constant coming and going of cars, slamming of doors and presence of people in the streets. The area residents were being confronted with the negative effects of the street prostitution day and night.

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*Map 1: The northern part of the city centre and the area of the Europe lane are highlighted.*

With the increase of use of hard drugs in the '70s the construction of the group prostitutes also changed. More and younger drug addicts joined the scene, who saw 'walking' as a necessity to earn the money for their addiction. Because of that, the character of the problem also changed. More drug traders settled in the area.

The police spent a lot of their time combating the walkers and maintaining of the public order. Extra manpower was deployed to minimise the nuisance as much as possible for the residents, but only with temporary effect. The action of the police was necessarily repressive. To establish contact with prostitutes was scarcely possible. By means of letters and protest actions the residents were pleading for stricter rules to combat the walkers. In September 1984 the residents had enough and strengthened their appeal by the cordoning off of the Van Asch van Wijckskade.

This way it was impossible for the prostitutes to pursue their normal activities in the area.

Because the average age of the prostitutes had decreased, the police dealing with children and moral behaviour became necessarily more involved with the combating of the problem. Because that department of the police force were - from the beginning - focused on this problem, they were able to assist because of their contact with the prostitutes. The police then developed the idea to determine an area where it was allowed to 'walk' but only under certain conditions.

Police and area residents demanded from the local community management that a solution to the problem had to be found. The local community management realised that the situation could no longer be tolerated and that a structural solution for the problem had to be found.

### **A new policy**

With the searching for a solution - the fact that prostitution will keep on existing as long as there is a demand for it - was clear and the prohibiting of 'walking' would not let it go away. Practice showed previously that when prostitutes are being sent away by the police they will simply find another area to operate from. After things have calmed down, they will come back to their old location again. To prohibit walking-prostitution in an entire city will not solve the problem - it will indeed encourage the illegal walking in different locations.

The object of the new policy then was, not to ban the walkers altogether - but to find a way where it could be controlled. By means of setting up new rules and regulations the residents of Utrecht tried to get a grip on the situation.

### **The area**

After careful consideration within the managing body of Utrecht, it was decided to make walking-prostitution illegal in the whole of Utrecht except for the one area which would be allocated by the community management. This formed the basis of the new policy. This way it was clearly stipulated where the prostitutes could and could not walk.

The area had to be chosen with great care and sensitivity. To prevent causing the same nuisance for residents this area could not be a residential area. Also from the perspective of the prostitutes some criteria had to be taken into account.

In the end 5 criteria were formulated.

- may not be too close to a residential area.
- supply driving-around possibilities for clients.
- safety for prostitutes.
- not situated too far away from the exit centre.
- availability of enough standing-space for every prostitute.

A few areas in Utrecht were taken into consideration. These were amongst others the Moreelse park and Europa avenue. The residents in the probable areas were given the opportunity to air their view in this concern. The prostitutes themselves gave preference to the Moreelse park, close to the city centre and the railway station. Even before the final decision was taken the prostitutes moved to this location on their own initiative. There they were tolerated by the police. The fact that there were a few schools and the Head office of the Netherlands Railways in close proximity made this area less suitable.

The vent way along Europa ave. (see Map 2) was eventually chosen by the community council.

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Map 2:

### **Overview of the area along Europa Ave.**

The area is not situated in a residential area and offers driving-around possibilities for clients, and standing space for the prostitutes. A disadvantage of the chosen location is that it is not close enough to the city centre exit and relatively close to a highway off-ramp, whereby there is a bigger risk for the prostitutes to be kidnapped or taken away without their consent. Moving to Europa Ave. happened without any big problems.

During the decision taking process it was expressed from different viewpoints that it was impossible to assign a walking zone. In order to enable the regulating of walking and assure medical care, it became necessary to establish a better contact with the prostitutes and supply them with a shelter.

### **The lounge bus**

Already in the early stages the Mr. de Graaf Foundation got involved with the structuring of the new policy. The Mr. de Graaf Foundation is a foundation which operates in the countryside and advises the population regarding walking prostitution. It was suggested by them to facilitate a Lounge Walk-in Project LWP. In May 1986 the foundation LWP was founded to implement this project. The function of the LWP is to improve the work and living situation of the street prostitutes.

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The bus shelter contains a medical consulting room, shower, toilet, kitchen and lounge area. Within the working parameters of the LWP the acceptance of prostitution is neutral. It was decided to allocate a mobile shelter to the walkers containing a medical consulting room, shower, toilet, kitchen, and lounge area. Every evening, for as long as the walkers are allowed to be active, the bus will be parked at the same place along Europa Ave. The bus fulfils the function of shelter and resting area.

For this project a full time co-ordinator, part time helpers and part time medical staff are present. Because of the kind assistance of 7 volunteers, of which 2 are drivers, it is possible to have 2 assistants present in the lounge every evening.

Condoms are being sold in the bus and two days per week a medical doctor offers consulting hours for medical care or advice. Certain rules are laid down for the lounge area. Trading in alcohol and drugs for instance is prohibited.

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### *The Lounge bus.*

A mobile shelter was specifically chosen in order to be able to clear an area of the negative effects of prostitution when not active. It can also be parked in a safe area (Police department) when not used where vulnerability to vandalism is minimised. An important side effect of parking the bus elsewhere during the day is that the whole project is invisible when inactive. Relations of existing businesses in the area see only a marked parking place during the day where parking is prohibited, and a somewhat unusual equipped parking area along Kanaal

road. (see: 'Trimming zone').

Through adjusting of walking hours (when shops are open later - walking hours also started later) the activities of the business area were separated from walking activities.

Annually an amount of 400.000 Dutch guilders is donated by the Managing body of Utrecht to the LWP. Besides that, the project is financed by the Department of Health, Welfare and Sport and The Foundation for Combating of Sexually Transmitted Diseases as well as different smaller institutions.

#### *The trimming zone*

After the walking zone was moved to Europa Ave. the prostitutes were indeed recruiting their clientele in that area. Thereafter further activities between prostitute and client happened in the car. The nearby residential area and parking areas of businesses were used for trimming.

Residents of the nearby residential area started lodging their complaints to that effect. Businesses had to put up with the littering of their parking areas. Some businesses put fences up around their properties to keep people from entering in the evenings.

With reference to their complaints, the mayor and keepers of the law (after deliberation between the mayor, the chief commissioner of police and the chief commissioner of justice) decided to put up a trimming area. Not to jeopardise the acceptance of the walking zone it was unavoidable to also regulate the trimming area.

#### *---o--- the trimming area*

The trimming area was installed in 1988 as part of a parking area on Kanaal road about 1km from the walking zone. Twelve parking bays are built there, separated from each other by means of fences. Every parking bay is supplied with a dustbin at the height of a car window. The cost of the trimming area amounted to 40.000 Dutch guilders.

After the trimming area was built, the stream of complaints quickly dried up. There is clarity for everyone as to where and when one can conduct your business. The trimming zone offers the prostitutes a form of security because they can work privately within close proximity of each other and if necessary can quickly warn each other in case of danger.

#### **The legal framework**

The new policy is legally possible because of an amendment of article 70 of the Utrecht's APV. In the old APV of Utrecht, 'walking' was prohibited in all public places. As was mentioned before, this rule was not feasible. In the board meeting of 15 November 1984 it was decided to amend the old APV. In the new APV walking is still culpable, unless administered in the area determined by the mayor and law keepers of Utrecht.

This location, where walking is not prohibited, is stipulated in the Feasibility decision. This Feasibility decision is part of the amended APV and was taken by the mayor and law keepers in 1986. It contains further single rules referring to times when walking is allowed, certain restrictions as to the dress of the walkers and the minimum age for a walker to be working.

In 1985 the area committee and businesses along Europa Ave. attempted to encourage Representative States to offer a destruction/annulment of the amended APV to the Crown. The Minister of Internal Affairs was also approached. The reason given was that the new APV was

in conflict with article 250bis of the criminal law act where encouragement of and assistance to prostitution is prohibited. They were also of the opinion that the community of Utrecht was contravening the town planning rules because the walking zone was in contradiction with the original destiny of the area. Both Representative States as well as the Department of Internal Affairs stated in their reaction that their concern was not grounded and dismissed the appeal. According to their view it was not a matter of encouraging or enabling of prostitution but merely the regulating of the existing situation. Because of these reactions the community of Utrecht feel supported in their policy.

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*\*) The current text of article 70 of the APV and its Feasibility decision were added as an amendment.*

*It carries a later date because the APV was revised in totality in 1987.*

### **Present situation**

The results of the new policy were accepted as satisfactory to all involved. Since the building of the trimming area, the residents in the nearby residential area and the businesses along Europa Ave. are experiencing little or no problems with the walking prostitution. The walkers feel safe in their allocated area and because they need not fear police intervention they can work much more calmly. The police can now be of assistance to them instead of acting in a repressive mode.

For the ultimate success of the policy the role of the Lounge Walk-in Project is crucial. An average of 35 prostitutes visit the bus per evening. The social control as well as the continuous guidance which is made possible, lead to mutual price agreements among the women and a strong stimulant for the use of condoms.

Previously a large percentage of street prostitutes could not benefit from the regular medical scheme, where in the Lounge a medical doctor is present 2 days per week. This has a favourable effect on the health of the prostitutes and their clients. The Lounge Walk-in Project is therefore also important for the health of the community. The police visit the bus regularly and a trustworthy relationship has developed between them. This relationship works to both sides. On the one side the prostitutes will report immediately to the police when they were ill treated - because they know their complaints are taken seriously. On the other side, a prostitute will be instantaneously reprimanded when she allows a client to entice her into the residential area. These incidents happen seldom because the prostitutes realise that too many complaints from the residential area could cause the project to be reviewed again.

A disadvantage of the allocation of a walking zone is that it has been mentioned that prostitutes from outside Utrecht could be drawn to the area.

The distance between Amsterdam and Utrecht is especially easily accessible. It is already a fact that prostitutes from outside Utrecht are working at Europa Ave. As possible cause of the slight increase of prostitutes (apart from other unknown causes) the climate of the project could be mentioned as one: tranquil, safe, with health and other provisions. Furthermore a relation is suspected between temporarily increased police controls in other cities and peaks in the number of prostitutes in Utrecht.

## **Summary**

In the introduction it was already mentioned that there has been strong interest for the Utrecht policy of walking prostitution from other cities. With reference to a working visit to Utrecht, it was mentioned by a colleague of the public service that in Utrecht, attention and serious thought was given to the detail of combating of nuisance, hygiene and community health.

It is understandable that regulating of walking prostitution is not readily acceptable by everyone. Walking prostitution remains a sensitive issue. It may actually be clear that the present situation in Utrecht is far more acceptable than the unrestrained situation of the past. Collaborators of the community, lounge project and police agree however that there are at least 4 issues which improved the circumstances in street prostitution.

1. a zone where the recruiting of clients is not prohibited
2. a lounge project
3. a trimming area, and;
4. a trusting relationship between police and prostitutes

One of the more important advantages of a walking zone is, prostitutes who are being raped, ill-treated or abused, will, because of a better relationship with the police, report more readily. At the same time they feel safer, both in the area of sexually transmitted diseases as well as working environment.

Prostitutes are taken seriously which encourages an understanding for each other's interests between all involved.

## **Appendix**

### ***Article 70: adultery, ban on streetwalking, ban on pimps***

1)

Persons of whom reasonably may be assumed that they are engaged in prostitution are prohibited, on public roads, in public grounds and in other places open to the public, to invite other persons through pose, words, actions, gestures or in any other way to commit adultery.

2)

On public roads, in public grounds and in other places open to the public, persons are prohibited to find themselves if reasonably can be assumed that these persons as pimps may benefit from protecting/supporting persons as meant in the first paragraph.

3)

What has been stipulated in paragraph one does not apply to public roads or part(s) thereof that have been designated in a publicly announced resolution by mayor and aldermen, provided that the conditions set in that resolution are met; these conditions concern at any rate the hours when the prohibition mentioned in paragraph one does not apply, the age and clothing of the persons meant in paragraph one.

4a)

Within the framework of the protection of the public order(s) and/or morality, the mayor or his representative may prohibit persons, who within 30 days after having been ticketed by police for violating the conditions stated in paragraph three do not comply with the conditions stated in paragraph three, to find themselves on a public road or in public grounds or part(s) thereof as mentioned in paragraph three during the hours stated in the said conditions other than inside a means of public transportation for a period of seven days maximum.

4b)

For those whose residence is in one of the streets as meant in paragraph three, the prohibition as stated in four a will be ameliorated such that the residence can daily be left or reached on mutually agreed points of time within the hours mentioned in paragraph three.

### **K. Stipulation of toleration area for walking prostitution**

Mayors and keepers of the law in Utrecht; note article 70, third member of the General Police Department Utrecht 1987;

#### **DECISIONS:**

- I. The area of the eastern parallel road of Europa Ave. between Europa circle and Westdijk Ave., as indicated on the drawing which belongs to this decision, being the area where unless under mentioned rules are adhered to;
  1. The activities meant in article 70 may only take place between 19.00 and 02.00 hours,
  2. on days where shops are open in the evening sub 1 activities may only take place between 21.30 and 02.00 hours
  3. people meant in the first section of article 70 need
    - a. have reached the age of 18
    - b. to have reported themselves at the bureau of community policing in Utrecht at Marco Polo Ave. for membership
  4. this membership is valid for a period of 6 months
  5. membership may be refused whenever the maximum number of prostitutes for the area is reached (this number to be determined by the Mayor, in the interest of the upholding of public order)
  6. those people meant in the first section of article 70, need to be dressed in order to satisfy the rules on public morality
  7. these people may not approach others in a offensive fashion
  8. the previously mentioned stipulations must be adhered to in detail
- II. This decision will come into operation on the 1st July 1987.

Utrecht, 16 June 1987.

Mayor and Keepers of order of Utrecht,  
The Secretary,                      The Mayor,  
C.J.N. Versteden                      drs. M.W.M. Vos-van Gortel

The announcement was done on 24 June 1987.

Dutch Text: Jacqueline Schadee and Hanneke van den Broek

# A brief survey of 'Frame' Prostitution in the major cities of the Netherlands

(by Jean du Plessis)

This information given in this survey was gathered by Jean and Adèle du Plessis during a study visit to the Netherlands in September 1996 - sources are from personal interviews, various publications and personal observations.

## **What is 'frame' or window prostitution?**

The Dutch word 'Raam' is translated as Frame, and denotes the large window frames of the cubicles provided for prostitutes to work from. These cubicles are all situated in a toleration zone where the sex trade is conditionally permitted. These conditions always include provisions not to solicit on the pavements or streets; to dress according to the moral laws of the land, even when soliciting from inside the cubicle; not to allow middle persons or pimps to be involved in the trade; etc.

The cubicles are about 10m<sup>2</sup> and are equipped with a toilet, basin, shower, bed and in most cases a central alarm system is fitted to alert 'bouncers' when unwanted guests persist. The women may not live in the cubicles and rent is usually charged by week.

Prostitutes must acquire a permit from the local public health authorities.

Some cities have found, over the past 20 years, that they wanted to decrease the number of frames, and in the case of Rotterdam for instance, drastic measures were taken to decrease from 600 (in the 70's) to about 40. This decrease caused a shortage - resulting in a spill-over to other cities and a black market trade over weekends and public holidays. Like any other business, the ratio of frame facilities must be decided on the economic principle of supply and demand, in order to ensure a controllable situation. An authority may decide to install too many prostitutes in an area and so doing flood the market - causing the prices to drop - or said authority may decide to limit the number to ascertain good prices, etc.

Some cities decided to locate their toleration zones inside special buildings, similar to shopping centres. Other again, decided to control access by revolving gates that charge an entrance fee (to curb the presence of the drug trade, junkies and hobos). Most cities locate their toleration zones on the outskirts and every city deals with complaints from citizens in the surrounding areas. Complaints vary but are usually concerned with excessive noise levels, excessive traffic, crime or moral issues.

Considering the international tendencies of this trade in erotic gratification, all things taken into account, the frame prostitute has the best possible deal - providing the highest degrees of dignity, self employment, safety, income, hygiene, working conditions and regularity.

The following notes about the trade in frame prostitution in the major cities may only provide the researcher with the most basic information.

## **Amsterdam**

The frames around the Dam canal and Dam square area are the most famous (or infamous, depending on your stance) in the world. We could not get anyone to tell us with certainty the exact quantity but they generally seem to vary between 200 and 600 frames (we could only count about 200 in two days). As to the question who owned most of the frames, which the exploiters are and what they charge, we met with the same ambivalence and uncertainty. Some persons, obviously motivated by braggery claimed to own most of the frames and to charge about R200 per day, while the consensus seemed to fall upon the "The Red Light District" group or cartel to be the 'big boys' in the trade. They run most of the live sex theatres in Amsterdam and own many of the porn shops as well. "Red Light District" advertises internationally, and on the Internet ([www.fun.nl](http://www.fun.nl)), and are specialists in 'different' porn and 'extreme' videos.

It is unfortunate that the Dutch allowed private exploiters to own and control the rent of the frames, since the girls are visibly weary and do not look as if they are doing this job out of choice. It is our guess that many of them are trapped in valleys of rent-debt and work for their freedom more than for their prosperity - but this is only a personal observation, not based on any substantial evidence other than that of a student of prostitution's trained eye and instinct.

Compared to the other cities, Amsterdam and Den Haag's frame workers seem the worse for wear and the more desperate.

## **Alkmaar**

In Achterdam street. About 60 frames equipped with a central alarm system and CCTV for security reasons.

These frames are exploited by Koos Noel, who is a veteran of the trade since 1973. According to Koos the trade is not what it used to be. He says the business has become hard. Coloured women from poor countries are flocking in to the Netherlands to work as prostitutes. Communication between exploiter and prostitute and buyer is minimal, if at all possible, and the service is very impersonal compared to the good old days.

According to Alkmaar Politie's, Hielke Vogelzang, two prostitutes were murdered in the frames during the past year. One of the murderers identified by the cameras is known to the police but has fled the country. The other murderer could not be properly identified and will probably not be brought to justice.

## **Arnhem**

Drie Koningendwarsstraat, Spijkerstraat and Karel Gelderstraat. About 250 frames.

The city council is currently perturbed by the almost 1 000 vehicles that frequent the three streets daily. According to the inhabitants of the surrounding areas, the crime rate and noise levels and nuisance rate is intolerable. A decision regarding a more suitable zone, on the city perimeter, is being debated in the council. The exploiters of these areas however state that the nuisance is rather caused by junkies and drug dealers, and not by the prostitution

## **Den Bosch**

In Schilderstraat, only 5 frames.

Ms Creebsburg exploits the five black women who work this small city

## **Den Haag**

Poeldijkstraat, Hunsestraat, Geleenstraat and Doubelstraat. About 600 frames.

The president of the soccer union exploits these frames but employs people to run his business. According to young Arie de Jong, one of the employees controlling the frames, alarm systems only cause aggression since the girls promise the buyers the earth and use the bouncers to remove those clients who complain about bad service.

Politie Den Haag's, Lineke Bennema, explains that not all is well in the trade. During 1995 they declared Doublet and Poeldijkstraat as emergency zones. It took a force of 40 men to remove about 500 culprits from these streets. The most prominent crimes were dealings in fire arms, drugs, women and illegal aliens. Currently the situation is kept under control by a team of 30 officers.

## **Deventer**

In Bokkinghang, about 30 frames.

One of the girls there describe her freedom as a frame-prostitute (compared to street prostitution and brothels) as dignified. Security is maintained by a prominent police presence.

## **Groningen**

In Muurstraat, Hoekstraat, Vishoek and Nieuwstad. About 150 frames. Average price for prostitution - R180.

Magreet van der Kammen and Femmie van der Wijk exploit the Nieuwstad frames. Both of them have served from behind these windows and claim to understand the needs of the women better than a male could. According to them the racial mixture in Holland must be at least 90% white and 10% black (exotic) women to maintain an interest from the buying public.

Groningen Politie's, Ali Manders, says that investigations of cases of slavery are being conducted but not in the Nieuwstad area where the relationship between the police and the frames are very co-operative

## **Haarlem**

In Begijnenhof, about 30 frames.

CCTV cameras and alarm systems provide security in the centre.

Mr Callenbach exploits these frames centred around a 14th century church courtyard. Begijnenhof is certainly the most beautiful red light district in the world and an entrance fee of R25 per person is charged at the gate.

According to Callenbach the entrance fee keeps the scores of peeping toms, tourists, junkies, vehicles and hobos away from the girls. He speaks from a quarter century of bitter experience when he tells how, in the past, the trade was dominated by slavery, extortion and violence (much like South Africa under the current conditions). During 1995 one prostitute was murdered, the culprit still being on the loose since camera identification was not possible

## **Leeuwarden**

In Weaze and Reigerstreet, about 35 frames in total.

A rotating security gate charges R3 entrance to the prostitution zone. In this centre, porn, sex

shows and prostitution is tolerated. CCTV and central alarm systems control additional security. During 1995 two prostitutes were raped.

### **Nijmegen**

In Markstraat, about 20 frames

### **Summary**

It seems as if those exploiters who disagree with the idea of stringent security measures are also the more fickle and less caring of the exploiters. In those instances where women exploiters are present the girls seem to be rather content, and we guessed that it could be because of the emotional support they received from persons who could empathise with their hardship. A correct racial balance of prostitutes is of great importance to circumvent black-market trades to result. This can only be facilitated by a manager that studies tendencies in the trade. Buyers do not buy sex, emotional intimacy or love - they buy human commodities according to fantasy needs that include specifications of size, colour, odour, race, language, hair texture, etc.

One mistake the Dutch did make was to allow the frames to be owned and rented out by private persons. This resulted in exploitation that is now generally accepted. The 10m<sup>2</sup> rooms rent for R2 500 per week. This amounts to an astounding exploitation of more than R1 000 per m<sup>2</sup>, per month. Even though the pimp is generally speaking a dying trade in this country (except in the case of illegal alien women who are being extorted by pimps) the new exploiter of these women are again men - landlords.

The frame trade brings with it a certain amount of violence, drug dealing and other criminal activities. The red light area automatically draws porn shops, sex shows and theatres and other sensual extremes. Vehicle and pedestrian traffic, business hours, noise levels, entertainment and restaurant facilities are considerations that must be kept in mind when such a zone is planned. Proper policing, licensing and statutory control of the areas is a must if peace and order is hoped for.

Generally it seems to be a good idea to contain the trade in one or two large buildings that can be secured by paid entrance, CCTV, alarms, police, licensing, etc.

Not one of the cities we investigated could tell us that any men were raped, murdered, battered or mutilated - it's always the women that are fall prey to male deviance. Likewise is it the men that are drug dealers, that are noisy and rowdy, that drive through the areas in droves and that disturb the peace. These arrangements, to control prostitution thus has very little to do with controlling prostitutes - it has everything to do with controlling the men and protecting the women and children against male perversion.

It is thus difficult and costly to provide men with a regular flow of (clean, relaxed, smiling) sex objects to use when their erotic and ego needs are out of control. How far are we prepared to go toward ensuring the welfare and happiness of these female-human-erotic-commodities we need to supply to our deviant males?

# Child Prostitution in South Africa

by Adèle du Plessis

Presentation at the Gauteng Conference on Decriminalisation of Sexwork, Oct. '96

The House, a group of projects working with the sexually abused and runaway girl-child, the juvenile prostitute and the adult prostitute, has been in existence for six years now. For six years we have been telling this country that child prostitution is a nightmare reality in Johannesburg.

In our attempts to convince the public of this reality we featured these children and their plight in the media and on conferences. Our organisation was featured in the national and international media more than 100 times over the past five years: national television [38+], international television [5], printed media [40+] and radio interviews and talk shows [14+].

More than two years ago 'Children involved in Prostitution' were highlighted in Pretoria at a national workshop hosted by the HSRC and Department Welfare who were 'exploring a social process to manage the problem in South Africa'.

More recently, during August this year, South Africa's child prostitution problem was featured in Stockholm at the international congress against commercial sexual exploitation of children. Our State President, Nelson Mandela's contribution towards this international congress gave cause to a standing ovation - allow me to quote from his wisdom:

'The time has come for children to be seen, and to be very clearly heard.

The cries of our abused and exploited children  
must no longer fall on deaf ears or closed minds.'

As I stand before you here today, quoting our State President's affirmation of what we have been telling you for six years, what more do you want me to say? All has been said! What I can say is that after so many years of fighting for the plight of these children there still is an increasing number of children in prostitution. The reason is simple - you as a government, you as individuals, you do not care about these children! You may think that you do, but I am telling you now that you don't! If you did, we would have seen concerted action from the Police, Welfare, Justice, Education, City Council, and the public. Only Welfare is currently making positive noises to assist a shelter for 15 girls in Hillbrow.

We all agree that children should never be part of the system of prostitution - why then are they? This very minute there are children as young as 12 selling their girl-child bodies to the pillars of our society. Why are we allowing it? Why don't we rescue our children? Why don't we bust these men that don't hesitate to rape our children, children that not by choice but by a lack of choice ended in a life of prostitution. Why don't we make a difference to the lives of the human beings that are exploited and victimised to serve the base needs of the men of our society?

I'll tell you why - the life of a child in prostitution has no value, she is considered as young blood, a fresh piece of meat, with buyers too eager to sample her wares. Where is the police? Believe me, it is not as if they don't know where these children are - they know and visit the clubs, agencies and brothels where these young girls are, they even work there as part time

bouncers. They know where these girls are today and they know where they will be in a few years time - broken children that we have to identify at the morgue.

While knowing the reality of the lives our women and children live, SANAB continues to perpetuate the abuse in the name of police investigation. Too many times when we begged them to rescue a child have we heard the excuse that they are busy with an investigation of some sort and that the agency or pimp is their informer. It is accepted to sacrifice human lives in the name of an investigation and possible drug bust.

If SANAB really wants to do something ... do something about the drug problems. Stop hanging out at the agencies and brothels, stop being 'best buddies' with the pimps, stop harassing the girls who are users ... start cleaning up Hillbrow where there's a coke dealer on every corner.

Let's take a closer look at the world of the child prostitute in Hillbrow. We'll look at it from two angles - that of the Runaway, inevitably ending up in massage parlours, strip tease bars and brothels - the New Child Prostitute. Then we'll look at it from the angle of the Old Child Prostitute - the thirteen year old girl that started working 7 or 9 years ago, the one society shuns as a whore, the one society used and abused and now refuses to take care of.

### **Runaways - New Child Prostitute**

Problems and difficulties related to the child prostitute are numerous and not easy to deal with.

Finding the children is not easy since they hardly show their faces on the streets and sleep during normal working hours. They are different from Street Children only in that they live in cheap hotel rooms, are addicted to scheduled or illegal drugs and can earn about R10 000 per month by selling their bodies.

Once the girls are found, the next problem is how to gain access to them. How to get them to want to talk to you. This has to do with trust, trust that you will not 'sell them out' to the police or 'throw them with the Welfare book'. This kind of trust can only be gained by building a street reputation, with difficulty and over years of struggle.

The frame of mind of the child is usually one of 'having arrived' in the grown up world. They sleep as late as they like, they go to bed when they like and with whom they want. They eat whatever they want and dress the way they like. Their friends visit when and how they like - they pay their own way, earn their own money and usually make more than their parents earn. Their lives are exiting in that it takes guts and a special skill to survive from day to day.

Once trapped in prostitution, they learn to survive the most violent city in the world and evidently witness murders, rapes, robberies and other crimes.

The girls are furthermore much sought after and deeply appreciated by men as old as their dads; they get paid handsomely for sharing their girl-child bodies, their very special selves, with these men. They learn how to con men and 'milk' them for their money. They sleep with police men, teachers, bank managers, company directors and business men of all races and cultures.

Soon they 'wisen-up' to these men and stop believing the promises to take them 'away from it all', they see the empty promises as the blatant lies that they are, after all ... who wants to marry a whore? The movie 'Pretty Woman' where the wealthy and sexy Richard Gere sweeps the prostitute of her feet and makes true his promise of love and happiness is a far cry from the stark reality.

The girls are usually unskilled in female matters and are educated by the streets as to these issues. They insert sponges inside themselves during menstruation to stop the flow that allow them to continue working. They contract diseases and infections then apply unconventional

medicine [if any] to remedy their problems.

Disassociation from sexuality occurs very soon once the girl indulges in any of the various forms of prostitution. In order to appreciate her mind-frame you need to be callous with yourself and graphically come to understand the work she does.

Striptease has changed - nowadays the girls strip completely, and add spice to the act with dildos, vibrators, dance partners and a variety of other tools of the trade - again I have to beg of you not to confuse this reality with movies such as Demi Moore's 'Striptease' currently on circuit.

Lesbian scenes are in great demand among the 'steamers' and almost every girl we have dealt with has experienced this - adding to their already confused sexuality.

A girl's first rape usually occurs within the first two-three weeks on the scene, an initiation experience signalling to her that all is lost and that there is no turning back.

In one of the clubs where the CPU often find teenage prostitutes, the girls live and work in rather nice rooms on the premises. Downstairs they spend their day in the disco, in the bar, playing pool with doting men or watching their friends strip in the topless bar during lunch time. Most clubs have pornography on video screens, running most of the day. This is the child's new life - exciting and depraved.

Other children working in brothels or from hotels in Hillbrow share their premises with Nigerian cocaine dealers, people who employ armed bodyguards to protect them. Even girls in school uniform can acquire a gram of cocaine from a dealer in exchange for sex. But this is not how they start out. Usually their first sexual exchange for drugs with these men will be a hand job or oral sex - later she readily has sex with anyone to acquire the drugs and soon she'll be on the street corners.

These girls do not realise they need us or their parents, neither are they interested in what we have to offer - we are part of the system that sucks, the very same system that drove them away from their homes - that is our beloved family and friends, the church, school, social workers, industrial schools, clinic schools - society in general.

The streets are unsafe and very lonely. The young girls need protection and more often than not they are happy when a pimp [supposedly a boyfriend] latches on to them. He is usually a man that has survived jail and the streets for years. He coaches her in the finer arts of drugging and prostitution. He protects her and becomes the only person on life that 'understands' her and that 'loves' her. He obviously does everything in his power to keep her away from the influence of a social worker, policeman or do-gooder.

Once retrieved counselling this child in a clinical set-up is difficult. Pastoral counselling hardly appeals to this child, incarceration in a standard children's facility will only lead to great frustration of both the facility and the child.

The therapist must take responsibility for helping the child to deal with all aspects of her imbalanced personality and frame of reference. We find that drug rehabilitation centres never address the full spectrum of problems and are quite content to treat drug addiction as a cause and not regard it as a symptom.

This child has to deal with the issues that made her leave home in the first place - childhood sexual abuse perhaps, a dysfunctional family, school problems or an inability to perform adequately in the peer group.

We can never overlook the fact that these kids have to deal with rape - something that takes most mature women years to work through, then again the issue of exposure to and

partaking in pornography, the issue of having seen the 'other' side of society's pillars and then her warped sense of values.

This girl's sexuality needs be corrected, however difficult that may be.

She needs shelter, therapy and an open minded enlightened approach to life - and above all, she needs tons of love and intimacy and enough excitement to keep her in the program.

### **Old Child Prostitute**

The issues affecting the New Runaway are compounded in the case of the street-walker or old child prostitute. This is the same girl than the one discussed above - only now it is years later, many rapes later, heavy drug addiction later. She has seen many of her friends go to jail, many of her friends have been murdered or died due to drugs. She has never made her bed in years, neither has she made a cup of tea or cooked food. She owns two Checkers bags of clothes and paraphernalia. She still only has a standard 5 or 6 education.

Her social skills are sorely lacking, so does her personal skills. Her job skills amount to faking climaxes, masturbating old men in cars and surviving the inner-city life. She has been detained in police holding cells and most probably has a criminal record for possession of drugs. She is only about twenty years old but looks thirty. She missed her puberty, she drugged her emotions away during her puberty years and now she lives in fear of that irrational part of herself she does not understand. She lost her childhood.

This girl needs more than drug rehabilitation - she needs total reconstructive therapy - she need to be taught how to become human, how humans think, act, sit, smile and eat, what they value, what their ethics are and what human potential is all about. She needs to be taught that she is a human being, worthy of love and respect, and not merely a commodity that can be used and abused by men.

Above all else she needs to develop a solid spirituality - a relationship with God, a paternal figure that will only love her and not exchange intimacy for goods.

We find that they can easily make a steamer out of God if your theology hinges on prosperity teaching - that is 'I will love Him, and allow him access o my inner being, if He pays for it by paving my way'. This is their prevailing attitude to life and will surface in almost all situations during therapy.

The other attitude is that of 'paying for their sins'. They find it fairly easy to feel guilty and readily want to pay for their sins by suffering - but then when they feel they have paid enough and someone or God is not yet prepared to pave their way after the penance, then the 'unfairness' of life is simply reaffirmed and she goes back to surviving the way she was before.

These girls suffer from something likened to 'battered wife syndrome', a something that makes it possible for them to submit to severe authority - as long as they feel they are still paying for their wrongs. Their self-image is bruised and fragile and their low sense of self worth makes re-entry into mainstream society very difficult.

Many of the girls in prostitution are mothers, and most of them have had their children removed from them, mainly due to neglect. This does not go to say that all prostitutes are bad mothers - only that in certain circumstances, such as when drug addiction is prevalent, does it become increasingly difficult for mothers to look after their children properly.

Don't underestimate the shrewdness and manipulative power of the pimps - they use the children to motivate the mothers to perform - motivational tactics are to physically abuse the children, many times putting their cigarettes out on the baby.

Many of the girls simply fall pregnant once their babies are removed and some of the

girls we work with actually have given life to two or three children. Why don't they learn? Most prostitutes desire to have a child - perhaps she wants someone to share the loneliness of her life with, perhaps someone to care for, perhaps someone that could love her.

During 1993 we operated a habitation program for girls in this category. Unfortunately we had to close it down after about eight months due to a lack of funds and personnel. What we learned from the girls in those months can fill several manuals but the most impressive aspect we learned was that each one of them, whether they were 21 or 24 years old, was but a little girl very much in need of love and guidance and each had a burning desire to be acceptable to society - but they lacked the tools needed to help themselves.

### **The role of child abuse in developing a Sexuality of Prostitution**

At The House we work with yet another child prostitute - the abused child.

Men, statistically proven to be the child abusers, always in some or other form give 'compensation' to the child they are abusing. The compensation can be anything - toys, candy, money, acceptance, promising not to hurt her mummy, etc., etc.

The emotional blackmail abused children suffer always has an element of fear attached to it - 'do not tell or I'll have to hurt you, even kill you, I'll hurt your mother, don't make me go to your little sister, etc., etc. Men teach our little girls that in order to survive they have to play the 'game' or the men will be forced to exercise their power and authority.

Men teach our children at the age of five, nine and older that their sexuality is a commodity, that their bodies have a price. Men make of our children prostitutes! We allow men to groom and raise our children as child prostitutes!!!

We as women, as mothers ... are we going to continue sitting on the side line, silently cheering our men on? When are we going to face the realities, or are we too gutless? .....

Men are the child abusers. Men turn our children into child prostitutes. Men buy the child prostitutes. Men are here today actively lobbying for the procedure to irresponsibly change the law to cater for their perverted sexual needs.

Prostitution is frequently alluded to as one of the possible long term effects of the sexual abuse of children. The incidence of physical and sexual abuse is staggeringly high among American prostitutes. Several authors assert that prostitutes have more often experienced incest and forced intercourse than non-prostitutes. Such claims warrant a detailed investigation into the effects of sexual abuse on the child and its correlation with subsequent prostitution.

No single factor determines the psychological impact that sexual abuse has on the child. Rather, the intensity of the child's traumatising and the character of the psychological symptoms are influenced by several factors:

The child's stage of socio-sexual development, temperament and understanding of the social sanctions against such behaviour. Effects will thus depend on the meaning attached to it by the individual child.

The nature of the abusive acts. Penetration, for example, will be more harmful than fondling or mere exhibitionism.

The use of coercion and violence. Non-consensual abuse appears to have a particularly harmful impact on the victim.

The perpetrator's relationship with child. Abuse by a trusted caretaker leads to more intense emotional conflict for the victim.

The perpetrator's proximity to the victim. Victims who cannot escape unwanted situations suffer more deleterious effects.

The absence of familial support. The severely dysfunctional family not only increases the child's vulnerability to abuse, but causes excessive guilt through unsympathetic reactions and rejection of the victim. Intrusive negative effects of unwanted abuse is indubitably amplified when the abuse is accompanied by poor nurturance (as is the case with many institutionalised abuse cases) and an unstable home life.

Negative effects are also aggravated in cases of incest where the child has assumed an pseudo-adult role within the family, since this effectively enmeshes the victim into the family system, prevents the development of normal peer relations and makes termination of the abuse so much more intricate.

Children's reactions to the abuse are diverse and idiosyncratic. Consequently, the evidence regarding the psychological effects of sexual abuse is contradictory.

Short term effects of child sexual abuse include fear, anxiety, guilt, hostility and shame. Negative coping mechanism such as passive submission, repression, identification with the aggressor or anger suppression appear to aggravate behavioural symptoms such as learnt helplessness, depression, sleep and somatic complaints, hyperactivity and sexual acting out.

Long term effects include suicidal ideation, hysterical seizures, confused social relationships, increased violence, promiscuity, truancy and delinquency. Adult survivors of sexual abuse report sexual dysfunction, phobias, neuroticism, anorexia and substance abuse. Also reported are post traumatic stress disorder symptoms such as affect disorders and depersonalisation.

Increased levels of dissociation among abused and traumatised children are also reported, accompanied by heightened aggressive and self destructive behaviour.

There is little doubt however, that premature exposure to sex gives rise to precocious sexuality, arrested psycho-sexual development and a distorted perception of love and affection. Diminished inhibition, disrespect for personal boundaries, inappropriate sexual behaviours and excessive masturbation are also noted. The premature sexual stimulation, in effect, teaches the child that sex can be used as a means of getting nurturance.

Where unwanted sexual contact becomes a focus for the victim, it may lead to runaway behaviour, which is the mediating variable associated with prostitution. The disposition towards prostitution among sexually abused runaways is facilitated by their heightened awareness of sexuality and its usefulness as a means of meeting non-sexual needs. Needs such as food and shelter, later to be replaced by the need for the drug to make their existence bearable.

### **In Conclusion**

The world these children live in is more hurtful than we can imagine.

Most married women only has sexual intercourse 100 to 150 times per year, these children do more than 1 000 customers in a year. They undress for unknown men and women many times per day. They do oral sex and 'hand jobs' in cars, in parks, in alleys, in public - wherever the client has the need for. They live out the 'kinks' and perversions of the married men as well as those men who are on a power and control kick. They get treated like dirt, totally objectified and dehumanised.

Once we found a 14 year old little girl working in a massage parlour. She had been away from home only four days when we found her there and talked her into coming to The House for shelter. That night after her shift - doing only topless massages and oral sex in her booth - she knocked on the door.

Her little T-shirt was stained in the front and back, covered in semen, she used it to clean herself with. She had seen in the four days things her mother never knew existed. She

experienced in four days more psychological trauma than most people experience in a lifetime. She had only been raped once - not gang raped just raped. She was one of the fortunate, one that returned home to her parents. She would not let us inform the parents of what she was involved in and she is back at school trying to cope with her week of trauma all on her own.

Up until the time we started working in Hillbrow I had never seen a dead person, I had never been in a mortuary, I did not know what an intensive care unit looked like. I had not seen any murders committed, I had not seen anybody shot through the stomach. I had never dreamt I would witness a bank robbery or that I would be mugged and robbed. Neither could I have guessed that we would hold the hands of dying children and console children after they have been raped. Never could we have dreamt that we would see children being buried in pauper's graves, [3 bodies in one grave, the one on top of the other] because no loved ones could be found to claim the bodies. This has become our life and all these things are common occurrences ... and these things are what constitute the life of the child prostitute...

I have said nothing new. What I've said, I said two years ago in Pretoria. Are you going to make me come back in another two years to repeat myself? The only thing that change is the number of children that die ... we have buried over 200 girls ... How many more children must we bury? It is up to you to make a difference.

# Recovering Prostitutes - their Therapeutic Needs

**Presentation made by Madonna Masemola to the  
Gauteng Conference on Decriminalisation of Prostitution  
Oct 1996**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. It gives me such a great honour and privilege to address an occasion of this nature. Excuse my voice and my wrong pronunciation if it may arise.

I hope you will agree with me that we live in a time of change that requires good planning. We are embarking on sharpening the future, so we should learn and acknowledge to change what needs to be changed, while leaving that which will invite disaster.

If the government is really concerned about the future of this country and the well-being of its people, consideration should also be based on women, children and the victims of prostitution. We cannot afford to have a traumatised generation of tomorrow, so effective means should be devised.

Prostitutes are the products of our dysfunctional society. Women and children run away from their homes and families due to different causal factors. These factors usually include poverty and various forms of abuse. Researchers will be quick to point out that not every girl from poverty stricken areas, or abusive families, resort to prostitution. Prostitutes originate from all different socio-economic backgrounds, areas, and races. The one thing that determines whether an abused women or child will resort to prostitution and drug addiction is her specific ability to cope with trauma. Those people with lower developed coping skills will be the most probable candidates to resort to drug addiction and prostitution as a way out of their childhood trauma. The psychological effect of any abuse or problem depends on the developmental stage of a person. Personality makeup, level of frustration tolerance, together with the external resources and social support, as well as how the abuse or problem is perceived by the victim, all determine the severity of the trauma resulting from childhood or sexual abuse. What I am saying is in fact that those women and children who have weaker developed coping skills - are the ones who come to the streets where their abuse is perpetuated. It means that, those women and children who needed our protection most, and who never received it, are the ones who now find themselves in prostitution. It is these women that are now pleading for your intervention and protection.

*NB. The stressor pattern that the child faces will differ in many ways from that of an older person.*

It should also be considered that there is a difference in the way people perceive and interpret similar situations. So each person faces a unique pattern of adjustive demands. From time to time each one of us experience serious difficulties in coping with the problems of living. During such crisis periods, we may need psychological assistance. Such difficulties are not a disgrace, they can happen to anyone if the stress is sufficiently severe.

In sum, the interaction between the nature of the traumatic experience and the individual's resources for dealing with it, is important in determining the severity of the problem. The behaviour of one's family or friends, that is intended to provide support, may actually increase

the stress.

Research shows that 80% of prostitutes were abused as children, and have never been to counselling, and never had supportive families. They escape the abusive situation and end up on the streets of Hillbrow hoping to find solace. Here they have to survive. Some get introduced to drugs, but they cannot find jobs to finance their addiction due to their lack of education. They resort to prostitution as means of survival. Others, the other hand, do not start with drugs but with prostitution, and then use drugs to make the horrors of prostitution bearable. Only the drugs can numb their souls sufficiently to cope with these horrors, and only drugs can make the harsh realities of survival on the streets bearable. Has anyone here ever asked themselves why the twilight boys sniff glue, and the child prostitutes smoke cocaine? If you were a child - would you not want a drug to numb your senses if you had to survive sleeping on the streets and going hungry - selling your body to get a meal in your stomach and to drive away the loneliness and the cold?

Prostitution has never been a "pleasant" job as many people perceive it. It is psychologically more demanding than other jobs, as women have to have sex with different men daily to finance their needs. They experience continual rapes, threats, narrow escapes, drug overdoses, deviant sex and evidencing close friends being killed - ordinary coping skills are relatively useless in these situations. How is the self-image of someone that has to have sex with more than 1000 men per year? - obviously a low and undervalued one.

It is again socially demanding as it involves a lot of competition. In spite of the degradation and terror in their lives, they are expected to look attractive and alert every day for men to buy them. Even though they could be tired, they try very hard to outshine the rest. Discrimination and labels given to these victims isolate them from the community.

The use of drugs affects them psychologically, physically and socially. They lose weight, often get old quickly, they then look unattractive for men to make business with them. Moreover, a woman is forced to work even during her monthly periods, during sickness and pregnancy - if she stops working, it means she has to stay without money and without drugs for 3-5 days - but she lives in clubs that charge daily rent and do not provide food. Even when they have money they are unable to budget, everything goes on drugs.

There are two types of prostitutes: the old child prostitute and the teenage prostitute. The old child prostitute is an adult prostitute who came to the street as a traumatised child of about 12-14 years of age. This child lacked the necessary coping skills and problem solving skills to remain in school or in her parents' house. She has never enjoyed her childhood or her teenagehood. She left home traumatised and more trauma is being added upon by their buyers (steammers). The rejection by the community adds to her trauma and psychological damage, not to mention the affect that the violence and depravity of the street has on her. Without sufficient coping skills, drugs serve to help these children to escape the reality of their problems characteristically they are emotionally immature, and they indicate the attention seeking behaviour of children and have a very low self-esteem. Their psychological dependence on drugs stunts their emotional growth

According to a study by Dr Melissa Farley (1996), 88% of prostitutes suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The symptoms include insomnia, repetitive nightmares, and paranoia (they either have difficulties falling asleep, they wake up in the middle of the night and cannot get back to sleep - how can we expect someone to sleep well while the mind is preoccupied with humiliating rapes and assault?). Furthermore they suffer from hyperalertness or exaggerated startle response, (they may feel that they are not safe anywhere in the world.

They feel that they are in danger and they must watch out all the time). They re-experience traumatic events in dreams and flashbacks, usually due to some triggering stimulus. Memory impairment or concentration difficulties are most common (cannot concentrate on things for very long, when they are doing something or listening to something, their minds wander off somewhere else). Some victims might avoid situations that remind them of the traumatic event. They may become suddenly irritable or explosive without provocation. Problems in eating are also observable, they either eat too little or too much. They stop caring about themselves and others (they may not wash or take care of their clothes and bodies). They are always nervous, worried and depressed.

The House is concerned with the holistic treatment of these victims of prostitution. We aim at the psychological, physical and the social well-being of these victims. With lack of resources we fail to cater for all their basic needs. We presently have 2 shelters, Intombi shelter that serves children under 20 years, and Ethembeni that serves children over 20 years old. Our shelters cater for only 15 children each. A multi-disciplinary plan of action will help us deal with the problems, since we are not experts in resolving all kinds of dysfunctions. We need occupational therapists, psychometrics (who will be able to test their IQs for any possibility of learning problems so that we do not sit up with girls who will never cope in any way with our measures). We would also like to do some referrals to clinical psychologists for psychotherapies, they would deem essential to these girls; while on the other hand we will be doing our part as counsellors. What is the use of sitting with severe dysfunctional girls who will only get treatment from other institutions? We also have problems getting co-operation from the overworked people in the Department of Welfare to help us in liaisons, and with the social workers in the areas where our women and girls come from - we work with people from all over the country and the neighbouring countries. We need a network of Social Welfare services to assist us to confirm their family situations, and to establish whether they will be welcomed back into their communities.

Of course, preventive efforts, like treatment programmes, are expensive. The early detection and correction of the maladaptive behaviour is of great importance in preventing the development of severe conditions like these. Preventive measures, including, primary, secondary and tertiary prevention are the most effective long-range approaches to the solution of both individual and group social problems.

Primary prevention will reduce the possibility of the problem before it starts. We should devise some educational and other social means directed towards increasing the community awareness and understanding of the causes of the problem. Uninformed families and children should be educated. Children should be equipped with knowledge about sexual abuse, and the curriculum should be suitable for the child's developmental stage. Public talks should be done for the ignorant and illiterate people who cannot read.

In terms of poverty the country should educate its people, offer job skills and business skills to the underprivileged. With illiterates who are recently unemployed, we should try to help them realise and exercise their talents, develop and improve them, so that they can use them as a means of living. Support groups should be formed for these unemployed people.

In secondary prevention the effort will be to reduce the problem before it spreads, and catching it before it becomes serious. We should break the community's silence about any abuse, stop rationalising the problem, challenge the regularities of the professionals (They should acknowledge that not everything from the book work for us, should do some follow-ups even after reintegration to find out how ex-victims cope), and again something should be done about the current system that at the end of the day hurts the children. The law should be tough on men who abuse and predispose children to dysfunctional life. CPU should invade all escort

agencies, brothels and hotels that harbour children. We must make people aware that there is a problem and that help is available.

Tertiary prevention deals with the problem that is already existing, and the cost of its social programmes are high. In a recent study, 70% of girls reported that they will get out of prostitution if given help. With such a lot of girls needing help, it is difficult without sufficient resources. The Hillbrow Drop-in Centre (a non residential care centre for street girls) serves as a place of initial assessment, counselling, referrals to drug rehabilitation centres and shelters. Life skills training and other therapeutic measures are offered here. No girl is permitted placement or referral to residential care facilities without life skills training since they are not equipped to deal with institutions.

Girls that come for help at the Drop-In Centre need medical attention, they are sick due to drug effects, from standing on the streets during severe climatic conditions, from malnutrition, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancy, injuries from jumping out of cars during an attempted kidnap, stab wounds, beatings from pimps or steamers, etc. Without nurses in our services we fail to cater for their immediate medical problem. They are uncomfortable to go to any community clinic or hospital because they are being treated with no respect, and they have become such regular clients at these centres that they are ashamed to again use the services. A clinic in our organisation is deemed essential to facilitate a proper harm reduction service.

What about family planning? - most of the girls are not using any contraceptives, they depend on condoms that their buyers sometimes do not want to use. What about the babies that are being born and those that will be born - they will end up at the Salvation Army or any other organisation. What are we going to do with cocaine babies that will be dysfunctional for the rest of their lives? What about their mothers - are we prepared to have more homeless women and children? Bear in mind that an old prostitute is no longer a good commodity for men to buy, therefore with no means of survival she turns into a tramp (hobo) and becomes a very expensive person to keep alive.

The two shelters that we have (Intombi and Ethembeni) only provide facilities for about 30 girls at a time. With the thousands of women and children requiring help, care and shelter, we encounter problems with lack of accommodation. The shelters are focused upon structuring the ex-prostitute's environment to provide clear communications of expectations and to get her involved in the treatment and participating in the therapeutic community through the group process. Our shelters serve as temporary placements where girls are prepared both mentally and physically before reintegration into the so called "normal" society. The trained staff help to find the girls' abilities and interests, help them to develop and improve them. Life skills programme and counselling are offered daily. We would like to give our thanks to the Department of Manpower for their willingness and support in assisting our girls with job skills, but then how do we get these girls IDs - some do not have parents, some their families have moved and the victims do not know their whereabouts, even worse, some their parents have written them off. Where then do we get their parents approval of their date of birth?

The need for providing other therapeutic measures such as drug rehabilitation is somewhat compelling and we encounter difficulties with some mishandling of the issue and the way the girls' applications are being processed by Welfare.

Even where sheltering has successfully modified the maladaptive behaviour and the victim has learned occupational interpersonal skills, readjustment in the community following release may still be very difficult. Remember that the victim has been abused by the same society that we will be releasing her into. Certainly she lost respect for many men in authority because she

had once been either raped or had any deviant sex with them and she also has to deal with her shame and guilt. Supportive services that will help them towards long-term psychological well-being are essential. Provided the government becomes more supportive in terms of resources and facilities, and reinitiating a system that will work for all its people, then we will be able see our way through the problem.

Finally, I would like to say that this new phenomenon, "DECRIMINALISATION OF PROSTITUTION", is nothing but a rationalisation, a defence mechanism to shy away from the problem. The use of this new concept will not in any way help to solve the problem, but rather complicate things more further. Let us face the problem and deal with it. Whether you walk out of here and legalise, decriminalise or criminalise prostitution - please remain aware of the fact that the so called 'prostitutes' are human beings in desperate need of your help and intervention.

Please South Africa let us help women and children for the better future of our country.

***A survey of juvenile  
prostitution in Johannesburg:  
the perspective of The House***

(Originally prepared by Jean du Plessis, in 1995, for publication by the HSRC)

*So, although your daughters play the whore  
and your daughters-in-law commit adultery,  
I shall not punish your daughters for playing the whore  
when the men themselves are wandering off with whores  
and offering sacrifice with sacred prostitutes,  
for a people with no understanding is doomed.  
Hosea 4:13;14*

## **Introduction**

In Hillbrow, Johannesburg, children as young as 12 are working as prostitutes in night-clubs, agencies, massage parlours, and on the streets. Despite the undeniable presence of these juvenile prostitutes in South Africa, the children's relative invisibility lends the public an opportunity to deny or ignore their existence. Even the recent sensationalist media coverage has not dramatically increased general awareness. This disinterest has effectively reduced the potential for active intervention and treatment programmes for these youth, and retarded the collection of empirical data on the phenomenon.

This survey considers the problem of juvenile prostitution in Johannesburg from the perspectives of The House, a community welfare project involved in the retrieval and rehabilitation of juvenile prostitutes and other girl children in distress. Rather than surveying literature and available academic data this survey will largely rely on empirical data and observations from The House's day to day experiences.

In order to conclude this survey with suggestions as to dealing with the problem the following sequence will be adhered to in the discussion:

1. Juvenile Prostitution in Johannesburg
2. Precipitating Factors of Juvenile Prostitution
3. Stumbling Blocks in Dealing with Juvenile Prostitutes
4. The House's Attempts to Address the Problem
5. Conclusion - Holistic Approach to Combating Juvenile Prostitution: A Successful Program will Address the Precipitating Factors and will Overcome the Stumbling Blocks Mentioned in this Survey.

The data presented in this survey is up to date and reflect current conditions but the scenario is expected to change drastically once prostitution is officially decriminalised. In the past when prostitution was regarded to be criminal juvenile prostitution prospered quite comfortably. At present the Law seems to be ambivalent in acting on any form of prostitution and our expectancy is that under the new dispensation child prostitution will flourish as never seen before in Africa.

### **1. Juvenile Prostitution in Johannesburg**

*For an urge to go whoring has led them astray  
and whoring they go and desert their God  
Hosea 4:12*

Paul Tillich, one of the greater theologians of this century defined a person's god as his or her 'ultimate concern'. Certainly for the juveniles considered in this survey their ultimate concern is primarily survival and coming in at a close second place, the priority of attaining to an alternative reality. However, without the presence of men whose ultimate concern (their gods) seems to be rooted in their dysfunctional egos, the slaughter of the innocents would not be as prolific as it certainly is in South Africa and the other areas of child prostitution in the world. For as long as we will have men who venerate ego and sensual pleasure, who are obsessed with youth, and offer children money for the abuse of their bodies and souls - for so long will we have children that resort to prostitution as a means of survival in the inner city.

Juvenile prostitutes in Johannesburg can be found in a variety of places such as clubs, brothels, massage parlours, the 'beat' (street) and in escort agencies. The place of work of a prostitute can be used to classify them into 'types'. There are distinct differences between the girl who works on the street and the girl in a brothel - not so much an indication of personality type - rather a difference in living conditions and challenges to survive. Having been asked on a television interview whether there is a difference between different types of prostitutes, one

prostitute well versed in the different aspects of the streets offered her opinion:

"And nobody is better than the other ... because on the end of the day they are still selling their bodies for money ... there is no difference." [Peggy age 24 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Prostitution, CCV, October '93]

### **Brothels**

The brothel in Johannesburg can either be a very large house in Sandton with spa-bath, tennis courts, pool and catering on a sun deck, or it can be a lice invested tacky residential hotel with a hollow bed and very dirty linen. The men who patronise these places share the same external qualifications (on average: middle class, older than 35, married) and it may only be guessed at what their internal differences may be.

Insofar as the presence of juveniles on these premises, we have a very limited experience of brothels outside of the Hillbrow/Yeoville/Berea/Joubert Park area and cannot comment on them. Although juveniles are definitely welcomed in the inner city brothels we have never found girls younger than 15. This may be due to the fact that the girls must stand on the balconies, in the doorways and in the pubs to solicit business. It may be too dangerous a choice for the girls and the establishment alike if a child younger than 15 is obviously prostituting. This may be an indication of a sub-culture sensitivity - perhaps that 15 or 16 is nicely young but 14 and younger is criminally young. We are currently acquainted with at least 30 girls aged between 15 and 18, working in these brothels. Evidence suggests that there must be at least two hundred girls of this age group in the inner city brothels at any given time.

### **Clubs**

"Hillbrow is never easy ... especially to a child. A place like this ... in the beginning might seem glamorous ... all the night-clubs, all the people and all the excitement. Eventually that wears off and what remains is what there really is! ... filth ... exploitation ... prostitution ... child abuse ..." [Sophie age 19 - The House, Runaways: Shadow Worlds, CCV, October '93]

These clubs may operate as night clubs and are situated mainly in the Hillbrow/Joubert Park/Berea areas. Club owners seem disassociated from the prostitution trade on the premises and the girls use the club as a pick-up point. Steamers are attracted to these clubs by the presence of the girls and the advertised sex shows. It must be noted that strip shows usually involve explicit scenes such as 'live shows', dances that involve dildos, lesbian sex and other pornographic material. Most of these clubs show continuous pornography on television monitors. Patrons of these clubs are men, usually older than 30 years and from a middle income bracket. Security on these premises is excellent and involves armed men in radio communication with one another, roaming around the premises and checking patrons at the doors.

The younger girls, especially recent runaways, find these places attractive because of its security and potential to fulfil her dreams. She ends up living an 18-hour day party in a glitzy environment, in the excitement of the underworld and earning as much as R10 000 per month. From here on the road is a downward spiral. Some girls live long enough to become addicted to the drugs available on the premises, they lose their youthful looks and eventually leave to work at an escort agency or massage parlour.

Many of these clubs are slowly changing into brothels, providing accommodation and control measures over the girls.

### **Massage parlours**

These places are slowly being replaced by brothels and escort agencies since the reason for their 'massage parlour' cover is not as pressing as before. This type of prostitution is favoured among juveniles and inexperienced girls since not all her clients expect penetrative sex and

rather request to be masturbated - the girl charging progressively more as she is requested to undress. A hand job, if the girl is fully clothed, may cost R20 or R50. If she is topless R80, naked plus a blow job R100, and full penetrative sex R150.

During July '93 we removed two 15 year old girls from a massage parlour in Hillbrow. They were runaways from Pretoria and had been introduced to the place by a man that met them on their arrival in Hillbrow. He put them up in an apartment and organised the job for them. The girls had been gone from home only for a week when we found them. Both girls claimed to have had their first sexual experience in the massage parlour. Each girl served about thirty men during that time and made it clear to us that if we should ever tell their parents about their work they would again run away from home and would not trust us a second time around. Needless to say, our exhortations to have themselves tested for HIV and to see therapists were not heeded.

"But no girl can do it ... nobody can just go into the business ... no drugs, nothing ... Mentally and emotionally it's gonna hurt you. You'll always remember it, even if you did it for 2 months ... you'll remember what happened." [Tracy age 20 - The House: People Program; Teenage Prostitution, CCV and NNTV, August '95]

Massage parlour girls can earn about R4 000 per month and we have found school-going girls doing this work part-time. This is still a relatively high rung on the ladder of prostitution success and the following step for these girls are usually into brothels and then to the streets.

### **Escort Agencies**

***"I made R200 within 20 minutes (first time at an agency). I thought, wow, easy money. But ... you forget how you're feeling at the time ... which ends you up in drugs and alcohol."***

[Tracy age 20 - The House: People Program; Teenage Prostitution, CCV and NNTV, August '95]

This is the most well known area of prostitution in South Africa and constitutes a large and important part of the trade. Most of the girls we work with started out working in escort agencies. Sophie was first arrested for topless waitressing in one such an agency's lunch-time pub when she was fourteen years old. She started working there when she was a little older than twelve. In a recent interview on television she indicated that not just any escort agency would take such a young girl.

***Q: You started in an agency?***

***S: Yes ... I was turned down a couple of times because I was too young.'***

[Sandy age 18 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, February '92]

In '90 she was arrested for prostitution and detained in John Voster Square awaiting trial. It was her 16th birthday, and late that night the officers at the station brought her a birthday cake and let her go free - in lieu of a birthday present. By that time she was well known as a prostitute and obviously one of the police's favoured girls. Sophie's next step down the ladder was to get fired at each successive agency because of her hopeless addiction to Wellconal. She started walking the beat when she was 17, by then already a "hopeless case", "rotten to the core" that has, "been around for years and years", according to the Child Protection Unit (Willie Botha: personal conversation '92).

### **Streets**

The 'beat' is the last stop for all prostitutes. These girls and women are seriously addicted to dangerous drugs, they are diseased, underweight and live in constant danger of rape, mutilation

and murder. One year before Cheeky was tortured and mutilated to her death she related the reality of a Hillbrow prostitute's death in a television interview, almost prophetically:

**Q: *Is it tough to leave once you've been here for a while?***

**C: *"Well, I've been here for years and the only way I've seen people leave is either OD-ing or getting killed."***

*[Cheeky age 21 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, May '94]*

As far as juveniles are concerned we have removed scores of teenagers from these streets. The commixture of dire financial need and depravity that marks this area of operation gives rise to weird, dangerous and downright pathological sexual deviance. We have removed children as young as 3 years old from prostitutes because they were used by their mothers to satisfy the sexual fantasies of her clients. We have come across cases where 10 and 12 year old children were used for pornographic purposes and in one case it involved an Alsatian dog of a well known steamer.

**S: *"I know if I carry on in this way of life there is no future for me ... because I will end up like a lot of these other girls, overdosed or just living from day to day."***

**Q: *What do you see yourself doing one day?***

**S: *(laughingly) - "Hobbling along the street, with my grey hair... and tatty shoes."***

**Q: *That's your dream or your fear?***

**(contemplating, her face changing from laughter to shock) - *"My fear... I suppose ..."***

*[Sandy age 18 - the House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, February '92]*

Girls of 16 years and older will visibly walk the beat whereas younger children can only be rented from mediators. Some of the older women on the street will act as mediators for young runaways that they live off, actually training these girls.

**C: *"The guys prefer the younger girls. You get some perverts that will ask for girls that are still at school or still virgins."***

**Q: *Are there children of 12 and 13 on the street?***

**C: *"Yes. They run away from home, come to Hillbrow, get boyfriends that get them onto drugs."***

*[Cheeky age 19 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, February '92]*

A disturbing new notion is that a pedophile beat is emerging in the city centre. These pimps have an array of children on hand and can seemingly satisfy any need one may have. In order to test the range of children and the services the pimps offer I had to stretch my imagination to the extent of being sick to my stomach - the pimp not flinching, happily prepared to let me have a child for the night, making me promise solemnly that I would return the child. A bad bust by the police unfortunately sent that particular operation underground, only to surface again in fragmented forms.

### **Boy children**

Due to financial and specialised manpower constraints The House is not involved on the 'boys beat' and we have only a superficial and hear-say perspective of this trade. Indications are that some prostitution of street children is practised and rumours about 14 year old boys in specialised gay-clubs abound. We are however not in a position to comment further on this aspect.

### **S & M Brothels**

Although we have quite an extensive knowledge of the S & M trade in Johannesburg we have

never seen or heard of any juveniles involved. This fact in itself raises interesting questions beyond the scope of this discussion.

## **2. Precipitating Factors of Juvenile Prostitution**

Although the economics of demand and supply play a major role as precursor of juvenile prostitution, the question why only some children will resort to prostitution as a means of survival needs consideration. It is obvious that not all children and women from poverty stricken areas, or all runaways, or all drug addicts become juvenile prostitutes. There must be some causal factors most juvenile prostitutes have in common. If we could isolate these factors we can readily identify at-risk children.

In our experience the children we work with have at least three of the following four experiences in common: 1. childhood sexual abuse; 2. truancy and runaway behaviour; 3. welfare intervention; 4. drug experimentation.

Although the causal relationship between runaway behaviour and juvenile prostitution is unquestionable (Coleman, 1989; Herrmann, 1987; Li, West and Woodehouse, 1990) it represents a mediating situational variable that facilitates prostitution. What remains unclear is why some runaway youth become drawn into prostitution and inner city vice while others escape it. The predisposition towards prostitution among some youth clearly has a more complex and controversial foundation.

Coleman (1989) suggests that in addition to the socio-cultural and situational variables, juveniles who become involved in prostitution suffer from faulty psycho-sexual and psycho-social development. In considering the factors that precipitate juvenile prostitution, it is important to examine those stimuli that are responsible for the disruption of normal developmental processes. This necessitates an assessment of variables such as the impact of child abuse, chaotic family structure and substance abuse as well as other related matters such as religious background, mental health status and welfare intervention.

With a clearer understanding of those factors that correlate with the development of child prostitution, it may be possible to evolve relevant primary preventative and treatment programmes for those youth involved in such activities.

### **The Role of the Pimp**

The primary motivation towards prostitution is, naturally enough, a need for money. Among runaway youth and drug addicts, however, accommodation, food or drugs are the essential requirements. Accommodation for street prostitutes and recent runaways is limited to the thousands of hotel rooms available in the area. These rooms are rented on a daily basis for between R30 and R80 per day (sometimes including breakfast).

The South African prostitute-pimp relationship differs markedly from that found in the American milieu. Indeed, the word pimp is not in everyday use among South African prostitutes, since they are generally 'pimped' by a boyfriend (or lesbian girlfriend) and the prevailing sub-culture makes rational argument of the boyfriend's role a taboo. These lovers encourage prostitution and use the funds thus generated to finance the drug habits of both partners. In return the boyfriend-pimp offers protection from the police by being on the 'look-out' and protection from perverted 'steamers' by waiting in the corridor while the prostitute is doing business. Furthermore the boyfriend-pimp offers support in the form of a 'loving' relationship and by satisfying the prostitute's unmet emotional needs. In this sense the pimp is the caretaker who provides a new life which is perceived to be a better alternative to what society has to offer.

Pimps manipulate the girls to believe in them and their role as caretakers, a fact usually

reaffirmed each time the pimp manages to display his/her superior physical strength and street savvy. We have found these pimps to be expert manipulators who employ skills that speak of astounding insight into human nature. We know pimps that are now pimping their third or fourth girls, all previous girls having died drug related deaths. These pimps are still respected on the streets as people who really care, who have tried their best to keep their girlfriends alive, but, despite their efforts to help the girls died anyhow.

The logic and the dynamics involved in these relationships confounds any normal-thinking person. After five years of intimate contact with these persons the pimp-prostitute relationship is still the one factor that leaves us unintelligent and impotent.

"They (the pimps) actually go out of their way to hurt the girls, they make sure that the girls are scared ... that they are terrified ... they try and get the girls to think that they will never be able to lead a normal life ... that they will never be able to lead any kind of life without the pimp, without the guy. ... And the girl on the other side lands up feeling that she just wants ... she doesn't care what type of love it is as long as he loves her ... she just wants to be loved ... she want to know that she's loved." [Penny age 24 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Prostitution, CCV, October '93]

Much of the extant literature on prostitution deals with adult sex workers, and is thus not necessarily relevant to issues related to juveniles (McMullen, 1987; Herrmann, 1987). While a great deal has been learned through hands on projects with street youth, no empirical data has yet been published with regards to the South African juvenile prostitute. Caplan (1985) and Coleman (1989) offer a detailed insight into American juveniles involved in prostitution. In our experience the South African scenario has many correlates with the North American. These youth are seldom younger than 14 and are most active from 15. They are quickly aged by the sleepless nights on the streets, alcohol and drug abuse, fear of police and freak steamers, betrayal and powerlessness. Although they come from all socio-economic backgrounds, juvenile prostitutes' family lives are generally traumatic, chaotic and disorganised (Caplan, 1984; Glynn and Haenlein, 1988; Li et al., 1990). With this background come poor vocational training, inadequate social skills, and inability to form meaningful relationships and a fear of intimacy.

For these youth, prostitution is the only viable way to gain economic and emotional power, and the 'love' of a street-wise pimp seems desirable if not necessary. The pimp-prostitute relationship leads one to consider the psychological make-up of the juvenile prostitute, particularly her unmet emotional needs as a child at home.

It is still unclear which children are at risk and what the processes leading to prostitution are. For a clearer understanding of what it is that forces girls to seek the money, love and caring from their street contact, it is essential to look at childhood experiences and the possible role of trauma within the child's family in more detail.

\*Although we state that the South African juvenile prostitute appear to follow the North American model reasonably closely it needs to be emphasised that our experience is limited to the inner city of Johannesburg and does not speak for children in other (specifically rural) areas.

### **The role of sexual abuse**

Prostitution is frequently alluded to as one of the possible long term effects of the sexual abuse of children (Bagley and King, 1990; Coleman, 1989; McMullen, 1987). Such claims warrant a detailed investigation into the effects of sexual abuse on the child and its correlation with subsequent prostitution. It is, however, beyond the scope of this discussion and author to go into a detailed discussion of child sexual abuse but a short survey of the phenomenon is necessary to lead the discussion.

No single factor determines the psychological impact that sexual abuse has on the child. Rather, the intensity of the child's traumatising and the character of the psychological

symptoms are influenced by several factors (Bagley and King, 1990; Dubowitz, Black Harrington and Verschoore, 1993):

The child's stage of socio-sexual development, temperament and understanding of the social sanctions against such behaviour. Effects will thus depend on the meaning attached to it by the individual child.

The nature of the abusive acts. Penetration, for example, will be more harmful than fondling or mere exhibitionism.

The use of coercion and violence. Non-consensual abuse appears to have a particularly harmful impact on the victim.

The perpetrator's relationship with the child. Abuse by a trusted caretaker leads to more intense emotional conflict for the victim.

The perpetrator's proximity to the victim. Victims who cannot escape unwanted situations suffer more deleterious effects.

The absence of familial support. The severely dysfunctional family not only increases the child's vulnerability to abuse, but causes excessive guilt through unsympathetic reactions and rejection of the victim. Intrusive negative effects of unwanted abuse is indubitably amplified when the abuse is accompanied by poor nurturance (as is the case with many institutionalised abuse cases) and unstable home life.

Negative effects are also aggravated in cases of incest where the child has assumed an pseudo-adult role within the family, since this effectively enmeshes the victim into the family system, prevents the development of the normal peer relations and makes termination of the abuse so much more intricate.

Children's reactions to the abuse are diverse and idiosyncratic. Consequently, the evidence regarding the psychological effects of sexual abuse is contradictory. There is little doubt, however, that such premature exposure to sex gives rise to precocious sexuality, arrested psycho-sexual development and a distorted perception of love and affection (Li, et al., 1990). Diminished inhibition, disrespect for personal boundaries, inappropriate sexual behaviours and excessive masturbation are also noted (Bagley and King, 1990). Putman, Helmers and Trickett (1993) report increased levels of dissociation among abused and traumatised children, accompanied by heightened aggressive and self-destructive behaviour.

Short term effects of child sexual abuse include fear, anxiety, guilt, hostility and shame. Negative coping mechanism such as passive submission, repression, identification with the aggressor or anger suppression appear to aggravate behavioural symptoms such as learnt helplessness, depression, sleep and somatic complaints, hyperactivity and sexual acting out.

Long term effects include suicidal ideation, hysterical seizures, confused social relationships, increased violence, promiscuity, truancy and delinquency. Adult survivors of sexual abuse report sexual dysfunction, phobias, neuroticism, anorexia and substance abuse (Bagley and King, 1990). Also reported are post traumatic stress disorder symptoms such as affect disorders and depersonalisation (Dubowitz et al., 1993)

Li et al, (1990) point out that many sexually abused individuals do not present with such diffuse reactions and suggest that victims who do react negatively were inherently disturbed before the onset of the abuse. This implies that pathological reactions are correlative and not causally connected to sexual abuse. It is, indeed, difficult to separate the unwholesome effects of the sexual abuse from those of the environment or family scenario. In effect, sexual abuse may simply provide a core around which all other harmful experiences may be organised. Following this argument, it is inappropriate to single out sexual molestation as the root of subsequent deviations.

Despite these objections, the many and varied psychological symptoms correlated to sexual abuse point to a strong link between such abuse and subsequent prostitution. Where unwanted sexual contact becomes a focus for the victim, it may lead to runaway behaviour, which is the mediating variable associated with prostitution. The disposition towards

prostitution among sexually abused runaways is facilitated by their heightened awareness of sexuality and its usefulness as a means of meeting non-sexual needs.

***"I've got 6 years on the streets now." ... "No, I never went back home ... "Hey, I can't talk with my father any more ... cause he doesn't want to see me anymore." He tried to sleep with me."***

[Lebo age 18 - The House: People Program; Teenage Prost., CCV and NNTV, Aug '95]

While there is a positive correlation between early sexual experiences and subsequent entry into a life of prostitution, this alone is obviously not sufficient. Other correlations need to be considered to assess their impact on the aetiology of prostitution among juveniles. One such factor which has emerged as a direct precipitating factor is that of running away.

### **Runaway behaviour**

***"Of course I was lonely ... I was a child!"***

[Sandy age 19, speaking about surviving as a runaway when she was 13 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Runaways, CCV, October '93]

Unfortunately it is not counsellors who await runaways on their arrival in the inner-city but pimps and pushers. Once on the streets, a young runaway may find little or no support systems, making it necessary to resort to sexual compromise for survival purposes. In this way prostitution and running away are undeniably connected. Furthermore, those elements which lead to running away have important influence in determining the potential inclination towards prostitution. Understanding why youth run away may thus shed light on the factors leading to involvement in prostitution.

A runaway is commonly defined as a youth under the age of 18 who leaves home without parental consent for at least 24 hours, or is 'pushed out' or 'thrown out' of the family home. While the 24 hour rule is convenient for definition purposes, it is not strictly adhered to in the South African context.

The runaway problem is a large and complex one. UNICEF estimates there to be 40 million street children in Latin America, particularly Brazil and Columbia, of which 76% left home before 12 due to rural-to-urban migration, civil strife, poverty or family violence (Plain Truth, 1990). Thousands of children run away from home each year in the United States, many of whom are younger than 15 (Children of the Night, 1993). Every year in South Africa over 3 500 runaways under the age of 18 are reported. In January of 1994, 39 children were reported runaway or missing in the Johannesburg area alone, representing 30% of all police cases involving children for that month.

Absconding and truancy in itself imply the presence of certain dysfunctional influences in the environment from which the runaway results. Much of the research indicates a positive correlation between running away and factors such as family instability and intolerable living conditions, which may include poverty, community instability, domestic strife, neglect, rejection, parental drug and alcohol abuse, over-protectiveness and poor communication. Kurtz et al. (1991) review a large number of studies which show that many runaways leave home to escape sexual abuse and violence. Running away is thus not an impulsive reaction to a new problem, but a culmination of crises and a means of escaping, or coping with, unsatisfactory circumstances. By the time the child runs away, the emotional stress has exercised its detrimental consequences on the child's life.

Not all abused children run away. According to the American scenario runaways who begin to rely on prostitution as a method of survival tend to have had longer and more coercive exposure to sexual and/or physical abuse than those who present with other symptoms such as delinquency (Coleman 1989). It has been repeatedly suggested that prolonged and severe sexual abuse by a trusted adult leads to widespread and conflicting emotions in the child which may cause running away, substance abuse and promiscuity.

The difference between Throwaways and Runaways is of special importance in the South African scenario since our cultural commixture is highly suggestive of different views on what constitutes an irreconcilable social sin. For some children the decision to run away is not their own; they are thrown out, or pushed out of their families by circumstance or dynamics beyond their control. Englander (1984) found that runaways perceive their parents to be significantly less accepting than non-runaways. Runaways from physically abusive backgrounds, for example, are more likely to have left home with parental encouragement due to their tendency towards school truancy, unruliness and aggression.

Sexually abused children are also vulnerable to familial rejection in some cases where the perpetrator is exposed by the child. The family may not only blame the child for the abuse, but reject the child for disrupting the family's equilibrium and causing the imprisonment of the breadwinner (Sharlin and Mor-Barak, 1992).

Englander (1984) reports that runaways believe themselves to be less able to influence or control external pressures. For adolescents, such feelings conflict with natural developmental crises centred on increased self-awareness, the search for identity and the need for independence. Teenagers find maltreatment particularly troublesome, especially if it inhibits the development of peer group relationships outside of the family and deprives the youth of independence and self-determination. It is, therefore, no co-incidence that a large proportion of the runaways are adolescents.

***"If you knew me then (as a runaway, 13 years old) , you wouldn't recognise me. I thought, as I said, I had everything under control, nobody daren't tell me a thing. I had everything worked out ... and I wouldn't take advice from anybody."***

[Sandy age 19, speaking about surviving as a runaway when she was 13 -The House: Shadow Worlds; Runaways, CCV, October '93]

Sharlin and Mor-Barak (1992) identify two broad groups of runaways, each with their own needs and motivation for absconding. Those who 'run from' are generally experiencing seemingly insurmountable interpersonal conflicts at home which they are no longer able to tolerate. 'Running from' is thus related to an external locus of control. On the other hand, children 'run to' somewhere in order to escape perceived restrictions of home or realise a romantic ideal of independence. Younger runaways with an internal locus of control tend to fall into this category. A distinction should also be made between situational runaways who stay in their local community with friends, and those who run to distant centres. Sharlin and Mor-Barak point out, however, that such classifications may be simplistic, since motives are likely to be multi-faceted and ambiguous. Furthermore, the child's developmental level and idiosyncratic personality traits play an additional role in the emergence and outcome of the runaway's behaviour.

***"Well ... on the age of 10 I was also raped. I think it's also a reason why a lot of the girls become prostitutes ... I was raped. Not by anybody known to me, I came from school ..." .....***  
***"My parents ... I always thought that they didn't understand, where they were trying rather to make me feel that it didn't happen. I took it up as if they ... as if they were not interested in what happened to me ... So ... I ran away from home, thinking it was a better idea and that it was a better option to go out into the real world. But, when I got to the real world I had to support myself, and the only means of support after you've slept out on the street for a***

***couple of nights not knowing whether you're going to be raped or killed or murdered again, on the age of 10 or 11, you take the easy option."***

***[Peggy age 24 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Prostitution, CCV, October '93]***

Observation of the runaways on the streets in Hillbrow indicate that the youth are running from perceived rejection, neglect and dysfunctional families, whilst some run to centres such as Hillbrow, Cape Town and Durban. Such cities are attractive lures to runaways, since they offer refuge from child protection and retrieval agencies, relatively easy access to money and bright lights and excitement. The act of running away has serious implications for the youth in that they are exposed to criminal elements, vagrancy and sexual vice as well as denied access to educational opportunities. The runaways are easy targets for drug dealers, pimps and pornographers who exploit their vulnerability, low self-esteem, helplessness and loneliness by encouraging sexual favours in return for cash.

Running away behaviour can thus be seen to be a mediating variable in the development of prostitution. The fact that not all runaways get to the stage of prostitution indicates, however, that it is necessary to look further in order to understand what it is that causes some youth to enter into a life of sexual compromise.

### **Substance abuse**

***"It is difficult to have sex with a guy if you're not on drugs ... because ... I don't know ... I just can't handle it ... that's why I smoke before I go with a client and afterwards again."***

***[Cheeky age 19 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, February '95]***

A strong correlation between some form of chemical addiction and prostitution is observed on the streets in Hillbrow. We have determined that substance abuse experimentation precedes prostitution and addiction follows soon after. It can further be proposed that the development of drug addiction would undoubtedly create the need for a convenient means, such as prostitution, to pay for the habit; equally true is the premise that drug euphoria is needed by the prostitute to alleviate the degradation and humiliation felt in the act of prostitution. With regards to chronological knowledge of which came first our observation is that: runaways who have experimented with drugs arrive in the city and soon find themselves entangled in the cyclic web of addiction and prostitution. In the beginning they use drugs recreationally, which makes prostitution come easier, but later, once they are addicted, they prostitute to maintain their drug habits. It is thus not possible to ascertain whether the substance abuse is a cause or an effect of prostitution but the strong correlation must be noted. All the girls we work with are dependant on drugs whilst most are terribly addicted.

The development of substance abuse in youths often indicates the presence of poor intra-familial relations, delinquency and delayed emotional development. The majority of dependants initiated usage as an emotionally unstable child who found the euphoria psychologically attractive, and continued the dependency as means of escape from the unfavourable emotions linked to reality. While typical abuse situations such as sexual molestation, neglect, physical abuse, foster placements of delinquent absconders, may lead to substance abuse, more initial forms of abuse have a similar effect. High socio-economic families in which parents do not take responsibility for their child, where there is a lack of communication, poor discipline and temporal values may increase the child's receptiveness to drug addiction.

Substance abuse is, therefore, a further symptom, along with other behavioural deficits such as delinquency or truancy, of the problems which have disturbed the child's normal social development from an early age. It is from the combined impact of the child's negative experiences from which prostitution and substance abuse evolves.

Runaways who reach Hillbrow and are exposed to exploitation by pimps are

encouraged to abuse drugs so that inhibitions and defences are lowered. The drug stifles any guilt and pain the youth is experiencing and offers the pimp an effective means of chaining the runaway more firmly. Substance dependence has the effect of rearranging the traditional hierarchy of needs according to Maslow, since the fulfilment of the psychological and biological needs for the chemical substance overpowers needs for shelter and food. In this sense the immorality of prostitution is no longer a relevant consideration. The perpetuation of prostitution and sexual exploitation is thus tied closely to the need for drugs.

***"I was scared ... I was very insecure and ... and once I turned to prostitution ... it was very, very difficult for me to even get to sleep at night. ... It was very difficult for me to live with myself ... and the only way that I could block out my shame was to turn to drugs."***

[Sophie age 19 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Runaways, CCV, October '93]

### **Social support systems**

In the discussion so far, the impact of child abuse (particularly sexual molestation), running away and substance abuse have been considered. In each, the importance of the chaotic family environment has been highlighted as important in the aetiology of the deviant behaviour among youth.

Children do not become involved in sexual compromise unless under extreme duress or dire physical need. Our experience has shown that those children who have been subject to multiple forms of abuse and severely dysfunctional familial structures are more prone to prostitution - of one thing we can be certain, and that is that a child who is loved and cared for will have a good self-image and is unlikely to enter into a life of prostitution. Here again our experience shows that juvenile prostitutes come from three typical backgrounds: 1. Disrupted family life; 2. Family living in horrid material and emotional circumstances (rich drug abusing or unloving parents / squatter camp poverty situations); 3. Disrupted emotional background of individual child (from any socio-economic society).

The importance of the family life on the child's development highlights the intervention of welfare systems as a possible indicator of individuals at higher risk for juvenile prostitution activities. Where the family unit has become irreparably dysfunctional, or stressors on the child have become unbearable, welfare and care organisations are in place to offer assistance and support.

Despite this, there are those who do not adequately benefit from the resources available. Admission into care organisations is disruptive on school, friends and family, is stigmatising and does not always protect the child from further abuse. Corrective action against family instability and sexual abuse, particularly when only partial or not sufficiently followed through, appears to increase the chances of re-victimisation. The removed child is placed in care where she may again be abused, abscond and then become involved in the network of drugs and prostitution. In fact the experiences gained in these institutions may be invaluable to the youth in equipping her with the specific skills to survive on the street.

The possible link between the failure of welfare agencies and subsequent involvement in teenage prostitution may be important in ascertaining which factors lead to the development of such activities and helping to determine which children are at particular risk.

### **Summary**

In the consideration of the factors precipitating juvenile prostitution, it is important to consider the impact of the individual's personal life history, relationship with parents and involvement in welfare institutions. From this it may be possible to establish which factors lead to absconding, drug addiction and ultimately prostitution.

### **3. Stumbling Blocks in Dealing with Juvenile Prostitutes**

#### **Responsible Acknowledgement of the Problem and a Willingness to Remedy**

It is not uncommon for society to react very biblically when prostitution is mentioned as a societal problem. The misconception that these girls are shameless capitalistic nymphomaniacs also vindicates society's extremely judgmental attitude towards prostitutes.

**The Lord Yahweh says this,  
"Summon an assembly to deal with them, and hand them over to terror and pillage;  
let the assembly stone them and dispatch them with their swords;  
let their sons and daughters be slaughtered and their houses set on fire.  
This is how I shall purge the country of debauchery,  
so that all women will be taught the lesson  
never to ape your debauchery again" . Ezekiel 23:46-48**

This allegorical imagery of prostitution in the Bible closely resembles the attitude society tends to harbour towards juveniles who get involved in the 'trade'. Rather than reaching out, taking the obviously broken and embattled child in her motherly arms to nurse her, society shuns her children - children from her womb, inadequately suckled on her breasts, whom are nothing less than a product of her iniquities. This shameful failure to care adequately cannot only be blamed on the patriarchal culture we share, it is also a symptom of a society so pretentious, so self-righteous and so terribly obsessed with the notion of the over importance of the individual.

The United Nations prescribe that a child has the right to choose, and if the child chose deviantly and is now denied by society - at least the individual had the privilege of a right to choose. Paedophile movements based in Amsterdam are already urging the human-rights people to consider that sexual desires are fundamental rights of humans, and that children are denied their human rights by laws that prescribe when, how and with whom they may have sexual relations. When will the global village realise that God entrusts children to the village? We may not allow the children to run rampant and set the village alight and we may not snub God's children of their mother's breasts and their father's tutoring. It is a given task, one of the few we were entrusted to do, to care for God's children as they are our own.

Juvenile prostitution is not prostitution between juveniles, it is a sociological disease at the root of which lies the men and women of our society - all culpable, whether in their active involvement in the abuse of these children or whether in their apathy toward the problem.

It took The House the better part of five years and almost 100 media exposures (national and international printed, television and radio) coverage to stir the authorities into a frame of mind where they will consider whether the problem of juvenile prostitution is worth acknowledging.

#### **Economics of supply and demand**

Children growing up in the city of gold, especially in her gastro-intestinal tract Hillbrow, but also in her surrounding areas even the far West and Eastern districts, face the challenge to get accustomed to and conquer the fact that men offer them money in exchange for sex. With the current state of financial resources in the country the way it is, so unevenly distributed, it can be foreseen that a girl from a poor home may be very tempted to consider an offer of R50 for a 'hand job', or R100 for a 'blow job', or R200 for a 'full house'. One 'blow job' buys a Barbie Doll outfit and a 'full house' buys a new pair of Doc Martins.

This problem for concerned parents is aggravated by the wholesale value that sexual intimacy has gained over the years. As parents we have allowed pornography to become commonplace in this country. It was to be expected that the schools should overflow with the material soon after its arrival on the open market - and it is to be expected that very few children have not yet

seen xxx-rated videos and pornography. This new attitude towards sex is also reflected in the music of the teenage culture. The chorus of the hit song 'Wiggle' goes:

**'Put your ass on my face  
I love the way your pussy tastes  
Girl you know you are the one,  
so shake that ass and make me come'**

Songs that belie the dictum that 'size does not count', were on the lips of little girls singing another hit song:

**'I don't want a short dick man...'**

Sexual abuse is also featured in pop music, as the song 'Father's Wrong' goes:

**'Come here little girl, daddy wants to hold you  
come here little girl, daddy feels warm  
I just want to show you that I'm nice  
I just want to show you that I'm kind  
I want you to know that I am yours  
And I want you to know you're mine**

**But if you think its wrong don't tell any other  
Or I'll have to hurt you and I'll hurt your mother  
And I could hurt you so much more  
Than any pain you've ever felt before'**

A sermon about the declining morals of the country is out of place here but the point that must be made is that children grow up in a world where sexual intercourse has a drastically different value than it had in the past millennium. The moral status quo is a stumbling block for those persons attempting to undo the incidence of child prostitution since a call for it as a social necessity is fuelled by winds that blow from many directions.

*"You won't believe .. geez. Some of those guys are such f...g perverts. Ja ... this ouk has a 11 year old daughter. He's Michelle's regular. He wants me to f...k her and he's gonna take videos and all sorts of stuff. Yes. He'll give me R1 000 if the two of ... his child an me ... like together, if we do it with his wife. F...k how's his mind ... the p..s."*

[Shane age 17 - stock footage FMS show '95]

### **Street culture**

*"By the time you find that out (that prostitution is a 'trap') you're usually an addict ... or ... so used to the money you make ... you're just into this life ... it's another culture."*

[Tracy age 20 - The House, Mary Magdalene Chapel: Koinonia, TV1, March '95]

This particular stumbling block either withholds people from trying to enter this arena or it inhibits their actions. Without the might of a sweeping military operation all other people must work subject to the rules of the sub-culture of the area. The 'Streets' has its own judicial laws and penal systems, language and anti-language, totems and taboos, ethics and standards. These social rules are distinctly different from any other societies and are known only to the real children of the culture. Because insiders live with the constant fear of penalisation and persecution by normal society the street culture is so designed to make detection of outsiders possible. Outsiders are perceived as a threat, not unlike the dynamics in other cultures, but this

threat is accentuated by the fact that insiders fear imprisonment and persecution from outsiders.

Any helper that hopes to get to the root of things must adopt the culture, make it their own and operate within its realm. This obviously creates terrible ambivalence since the sub-culture protects and venerates what the helper perceives as the evil that needs to be eradicated. To make the issue even more intricate; helpers that transgress the social rules of the sub-culture or anti-society face retribution and punishment which has immediate and vicious ostracisation as the mild form of punishment and murder as the norm. The courts of law of the Street takes the form of a rumour that spreads rapidly and changes dynamically as it is passed on until it becomes so noxious that it moves insiders to convict the person. The elders of the society will order or perform execution and gain stature in the process. Although the rumour-law-system seems grossly unfair it must be said in its defence that each participant in the rumour, each link in the chain, has the right to reflect on how much he/she believes of the information received and to change the rumour either for or against you before passing it on. This procedure allows a natural selection to take place - only those who are generally perceived to be 'law abiding' and 'good', who have reputations that can save them in the event of rumour, are the ones who survive street justice.

It may seem impossible to play the helper under these conditions but it is not. The House has managed very successfully to become an institution inside the sub-culture, one of the aspects of the sub-culture, one of the elders that have an influence on the proceedings and the ethics of the street. But it must be noted that even though The House has successfully entered the Street, it can never openly oppose, and each of our actions are weighed and rumoured and we need to survive - being greatly hampered in our efficiency.

### **Staff**

With the above scenario in mind the selection, training and maintenance of staff becomes a very intricate business. If one has the ability to pay market related salaries this issue can be seen as a great challenge but in The House's situation where we can only afford R1500 per month for the top salary (manager) the challenge is overwhelming. Most of our work is done by volunteer workers who may provide about 10 hours each month. The House has about forty dedicated volunteers.

Training, selection and motivation of volunteer workers is an important aspect of our staff management. The House is fortunate in that we only needed to have five volunteers arrested in the five years we have been going. It may be interesting to know that three of these people (including one female) had post-graduate psychology qualifications.

We do believe that if the Government would assist NGO's such as ourselves with salaries for staff members our efficiency will be greatly improved and much of the difficulties of having to rely on voluntary workers will be alleviated.

### **Drugs**

*"I've seen my boyfriend die of it (drugs) ... and ... a lot of my friends, they just drop like flies I know, you can die any minute, but then all other drugs kill you ... slowly ... but they kill you ... (with a shrug) take the drug you enjoy best hey ..."*

[Clara age 19 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, May '94]

Clara died in August '94 in a rehabilitation centre. She was a victim of dirty needles and the cause of death was septicaemia. Clara was a victim of childhood sexual abuse.

Drugs act as a stumbling block in two particular senses. The first is that of the world in which

the drugs are merchandised is also the world in which the juvenile prostitute lives - is also the world where the child is to be retrieved from. The vast amounts of money involved in the drug trade makes it necessary for merchants to protect themselves, their wares and their 'turf' with fire arms and gangster affiliations. The presence of the drug trade on the Street makes the place particularly dangerous.

The level of excitement on the Street is so high and so extreme that normal life is perceived to be extremely boring once the child attempts reintegration. Any rehabilitation program for these children must keep this aspect in mind. In the five years that we worked the Street we have: witnessed five murders, identified 23 bodies from the mortuary, 'buried' 170 children, assisted in recovering about 15 children from OD's and we are continuously involved in street scandal that sometimes capitulate into drug wars between opposing factions or simple murders of 'perpetrators'.

***"Yes ... yes ... I was raped, a number of times" ..... "It changed my character, it changed ... it made me hard ... it made me feel dirty ... mm ... I lost any pride that I had and ... I lost the will to live and I turned to drugs ... I really think that (drugs) had a major effect on the way my life turned."***

[Sandy age 19 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Runaways, CCV, October '93]

***"A lot ... (drug abuse). I think because a lot of them can't cope with being a prostitute .... and I mean, it wasn't their choice, they just have to do it to survive ... So, in order to make life easier they take the drugs in order to try and put their minds at rest. "***

[Vanessa age 20 - The House: Living with Aids, CCV. February '93]

In prior years the main drugs on the streets were Wellconal (opiate) and Buttons (Quaalude), both downers, and central nervous system depressants. These drugs rendered the children lethargic, emotional and pathetic. In retrospect we know that it was easier to work with them in those days since they still shared their emotions and still allowed counsellors to dig around in their souls. The new drug, crack cocaine, however, is a totally new ball game. The addicts are cold, unemotional, fast, lucid, aggressive, obsessed, whimsical and not in the least interested in sleep, eating, health or wholesomeness. The same children that we came to love and respect over the years have changed to become noisy, disrespectful, egocentric and uncaring - not in the sense as most parents will say, but this sounds like my child in a domestic context - but in the sense where these symptoms accompany fits of extreme violence and anger in a Street context.

What is generally referred to as drug rehabilitation in South Africa seems to be confused with drug detoxification. The rehabilitation centres we have had intimate contact with all treat drug addiction as the disease, a disease that is largely cured by withdrawal and abstention. We understand drug abuse to be one of many symptoms presented by the disease these children suffer from. A disease we have no proper description for but we know it involves a dysfunctional sexuality, drug abuse, anti social behaviour, compulsion, self mutilation and prostitution. Drug rehabilitation centres should not be regarded as more than drug detoxification programmes and must be followed up with intensive reconstructive therapy.

### **Child Care Act**

Working within the realms of the Act is almost impossible for any organisation that has to deal with the sensitivities of a Street sub-culture and anti-society. We contravene the Act almost every day, out of necessity, acting in what we understand to be a child's best interest. In those events where we do work with the welfare system we find the Act to be detrimental to these children, specifically with regards to the rules of jurisdiction, care facilities and the lack of the

child's participation in finding a solution.

According to the MEC Minister of Welfare The House will receive assistance during 1996 to write a welfare programme that when accepted, will affect certain changes which will benefit NGO's in our position.

### **South African Police Services**

#### **Uniform**

During the past five years we can honestly say that the SAPS have been of no particular assistance in combating the problem. With the exception of about five officers from various units and stations who reached out in their personal capacity the SAPS has mostly been a source of concern for The House. We deal with so many (unsubstantiated) complaints of girls who claim to have been raped, beaten and abused by police officers that we are inclined to conclude that where there is a thousand streams of smoke there must be a fire somewhere.

Another stumbling block posed by the SAPS is that of untrained personnel. They send young officers to places of extremes such as the Hillbrow area where these unprepared young men and women attempt to learn about the Street from the seat of a yellow van or from the front desk of the charge office. On occasion we have had to take our complaints and concerns to the Station Commanders and district commanders but nothing seems to change for the better.

The most recent atrocity was of a young officer who was asked to arrest a 16 year old (absconder from an industrial school) and her lesbian pimp. We had a watertight case built against the 28 year old pimp and realised that the only way to help the young prostitute was to have her taken back to school where we can advise her therapist. The young sergeant looked into the eyes of the young girl and within an hour he had his mind made up that we were the bad elements. He gave the child and the pimp our reports to read, told them that The House initiated the arrest and furnished the information - the case blew up in our faces. In the end, after we involved CPU and the Station Commander, the child was placed in Van Rijn place of safety. She was abducted by the pimp and the two are still missing. Our street reputation took a very serious knock that will probably take a year or more to rectify. Ever since that incident (Nov. '95) we have not had another runaway come to The House for our assistance.

The above example is typical of the problems presented by the uniform police. We are eternally grateful for their efforts to provide us with immediate assistance each time our lives are in danger but we do believe that proper training will assist them not to endanger our lives so often.

The incidence of police picking up children as young as 13 from the beat and brothels and letting the children go is overwhelming. The following extract of a discussion with Lebo tells the story on behalf of many other children:

***Q: How long have you been on the street***

***L: Six years now***

***Q: Did the police ever catch you?***

***L: "Yes. When I was 15"***

***Q: And what did they do? Did they send you to a school?***

***Q: "They just put me in jail. For 2 days ... then 4 o'clock they let me to go."***

***Q: They didn't send you to a school?***

***L: "No, no, ... they didn't take me anywhere. They were just only talking ... they gonna take the young girls to the schools, they gonna stay there. They count us already ... then they come again they say we must go."***

[Lebo age 18 -The House: People Program; Teenage Prostitution, CCV and NNTV, Aug '95]

### **SANAB - South Africa Narcotics and Alcohol Bureau**

The most intimate and most positive contact we ever had with the vice unit in Johannesburg was when they found my stolen firearm on the person of one of their associates, who used to visit The House trying to fish for information. He was shot dead by colleagues when they busted him for some atrocity. We have been officially warned to stay out of their business and unofficially we have received threats from their ranks. We accidentally stumbled on the fact that these people may actually deal in drugs, they may make files disappear and they may lose the drugs (evidence) from a bust without being questioned. We do not question any more. We do regard these people as one of the more dangerous stumbling blocks in our area.

### **CPU - Child Protection Unit**

At the time of writing the Johannesburg CPU has 16 staff members (10 male and 6 female) of whom only 11 can be counted as active investigating officers. Between all the staff they have 7 cars and 3 cellular phones and react to calls from all over the greater Johannesburg area, 24 hours a day.

Most of the brothels that feature teenage and child prostitutes have high tech security and surveillance systems and a multitude of armed guards on the premises. We know that the CPU is not only understaffed but lack equipment as well. In order to make the successful retrieval of children possible - and make a charge stick - the police need to at least match the crooks in human resource numbers and technology. It is futile for The House to think that CPU can assist them in opposing these rackets since the CPU simply does not have the facilities to bust these operators.

One club notorious for its ability to provide child prostitutes, (and that was the training ground for many of the girls The House works with, when they were between 12 and 14) was never busted or raided by CPU for the past 4 years. Another club, from which CPU often removed teenage prostitutes over the past four years, was never charged for any of these incidents. Currently there are numerous teenage girls working in brothels in Hillbrow, not without CPU's knowledge, but for this unit to act on these cases they need more human resources and facilities.

SANAB should be doing the work of busting brothels. In a recent incident The House thought it had a break with a child of 18 who had been on the streets, with CPU's knowledge, for the past three years. She was busted by SANAB for possession of 13 grams of cocaine. SANAB, as all too often happens, again lost the evidence. The prosecutor was forced to throw the case out of the court and the child was released back to the streets. CPU should be doing these busts where children are involved. Most of the drugs sold on the streets are sold to children and young people - that constitutes crimes, both by, and against, children - and should rightfully be dealt with by CPU and not SANAB - but CPU is not equipped.

South Africa cannot afford to have the CPU limited. With almost a third of our population being children, and with sexual abuse of children reaching epidemic proportions, the expansion and improvement of this unit is of utmost urgency. We cannot allow the State to make the mistake of limiting the CPU.

This unit can be nothing less than a national specialist unit with the highest of priorities. And then we can expect of them to close the brothels that harbour children and to act in all cases where dealers and pimps involve themselves with children. But right now these children go unaided by the policing structures of the country.

*Q: There seems to be so many services to help young people.*

*C: "Well, I've been in Hillbrow for 8 years going on 9 and I haven't met any." ... "I was in Hillbrow since, as I said 12, they (police) never saw me ... I mean, they used to see me every day, they never did anything and they knew I was under age."*

[Cheeky age 19 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, February '92]

### **Child-unfriendly legal system**

This is a serious stumbling block. Juveniles receive no recognition from the welfare systems or the courts whilst they are awaiting trial. Most of the girls we work with have seen the inside of the court cells before they were sixteen years old and if they were acquitted or the charges were withdrawn the children simply walked out of the cells back to the streets. The whole issue of children and the judicial system is currently being reorganised and one can only hope that this time around the interest of the child will feature brighter than any other interest the agenda may have.

One of our main concerns with the social welfare system, the juvenile and children's courts, are that they hardly see children holistically. The whole concept of holism, in fact, seems strange to the system. It is for this reason perhaps that a child who seems unmanageable can be so readily be removed from society and be placed in an institution. It is perhaps for this same reason that children who complain about abuse at home will be removed from their loved ones and be placed in an institution for periods of up to a year before the case has been resolved.

We believe the main objective of the welfare system should be the mobilisation and empowerment of the dysfunctional family. In our experience, given the fact that more than 80% of the children we work with have been in contact with the system as some point in time, shows that these children have fallen through holes in the system. We postulate that those holes are there exactly because of the system's unwillingness to deal with troubled children in a holistic manner.

### **Places of safety**

One of the many restraints on the efficiency of the courts, the CPU and NGO's such as ourselves is the very unsatisfactory conditions in the official places of safety such as Van Rhijn, Norman House and others. We have had numerous discussions with officials from the courts, welfare, CPU and other NGO's regarding this situation, and this happens every time a child needs shelter. Each time we have to see a child off to one of these places we just know that we are doing wrong by that child - that we are diminishing the child's chances of survival.

This reluctance to have children placed in these institutions inhibits all parties concerned to act swiftly to come to a child's assistance. We would rather let a child continue to prostitute for another two weeks whilst we work on a better solution than to 'waste' our one chance to help her by allowing the system to process her via the place of safety route.

The need for an innocent temporary shelter, a place of safety that is trusted by the police officers, is a very urgent need.

### **Untrained social workers**

Social workers in the employ of the Department cannot be expected to be trained in the sensitivities of the street culture or in the intricacies of the drug world. The fact that they are largely unable to identify with the child prostitute's life, her motives, her dreams, fears and loyalties, renders them inefficient as counsellors. We do not consider the average social worker as appropriately qualified to deal with these children. This problem causes a reluctance to involve oneself with this discipline in the search for resources.

### **Foster and Children's Home Placements**

It is downright impossible to get a juvenile prostitute placed in a children's home. The rule is usually that a child of 13 and older that is sexually active will not be accepted in children's homes. We have at least 15 girls on the street that could not get placement in a home and that must prostitute on the streets of Hillbrow to make a living.

Foster placement is out of the question in the current South African situation where follow-up from social workers is almost nil. To place a child prostitute with a family is a very

risky situation and if such a programme should be considered it must be correctly managed .

#### **4. The House**

##### **Description**

The House is a community welfare project aimed at bringing hope to young people that are entrapped by the trauma of sexual abuse, juvenile prostitution and drug addiction.

The House operates at grassroots level and is involved in retrieving runaways from all over the country from the various sub-cultures of vice in the inner-city.

The House operates a number of therapeutic, preventative and educational programmes in an attempt to alleviate the total inadequacy of resources for the abused children of our society.

The House belongs to its members (open to the public) and a management committee is elected each year to govern the project.

Financially The House is wholly reliant on donations. This is not an ideal we necessarily approve of but it is fostered by the State, because of the catch-22 situation created by the Tax Laws. The House has never received financial or material support from the State although it seems as if the service we provide is at least appreciated:

*Gauteng Provincial Government Welfare and Population Development*

*Ministerial Petition: Request for Financial Assistance*

*In reply to your letter of 13 November 1995, allow me to express my sincere gratitude for the excellent services The House is rendering, especially in regard to the combating of child- and teenage prostitution.*

*I am aware that your field of work is most difficult as it is quite unique. Although you may at times feel isolated in the work you do, please be assured that your endeavours does not go by unseen and is greatly appreciated.*

*Although The House can be regarded as a shelter, the shortage of funds has thus far prevented any form of financial assistance to shelters. It is however agreed that this type of service is essential and the matter is receiving priority attention. Financing of shelters will be implemented as soon as funds become available.*

*I have been informed by officials of my Department that you will nevertheless be assisted to submit a welfare programme in order to be placed on a priority list with the view to possible financing when funds become available.*

*Please be assured of my Department's support in all your endeavours.*

*With kind regards.*

*Sakkie Blanché, MEC*

*Minister of Welfare and Population Development*

*Date: 10.01.96*

## **Aims and Objectives of The House**

To remove or to assist in the removal from undesirable places and to rehabilitate or to assist in the rehabilitation of persons under the age of 21 years who are involved in prostitution and/or, are subject to criminal exploitation, particularly to sexual abuse

To give advice, assistance, shelter, guidance and direction to persons under the age of 21 years who are involved in or exposed to the use of drugs, undesirable influences including cult influences and negative peer pressure or who are destitute or runaways from homes and institutions.

To work with and assist law enforcement agencies including the South African Police, welfare, institutions in the correctional and educational facilities, institutions in the private sector, churches and religious organisations in removing, rehabilitating, placing, and generally assisting the persons referred to above.

To work actively towards combating the criminal exploitation and abuse of such persons.

To educate or assist in the education of the public in general in matters relating to drug abuse, juvenile prostitution and HIV/Aids by means of the dissemination of pamphlets and other literature, and the holding of seminars and lectures and counselling.

## **History of The House**

The House was founded by Jean and Adèle du Plessis in January '91. The project was given its name when Jean and Adèle relocated it (due to shortage of space) from an apartment in Hillbrow to one of the few houses in the area. The 6 children that excitedly relocated to the new premises started a tradition in Hillbrow by referring to the facility as 'the house'. The sub-culture continued the tradition and one year later, at the time of applying for a fund-raising number, we had no choice but to honour the tradition and to formally name the project - The House.

Since its inception The House has been featured many times in the national and international media. It was The House that first made the ongoing reality of teenage prostitution and intravenous drug addiction public. It was unfortunately necessary to use the media to expose these atrocities since the authorities initially refused to grant The House the right to apply for a fund-raising number, refusing to believe our reports of the prolific abuse of children in the under-world of vice.

## **The House's Approach**

***Q: So how are people meant to help you?***

***"I think it's too late. They should help you when you get started, when you're still under age ... that's when they've got to get you ... before the money and the drugs get you totally. .... Cause at the moment I don't care ... I just live from day-to-day. I can die tomorrow, I can die when I walk out ... to me it doesn't matter any more."***

[Cheeky age 19 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, February '92]

We believe that Cheeky taught us the truth about what our project should endeavour to do. We are grateful for her input. We hope to honour the memory of this lovely girl, who lived and died so tragically, with a field work programme that really makes a difference.

At one stage The House dreamt of modelling itself along the lines of a veteran project in Hollywood, Children of the Night. Although we have not lost the dream we are now coming to grips with the reality of the fact that we live in a second world with third world financial resources and first world expectancies for our children. We will still look toward the Children

of the Night model but some Bombay experiences and a lot of African input will be the ingredients of a successful soup we are determined to cook.

The following pages contain a list of all our projects and a short description of each of them.

### **Street-work Project**

Aims and objective of the street-work project

To be therapeutically involved, on grassroots level, in the sub-cultures of vice (and in particular those which exploit children).

To retrieve at-risk children from these areas.

Aims

To maintain an intimate working knowledge of the sub-cultures of vice and its related aspects.

To work with law enforcement agencies where possible and to expose those that are corrupt.

To advertise The House in these areas.

To create a 'therapeutic presence' in the: Streets, Clubs, Brothels, Escort Agencies and other areas where children are exploited.

To provide other programs of The House with information, to be used for: Training, Public Relations, Therapy, Public Education, Childfriend, etc.

This program utilises volunteer workers who join us on day-night searches for missing children who are known to have arrived in Hillbrow. These trained volunteers also visit the large number of brothels, sex clubs and a list of forty Escort Agencies on a regular basis. The field-worker's task is to befriend the girls, bringing The House and other therapeutic resources to their attention, and to do informal counselling on the streets. This program keeps us informed of activities and undercurrents in the sub-culture. The program utilises a specially equipped vehicle to assist field workers in their task. The matter of personal safety is always a major concern since our work necessarily involves us in the heart of the sub-culture of vice.

These workers live with the very frustrations of the facts that our legal and moral systems are in decline; that the policing system is corrupt; and that the social welfare systems are inadequate and can not deal with the problem - at the cost of our children.

### **Drop-in Facility**

During '94 The House bought the property, 60 Olivia rd, to overcome the problem of high rentals in Hillbrow. The House's office is situated here, and the Drop-in facility occupies the largest part of the premises. This programme is concerned with keeping the doors of the facility open for those who need our services. The programme employs two full-time staff members at minimal salaries. About 15 trained volunteers assist in this programme, to supplement the need for additional staff - especially on weekdays between 18:00 and 22:00. During '94 this programme dealt with more than 4 000 cases.

Other aspects of this programme includes Structured Counselling; Telephone Counselling; Referrals; Placements in institutions; Intermediary work - mostly negotiating on behalf of the child with authorities and bureaucratic systems.

### **Child abuse counselling centre**

Due to the inaccessibility and insufficiency of therapeutic facilities for abused children - and the increasing number of children requiring these services from us - The House decided to start a counselling centre to deal with the need. The project is due to start operating by May '96.

Training of lay-counsellors starts in January '96. The project will be staffed by volunteer counsellors who will work under the guidance of volunteer clinicians and other professionals. This project aims to provide at least 1 500 counselling sessions per year (feasibility break-even point), and to train a minimum of 40 counsellors each year. We hope to

train lay people from all areas of South Africa to assist in the quest to provide sufficient resources for the abused youth of our country.

This project will operate from 62 Olivia rd, adjoining the Drop-in facility. The property is being purchased at a very good price and it makes good sense for The House to buy rather than rent since the bond repayments are much less than rental costs.

### **Safe House**

Plans are underway to start a Safe House project in June '96. The idea is to create a safe environment for runaway girls, a place where they may run to, for assistance. We are aware of the legal problems associated with this idea but we trust that all the parties concerned will work with us to make a success of this pilot project. The project will initially shelter only ten girls for indefinite periods.

### **On Top Of My Voice**

Newsletter for teenage survivors of child sexual abuse

*"No ... I've actually ... I have learned to live with it ... I have blocked it out ... like a lot of steamers (clients) have done a lot of harm to me ... I have blocked that out too ... which is not a good thing. If you're abused you have to talk it out ... talk it out as early as possible. From the age of 9 it is only now that I could speak about it ... recently."*

[Tracy age 19 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, May '94]

'On Top Of My Voice' is a national newsletter for teenage survivors of child sexual abuse. This newsletter provides children with a forum where they may voice and share their feelings in poems, short stories, prose and in letters. For the abused child, to know that you are not alone; that you are not bad for feeling what you feel; and that you are not crazy for thinking what you think - is one of the first and most necessary steps toward healing and seeking assistance. This forum provides children with that therapeutic sharing of feelings.

A typical contribution by a 16-year-old girl from Johannesburg. She calls herself, '(andy'may):

**"daddy"**  
the daddy that i knew  
was someone whom i adored  
he never beat my mother  
he never made me sore  
what's he doing now - i don't understand  
i'm afraid of his belt - i'm afraid of his hand  
i feel cold to his touch - it's a feeling i loath  
why is he taking off my clothes?  
  
please! please! please! daddy no!  
i try to run but there's nowhere to go  
i can't awake from this nightmare - i feel so afraid  
who, baby jesus will come to my aid  
  
i despise him, he's no father to me  
he beats me and he drinks continuously  
what did i do? what did i say?  
to make papa peter hate me this way

**Childfriend - Community action against legal injustice towards children**

Childfriend is a project that aims to mobilise the public to speak out against injustice against children. The issues tackled by Childfriend are typically those of injustice in the Courts and at the hands of the legal systems. Lenient sentencing of offenders against children and inadequate protection of juvenile witnesses in child abuse cases are currently being addressed. This project, still in its infancy, has about 300 registered members from all over the country, and the numbers are growing rapidly. The aim is to register at least 2 000 active members by July 1996.

Communication with members is facilitated by a regular newsletter. All members are requested to phone and write to a particular official, MEC, Judge, Magistrate and/or Minister to lodge an official complaint. We hope that this pressure group will be able to make a difference in the long run.

**Mary Magdalene Chapel of Jesus Christ**

*- worship services for young people rejected by society*

The same day as sacrificing their children to their idols, they have been to my sanctuary and profaned it. Yes, this is what they have done in my house. Ezekiel 23:39

The beat is not so very busy on Sunday. Most of the steamers had a very late night and the girls tend to sleep until 12:00. Then they slowly get ready for the afternoon shift. Steamers that went to church, and perhaps had lunch with their families come to cruise the beat at about 17:00. So we start our church service at 16:00 and finish in time for the girls to go to work.

*"... here we can come if we want to. Here I understand the sermons and most the people we associate with on a weekly basis also come to church ... with us ... so we're not going into a straight church or ... well ... I was from a Catholic church first, it's not like going in there and you know ... well ... you're the only prostitute in church. God! Who's going to forgive my sins for me?"*

[Tracy age 20 - The House, Mary Magdalene Chapel: Koinonia, TV1, March '95]

The chapel was started in January '94 and occupies one room of the house at 60 Olivia rd. Services are presented by Dr. Bill Domeris (WITS University) and Adèle du Plessis. Services are non-denominational and are contextualised for the drug and prostitution sub-culture. The need for this chapel arose when we came to learn two important lessons: firstly that the children on the street are in desperate need of a relationship with God, and secondly, that they feel very unwelcome in a church where 'normal' people worship. This chapel has become their church, speaking their language, speaking of a Christ understanding their problems.

*"I tried to go ... and I felt like ... because I knew I was a hooker and men were after me at that time ... I mean guys ... I used to pick up guys and I was scared to go into a normal church ... meet some good peoples in the church and like maybe be an influence on them peoples ... like making them go wrong or something ... but I do want to believe in God!"*

*" ... come here and talk about your problems ... mm ... like in church ... I don't think I can go and flippen go and say what I wanted to say there ... say ja I'm a whore and I wanted to change and all that stuff. Adèle and Jean, they listen to you, they know you're a whore. They'll help you. They helped me a lot. They said do it gradually and I didn't know any other way before ... Now I've been speaking to them. They've helped me a lot ... shucks ...they've got me of the streets ... I can speak much more open now ... before I was a neurotic ...(nervous laugh).*

[Sammy age 25 - The House, Mary Magdalene Chapel: Koinonia, TV1, March '95]

**Ethembeni - rehabilitation centre (victims of child prostitution)**

The Salvation Army, in conjunction with The House, starts this project in November '96. The project combines a care facility for abandoned HIV/Aids babies with that of a rehabilitation facility for prostitutes who are victims of childhood sexual abuse. Apart from the other therapeutic programmes that are planned, we believe the interaction of the two programmes - recovering prostitutes caring for abandoned babies - will be a great factor in the success of the programme.

The project will cater for a maximum of 15 girls at a time and will involve them in a 12 to 18 month therapeutic programme. During this time the girls will be habilitated - domesticated and educated and be given job opportunities to make a future possible.

**Theosis - Holistic Growth Centre for Survivors of Childhood Trauma**

This project specialises as a therapeutic retreat for persons learning to heal from the effects of childhood sexual abuse. Although recovery from the trauma of childhood sexual abuse is a criterion for accommodation in the program, co-dependants (such as drug dependence) are welcome.

By May '96 the retreat will be able to accommodate about 15 people. By this time the 100-year-old stone and clay barn will have been restored to function as a chapel. The project will accommodate a maximum amount of 40 people for therapeutic programmes of various durations.

With the assistance of Trees for Africa, Onderstepoort and Nature Conservation the project will incorporate a tree nursery and an animal rehabilitation project to serve as occupational therapy.

The project is situated in the Cullinan/Bronkhorstspuit area on a 25 hectare farm.

**HIV/Aids Education - Reaching out to the highest risk group in society**

We currently assist in Johannesburg City Council's 'Outreach Programme'. This training programme is very successful in preparing lay-counsellors to do HIV/Aids counselling.

The House distributes about 200 000 condoms each year to various agencies, brothels, prostitutes and clients of prostitutes. The condoms are used as a 'licence' to discuss the issues of HIV prevention, testing and survival, with these women. We are specifically concerned with the population of prostitutes and their clients. The latest estimates are that South Africa has more than 60 000 prostitutes, who mainly serve married clients in the middle and upper income groups. A conservative estimate is that the 7 000 prostitutes in Johannesburg engage in 20 000 sexual encounters every day - 600 000 per month! We further postulate a generalisation that most clients do not use condoms with their spouses and friends and are placing many innocent people at risk. There is no way to overemphasise the importance of programmes such as this.

It may not be too out of line to postulate conservatively that 60 000 prostitutes serve an average of 2 clients per day - more than 43 million sexual contacts per year!! This may amount to a staggering R 4 300 million. And this when prostitution is still illegal.

Even at this stage when prostitution is illegal, do we have an abundance of child prostitutes in our country. We estimate that at least 2 000 of these girls in Johannesburg range between the ages 14 - 17. This group is our main target group for HIV prevention, retrieval and rehabilitation.

Another aspect of this programme is the supply of clean syringe needles to addicts. We have lost much support from the community because of this project since most people do not stop to think before they judge. We know that nothing will prevent an addict with drugs in her hand,

from getting the stuff into her veins. Whether a ball-point pen or a plastic straw is used, they will get high.

***"That's very good (The House supplying syringes). I've gone to that extent ... looking around on the ground ... where's the syringe, where you going to? ... or you're going through the***

***Nest Inn's toilets to look if someone left their syringe in the toilet so that you can just use that needle."***

*[Tracy age 19 - The House: Carte Blanche, M-Net, May '94]*

### **Public Education Programme - Reaching out to the public in general**

Adèle du Plessis and some trained volunteers specialise in doing talks and making presentations at seminars, community projects, churches, schools and other institutions. The aim of this project is to educate the public regarding the issues of child sexual abuse, child prostitution and drug abuse. Talks are given at schools on Sexuality, Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Coping with Parents. During '94 more than 2 500 people were addressed as part of this program. This program, along with referrals from other organisations and schools, will be an important source of referrals for the Child Abuse Counselling Centre at 62 Olivia rd.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Holistic Approach to Combating Juvenile Prostitution: A Successful Program Will Address The Precipitating Factors and Will Overcome the Stumbling Blocks Mentioned in this Survey.

Rehabilitation of a child prostitute is not a task to be taken lightly. These children suffered so much trauma, of such intensity that any therapist recoils in horror and impotence when these children open their hearts.

***"I went through a lot of pain, emotional pain, emotional trauma ... I went through a lot of abuse and at the time I didn't even realise that it was abuse."***

*[Sandy age 19 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Runaways, CCV, October '93]*

They are sexually dysfunctional, totally disassociated from their emotions and many have developed multiple personality to cope with the work of prostitution. Most young people are very fragmented but older girls seem to accept personality changes and slip into the 'street person' permanently.

***"Going to bed with a strange man ... a couple of times a week ... maybe even a couple of times a day ... it is not something to be proud about ... it is not something that you even talk about. The effects it has on a person is terrible and it is something that you will have to live with for the rest of your life ... and it is something that you need to overcome ... the shame ... and the guilt ..."***

*[Sandy age 19 - the House: Shadow Worlds; Runaways, CCV, October '93]*

The abuse these girls have to deal with shatters their self-image and makes them distrust people. They find it difficult not to reserve the possibility that any person they meet may be perverted, may harm them or may have ulterior motives for helping them.

***"You're continuously being abused especially if you ... I think ... when you don't look that well. It gives them (steamers) an opportunity to see that you are being abused." ..... "A guy ... the next minute he says he doesn't want to pay you anymore and you demand your money and ... then he hits you around." ..... "I've actually fought big guys ... but I've come of***

**worse ... but just degraded myself more because having to fight big guys for money."**

[Sammy age 24 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Prostitution, CCV, October '93]

Society instils guilt on these children and any responsible therapist should teach them that they will never be forgiven for their social 'sin'. Twenty years from now her children may be the objects of derision because their mother was a whore. Five years from now she may be married and one of her husband's friends, or her father in law's, may recognise her and her marriage will come apart. Should she live in secret or should she be taught how to be open about her past and to take the punch?

**"I've come to terms, as I've said, I've come to terms with what I've done, but with the help of other people (The House) ... only with support. ... I've come to terms with what I've had to do for money and ... I've ... I've forgiven myself for robbing myself of my childhood."**

[Sophie age 19 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Runaways, CCV, October '93]

So many of these girls have never had the opportunity to develop through puberty. Most have never had any therapy for that which made them troubled children in the first instance - childhood sexual abuse perhaps. The result is many times a neurotic and obsessive person that is much too juvenile to deal with real issues, especially not existential issues.

**"Hmm ... I had black eyes, I've got punched ... I've had black eyes ... I've had split lips ... very bruised body." ..... "They hammer you with the fists ... they kick you." ..... "They, because ... they say you're a prostitute, and ... mm ... that's maybe ... I think they ... they just like to demoralise you more." ..... "It's been extremely very scary. I've had a guy hold me up with a knife which was scary and ...(after being raped) then he threw me out of his car."**

[Sammy age 24 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Prostitution, CCV, October '93]

The sexual dysfunction the girls present with vary considerably. Some have masochistic tendencies, others identify with their abusers and present with worrisome (their own concerns) sadism. Inability to climax is a very common problem whilst a total lack of interest in sex for pleasure is most common. Sex is usually only appreciated for its utility value and the notion that sex and love has possible connections moves them to tears of laughter. Self mutilation and other extreme forms of sex that usually involves knives, guns, and other very scary devices is many times a secret pleasure they keep from therapists. A morbid fascination with serial killers and rapists is not uncommon.

**" Well ... working at an escort agency at that age (15) is not easy ... you have people taking advantage of your innocence ... robbing you ... raping you ... "**

[Sandy age 19 -The House: Shadow Worlds; Runaways, CCV, October '93]

Most of the girls come into therapy with a standard five or six behind them as the only socially acceptable qualification that you can use to help her build her future. She can perhaps find a menial job somewhere that earns R1000 per month - and she will always remember that her fanny can earn her that much in a night.

**"Hmm ... they say you shouldn't regret what you've done ... it's part of your life ... and ... ja, I do regret it because ... mm .. I'll always think about it ... and for my age ... I've got nowhere ... because of doing it."**

[Sammy age 24 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Prostitution, CCV, October '93]

Fortunately one can marry ones girl children off to knights on white horses. But the responsible therapist will counsel the knight, the horse and the princess because for them to

cope with what is in store for them is more than the average person can handle.

***"Yes (I am a real person) ... feelings, emotions, I hurt ... I get hurt like anybody else and sometimes more maybe ... because I know what I've done wrong ... and I have to live with it."***

[Peggy age 24 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Prostitution, CCV, October '93]

A sober treatment programme will deal with all the issues - social skills, job skills, personal skills, sexual skills, psychological skills, spiritual skills and then one must search the soul for more skills and deal with all those as well.

***"Mentally it takes away your pride, it takes away your dignity, you become nothing ... you have no ... you have to learn how to want to become something again in life." ..... "You do not have the want to become anything ... you think low of yourself, you feel people can see that you have been a prostitute ..." ..... "You feel bad and you feel dirty ... in yourself."***

[Peggy age 24 - The House: Shadow Worlds; Prostitution, CCV, October '93]

To deal with one rape is traumatic. To deal with gang rape is more traumatic. To deal with powerlessness and being beaten up is an art that must be learnt. Perhaps to deal with many, many rapes, and repeated beatings and many sexual perversions you got involved in because you were inebriated - all before your 18th birthday - perhaps there is a way to cope with the whole lot as a single unit instead of having to tear yourself apart for each of those. But the one rape that will haunt them for the rest of their lives is that first one - the one her uncle or father did.

***"You're being thrown out of cars, guys hitting you, biting you, being verbally abused as well ... mm ... they ... you're a whore. Sometimes a guy will ... being in a car with him ... and he'll ask 'please can't you wipe off your lipstick so my wife don't find lipstick on my collar' ... as you turn your head ... dwha! ... he'll hit you. They'll be all calm, fine, have sex with you, everything ... in the end they start ... some don't even want their money back, they just enjoy the ... abusing the girl ... I mean ... I don't know ... they're bastards ..."***

[Tracy age 20 - The House: People Program; Teenage Prostitution, CCV and NNTV, Aug '95]

***(raped 2 days before) "I'm feeling a bit scared, but ... I'm feeling OK ... but a ... the thought of being raped by an unknown person ... makes me feel ... I don't know ... like ... I did it to myself, to get raped or something like that ... that's how I feel."***

[Pauline age 17 - The House: People Program; Teenage Prostitution, CCV and NNTV, August '95]

***"It's tough (to survive) ... mm ... shucks ... it's hard ... and it's hurtful ... mm ... you become weary ... you very ... I was always weary, and I was always fighting for myself ... fighting." ..... 'When something was said about me being a prostitute and that ... I used to end up fighting ... and drinking ... most of the time drinking and then fighting ... and just being a destructive person to myself ... I think."***

[Sammy age 24 - The House, Prostitution: Shadow Worlds, CCV, October '93]

Healing and community, the two are mutually inclusive. This is the final and most important challenge for all therapists. We do not have the resources to heal these children but this does not mean that we may walk away from them.

**PS.**

*Cheeky's mutilated little body was found in the veldt in Mulbarton in Dec 1994. She died because of a severe non-sexual assault; she had a nylon rope around her neck. Cheeky died at the age of 23, having served the men of our society for more than 10 years of her life.*

*Sammy has been in therapy since 1994 and is showing positive signs of recovering. Her future hopes are in the hands of her psychiatrist.*

*Sandy embarked on a recovery programme in 1994. She got married in 1996, and is working toward 'having a life', for the first time since she came to the streets of Hillbrow at the age of 14.*

*Tracy and Peggy are struggling to start out on a recovery road.*

# Prostitution in the context of Christianity

(by Dr William R. Domeris, Presentation to the Gauteng Government, October 1996)

## **1. Introduction**

*"Do you want to know where hell is?"* asked one of the girls upon entering the Mary Magdalene chapel, *"I live in it!"* For many South African women and children who have, either voluntarily or involuntarily taken upon themselves the role of a prostitute, life is hell. The catalogue of rapes, gang-rapes, violence, abuse, perversion and murder make one wonder how anyone in their sane mind would chose to take up such a way of life. Yet our streets are full of women and men, boys and girls who in exchange for money or drugs prostitute their bodies. The answer may be that there was no real choice. Sadly, they are often the victims of sexual abuse in their childhood years and of drug abuse in the decades that follow. Whether prostitution is legalized or not, the prostitutes will always be the victims. Beyond the issue of legalization or decriminalization, therefore, is the greater and more urgent cry for the healing of these women and children.

Religion has played an important part in the history of prostitution, both uplifting them as sacred symbols of the deity and as denigrating them as the epitome of evil. For too long, men have been telling women what they may or may not do with their bodies, including their sexuality. I do not intend to continue that tradition. My immediate concern is the well-being of the thousands of prostitutes who live in a hell constructed, in no small part, out of the fabric of religious, moral and social traditions. I have chosen to expose some of these traditions in the hope that those with power, might find ways of empowering these the most marginalized of our society. My work is among children and women who are prostitutes and so that will determine my focus, although I am aware of the plight also of the young boys who serve as the homosexual prostitutes of the well-to-do.

## **2. The roots of prostitution**

Understanding modern attitudes to prostitution requires that we delve into the cultural traditions of the social mores of contemporary society. Since much of our South African culture reflects the norms of Europe, we shall begin with a consideration of the Mediterranean region and the work of cultural anthropologists of that region. One might just as easily start with African culture for there are many parallels. Prostitution was not a European import as some theologians have recently claimed.

Behind the phenomenon of prostitution is the ancient Mediterranean system of reciprocity, or the exchange of one good for another (see Gallant 1991:144-60). Reciprocity might imply a system of barter between equals or an exchange whereby a peasant works the land of a landlord in exchange for protection and subsistence. The landlord might make gifts of food in times of a crisis, in exchange for honour and loyalty.

Even marriage forms a part of such reciprocity, whereby the father forfeits control over the sexuality and reproductively of his daughter in exchange for loyalty, services or gifts from his prospective son in law.

Law after law from the ancient Mediterranean clearly demonstrates that women are ranked with property, rather than with other legal personae. Control over women is a male prerogative,

meaning that adultery or rape are primarily sins against the male members of the family (father, husband and brothers), and only incidentally against the woman. If a married woman is raped within a city and is not heard to cry out then that is not rape but adultery and she is to be punished accordingly (Deut 22:25-8).

Women, particularly virgins, form a part of the limited good of society, scarce resources to be sought after and acquired by men of power, prestige and wealth (see Schneider 1971). Prostitution is an extension of the concept of reciprocity, whereby certain women become public property, and their sexuality (including reproductive abilities) are there to be used by more than one man. Free from the control of either father or husband such women were viewed as liminal, meaning that they stood on the edge of the margins of society. Often, these same women were considered to be dangerous.

Prostitutes may be found in all ancient societies regardless of the religion practised. While the use of prostitutes may have been frowned upon in certain sectors of society, in general prostitutes were accepted as a component part of that society. Their place within society varied enormously from place to place, age to age, society to society. What might be acceptable for one century, might be radically different for the next. Men were both the controllers and the customers, and the pendulum of conscience took them from one extreme to the other. Prostitutes were both idealized and marginalized. Men fantasized, in private, about the sexual freedom or excesses of the courtesan, while in public they decried the public presence of such women. Horace, Plautus and other poets use the prostitute within their writings as a character within the general tapestry of society. Plautus even details the forbidden domains of sexuality (wife, widow, virgin, and freeborn child) making clear that prostitutes fall within the bounds of the normal sexual activities of men, married or otherwise (Henriques 1962:130).

The first known registration of prostitutes occurred in Rome, and it was in the same city under Caligula that prostitutes were first taxed, and their earnings contributed in no small way to the city coffers (Henriques 1962:119). Once the prostitute was registered as such, together with her name or pseudonym and agreed price, she was listed for life and neither marriage nor motherhood could remove her name from the list. In the process of this form of legalization, control by the state led to the prostitute losing her normal rights as a citizen. Her occupation became the determinant of her whole life-style and the stigma could never be removed

The prostitutes were marked, both in terms of tattoo or dress (veiled or unveiled, or some other form of identity) and in terms of the shame/honour culture of especially the Mediterranean world. Where men epitomized honour and status, women epitomized purity and decorum. The absence of these, implied the presence of shame - a social stigma, designed to exacerbate the powerlessness of the woman. Her whole dress code was intended to mark her out as other than the normal woman, the wife or mother, yet paradoxically she was often both.

There was a yet more tragic connection, which further diminished the status of the prostitute. The fifth century BC began a process which had its full consummation in the Christian teaching of the fourth century AD. The Greek myth known as Pandora's Box sparked in the Greek world an association between women and the source of evil. The Jewish myth of Adam and Eve, similarly allowed a connection between women and the so-called "fall of humankind". These and other stories of the ancient world made way for the emergence of a belief that women were somehow more closely connected with evil, and the underworld, than men. In the course of time women were progressively demonized, until even the sexuality which took place in the confines of marriage was considered a part of fallen humanity - a necessary evil, argued Augustine, for the procreation of children. Sexual enjoyment was considered to be a slippery slope towards the very gates of hell, and men took increasing

delight in blaming women for their own desires. Ever ready to point fingers of accusation, the male legislators in the late Medieval period, justified prostitution on the grounds of the needs of the common man, rather than his elitist counterpart. Elitism and misogyny joined hands to create the medieval prostitutes hell. But it was left to the Protestant Reformation to push the prostitute into a theological hell as well.

Curiously, two of the most important of the Christian writers chose to accept the place of the prostitute as a "necessary evil" within society. Saint Augustine warned that to remove the figure of the prostitute, if that were possible, could have dire consequences for the stability of society (Otis 1985:12). The wrath of the church was aimed, not at the prostitute but at those who profited from their earnings (Otis 1985:13). In the late thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas took the same position as Augustine (Otis 1985:23). Over the centuries, the church accepted prostitutes provided they were willing to repent as full members without any stigma. Indeed Christian tradition celebrated several ex-prostitutes within the ranks of the saints.

Otis (1985) sums up the position of the church as follows: Thus, the church's position on prostitution, crystallized by the fourth century, consisted of these three elements: acceptance of prostitution as an inevitable social fact, condemnation of those profiting from this commerce, and encouragement for the prostitute to repent (1985:13).

While the prostitute was accepted within society, particular laws indicated that changes in public attitudes were in progress. So in 1213 AD, in France, prostitutes were set aside to live in separate domains as with lepers (Otis 1985:23). In the later centuries they faced the possible sentence of excommunication, although for the next two centuries at least they would still be welcomed at mass. Taking France as an example, one can see a definite shift in attitudes over the centuries. While prostitution was accepted in the thirteenth century, institutionalized in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, it was finally banned in the sixteenth century. Various explanations have been advanced (see Otis 1985:41-43), none sufficient in its own rights, so that we should think instead of an accumulation of factors, from venereal diseases to the growing hold of the evangelical wing of the Protestant tradition and not least of all, a reaction against the increasing power of women in the late Medieval period. In the same century, Otis writes, that in criminal law women were considered irresponsible because of their inferiority (*imbecilitis sexus*) and that the rape of a prostitute was no longer considered to be a crime (1985:42).

We may contrast this position with the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries where the legal records show prostitutes bringing charges rape and battery and lists of those fined for aggression against prostitutes (Otis 1985:69). Common morality demanded that prostitutes be given a fair price and that her consent was a necessary step in the process. Prostitutes even participated in sacred festivals, albeit in a somewhat unorthodox manner. In Beaucaire in the fifteenth century there was a race for prostitutes on the feast day of Mary Magdalene and in Arles on Pentecost (Otis 1985:71). Pope Innocent III, in a letter dated to 1198, pleaded for fellow Christians to assist in the resocialization of prostitutes such as by marriage, even offering remission of sin to those who chose so to do (Otis 1985:72). Christian communities were established specifically to accommodate ex-prostitutes and by the early fourteenth century, most big towns in France would have had such.

Luther and those who followed his teaching railed against the existence of brothels and at the same time championed the chastity of young men (Otis 1985:43). Calvin was even more severe in his reprimands, attacking all forms of fornication including that between engaged couples. The continued existence in certain American states of laws against fornication indicate that Lutheran and Calvinist sympathies reached far and wide. In 1562, in Geneva, simple

fornication and similar sexual offences made up 20% of the criminal cases (Otis 1985:43). At the instigation of the church brothels were closed, including those were in previous centuries the Abbott had been the brothel keeper (Otis 1985:83). Otis demonstrates that definite parallels existed between laws concerning Jews and prostitutes. Both were forbidden to touch food in the market on the basis of their impurity and both were required to wear distinctive garments (1985: 70) and neither was allowed to circulate during Holy Week.

Otis writes that, "hostility towards prostitutes was but one manifestation of the misogynous spirit of the sixteenth century" (1985:42). She continues, In this new Christian society ..., there was no longer room for the role of social stabilizer granted to the prostitute in late medieval times. And prostitution ceases at this point to be the domain of institutional history, but rather becomes a part of the history of criminality and marginality in the early modern period. (1985:45). The forerunner of this was the growing restrictions upon those admitted to brothels in France, including boys under fourteen, clerics and married men. Italy by contrast admitted all who would enter.

In tracing the path of this progressive dehumanisation of the prostitute, I turn now to contrast the Biblical view of prostitution with the Victorian view, and to show how each has shaped our modern understanding.

### **3. The Biblical views on prostitution**

One must separate out three distinct traditions all found within the pages of the Christian Bible. The first concerns the actual practice of prostitution, the second concerns the metaphorical usage of the harlot, and the third concerns the adulterous wife. Confusion between these three trajectories has resulted in false claims, such as "The Bible condemns prostitution" or "Prostitutes were to be stoned in Bible times". Neither of these claims is true as they stand.

Prostitution was accepted as part of biblical society from the very start. In Genesis 38, we read how Tamar dressed up as a prostitute in order to seduce and trick her father in law, who had failed to provide a husband for her. Harlots may be heroines, and celebrated for their faith as Rahab was (Heb 11:31). The genealogy of Jesus contains a harlot, an adulteress and a seductress. Jesus is said to eat with harlots and tax-collectors, and he warns the religious leaders of his time that these harlots are in the key for heaven ahead of them (Matt 21:31). An anonymous sinful woman anoints the feet of Jesus and he blesses her, forgives her sin and requires of her that she "go and sin no more" (Luke 7). Curiously in the history of the Christian tradition she was identified first with Mary the sister of Martha and finally with Mary Magdalene. So it was that a woman, out of whom Jesus had cast seven demons, and who was the first to meet with the risen Jesus becomes a harlot. Strangely, the power of the harlot become saint forms a powerful image as shown not least in the decision by our congregation of prostitutes to name our chapel, Mary Magdalene. For all time, Mary stands as the symbol of the redeemed.

The legislation concerning prostitutes in the Ancient Near East focussed upon their attire and sought to prevent them dressing in such a way that they might be confused with married women. In the biblical legislation we read that fathers should not sell their daughters into prostitution (Lev 19:29) and that the wages of a prostitute should not come into the coffers of the temple (Deut 23:18). There is no command against prostitution *per se* in the Old Testament. When Paul speaks about Christians and prostitution he is obligated to go outside the Jewish legal system, and to use the combined analogies of marriage and a sacred temple (1 Cor 6:15-16). It is the man and not the prostitute who is in danger of sinning against God.

The Hebrew wisdom literature (like Proverbs) deals at length with the adulterous wife, who has sex for the fun of it, and in passing makes mention of the prostitute. Curiously in both the case of the wife and the prostitute it is the action of the man which is condemned and criticized. He is warned that the path to the adulterous woman or the prostitute lead to hell. In an interesting verse (Prov 6:26), we read of the man who sells his honour to the prostitute for a loaf of bread (apparently the regular price).

The prophetic literature makes little mention of actual prostitution but abounds with metaphorical allusions to adultery and prostitution, male and female. The metaphor grows out of the marriage analogy depicting Israel as the wife of God, albeit a frequently erring wife, who hungers after the attentions of other lovers in the form of foreign or local deities. The vivid imagery of the promiscuous men and women of Israel chasing after Baal and Astarte has created the impression of a rampant sexuality in these cults, and scholarly works abound in references to such promiscuity. The reality was probably quite different, and one needs to be guard against making a myth of the metaphor. Similarly one might justifiably question the existence of the so-called cultic prostitutes in Israel. We have no reason to believe that this was a regular feature of either Israelite or Canaanite cultic life, nor do we know that the so-called "holy women" were indeed cultic prostitutes. However, there were such holy prostitutes in other religious traditions, who served as the sacred representatives of the deity.

Prostitution was for the biblical writers an ambiguous concern. On the one hand concubinage was accepted as also the choice of women to take up a life of prostitution. On the other hand, the man of honour was warned of the dangers of fraternizing with prostitutes. So in one society, the prostitute could be both accepted and rejected. Jane Schneider in her study (1971) of contemporary Mediterranean societies offers an admirable description of the prostitute as a liminal person, existing in the shadowy limits of the social ordering, along with widows and witches. Lacking the confines of a dominant male, these were considered by some men to be dangerous women capable of robbing them of their virtue if not their very masculinity. So to the prostitute of the Bible carries no particular content, and may be the faithful Rahab or that great prostitute Rome in Revelation.

#### **4. The Victorian Situation**

Prostitution was legal for the Victorian era, but it was the Acts concerned with the control of contagious diseases which brought about a very definite change in public perception regarding the prostitute. The work by Walkowitz (1980) shows that the average age of the women was in their early twenties, that they came from broken homes (most were orphans, or had only a mother) and that they had had their first sexual encounter out of wedlock at an early age (sixteen). Their customers appeared to have been drawn mainly from the working class. In their mid-twenties, those who survived that long left their occupation to get married.

Although depicted as living in reasonable luxury (their earnings raised them above the level of maids and house-helpers) the medical and other records indicate the true hell in which they lived. Alcohol, in particular, appeared to have been a problem. With the introduction of the Acts concerned with the control of contagious diseases, prostitutes were forced to undergo bi-weekly internal examinations for syphilis. If they were found to be infected they were confined to the "lock-ups" (hospitals with wards for venereal diseases) for a period not to exceed nine months. Thanks to the lobbying of several women's groups the acts were repealed. But the die had been cast, and the prostitute was there-after marked as the source of infection, rather than the one most vulnerable to such.

## **5. Honour as a form of masculine social control**

Honour is a male prerogative and value. While one might applaud the quest for honour at one level, there is another side which deserves attention. The honour/shame game is designed to benefit those with power at the expense of those without. Honour is a masculine attribute, and shame becomes a female attribute. Men use honour, purity, and moral values as a system of categorising women according to the way in which men use or abuse women. The sexual conquests of men are celebrated but those of women are stigmatized. Thus a double standard, which still exists today, was an integral part of the honour/shame discourse. It was left to Christianity to create the ultimate dichotomy, namely the Madonna and the Whore. The cult of Mary, mother of Jesus, has both lifted hopeful eyes to the female side of God, but also created a process of shaming for all women who fail to reach her elevated status. Since few reach such an elevated status, this makes whores out of all the rest.

The African culture has strong overtones of the shame/honour culture that typified the Mediterranean region. So we need to take seriously the honour game, as we watch the customers of the girls escape with impunity, while the girls are jailed.

## **6. The prostitute as the sacrifice on behalf of male sexual guilt**

Religion has allowed men to gain further control of the lives and bodies of women. More importantly it has offered men a scape-goat for their sexual indiscretions and feelings. The connection between women and primeval allows for such a scape-goating. Even today a sudden surge of guilt will lead to a customer violently attacking the woman he has just had sex with. Whether prostitution is legal or not, the prostitute remains vulnerable to co-option into the cult of masculinity, in which she serves (literally) as the anti-type of the faithful wife.

Hobson in discussing the situation in the USA notes that it was "not until the first decades of the nineteenth century that reformers "discovered" prostitution as a dangerous urban social problem and mobilized a broad segment of the population - what one might call the respectable classes - against it" (1990:11). The criminalization of prostitution "defined prostitution as a state or style of life rather than the act of selling one's sex" (Hobson 1990:17).

## **7. Prostitutes asserting control over their own lives**

In considering responses based upon the history of prostitution and the various attempts, as in the Roman and Victorian period, at legal control, it is scarce wonder that the various prostitute lobby groups have opted against the legalization of prostitution and in favour of decriminalization.

The call for decriminalization moves the struggle onto a different terrain where prostitutes have to be recognized in law not as "prostitutes" but as workers and business owners. The negative stigma that society attaches to the prostitute is detached if prostitution is treated as work. Legalization, on the other hand, reinforces stigmatization; prostitution can be segregated into districts and excluded from the rest of society (Bell, 1994:117).

Moreover with decriminalization no new legislation is required. Bell argues that neither the police nor the justice department have any right to regulate the business of prostitutes than that of any other legitimate business.

Involvement of prostitutes is a key part of the process. One needs to create space for prostitute's rights lobby groups and give attention to the declarations of the World Whore's Congresses and the resultant charters. There is need also to continue to research ways of offering protection to prostitutes from AIDS rather than viewing them as the prime source of

the contagion.

### **8. Healing not rehabilitation**

The World Congress against the Commercial, Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm in August 1996, hosted a youth panel. It was there that a strong cry was made to suspend the use of the term "rehabilitation" with regard to the child-prostitute. The youth argued that these children, as victims, did not need to be rehabilitated, rather the paedophiles needed such rehabilitation and the children needed healing. The experience of The House in Hillbrow is that most prostitutes would prefer not to do the work they are doing, but they also do not see a way out of the vicious cycle of drugs and prostitution, and we might add shame and guilt to that cycle. Our pious attitudes only cement the connection in the minds of the girls that they are being forced to do a shameful thing. We create the guilt on their behalf..

In place of criminalization one needs therapeutic concern, healing to cover the scars of the multiple abuses at the hands of man after man.

### **9. Conclusion**

The same young woman who spoke of the hell of her life commented later in the service, "Isn't it great that there is one place where we can behave like ordinary people!" That is the purpose of the Mary Magdalene chapel, to create a space where prostitutes can rediscover their roles as ordinary people, safe from the stigma that religion and our culture of shame and honour have foisted upon them. That also should guide the legislators of the future.

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# **Prostitution:** **Sexual orientation or** **dysfunction?** (by Jean du Plessis, 1994)

1. Prostitution in context
2. Categories of prostitution
3. Street Prostitution
4. Upper Class Brothel
5. Therapeutics
6. Conclusion

## **Prostitution: *Sexual orientation or dysfunction?***

The question this article asks, 'what is the sexual orientation of prostitutes?', is a valid and often asked question. One commonly suggested answer is that these persons have their cake and eat it as well - in that they are highly sexed, nymphomaniac perhaps, have several orgasms a day and get paid for it at an above average wage, to top it all. This assertion smacks of the egotistical needs of the typical steamer (whoremonger) and the ego defences of the 'threatened wife'. To find out more about this question I suggest one looks at what is known about the prostitute's working sexuality, that is what they do sexually when they work and what are the working conditions. Then one must consider what is known about their non-working sexuality - that is how these women function sexually when they are not working.

In Johannesburg alone 6000 women operate professionally. At a minimum of 3 clients per day these professionals perform 6.5 million acts of prostitution per year - in this city. This represents an annual revenue of R 975 million. Now that is a whole lot of sex. Countywide though we have 50 000 of these professional women that will perform about 36 million acts of prostitution - amidst a national population of only about 9 million males over the age of 18. The average married woman will have intercourse 120 times per year (with the same person), whereas the prostitute averages 1270 times (mostly with different persons and diversely as well). The question about their sexual orientation, whether it is capitalistic nymphomania or dysfunction, is linked to the possible answer to the next question - 'what motivates these women to perform their profession at this astounding frequency?' Although this question is dealt with in another article it is mentioned here since a common lay conclusion is usually that 'They must enjoy their jobs very much - there must be excellent sexual perks besides the good money'. In consideration of the question of what makes up the sexuality of these women, we will look at prostitution as it occurs in two of the eight categories. We will look at what is known about their working environment and the sexual demands of the job - and we will look at what is known about their private sexuality.

### **1. Prostitution in context**

Prostitutes are said to perform a sexual service for economic or subsistence gain with persons they would not normally stand in relationship with. By definition then, and in practice, prostitutes have various modes of sexual intercourse with persons they do not know. These persons they have never met before, they know no medical or mental history of, and they have only a very limited ability to consent to exactly how the sexual fantasy or service will be performed. Most customers visit these women in the early hours of the morning - after a sweaty night on the town with the boys, or after a long day at the office.

A look at how this occupation structured itself in the city of Amsterdam may serve to prove some mean what a 'free' society will exhibit in terms of its commercial sex needs. It will also show what the sexual expectancies are for a prostitute, and what 'skills' she should be adept at. Hardly any legal restraints are exercised in Amsterdam but for: a] a prohibition to solicit prostitution in public (but the media is used extensively); b] a requirement to submit to regular health inspections; c] restricting the trade to KEEP TO VAGUELY DEMARCATED AREAS. In the 'Red Light' district of this city one finds an abundance of sexual services offered from shops, stalls, theatres, cubicles and apartments. In terms of literature and video there are available to the undecided customer a selection of 'soft' and 'hard porn' material. These will consist of at least the following: paedophile material; pornographic mail societies; bestiality; 'quadriplegic sex'; gay and lesbian sex; child to child sex; sadism; masochism; 'abnormal growth' sex such as overly large phallic and breast growths; transvestite sex; sex tools and mechanical devices. A host of material on sexual fantasy involving interaction of every

conceivable and inconceivable orifice of the human anatomy and anything even remotely resembling anything phallic is always in demand. The market for sex tools and devices include a variety of, 'more than 300 different vibrators to choose from' according to one catalogue. Life-size blow up dolls (some with voice, built in vibrators, warm genitals, etc.) are used by people with 'rubber fetishes' and allegedly by lonely males that cannot afford the luxury of a prostitute.

The physical services available on a 24 hour basis are ALL OF THE ABOVE. Theatres produce live sex shows: girl to girl, boy to girl, boy to boy, animal to girl, orgies and solo shows. During lunch-time shows one can buy a sandwich at the door to eat inside. Masturbation in theatres is discouraged.

The pornographic scenes the viewers see in the theatres, videos and magazines create pipe dreams that many of the viewers will want to fulfil. Most persons usually do not expect their sexual partners to participate in these fantasies and may never even mention their fantasies to their mate. The prostitute serves also that purpose - to cater for fetishes and kinky ideas. It is common to hear that two girls are booked to act out (with one another) a person or a couple's fantasies. These acts may involve the clients physically or sometimes only as observers.

It is only fair to mention that not all prostitutes indulge in all the activities described above. Some women specialise in certain areas and other are fortunate enough to be involved with an establishment that controls the degree of kinky stuff that is allowed on the premises.

## **2. Categories of prostitution**

The phenomenon of prostitution produces in each different society different strata and 'types' of prostitution - various factors within the society dictate what these 'types' will be. These factors include considerations such as:

- a] The prevalence of a drug sub-culture (including the type of drug preferred, since its cost, effects and addictive ability alter situations)
- b] The type of steamer (considering his/her socio-economic standing as well as sexual preferences since certain types of 'kinky sex' dictate the emergence of other classes of prostitution - appreciating that out of the ordinary locations, equipment, costumes, etc. are involved))
- c] The complexity of the society in terms of cultural commixture
- d] The types of legal restraints (if any) placed on the trade in commercial sex.

In the Johannesburg area it is not unusual to classify commercial sex workers according to eight different 'types'. The types may be named: a] the 'high class' brothel prostitute; b] the call girl (mostly travelling masseuses, of both sexes); c] the Escort Agency prostitute; d] the Massage parlour prostitute; e] the Erotic dancer prostitute; f] the Club/Hotel prostitute; g] the Street walker prostitute; h] the Shebeen prostitute.

In South Africa prostitution is most prevalent in the townships and in the inner city. Township prostitution coagulates around the countless number of shebeens. The high level of unemployment, the migrant worker situation and the high birth rate (making it more expensive for young girls to maintain a living) in these areas makes for prostitution to be a social necessity and a much accepted part of life. In the South African city the scenario presents the faces of prostitution first in Escort Agencies; then the night clubs that specifically cater for clients who prefer to spend their time watching erotic dances and end the evening with one of the ladies available on the premises. The 'street walker' girls parading the beat and the lobbies of hotels are found in specific areas and the 'high class' brothel is usually situated in the suburbs.

On the whole it is understood that the type of customer and the type of sexual service rendering differs slightly from the one type to the other.

*Note: Drug using teenagers that get involved in club prostitution usually devolve into street prostitutes but hardly do they ever evolve to the higher strata of this hierarchy. Non drug using housewives, teenagers and students indulging in prostitution usually start at the Escort Agency level and may continue to specialise in either of the speciality 'kinky stuff'(swingers, masochism, sadism, lesbian and pornography) at specialised clubs. They may on the odd occasion move into the high class suburban brothel.*

### **3. Street Prostitution**

The street walker usually has to adapt her charge rate according to her physical and mental condition. Depending on the stage of drug withdrawal she experiences the prices can vary between R20 (for oral sex in a car) and R100 (for most types of penetrative and other sex). These girls live in backward hotels and pay daily rents of R70 on average since they do not have the personal skills to save money to pay weekly or monthly rent. They possess no material goods and find it difficult to spare money for meals and clothing although they do about five customers per day. These young women are addicted to dangerous drugs - they inevitably die within a few years due to drug overdoses, rape, infections and abuse. Most of these girls are aged between 16 and 26. The type/s of steamer and the frequency of weird sexual requests, as well as the conditions of the premises they operate from are all factors that make for massive psychological trauma in any normal person.

These girls need protection from dangerous steamers, from the dynamics within the sub-culture and from loneliness - their greatest enemy. Their \* pimps (or boy/girlfriend as they call them) are either male or female and are interchanged freely and frequently. The couple imitate a normal steady relationship and a working partnership. Between working hours the couple will sleep together in the same bed than was used for the five men that heaved fulfilment there that day. The hotels change their sheets twice a week (a special arrangement for the sake of hygiene). The prostitute partner has to verbalise discontent with the steamers to keep the relationship on safe ground (a girl that likes a steamer is not tolerated by the sub culture, and the pimp has security needs as well). The pimp partner expresses frequent needs for intimacy (since the many men with money in and out of his/her bed create ego needs).

*\* Note the difference between the classical image of the pimp and that of this scenario*

Most of the girls refuse to kiss. Steamers are hurried up and various techniques are used to hasten his climax. It is for this reason that the girls do not use an internal lubrication other than that of the condom (less lubrication heightens the friction and hastens ejaculation). Needles to say the practice is unhealthy and causes ulcers, infections and formation of hardened layers of protective tissue in the vagina wall. During the monthly menstruation period (many girls do not have their periods due to excessive drug intake) a bathroom sponge is inserted high up in the vagina to contain the flow of blood in the upper regions. This allows them to continue to work during this time. It is not the practice for these girls to wash, bath or shower after every steamer. They usually bath in the mornings if they happen to have access to a bathroom. Hygiene is an obvious problem and most girls suffer from regular infections such as candida and thrush although the more serious and infectious varieties are common.

Their private sex lives remain an array to keep a partner/pimp content or to manipulate situations. The need for intimacy is high and is easily expressed - most of the time therapists

confuse this behaviour with a sexual need or a sexual pass. This is a dangerous scenario since refusal to reciprocate may be read as a perpetuation of rejection (something she expects from all people) whereas reciprocation will most probably be read as steamer activity on behalf of the therapist. These girls can hitch on to a lesbian girl the one week and may ditch her the next week for a male pimp/boyfriend. The pimp partners do not usually prostitute except in special instances will two girls (a prostitute and her butch pimp) perform a lesbian sex scene for a steamer. It does happen that a butch pimp girl gets ditched by her prostitute and has to resort to prostitution herself to make a living. But these girls work hard at getting hooked into another prostitute soon and then they will stop working. It is respected on the street that butch girls dislike heterosexual prostitution more than other girls and should ideally not indulge.

Each day for these prostitutes (365 days of the year), dawns with an urge for the drug, the knowledge that the rent must be paid by noon, that they have to eat, that they need medication for infections and that they owe the merchant on the corner money. They know that they need to do three, perhaps five, clients to manage the budget (the average budget for the above mentioned necessities is about R350 per day). By lunch time they pay their rent, by the evening they can eat, and by three the following morning they go to sleep after working the whole night for the necessary drugs. By that time both partners are wasted from the drugs and the cycle of late nights, tobacco, alcohol, and inadequate dietary habits. If the pimp can manage the effort it is his/her turn to have sex with the prostitute before they go to sleep, which seems almost impossible; or after waking up in the morning, but then the drug withdrawal competes with the ego for fulfilment. It seems almost impossible for the couple to fit in a sex life of their own. In the case of male pimps they are usually impotent due to excessive drug consumption. But this does not remove their ego needs - and it frequently leads to outbursts of violent behaviour. As long as the prostitute reads the violence as a sign of possessiveness it gives her a feeling of security. She may tolerate the abuse for a while - eventually she succumbs and gives the pimp the sexual intimacy that binds the relationship. The prostitute must then announce the sex as 'the best that she had ever experienced and no steamer can ever make her feel that good'. Many of the more successful lesbian-prostitute couples claim that they never have sex but indulge in intimate behaviour such as caring for one another and cuddling during sleep.

From the foregoing it is clear that the sexual orientation of these young women is different to that of the classical homosexual or heterosexual categories used to classify people. Their orientation is one of utility rather than understanding sex to be a biophysical emotion that speaks of intimacy, and as binding people in a relationship. Sex for these girls can be equated to the farmer watering his crop. It comes with the job - it produces results and it may not always be pleasant but it is a necessary action expected to be performed if one wants any results at all. The task can be unpleasant but there-again one can learn to make the most of it and gain some sense of job satisfaction. The thrill the farmer feels from watering his crops every day is about the same as the street prostitute feels when she has a good day. A day that does not provide a beating, an arrest or a garlic-sweaty drunk kinky steamer that insists on all kinds of sex with him and his buddy - she made her rent and her drug money.

#### **4. Upper Class Brothel**

In the suburban brothel customers expect a friendly atmosphere and well-dressed women that can care for a man's needs such as a light massage or a jolly romp in the bubble bath. Customers pay up to R300 for these services.

The women working in the suburban brothels are frequently housewives and students doing it part time. They do not usually have any specific traumatic past incident that can be cited as a

possible 'excuse' for their involvement in commercial sex. They usually start at the Escort Agency level and may go on to the high class brothel or else get recruited to these brothels directly.

The working environment is classy with accommodation for the prostitution aspect as well. This provides for good personal security and goes a long way to ensure a psychologically healthy prostitute with a smile, a body without the scars and marks of the street life, a firm figure and good grooming. Massage and non-kinky or 'acceptable specialities' are allowed by the establishment and the setting is quite relaxed. Steamers can afford to spend R500 for the evening - the quality of life is high and infrequently unpleasant or traumatic.

These women are mostly of heterosexual orientation and are either married or are not involved in relationships at all. They all share an idealistic view of life, dreaming of the days when they will retire and live on their savings. They rationalise their jobs by pointing at the various modes of sex-for-favours prostitution or sexual manipulation women in general indulge in. They have no need for the protection of a pimp since the environment is secure. Husbands or family and friends usually do not know what these people do for a living and they have to dish up a lie that can be seen through to the extreme extent. This leads to a situation wherein they may end up having no emotional support and probable psychological trauma is heightened by the fact that they work hard at trying to maintain the secrecy. On the surface these women appear to be normal and coping well with their choice of work.

But in therapy another story is told of the women involved in both these strata.

### **5. Therapeutics**

The majority of the cases we have dealt with regarding sexual dysfunction in clients were from the suburban brothels. In almost 90% of the instances the women who came in for counselling had already left the employ of the brothels and have trouble adapting to a normal lifestyle.

The most common complaint is that they are 'frigid' and cannot tolerate physical intimacy at all. They experience much need for intimacy though (not sex) but the moments the contact becomes physical they 'feel like whores'. They hardly ever felt like 'whores' whilst working but now they equate physical sex with their playing the part of the prostitute. They do not seem to be able to divorce this feeling of prostitution from a loving normal relationship. The flirtation with steamers in the brothel has become their sexual body language and either they resent that in themselves, or find that they cannot communicate sexually without that element. Almost every move made by a normal COUPLE IN THE PROCESS OF COURTSHIP, HAS A MEMORY OF HER 'WORKING DAYS' TO IT. The smile, the walk, the tease, the undressing the cologne - everything has the potential to remind her of the great dance of the whore that she performed hundreds if not thousands of time before.

Almost all the women fake orgasms in their normal relationships (and expertly at that). More than 60% of them had never experienced an orgasm - even before they indulged in the profession. They do not masturbate and do not usually get sexually aroused to the point of vaginal lubrication. They are however very proficient at hiding these symptoms and can cope for a limited time in a relationship. Some of these clients find that they can enjoy masturbation with the assistance of vibrators but most of them find the idea of solitary sexuality contemptuous. To add to the problem the introduction of a vibrator in their sexual relationships will enhance the feeling of 'whoring' and is thus not considered.

Other common tendencies are; the missionary position 'crowds' them; '69' is perverse; body odour is extremely of-putting; and most of them will consciously not utter a sound during the

love making process.

The fear of 'being discovered' in later life stays with them. Even years after they have stopped prostituting they live with this fear that an ex steamer may recognise them. He may be her boss, her lover's best friend, at her wedding, her pastor in church or an elder, in a shopping mall - everywhere. She lives with guilt and the fear that her whole life may tumble into pieces upon discovery. Her children are at risk of degradation at school and in later life - for ever, even after her death. The stigma attached to that of prostitution is a veil that will not be lifted in our lifetime. Many of these young women have during the years allowed videos or photographs to be taken of them in compromising situations. This fact haunts them and greatly contributes to her feeling of being persecuted by society.

Self respect and self-image are areas of great vulnerability. It is commonplace for these young women to return to prostitution at the slightest upset they experience since they usually feel they have been potentially persecuted for a long time, although the upsetting incident may be totally unrelated. They dress conservatively and are especially suspicious of women in the work place. It is not uncommon to find that these women develop eating disorders that will render them physically unattractive in the end.

Many of the Street walkers are survivors of childhood sexual abuse (the guess is as high as 70%). Most of them have experienced at least one rape in the past 6 months. Considering what we know it speaks for itself that girls involved in this stratum of the profession especially - perpetuate their own sexual abuse. It is not assumed that their customers be clean, friendly, sensitive or romantic. The idea is to get it over and done with within 20 minutes. 'Make him cum and run' - is the motto on the streets. Many of these girls have been gang raped, most are raped frequently and all of them have to do oral sex, anal sex, lesbian sex, toy sex and cater for fetishes such as the common 'golden shower'(sexual partners urinating on or in one another), etc. Although they indulge in these acts with drugged minds and numbed souls the impressions are all there. They cannot consciously remember any of those scenes except when it was extraordinarily strange or upsetting - but the defilement of the psyche is there, ever ready to break down any move toward a positive self image, ever ready to kick into memory at the slightest provocation from a future lover's actions.

The argument that these women keep perverts away from the innocent in society by catering for their whims and absorbing many of the violent sexual expressions is still a moot point. It is definitely a point to remember when considering what it is that can be the sexual orientation of these young women, especially after a few years in this life.

These young women all share one sad interesting problem. They are unusually bad judges of character and frequently fall prey to con-artists and wife-batterers. Many of them end up with some guy (or woman) that seemed the ideal man in the beginning and now sits at home to be supported by her or perpetuates the abuse of her, either physically or emotionally.

When they do turn to religion for support they tend to be fundamentalist and fanatical. We have found that the religious aspect does help alleviate the self-image problems, and in spite of Freud, much of the guilt problem is relieved by religion. Sexual dysfunction can in fact be enhanced by those Christian denominations and sects that advocate the Pauline and/or Calvinistic theology of the utilitarian purpose of sex and its ability to defile the flesh. The religious person usually finds an audience to whom it is safe to talk to about her past, and over time the cathartic effect of the openness, discussion and reaffirmation of God's saving grace wins the day for her - but for the remaining sexual dysfunction.

## **6. Conclusion**

It seems that persons having indulged in prostitution develop a 'sexuality of prostitution'. This sexuality disallows one to be emotive about sex, it rules out any possibility for romance and sex to go together. Sex has only a utilitarian value and is used for gain only. Persons having adopted this sexuality have different biochemical and physiological reactions during sexual encounters - the terms 'arousal', 'sexual euphoria' and 'lust' either have different meanings for these persons or they do not relate to it. It follows that they have adopted a sexual personality that is highly developed but dispassionate. This sexual orientation also seems to be imbedded in the personality and shows as much sign of being readily altered as that of other sexual orientations (heterosexual, homosexual - for instance). The question remains whether this sexuality of prostitution developed because of prostitution or whether it was inherent or latent in the person before prostitution. In this consideration then a sexuality of prostitution can be a definite precipitating factor to both adult and teenage prostitution.

Empirical studies are underway that will attempt to determine whether childhood sexual abuse is a redounding and or precipitating factor to teenage prostitution. Perhaps at a later stage academics will avail us of a study that can compare pre- and post prostitution sexuality. For the time being it seems only possible to understand that prostitution is damaging to a person's sexuality. It poses serious medical and psychological threats that can cause severe conditions to persist long after prostitution has been ceased.

The obvious physical strain of the job and the high risk of HIV/Aids and venereal infections add to the psychological tension. This is compounded by self-objectification and objectification of the intimate union between man and woman. Sex becomes a physical skill whereby the world can be manipulated to ensure her survival (or were those her views even before prostitution?). The frequent incidents of forced sex, rape and sacrilegious episodes that cling to the memory does not serve either the prostitute or the ex-prostitute in a manner conducive to psychological health.

# **THE HOUSE**

## **A Place of Hope for Girls**

**Case Study prepared, May 1996 by Jean du Plessis, for NGO Group for the  
Convention on the Rights of the Child  
(Prevention / Psycho-social Rehabilitation of child victims of commercial sexual  
exploitation)**

*This case study was prepared following the guidelines and questions of the conveners of the  
above organisation. This case study was published in a workbook for the International  
Congress Against Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation, held in Stockholm, 1996.*

# THE HOUSE

## A Place of Hope for Abused Youth

### CONTEXT

#### **Geographic / Demographic**

The Republic of South Africa, infamous for her past Apartheid policies enforced by a white minority first world regime, now suddenly famous for her democratic government mainly consisting of blacks, remains to be a unique commixture of first, second and third world societies. With 44 million people of which 40% are juveniles and 10% are tax payers, 11 official languages, nine provincial governments, a shortage of water, one of the best equipped militaries in the world, a discomfoting strategic geographical location, first world expectations and third world productivity - South Africa will pose a continuous challenge to the Platonists the Modernists and the Marxists who philosophise on the ideal governmental system. Whilst a democratic republic sounds so very nice to the Haves, socialism and communism feels so much better to the Have-Nots. It is exactly this continual mixture of Haves and Have-Nots that creates the animosity since the relativity of poverty serves to remind the so-called Have-Nots that they are in need of what the Haves seem to revel in. This exact same syndrome is also responsible for the immense crime rate, the laxity in productivity, the worker's demands for first world wages, and then also for the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The hub of South Africa is the province of cities, Gauteng. Johannesburg lies at the heart of this province and has in her centre the offices of the world's multinational corporations and the famed Johannesburg Stock Exchange. On the surrounds of Johannesburg lies the townships - to the North the white collar area, where houses are usually larger than 400m<sup>2</sup> on half acre stands and sell for anything between 1 and 7 million Rand - to the West and the East, just outside the blue collar area lie the black townships where houses are generally not larger than 40m<sup>2</sup> and the people are not willing or able to buy for R5 000. The per capita income of the country is R? per annum and the per capita income of Johannesburg is R? per annum. It is here, in the heart of Johannesburg where THE HOUSE is operational.

THE HOUSE is located in Hillbrow, the inner-city suburb, of Johannesburg. Many years ago Hillbrow became famous as the most densely populated square mile in the world since it consists of apartment blocks, some being as tall as 50 floors. These apartments are run down and most are managed by slum landlords. The drug and sex trades provide most of the work supplied in the area whilst other people commute to the surrounding cities to work. The unemployment rate (if illicit trade is not regarded as employment) is however judged to be as high as 70%. The area specialises in daily and weekly accommodation and because of its crime rate (the hub of the murder capital of the world where 1 in 9 people get mugged and 1 in 7 get raped) tourists and overnight visitors are not a general sight.

The Johannesburg City Council estimates a resident prostitute population of 8 000 whereas the national estimate is 50 000. The commercial sex trade in Johannesburg generates more than R40 million per month, most of which is spent on accommodation and drugs.

The visible economic activities largely comprise street vendors selling their wares and/or services, such as toiletries, clothes, fruit and vegetables, haircuts, cobbling and vehicle repairs. This consequently results in a low standard of living, neglect of appropriate hygienic/sanitary measures (on an individual and broader community level) and a lack of social responsibility.

Johannesburg is the city that runaway children come to from all over the country. Here the night life, the lights and the activity never stops to sleep and opportunities to make a 'way' for themselves seems (to them) boundless.

## **Legislative**

In South Africa, the definition of a minor varies according to the situation. For example, children under the age of 21 are unable to sign binding contracts or get married without parental consent. Driving licences and permission to buy and publicly consume alcohol may only be obtained at 18 years of age. The age of consent for heterosexual penetrative sexual intimacy with a person more than 5 years older, is 16 years of age, whilst for a homosexual act it is 19 years old but anal penetration with a penis is illegal at any age. One has to be 18 years old to buy pornography.

According to South African Law it is not illegal for a child to abscond from home. Such a case is dealt with as a missing person's case according to those channels, and constitutes a very low priority. Cases of missing children are not investigated by the Child Protection Unit but by a missing persons unit who never actively search but mainly keep records of cases since no crimes have been committed, yet.

Presently, South Africa does not have specific laws against juvenile prostitution and steps are being taken to legalise prostitution and a minimum age limit of 16 years is suggested. We are opposed to this age limit for many ethical reasons. On the practical side we also feel that a person younger than 21 is regarded as not of stable mind and cannot legally engage in important decisions such as marriage and legal contracts - that this same person should not be allowed to choose to work in the most dangerous and destructive job on earth. In the same vein we feel that a person generally regarded as too young to drive a car, too young to buy liquor, too young to buy pornography - should not be allowed to produce pornography, to act in those media, to engage in commercial sex since decisions with such far reaching long term consequences must be made by adults on behalf of themselves.

Presently it is considered a crime to solicit sex/sexual activity i.e. no mention is made of prostitution actually being a criminal offence. It is hoped that a new constitution will pay specific attention to age and adequate control measures in considering the legalisation of prostitution in South Africa. Now, whilst the matter of legalisation of prostitution is on the table, is the best time ever for pressure and advisory groups to make their presence known.

In South Africa it is difficult to ascertain the incidence of child prostitution since many conflicting factors make it nearly impossible to come to a conclusion. In order to acquire information regarding child prostitution from the various government departments and services results in confusion. Our Law and reference terminology does not allow for such a category as 'child prostitution'. Prostitution is not a crime that one can be charged for and the definition of a "child" varies according to whims. According to UNICEF, whom South Africa would like to accommodate, a child is younger than 18 years-old and some aspects of the Law regards this as the definition. The age of sexual consent for heterosexual contact is however 16 years-old, and so also, at this age, does compulsory schooling fall away. A 16-year-old can thus move out of her parent's home, live with a boyfriend and refuse to attend school without any legal recourse to the parents. Prostitution in itself is not a crime but is dealt with in various ways under the sexual immorality act. This Act states that no person may solicit sexual acts in public, no bartering with sex is allowed and no intermediary may have material gain from a sexual act between other parties and no person may make premises available for this. If a female person is found to engage in such acts on premises not belonging to her the manager or landlord is suspected of keeping the female person against her will. During the six years that THE HOUSE has been operational in Johannesburg we have instigated many successful raids on establishments where teenage prostitutes were found but to date no convictions have been made. Five years ago the South African Police formed a special unit called Child Protection Services that investigate crimes by and against children. These units are however, as the rest of the Police Force, understaffed and ill equipped to deal with all the issues. Child Prostitution is a very low priority for these units and also the policing of it calls for special equipment, decoys and surveillance manpower - all aspects our police force are lowly stocked with. To prove that prostitution did occur, an exchange of money and

evidence of a sexual act must be presented in court as evidence. For the above and other more socially oriented reasons, it is not possible to conclude a true official figure of the occurrence of child prostitution in this country. Whilst the official figures from the law courts state that 5 cases of child prostitution were dealt with during 1994, THE HOUSE's Drop-In Centre serves about 10 000 young prostitutes who walk through our doors every year (many of this 10 000 can be the same girl returning every day for a month or two).

### **Scope of the problem of child prostitution**

An official estimate of the number of street children in South Africa now reaches 10 000 and more. These studies were done over a period of many years and no one asked why it was that these children only happened to be of the male gender whilst the official figures show that 70% of the children who run away from homes are girls. THE HOUSE knows that girls become sex workers and are hidden from public view since they live in hotels and in brothels. We feel that we can safely estimate the number of girls in the sex industry to equal that of the number of boy street children - that is a national figure of about 10 000.

The Child Protection Unit does not monitor the amount of pornography cases dealt with since such perpetrators are charged with a variety of other-named offences. According to THE HOUSE's observations only about 40% of the children used for pornography are street children and/or child prostitutes and the other children are definitely from average society. It is also our estimate that more boys under the age of 12 and more girls between 12 and 16 are used for these purposes.

The CPU publishes the following figures for crimes reported to them and not for crimes dealt with by other units, i.e. all other police stations and all specialist units such as Vice, Murder and Robbery:

#### **Crimes against children under 18 years**

##### **Monthly Average**

	<b>'93</b>	<b>'94</b>	<b>'95</b>	<b>'96 (jan-mch)</b>
<i>Rape</i>	395	630	713	1131
<i>Sodomy</i>	36	41	48	66
<i>Incest</i>	12	13	20	20
<i>Indecent Assault</i>	286	325	324	364
<i>Sexual Offence - Act 23/1957</i>	86	91	92	96
<i>Attempted Murder</i>	14	18	17	19
<i>Assault Serious (GBH)</i>	112	159	190	326
<i>Assault Common</i>	197	271	303	422
<i>Abduction</i>	44	62	71	91
<i>Kidnapping</i>	56	76	78	96
<i>Child Care - Act 74/1983</i>	164	225	290	326
<i>Other</i>	32	63	71	74
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b>1434</b>	<b>1974</b>	<b>2217</b>	<b>3031</b>
<i>Absconders</i>	94	85	82	92
<i>Missing</i>	36	40	43	67
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b>130</b>	<b>125*</b>	<b>125*</b>	<b>159*</b>

\* During '94 the CPU declared that they do not work with absconders and missing children.

Responsibility for these cases was largely passed on to the local police stations and the Bureau for Missing Persons.

### **The perpetrators**

With regards to the perpetrators, or "Steamers" as they are called in the colloquial of the street, these men are from the middle and upper classes, the Haves, who prey on drug addicted and destitute girls. The men drive around the beat offering girls money in exchange for sexual gratification. A large variety of first world type venues exist to satisfy these needs, from Massage Parlours, Escort Agencies, street pimps, peep shows, porn and live sex shows, Strip clubs, to telephone and magazine connections. The actual trade in children, prepubescent that is, currently occurs only in sleazy bars and on street corners where pimps sell a client a street address and a description of the awaiting child. As far as we can establish there are no control systems to ensure the return of the child.

The perpetrators are mostly South African men and a fair portion of them are from out of town on business trips. We dread the day that South Africa becomes safe enough to be attractive to tourists since we know how devastatingly powerful is the Steamer with Dollars in this town. With the exchange rate as it is a Steamer can buy as much weird sex imaginable for \$50. Overseas porno producers already found South Africa to be a very lucrative location since R1000 (\$280) can buy a couple to perform for the camera for a day. The total production cost of such a porn movie can be as low as \$4000 if all the equipment is rented locally. From our point of view the lack of tourism in South Africa is our saving grace.

### **The children**

Children (mainly girls, aged between 12 and 17) from all over the country RUN TO Johannesburg to make a 'way' for themselves, and not necessarily with the idea of indulging in the commercial sex trade. Most find themselves arriving in this area, attracted by the lights and night life, to face the problems of hunger, shelter and safety within hours. Since there are an abundance of Steamers offering young girls money (sometimes shelter and food) for sex, the dilemma of a sexual compromise becomes existentially real.

In our experience most of the girls do not only run to this area but also RUN FROM a home where sexual abuse led to dysfunctional teenage years and resultant discipline and school problems. Few children arrive here being able to state that they run away from abuse but rather experience life in general as intolerable and trying to vent a spirit of narcissistic nihilism.

Few, if any, of these girls are motivated to leave home to join the drug and sex sub-culture of the inner-city due only to poverty. More girls originate from middle class and upper class homes than contrariwise. The other side of the pendulum however, is the incidence of prepubescent prostitution where the children originate from poverty stricken homes and are taken away from home by some person promising that family some remuneration. This situation is a recent occurrence and we know but very little of its actual dynamics.

Insofar as pimps go, the South African scenario does not conform to the classic scene of the rich pimp running a number of girls. Our pimps fall into one of two categories, either they are brothel managers who may take a commission but mainly lives off his salary, or he is a boyfriend and lover of the girl, living off her income and manipulating her earnings. The latter is almost always a drug addict and will perhaps steal to survive during those times the girl spends a night in jail or takes a long weekend with a Steamer.

These girls live in daily-rented accommodation in hotels. Since the average age of arrival in the inner-city is about 14-years-old most girls have a final year primary school, or first year secondary school education. They live their lives vacillating between drug euphoria and prostitution with no other activities to expose them to a life outside of this area. They become fixated on the streets and the survival game and they end up being so oriented to this environment that rehabilitation must start with deprogramming and then a phase of habilitation must be entered.

### **How do the girls view themselves and their involvement?**

One of the girls in our rehabilitation programme told a television interviewer how she viewed

THE HOUSE's non-denominational chapel for girls where she was baptised and confirmed by an Anglican priest (her choice of denomination) who consented to come down to our level. She said:

I cannot go into a normal, like straight church, and sort of look around at all those peoples. I look and I'm the only prostitute in church ... and I think geez, who's going to forgive My sins. And then, maybe I can lead those good peoples astray ... then what?

Although beautiful in its innocence and honesty her statement summed up what these girls believe themselves to be - rotten to the core. This self-view hampers not only attempts at getting out and entering normative life but also makes therapy and in-depth introspective counselling an absolute necessity - and South Africa has a seriously chronic shortage of counsellors, not to mention affordable counsellors. The typical western view that the girls feel themselves to be performing a service to society is not standard in South Africa.

### **Drug abuse**

All of THE HOUSE's clients abuse drugs. During the past two years, when the South African borders opened under the new Government, cocaine became so readily available that the children started cooking their own crack. Currently the Colombian cocaine is brought in by Nigerian dealers who compete with Iranian heroine dealers and Mozambiquen methaqualone dealers. Whilst Ecstasy is becoming the popular young person's drug it will never serve the needs of the young prostitute. Our prostitutes need a hard hitting drug that can either block it all out or that can remove it totally. Only intravenous opiate abuse and crack cocaine seem to fill the order whilst methaqualone-on-cannabis takes an honourable second place.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME**

### **Brief History of the programme**

During 1990 Jean and Adèle du Plessis helped a young (14 year old) victim of childhood sexual abuse to cope with what she perceived as the stressors of her life. The girl revealed that she and some of her friends occasionally went to Hillbrow to work in clubs where they used to prostitute for money for drugs. On investigation, Jean and Adèle found that Hillbrow was rife with teenagers that prostitute and that many of them were intravenous opiate addicts. They were so moved by the plight of these children that they gave up what they were doing and set out on a one year mission to assist the children. The idea was that they would soon learn about all the places of inequity, bring it to the police's attention, take the children to Welfare for assistance, and by the end of 1991 the combined effort of the Law and Welfare would have eradicated the problem. The plan did not work because the police did not react as expected and the greater disappointment was the apathy and inability of the Department of Welfare.

When and how did THE HOUSE identify commercial sexual exploitation of children as a significant problem?

Initially, according to our understanding, the numbers of children involved were not sufficiently large enough to warrant the problem significant status. For the first year of operation we could only estimate that about 300 girls were involved. It may be due to this low estimate that we also thought of the 'mission' as one that can accomplish the eradication of the problem within a year, also perhaps due to this low estimate did the Governmental apathy result. Within eighteen months of starting the Drop-In facility however, we came to realise that the problem was a growing one. The one element that made the problem a significant one was the fact that the various departments of Government blatantly ignored our continuous pleas to acknowledge the problem and to act on it. This refusal enhanced the dimensions of the problem and forced us to expose their apathy and denial in the media, to force the hands of the powers that be. After the first bursts of sensationalist media coverage, hundreds of children came forward to seek our assistance and hundreds, more older women, phoned and wrote us to

share their stories of childhood prostitution. What astounded us was the fact that many of the older girls related stories that happened ten years prior, in Hillbrow, and that followed the same patterns, the same operators, the same drugs and the same modus operandi. We suddenly realised that the problem was not new but was very well disguised under veils of official denial. By the end of the second year of operation we already served 20 children coming through our doors every day and our estimates were that at least 1 000 girls under the age of sixteen were involved in Hillbrow alone.

### **How was the problem defined?**

Initially the children in need of our services were white, between 14 and 22, had been on the streets for at least two years, and were severely traumatised by multiple rapes and drug abuse. We became aware of a large crowd of black girls who operated from another beat some blocks removed from the white beat. These girls however were not abusing drugs and did not need our crisis intervention service (the only service we could offer). A year later however, in 1993/4 crack cocaine reared its awful head and the black girls started falling prey to it. Currently we serve 60% black and 40% white girls.

We 'marketed' the problem in the media as - Abused girls run away in search of better alternatives, a pimp meets her and gets her onto drugs, she soon prostitutes to fulfil the drug need, she remains trapped until society realises that their men (middle and upper class) made the child a prostitute and society has a duty to assist her to get out of the trap. Although this story is a gross oversimplification of the dynamics involved and renders the girls lily white victims, we actually believe this ethic is not far from the whole truth.

THE HOUSE came to realise that it is the only organisation in the country working exclusively with street girls. We tried to learn from anywhere but ran into ignorance most of the time. A ray of hope dawned on us when we read an article in a religious magazine about Children of the Night, a project working with teenage prostitution in Hollywood. We wrote to Dr. Lois Lee, the founder, and she graciously responded by allowing us to have all her training manuals and materials. This was our only connection with other similar organisations until we accidentally met delegates from ECPAT.

How did you perceive the children and their families and how did they perceive your project?

Initially we had an overwhelming personal need to immediately prevent the girl from having another Steamer or another shot or hit. We could not bear the thought of her being pinned down by perverted sweaty men heaving obscenities into her little neck - we would move the earth to prevent her from inserting that long needle into her groin or neck one more time. The parents, initially that is, we judged them in a way hellfire would have seemed graceful. Once, within the first few months, we again went through a spell where we had no money for food or rent. After the third day of eating maize and soup only, one girl left the shelter without permission and returned half-an hour later with salami, cheese and fresh rolls. We ate with long teeth, grateful for the food but hating the idea of how the 16 year-old earned the money. Our perceptions started changing. As for the Steamers, we initially viewed them as perverted untouchables - and that constitutes about the only initial perception that we could not change.

Right from the start, although we were very naive and were taken for rides, the girls appreciated the project and made ultimate use of the love, familiarity, shelter and crisis care we offered. The project was obviously very much needed and the girls had no other resource to turn to. As we grew into the street culture, walking the streets and clubs every night and winter morning, being there on the streets with the girls, they started trusting us and started telling us intimate street gossip and about themselves. We assimilated the Street into our beings and were regarded as equally street-wise and worthy of the respect. We were known by the club operators and the street pushers, by the crooked cops and the big time dealers and we never constituted a threat to them since we lived by the Street laws. THE HOUSE still rides on that

credibility - street credibility.

**How did the broader community perceive your the problem, and what was their response to your proposal?**

When the officials of the Department Health and Welfare accused us of concocting gruesome stories and of attempting to register an organisation based only on emotive manipulation of the public's purses we were devastated. We had to prove to the authorities that the problem was a real one. Some of the girls took the snub from government very personally and offered to help in any way they could. After much debate and weighing of risks and consequences we decided to allow four of the girls to speak to a magazine program on national television. The producers were extremely sensitive with the children but nevertheless the programme shocked South Africa silly. Four years later, and after much media coverage, the public still talks about that first programme that exposed South Africa's shame.

The money did however not roll in. We received thousands of telephone calls from all over the country but no money. Then a Hillbrow beggar unwittingly taught me why it was that we received no donations. He had a glass eye, and he would walk up to people and ask for money and take out his glass eye to show them that he is cripple, and the people would recoil in horror and scatter away. We came to realise that our marketing problem was one of the product being too emotive and it challenged too many preconceived ideas about bad women and capitalistic nymphomaniacs, sluts who are out to steal their husbands, etc. Despite all the marketing we did to address the harsh way that society views these children the general feeling towards them is still not empathy or sympathy but, like the abortion issue, is reserved to remain a moot point in the hearts of even the greatest philanthropists. The way these children act also does nothing good for one's marketing dilemma. They earn non-taxable earnings equalling that of a medical specialist but they own no material goods, they cost the government a fortune in medical expenses, they steal from anyone, they spread diseases, they expect public money to pay for their rehabilitation and they do nothing from their side to improve their own situation, and they judge society severely whilst they drug out all their earnings, enough to have saved 500 children from dying of hunger every month.

AS PART OF OUR QUEST FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC,  
PROVING OUR POINT TO THE GOVERNMENT,  
CHANGING THE PUBLIC VIEW AND UNDERSTANDING OF  
CHILDREN IN PROSTITUTION,  
PROVIDING RESOURCES AND HOPE FOR THE EXPLOITED GIRL CHILD  
WE ALLOWED MUCH MEDIA COVERAGE DURING THE FIRST FEW YEARS  
THE FOLLOWING MEDIA COVERAGE ABOUT THE HOUSE CAME TO OUR ATTENTION:

## TELEVISION

'96

CHILD-CARE FACILITIES - *Credo, TV1* - February '96  
THE HOUSE - *Ithuba, Win-and-Spin, TV1* - April '96  
THE HOUSE AND THE PLIGHT OF JUVENILE PROSTITUTES - *GMSA, TV2* - June '96  
DECRIMINALISATION OF PROSTITUTION AND THE LACK OF WELFARE RESOURCES -  
*GMSA, TV2* - June '96  
DECRIMINALISATION OF PROSTITUTION AND ITS EFFECT ON WOMEN AND THE GIRL CHILD  
- *GMSA, TV2* - July '96  
ADDICTED TO LIFE - *Series on Drug Addiction, The House featuring on 3 of the  
programs, TV1, TV2, TV3* - scheduled for July '96 to June '97  
DRUG ADDICTION - *TV1* - July '96  
M-NET 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY - *Carte Blanche, M-Net* - scheduled for October '96  
RUNAWAYS - *Series on youth, TV1 and TV2* - scheduled for December '96  
THE HOUSE (ANOTHER 2 YEARS LATER) - *Carte Blanche, M-Net* - scheduled for November  
'96  
THE HOUSE - *Community Forum, M-Net* - scheduled for November '96

'95

PROSTITUTION AND AIDS - *Medic Air, CCV* - January '95  
THE HOUSE - MURDER OF A CHILD PROSTITUTE- *Carte Blanche, M-Net* - February '95  
MARY MAGDALENE CHAPEL - *Koinonia, TV1* - March '95  
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND ITS CONSEQUENCES - *Agenda, TV1* - April '95  
SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND DRUG ABUSE - *Medic Air, CCV* - June '95  
TEENAGE PROSTITUTION - *People, CCV* - July '95  
THE HOUSE AND TEENAGE PROSTITUTION - *Community Outreach, M-Net* - August '95  
CHILD/TEENAGE PROSTITUTION - *People, NNTV* - August '95  
TEENAGE DRUG ADDICTION - *2 x Teleschool, CCV and NNTV* - July / August '95  
CHILD PROSTITUTION - *2 x Teleschool, CCV and NNTV* - July / August '95  
PROSTITUTION, THE OLDEST PROFESSION - *Religious Talk-show, M-Net* - September '95  
RUNAWAYS - THE GIRL CHILD - *Psychology on the Air, TV1* - September '95  
LEGISLATION OF PROSTITUTION - *Carte Blanche, M-Net* - Sept '95  
TEENAGE PROSTITUTION - *Psychology on the Air, TV1* - October '95

'94

THE HOUSE, 2 YEARS LATER - *Carte Blanche, M-Net* - May '94  
'THANK YOU' SKETCH - *Carte Blanche, M-Net* - June '94  
LEGALISATION OF PROSTITUTION - *News Line, CCV* - August '94  
LEGALISATION OF PROSTITUTION - *Agenda, TV1* - September '94  
CHILD PROSTITUTION - *In search for Common Ground, NNTV* -  
October '94

'93

LIVING WITH AIDS - *CCTV, 13 part series* - from January to March '93  
RUNAWAYS AND SEXUAL ABUSE - *GMSA, TV1* - July '93  
CHILD PROSTITUTION - *Dutch TV* - August/September '93  
CHILD PROSTITUTION - *BBC* - September/October '93

SHADOW WORLDS - *TV1, TSS, CCTV, 13 part series, The House featuring on 3 of the programs* - October to December '93

'92

TEENAGE PROSTITUTION - *Carte Blanche, M-Net* - February '92

CONDOM DISTRIBUTION - *Agenda, TV1* - April '92

AIDS AND SYRINGE DISTRIBUTION - *Carte Blanche, M-Net* - April '92

## PRINTED

'96

THE HOUSE - *Sowetan* - March '96

A SEX WORKER SPEAKS OUT - *Femina* - February '96

THE HOUSE, PROJECT FOR THE CITY'S ABUSED GIRLS - *City Vision* - August '96

DEKRIMINALISERING VAN PROSTITUSIE - *Rooi Rose* - scheduled for November '96

DECRIMINALISING OF PROSTITUTION - *Femina* - scheduled for November '96

'95

CONFERENCE ON CHILD PROSTITUTION - *The House - Star* - March '95

LIEFDE, SKOON SPUITNAALDE EN HULP VIR DIE JONG MEISIES - *Beeld* - March '95

TIENERS EN HULLE PROBLEME - *Beeld* - March '95

HILLBROW'S HOUSE OF HOPE FOR CHILD PROSTITUTES - *Star* - May '95

CHILD PROSTITUTION A REALITY - *Sowetan* - May '95

THE HOUSE, CHILD ABUSE AND TEEN PROSTITUTION - *Challenge* - June '95

THE PROBLEM OF SEXUAL ABUSE - *Upbeat Magazine* - June/July '95

THE TRAUMA OF TEENAGE PROSTITUTION - *Star* - July '95

THE HOUSE - *City Vision* - August '95

'94

PROSTITUTION - *Citizen* - '94

'N STILLE NOODKREET WAT MIN MENSE VERSTAAN - *Beeld* - 8 July '94

'N HUIS MET WARMTE EN LIEFDE - *Beeld* - 8 July '94

NO CHILD SEX RING, SAY POLICE - *Weekend Star* - 20-21 August '94

KAPEL GESTIG OM MEISIES VAN DIE NAG TE BEDIEN - *Beeld* - 9 September '94

DRUG ADDICTS OVERDOSING ON STATE RED TAPE - *Sunday Times* - 30 October '94

PROSTITUTION AND DRUGS - *Sowetan* - November '94

THE WAIFS AND STRAYS ARE NOT FORGOTTEN - *Weekend Star* - 24-25 December '94

'93

PROBE SHOCK: GIRLS OF 12 ARE HOOKERS - *The Citizen* - 17 May '93

POLICE 'FLUSH OUT' CHILD PROSTITUTES FROM AGENCIES - *The Citizen* - 18 May '93

VOLUNTEERS RESCUE CHILD PROSTITUTES - *The Citizen* - 18 May '93

'MOTHER' OF THE STREETS - *The Citizen* - 9 June '93

PATHETIC GIRLS NOT RICH NYMPHOMANIACS - *Sunday Star* - '93

KINDER PROSTITUTE 'N WERKLIKHEID! - *Rapport* - '93

'92

TRAGIC 'CARTE BLANCHE' INSERT TOUCHES, SADDENS - *Pretoria News* - 25 February '92

KINDER-PROSTITUTE WORD HIER GEHELP - *Beeld* - 19 March '92

THE HOUSE IS HILLBROW'S ONLY HOPE - *Pretoria News* - 2 April '92

HEIRESS IN THE FAST LANE TO HELL - *New Idea* - 25 May '92

TRYING TO GO STRAIGHT - *New Idea*, 25 May - '92

SEX, DRUGS AND DEATH - *Top 40* - June '92

CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT - *You* - 24 September '92

KINDERS VAN DIE NAG - *Huisgenoot* - 24 September '92

'N HAWE VIR WEGLOOPKINDERS IN HILLBROW - *Rooi Rose* - 7 October '92

## **RADIO**

**'96**

DRUG ADDICTION - *Hope FM* - April '96

RUNAWAYS - *Hope FM* - May '96

DECriminalISATION OF PROSTITUTION - *Religion on the line, SAFM* - scheduled for October '96

**'95**

THE PHENOMENON OF CHILD PROSTITUTION - *Religion on the line, SAFM* - April '95

A QUESTION OF FAITH - *SAFM* - May '95

CHILD ABUSE - *Solid Gold* - July '95

**'94**

STREET CHILDREN - *Radio South Africa* - July '94

HOEKOM IS DAAR WEGLOOP KINDERS? - *Radio Suid Africa* - October '94

TEENAGERS AND THEIR PROBLEMS - *Radio South Africa* - October '94

**'93**

TALK-SHOW - *Radio 5*

TALK-SHOW - *Radio 702*

**'92**

SEXUAL ABUSE AND RUNAWAYS - *Radio Pulpit* - March '92

Did any of these change over time?

The marketing problem did not change much over time. We became better at it but the problem remained. One thing did make a great difference was - a message of hope. When we reached a stage in organisational growth where we could market a concept that the public could identify with as something that would truly help these children become honest normative, repentative, tax paying, church going citizens - only then were we more successful in raising funds and soliciting a better type of volunteer worker.

### **Planning Phase**

In the initial, phase when THE HOUSE was forced to operate without resources or official recognition of the problem, the principle of harm reduction was what motivated the planning. We figured that we could not successfully go to the girls' workplace to interact therapeutically. To go to their rooms was not an alternative since this was the place where they used their drugs (with their pimps) if they did not use it for working purposes as well. We realised that we had to create a place where they could retreat to when the street became pressing. The idea of the Hillbrow Drop-In Centre was very successful. The girls were initially lured in with free condoms and the availability of clean needles. In time they started trusting the place and acquainted the staff and volunteers. We provided coffee and sandwiches and knew that the children were better off sitting in our lounge than being on the streets, even though it was only for an hour or three per day. Harm reduction is however not what the children ultimately need and it took some years to muster the know-how, moneys and recognition to create more resources.

Although the Drop-In Centre saved many lives and facilitated the return of many girls to normative life the main successes were with retrieval of runaways before they got too deeply involved in the street life. For the other girls we could only offer crises shelter, counselling and love (love = unconditional positive regard). The latter being the one luxury most of them would comment on, even years after their rehabilitation, as the main ingredient facilitating their success. We did solicit the services of volunteer clinicians and counselling experts but these people were totally out of their depth with the children we deal with. Generally, they ended up suggesting the children should be institutionalised and be dealt with by a multi-disciplinary team. This possibility is not only a first-world approach but is also an ivory tower

mistake since institutionalisation is what these children fear more than the hell they live on the streets. There is one category of child where this approach is a real possibility, that is in the case of the child younger than 14. Such resources do exist in South Africa in the form of Clinic Schools but we do believe the right setting for these children would be a centre dedicated to working with sexually disrupted children.

### **Raising of funds**

Welfare oriented NGOs and CBOs do not automatically receive Government subsidies. Projects must apply for permission to solicit funds from the public. Only certain types of organisations can apply for Welfare Organisation status and will probably receive some state assistance. In order to get a Fund Raising Certificate a proposed programme must apply to the Welfare authorities. Normally the process takes about 18 months before the certificate is issued and only if the Constitution, administrative abilities and Management Committee of the proposed project complies with the legal specifications. The raising of funds without this official permission is illegal.

In THE HOUSE's case the proposed project was denigrated as a scam by the authorities, accusing us of manufacturing a story of teenage prostitution and intravenous addiction. After about two years of surviving on unsolicited donations from the public the officials were sufficiently embarrassed by the continuous media exposure that a Certificate was issued on an urgent basis. Although the legal permission made fundraising easier it did not solve our public image problems. Even though we were the most publicised welfare organisation in the country the larger donors regarded our cause as a 'tacky' issue and it made the decision makers uneasy. For the first four years the largest single donation we received amounted to R10 000.

This changed over time. After six years the government acknowledged the concept of a Drop-In Centre as a correct way of dealing with these children and they are funding a third of its budget. They also came to realise the specialised need for rehabilitation of these children and are funding a third of the budget of a second phase project we started. Negotiations are under way for the government to also fund a third phase rehabilitation centre. (These 'phases' will be explained later). Raising funds have become easier but not due to a difference in marketing strategy or a different view of the children, rather because THE HOUSE has become an established organisation that owns property, is stable, provides audited financial statements and is as cost effective as possible.

## **ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSE**

### **Programme priorities**

At the outset it was the intention of the founders to dedicate a year to assist the children from the streets of Hillbrow. However, a lack of appropriate responses from the Welfare departments and the police resulted in a mission which was to become an entire project and welfare programme. These changes in initial goals led to the establishment of numerous services offered by The House. A description of 9 of the programmes run by THE HOUSE follows:

### **Hillbrow Drop-in Centre**

During 1994 THE HOUSE moved two blocks away, out of the heart of the problem area, where it bought a standard 3 bed-roomed house to overcome the high rentals in Hillbrow. THE HOUSE's office is situated here, and the Drop-in Facility occupies the largest part of the premises. This programme is concerned with keeping the doors of the facility open for those who need our services. During 1993/4 this programme dealt with more than 4000 cases and during 1994/5 with almost 8000 cases. Other aspects of this programme include crises

intervention, structured counselling, telephone counselling, referrals, placements in institutions, funerals, intermediary work - mostly negotiating on behalf of the child with authorities and bureaucratic systems.

At the Drop-In Centre children can earn merit point by performing various domestic tasks and by attending the large variety of Life Skill programmes. Each child is assigned to a staff member who helps the child determine her programme to 'get out'. Such a programme may for instance involve going to the dentist, attending certain Life Skills classes, improving her personal hygiene standard and making improvements to her rage control and perhaps visiting the family planning and STD clinic. Upon gaining the necessary merits the child is then either placed in a further phase programme such as our Intombi Shelter or she may be reintegrated back home or elsewhere.

This project requires two full time staff members. It is not possible to work with the families of these children since most are from other provinces, other cities and rural areas. The ideal staff compliment is about 4 or 5 people to enable Field Work and proper case loads. In our case this shortage of human resources must be covered by trained volunteer workers who help to keep the doors open until later in the evening and do Field Work.

### **Field Work Project**

This programme utilises volunteer workers who join us on day and night searches for missing children who are known to have arrived in Hillbrow. These trained volunteers also visit the large number of brothels, sex clubs and a list of over forty escort agencies on a regular basis. The field worker's task is to befriend the girls, bringing THE HOUSE and other therapeutic resources to their attention, and to do informal counselling on the streets. This programme keeps us informed of activities and undercurrents in the sub-culture. A specially equipped vehicle (a very old Volkswagen Combi) is used to assist field workers in their task. The matter of personal safety is always a major concern since our work necessarily involves us in the heart of the sub-culture of vice.

These workers live with the very frustrations of the fact that our legal and moral systems are in decline; that the policing system is corrupt; and that the social welfare systems are inadequate and can not deal with the problem - at the cost of our children.

This project needs about 12 volunteer workers who each work one evening every week. Ideally this programme should be staffed by full time employees.

### **Intombi Shelter**

Intombi is a Zulu word for girl. This shelter is situated next door to the Drop-In Centre in a house that was bought for the purpose. This is a second phase for girls under the age of 19 who have earned the placement by gaining the required merits at the Drop-In. Intombi Shelter also acts as a place of safety for runaways that have been retrieved and are in process of being returned home or placed in more appropriate care.

Intombi Shelter aims to ready the child for reintegration, either with her family, into society and the job market or into a third phase placement. Girls live here for up to two years depending on their individual programmes. Whilst domestication or habilitation is the aim of this programme the goals are related to job and personal skills training.

The place of safety aspect of this programme operates as a 'Safe House'. The motivation for this project is to create a safe environment for runaway girls, a place where they may run to, for assistance. We are aware of the legal problems associated with this idea but we trust that all the parties concerned will work with us to make a success of this pilot project. The project will initially shelter only five girls at a time who will share the house with the 10 to 15 girls in the Intombi Shelter project.

This project needs two full time staff members and about 10 volunteer workers who should cover for the staff during their off days and who assist with cultural education and outings.

### **Kulula House (Project in planning phase)**

Kulula is a Zulu word meaning 'emancipation'. This project hopes to act as a third phase rehabilitation programme. Whilst the emphasis will be on academic and job skills training ongoing in-depth counselling and therapy will be the heart of the programme. Here we hope to heal the deviant sexualities and broken personalities that resulted both from childhood abuse and the perpetuated abuse experienced on the streets. This project will also act as referral resource for other agencies who need placement for girls who are 'too experienced' to gain placements in other institutions - a very common crack in the social welfare system that currently results in the authorities closing files on children that are too difficult to place because of their advanced exposure to the unsavoury side of life. It is hoped that this project will be in operation by early 1997.

This project will need the services of three full time staff members and about 10 volunteers. Planning includes facilities for 20 to 25 girls under the age of 20.

### **Childfriend - *Community Action Against Legal Injustice Towards Children***

Childfriend is a project that aims to mobilise the public to speak out against injustice against children. The issues tackled by Childfriend are typically those of injustice in the courts and at the hands of the legal systems. Lenient sentencing of offenders against children and inadequate protection of juvenile witnesses in child abuse cases are currently being addressed. This project, still in its infancy, has about 300 registered members from all over the country, and the numbers are growing rapidly.

Communication with members is facilitated by a newsletter. All members are requested to phone and write to a particular official, MEC, Judge, Magistrate and/or Minister to lodge an official complaint. We hope that this pressure group will be able to make a difference in the long run. On average this project utilises 6 volunteers.

### **On Top Of My Voice - *Newsletter For Teenage Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse***

'On Top Of My Voice' is a national newsletter for teenage survivors of childhood sexual abuse. This newsletter provides children with a forum where they may voice and share their feelings in poems, short stories, prose and in letters. For the abused child, to know that: you are not alone; you are not bad for feeling what you feel; and that you are not crazy for thinking what you think - is one of the first and most necessary steps toward healing and seeking assistance. This forum provides children with that therapeutic sharing of feelings.

The target market is those children still at school who have experienced, or are experiencing abuse. This project needs the services of about 8 volunteers.

### **Mary Magdalene Chapel of Jesus Christ - *Worship Services For Street Girls***

The Chapel was started in January 1994 and occupies one room of the Drop-In Centre. Services are non-denominational and are contextualised for the drug and prostitution sub-culture. The need for this Chapel arose when we came to learn two important lessons: firstly, that the children on the street are in desperate need (their perceived need, not our evangelistic need) of a relationship with God, and secondly, that they feel very unwelcome in a church where 'normal' people worship. This Chapel has become their church, speaking their language, speaking of a Christ understanding their problems.

This project requires the services of about 6 volunteers, three whom are trained ministers.

### **Ethembeni - *Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Child Prostitution***

The Salvation Army, in conjunction with The House started this project. It combines a care facility for abandoned HIV/AIDS babies with that of a rehabilitation facility for older

prostitutes (19+) who have been on the streets for some years. We believe the interaction of the two programmes - rehabilitating prostitutes/caring for abandoned babies - will be a great factor in the success of the programme.

The project will cater for a maximum of 15 girls at a time and will involve them in a 12 to 18 month therapeutic programme. During this time the girls will be habilitated - domesticated and educated and be given job opportunities to make a future possible. The first phase, the baby sanctuary aspect of the programme (wholly managed and funded by Salvation Army initiative) is already well under way and by November 1996 the second phase will be in operation.

This project (the sex worker rehabilitation aspect) needs the services of two full time staff members and some volunteers.

#### **HIV/AIDS Education - *Reaching Out To The Highest Risk Group In Society***

We currently assist in Johannesburg City Council's HIV/AIDS Education Programme. This training programme is successful in preparing lay counsellors to do HIV/AIDS counselling.

THE HOUSE distributes about 200 000 condoms each year to various agencies, brothels, prostitutes and clients of prostitutes. The condoms are used as a 'licence' to discuss the issues of HIV prevention, testing and survival, with these women. We are specifically concerned with the population of prostitutes and their clients. The latest estimates are that South Africa has more than 60 000 prostitutes, who mainly serve married clients in the middle and upper income groups. A conservative estimate is that the 7 000 prostitutes in Johannesburg engage in 20 000 sexual encounters every day - 600 000 per month! We further postulate a generalisation that most clients do not use condoms with their spouses and lovers and are placing many innocent people at risk. There is no way to overemphasise the importance of programmes such as this.

Even at this stage when prostitution is illegal, do we have an abundance of child prostitutes in our country. We estimate that at least 2 000 of the girls in Johannesburg range between the ages of 14 and 18. This group is our main target group for HIV prevention, retrieval and rehabilitation.

Another aspect of this programme is the supply of clean syringe needles to addicts (we are still the only project in South Africa doing so). We have lost much support from the community because of this project since most people do not stop to think before they judge. We know that nothing will prevent an addict from getting a drug into her blood stream, even if a ball-point pen or plastic straw must be inserted into the vein to transfer the chemicals - she will get high.

Usually this programme is managed by one full time volunteer although the staffing needs are higher.

#### **Public Education Programme - *Reaching Out To The Public In General***

Adèle du Plessis and trained volunteers specialise in doing talks and making presentations at seminars, community projects, churches, schools and other institutions. The aim of this project is to educate the public regarding the issues of child sexual abuse, child prostitution and drug abuse. Talks are given at schools on Sexuality, Sexually Transmitted diseases and Coping with Parents. During 1994 more than 2500 people were addressed as part of this programme. Since we experience a shortage of personnel, activity in this programme is dropping.

#### **Capacity Building**

For the first two years of the project we could only afford one salary of R800 (US \$250). During the third year we attempted to start two new projects, a rehabilitation centre and a run-to shelter, in association with two different churches. During that year the three staff members and two volunteers contracted hepatitis and all the projects closed down due to a shortage of personnel. We were disillusioned with the inability of the churches and realised that we would

have to do it ourselves in the future. We started the Drop-In Centre again after we recovered (still with only one salary of R1 200 (\$380)) and trained about 50 volunteers. We expanded the services of THE HOUSE by adding Childfriend, On Top Of My Voice, Public Education and HIV Outreach. During the 5th year we bought the premises for Intombi shelter and planning on Entembeni Rehabilitation Centre (with Salvation Army) started. During the 6/7th year we will receive our first grant from the State and we will also open the Kulula House project.

During the past six years we helped create a national awareness of the plight of children in the commercial sex industry. It is rather difficult to evaluate the response of the community and it will be overly presumptuous to claim credits for all that did change but we have never been reluctant to stake a claim to credit in the past, so I will proceed, despite the cheek. Since the inception of THE HOUSE we have assisted in, and in some cases directly facilitated, two educational psychology PhD's and two MA's in clinical psychology. Many other academics get onto this new-found bandwagon and during 1995 the Department of Health and Welfare commissioned the Human Sciences Research Council to host a national working conference (300 delegates) on child prostitution, where we were guest speakers. Some opportunists created alliances and forums to investigate and deal with the child prostitution issue and even though their motives are selfish and academic it shows that a healthy awareness is doing the rounds. During 1995 various people from two port cities in South Africa, Cape Town and Durban, visited THE HOUSE to learn how to deal with the problems in their areas. Early in 1996 the Government accepted the Drop-In concept as a new suitable concept to deal with street children and we were asked to write manuals to provide an initial standard to work by. The Departments of Health and Welfare, that determined through expensive research that we have in excess of 10 000 street children (who happened to be boys but no one asked Why?), came to accept the concept of the 'invisible street child' as we punted it. It is now officially understood that girl street children in South Africa do exist, that they are not as visible as the boys, and that they are active in the sex industry, but the numbers are still undetermined. The number of crooked police officers involved with children and drugs in the Johannesburg area seems to have grown less and mainly due to Childfriend's persistent nagging, the amount of officers in the Johannesburg Child Protection Unit has doubled. The Department of Justice has asked us to inform it of our suggestions with regards to possible changes in the Law to protect children involved in prostitution. Most of the strip clubs and notorious brothels are now displaying signs that read 'No persons under 18', and they are more discreet in keeping the obviously younger looking girls from public display. All considering, we are not unhappy with the community's ability to accept and act on the incidence of children involved in commercial sexual exploitation and we believe a thrust of international pressure can formalise policy in this country.

## **PARTNERSHIPS / NETWORKS**

The fact that South Africa did not initially recognise the existence of child commercial sexual exploitation resulted in a severe lack of expertise in this field. Our social workers and clinicians are not trained in this aspect and no research or reading was done on the topic, even the police services are innocent of any expertise in the matter. It was thus difficult to engage in partnerships that could assist us in our cause. The children's homes were incapable and reluctant and so were the courts and social workers distrustful of the children and the claims we make for them.

Over time we have developed working relationships with all the relevant Government agencies and we play an informative and consultative role for various NGOs and CBOs in the child care industry. We sit on various committees such as, for example, National Association of Child Care Workers, Child Protection Unit Community Police Forum, Substance Abuse Forum, and Inner City Ministries.

We have good working relationships with: the Child Protection Units, some of the less expensive drug rehabilitation centres, family planning clinics, STD treatment and HIV testing clinics, about 40 escort agencies, the local hospitals (limited), the city morgue, dental clinic (extractions and fillings only), the media, some children's homes, some courts (drug and children's courts), police cells, Departments of Child Welfare and Welfare, Rape Clinic, Trauma Clinic, Salvation Army, Department Health, Rand Afrikaans University, Childline, Child Assessment Centre (3 month waiting list), etc.

We are currently advising two proposed centres for child prostitutes in port cities, Durban (Youth For Christ) and Cape Town (Methodist Church). We have been asked to visit and advise a project dealing with prostitutes in Tanzania on how to address the issue of child prostitution as well. A Roman Catholic minister in Mozambique once contacted us for information but never arrived for the appointment, we therefore suspect that the area also has a problem. A colleague in Swaziland (Zionist Church) asked us to visit and advise them on the issue of child prostitution although they seem to feel that it is insignificant.

We are in the process of setting up an alliance called SACAPA (Southern African Child and Adolescent Protection Alliance) that will keep a database of all the services in the area on Internet. The aims of SACAPA also makes provision for acting as an advisory group, a pressure group and to share information among members. This project, although already well planned and enthusiastically awaited, needs a technological injection to truly see the light.

## **EVALUATION**

Evaluations are done internally and are mainly facilitated by management mechanisms such as logs, control sheets, budgets and databases. The Department of Finance expects annual copies of our audited financial statements and the Department of Welfare expects annual performance reports. We endeavour to run a very transparent organisation and remain chronically aware that we must show the public what effect their monies have with regards to healing the problem.

We have been keeping a standard record for the Drop-In Centre over the past four years and this helps us to monitor the activity levels. Following is an abstract of such a record.

### **Evaluation of the success rate**

We find it impossible to define 'success' in a manner amiable to all enquirers' needs. It may be regarded as success if the Drop-In maintains a constant flow of a manageable amount of children through the door but another person may regard it as unsuccessful because we only reach about 10% of the girls on the street, but then growth would bring about higher costs that we surely cannot afford. In another scenario, I may feel that in a particular instance it must be regarded as a success if a girl cleans herself up and upgrades from the Street to an Escort Agency or a brothel that offers a cleaner room but most people (sponsors and churches especially) will disagree violently. There are so many aspects that must be taken into account to determine successes that it still remains an idealistic dream of THE HOUSE to be able to do that. We realise that without such means we will never know where we go wrong or how we can improve.

Despite the fact that we are regarded to be very cost efficient two very frightening figures that we have established in the cost / benefit analysis constantly challenge my management and lateral thinking abilities. The cost-per-contact for the Drop-In Centre is about R20 (\$5:70 US) and the cost per child in the medium term shelter is about R1 500 (\$420 US) per month. To put this into perspective for you: a litre of milk costs R2:85 (\$0.81), a kilogram of mad-cow-

free chuck meat cost R20 (\$5:71), 1 litre of petrol costs R2:06 (\$0.58), 1 dozen of eggs costs R4:20 (\$1:20), a bachelor apartment rents for R850 (\$242), an average secretary earns R1 800 (\$514).

### **PROGRAMME CONSTRAINTS**

The major constraint of the programme) is an apparent one brought about by the relativity of poverty syndrome us South Africans are so good at suffering. The programme operators have first world hearts and want first world facilities to bring about healing by these standards. South Africa is however a second world country and those truly living that reality would not see constraints where we experience it and they would see blessings where we take things for granted. THE HOUSE feels it to be a major constraint that we do not have social security systems such as Australia, USA, most of Europe and England has. We cannot retrieve a child from the street and immediately obtain medical help for her. We can hardly find placements for these children in hospitals, not to speak of drug rehabilitation centres, mental health programmes, schools, children's homes, etc. We have no Medi-Cal, food stamps, destitute allowance and other. Foster care allowances are only worth R180 (\$51) per month and only pays for bus fare and lunch money. Many were the times we had to assist a girl in coming off the street, finding her a nice Escort agency, help her to save money, then help her to find a suitable apartment and enrol her into a class or college hoping that she will stick to waitressing in the evenings rather than prostitution to pay for her education and costs of living. But we must appreciate that even the above scenario is not attainable in India and other African countries and we should find a way to cope with our schizophrenia.

Other more relevant constraints are those of the street culture, the Law, the lack of adequate policing, unintelligibility of the Welfare and the very negative and unsympathetic public image of child prostitutes.

#### **The Street Culture**

The street culture either withholds people from trying to enter this arena or it inhibits their actions. The 'streets' have its own judicial laws and penal systems, language and anti-language, ethics and standards. Because insiders live with the constant fear of penalisation and persecution by normal society the street culture is so designed to make detection of outsiders possible.

Any helper that hopes to get to the root of things must adopt the culture, make it their own and operate within its realm. This creates terrible ambivalence since the sub-culture protects and venerates what the helper perceives as evil in need of eradication. Helpers who transgress the social rules of the subculture or anti-society face retribution and punishment which has immediate and vicious ostracisation as the mildest form of punishment.

Irrespective of the above, THE HOUSE managed successfully to become an institution inside the sub-culture, one of the aspects of the sub-culture, one of the elders that have an influence on the proceedings and the ethics of the street. Even though THE HOUSE has gained such street credibility, it can never oppose the street openly. Our actions are closely monitored, weighed and rumoured. The continuous interplay of street politics and our therapeutic aims greatly impedes our efficiency.

#### **Economics of Supply and Demand**

Children growing up in this city face the challenge to get accustomed to, and conquer, the fact that men offer them money in exchange for sex. With the current state of financial resources in the country the way it is, so unevenly distributed, it can be foreseen that a school girl from a poor home may be very tempted to consider an offer of R50 for a 'hand job', or R100 for a 'blow job', or R200 for a 'full house'.

This problem for concerned parents is aggravated by the wholesale value that sexual

intimacy has gained over the years. As parents we have allowed pornography to become commonplace in this country. It was to be expected that the schools should overflow with the material soon after its arrival on the open market - and it is to be expected that very few children have not yet seen these pornographic magazines or videos. The pornographic scenes the viewers see in theatres videos and magazines create pipe dreams that many viewers will want to fulfil. Most persons usually do not expect their sexual partners to participate in these fantasies and may never even mention their fantasies to their mate. The prostitute serves also that purpose - to cater for fetishes and kinky ideas. This new attitude towards sex is also reflected in the music of the teenage culture.

### **Drugs**

Drugs act as a stumbling block in two particular senses. The first is that the violent world in which the drugs are merchandised is also the world in which the juvenile prostitute lives - is also the world where the child is to be retrieved from. The vast amounts of money involved in the drug trade makes it necessary for merchants to protect themselves, their wares and their 'turf', with fire arms and gangster affiliations. The presence of the drug trade on the Street makes it particularly dangerous. The level of excitement on the Street is so high and so extreme that normal life is perceived to be morbidly boring once the child attempts reintegration.

Drugs serve a necessary function in these children's lives. As therapists we would hate to think that any of these children may be living and working in these horrid conditions without the consolation of a drug, without the drug induced ability to reach toward an alternative reality. No sober mind can cope with what these children experience. A drug addicted mind, however, makes it difficult for helpers to retrieve children.

### **The South African Police Services**

During the past five years we can honestly say that the SAPS have been of no particular assistance in combating the problem. With the exception of some officers from various units and stations who reached out in their personal capacity, the SAPS have mostly been a source of concern for THE HOUSE. We deal with so many (unsubstantiated) complaints of girls who claim to have been raped, beaten and abused by police officers that we are inclined to conclude that where there are a thousand billows of smoke there must be a fire somewhere.

Another stumbling block posed by the SAPS is that of untrained personnel. Young officers are sent to places of extremes such as the Hillbrow area where these unprepared young men and women attempt to learn about the Street from the front seat of their car, or from the desks of the charge office, waiting for cases. It is too easy for these officers to meet up with runaways or child prostitutes and do the wrong things such as: believing the children's stories, paying for their hotel rooms, taking them back home to their parents, making the night in the police cells more bearable by being overly protective, letting them out of custody and not charging them because of misplaced sympathy, accepting offers of sex in exchange for freedom. On occasion we have had to take our complaints and concerns to the Station Commanders and District Commanders but nothing seems to change for the better.

### **The Child Care Act**

Working within the realms of the Act is almost impossible for any organisation that has to deal with the sensitivities of a Street sub-culture and anti-society. We contravene the Act almost every day, out of necessity, acting in what we understand to be in the child's best interest. In those instances when we do work with the welfare system we find the Act to be detrimental to these children, specifically with regards to the rules of jurisdiction, care facilities and the lack of the child's participation in finding a solution.

### **Child -Unfriendly Legal Systems**

The child-unfriendly legal systems are a serious stumbling block. Juveniles receive no recognition from the welfare systems or the courts whilst they are awaiting trial. Most of the girls we work with have seen the inside of the court cells before they were sixteen years old and if they were acquitted or the charges were withdrawn, the children simply walked out of the cells back to the streets. The whole issue of children and the judicial system is currently being reorganised and one can only hope that this time around the interest of the child will feature brighter than any other interests the agenda may have.

One of our main concerns with the social welfare system, the juvenile and children's courts are that they hardly see children holistically. The whole concept of holism seems strange to the system. It is for this reason, perhaps, that a child who seems unmanageable can be so readily removed from society and be placed in an institution. It is perhaps for this same reason that children who complain about abuse at home will be removed from their loved ones, be placed in an institution for periods of up to a year, before the case has been resolved.

We believe the main objective of the welfare system should be the mobilisation and empowerment of the dysfunctional family. Our experience, given the fact that more than 80% of the children we work with have been in contact with the system at some point in time, shows that these children have fallen through cracks in the system. We believe that most of the children we deal with could have been prevented from entering into this life if the system operated in practice as it seems in theory.

### **Places of Safety**

One of the many restraints on the efficiency of the courts, the CPU and NGOs such as ourselves, is the very unsatisfactory conditions in the official places of safety. We have had numerous discussions with representatives from the various role players regarding this unsatisfactory situation, and discussions seems to reoccur each time a consideration is made whether to place a child in custody or not. Each time we have to see a child off to one of these places we know that we are doing wrong by that child - that we are diminishing the child's chances of survival.

This reluctance to have children placed in these institutions inhibits all parties concerned to act swiftly to come to a child's assistance. We would rather let a child continue being on the streets for another two weeks whilst we work on a better solution than to 'waste' our one chance to help her by allowing the system to process her via the place of safety route.

### **Untrained Social Workers**

Social workers in the employ of the Department of Welfare cannot be expected to be trained in the sensitivities of the street culture or in the intricacies of the drug world. The fact that they are largely unable to identify with the child prostitute's life, her motives, her dreams, fears and loyalties, renders them inefficient as counsellors. We do not consider the average social worker as appropriately qualified to deal with these children. This problem causes a reluctance to expose retrieved children, and especially some of the hardened cases, to social workers.

### **Foster and Children's Home Placements**

It is downright impossible to get a juvenile prostitute placed in a children's home. The rule is usually that a child of 13 and older, and who is sexually active, will not be accepted in children's homes. We have at least 15 girls on the street that could not get placement in a home and that must prostitute on the streets of Hillbrow to make a living.

Foster placement is out of the question in the current South African situation where follow-up from social workers is almost nil. To place a child prostitute with a family is a very risky situation and if such a programme should be considered it must be correctly managed.

## **SIGNIFICANT LESSONS**

Society can ignore a problem to the extent that it, society that is, can be innocent of the existence of a certain social condition that prevails. In our experience this is what happened in South Africa with regards to commercial sexual exploitation of children until we arrived.

Small organisations can impact a society's conscience and the way it thinks but this takes years of persistent marketing and a very aggressive attitude.

Systems need watchdogs to ensure optimum efficiency and to show up cracks. It is the duty of NGOs and CBOs to see to it that the unpleasant job of nagging and exposing of cracks is done.

Children can change and save themselves despite the lack of material and social resources, providing that they can be loved.

The ability to work with, and within, the particular Street culture is essential to helping these children.

Non-professionally trained persons are generally better therapists and helpers in the unstructured and ever-changing world these children experience. Judging by the manuals for drop in centres in the first world this statement may only be true of our particular scenario.

The cushion provided by constant drug abuse, especially 'downers', is perhaps the single most positive precondition to attaining future mental health for the rehabilitating child prostitute.

Locally, the police constitute a negative aspect of the Street culture. This force is divided into those who do evil and those who think they do well but neither are of assistance to our project and rather pose stumbling blocks.

Children have to 'bottom out' before they can be helped. It is easy for a centre to lengthen the time the child will spend on the Street by cushioning its terrible realities from her by providing crisis shelter and other such facilities. One's misplaced compassion can thus lead to the child being on the Street for another year before she 'bottoms out'. On the negative side, we have buried almost 200 girls over the past 5 years.

Helpers must acquire and maintain an intimate knowledge of the Street in order to have the necessary credibility. This will cause other children to walk in spontaneously since mouth-to-mouth advertising, or the oral culture, is what the street is founded on.

Maintain an open door policy and never allow a child that 'disappointed' you to feel she may not return. These children grow in phases and each time she tries she learns. With your help she can learn in progressive phases if she is guided not to see the end of a particular learning cycle as a failure.

A holistic approach is an absolute necessity. As important as spirituality is, and as important as medical attention and resolution of childhood trauma and the hold of the pimp, the education problem and society's negative view of ex-prostitutes - no one aspect can be afforded a priority over the other.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The child sex-worker is different to the Street Child in that rehabilitation involves so much more than finding the child a home, education and loving foster parents. The traumas these children have lived usually leave very deep scars that result in scary pathology that can never be left unresolved. The reasons why this child got involved in the first place (also in drug taking), the precipitating factors, must be addressed to facilitate rehabilitation. We believe that if these aspects can be truly understood by governments then more care will be taken in how these (and potential) children are dealt with. We need legislation, welfare systems, policing

and court systems that are particularly sensitive to these issues. We believe that anyone found guilty of collaborating with, or keeping silence about, a child sex worker should be charged for offences such as being accessory to inflicting mental cruelty, rape of a child, indecent assault, abusing trust, public duty, condoning child abuse, etc. Such charges and appropriate sentences will instil in the public mind a true picture of what happens to the souls of these children and in the end it may change the public image of the perpetrators (instead of seeing them almost as victims) and will inspire more people to act on revealing these problems to the Law.

We believe that no city should have more than one drop-in centre for each gender and / or age group since both the problems of 'shelter hopping' and of perverted volunteers can only be controlled in this way. It is very important that shelters and drop in centres are linked to a central database (even given the practical problems) and that they share information. Many girls and perverts move from shelter to shelter, from city to city, and they become so well versed in the jargon of helpers that they play skilled games to their own (and others') detriment.

We feel that one possible solution to covering the numerous cracks in our child welfare system may be to form a Family Court where the child is regarded in a holistic perspective and not as an individual gone-wrong. This way of thinking is inherent in the African mind-set and was natural for these people before the West imposed its 'superior' individualistic laws and ethics.

A successful programme will address the precipitating factors in primary prevention and in after-the-fact therapy; it will also address and overcome the stumbling blocks and it will improvise to make resources available. Retrieval and rehabilitation of a child prostitute is not a task to be taken lightly. The children suffered so much trauma, of such intensity, that any therapist recoils in horror and impotence when these children open their hearts.

Only a holistic approach will suffice. There is no sense in wasting the one opportunity you may have on a half-baked therapeutic approach. So many people do that - only to see the child returning to the street. The strain on the hopeful children on the street is a serious threat when that happens but the strain on the child can so easily be the last straw that breaks the camel's back. Plato left us this idea of holism in his Charmides:

*"As you ought not to attempt to cure the eyes without the head,  
or the head without the body,  
so neither ought you to attempt the cure the body without the soul ...  
for the part can never be well unless the whole is well.  
... And therefore, if the head and body are to be well, you must begin by curing the soul".*

These children are broken and fragmented beyond simple description in a paper of this nature. They are sexually dysfunctional and dissociated from their emotions. Many have cultivated highly developed self-differentiation to the point of multiple personality - to cope with the work of prostitution. Most young people are very fragmented but older girls seem to accept personality changes and slip into the 'street person(s)' permanently. The abuse that these girls have to deal with shatters their self image and makes them distrust people. They find it difficult not to reserve the possibility that any person they meet may be perverted, may harm them or may have ulterior motives for helping them.

So many of these girls have never had the opportunity to develop through puberty. Most have never had any therapy for that which made them troubled children in the first instance - childhood sexual abuse perhaps. The result is, many times, a neurotic and obsessive person that is much too juvenile to deal with real issues, especially not existential issues.

Most South African 'technical experts' (as they refer to themselves) believe that child prostitutes are really a female version of the male Street Children. We however know differently, the differences between street children and juvenile prostitutes in Johannesburg lie

deeper than mere definition and semantics.

Resources for child prostitutes should take into account the fact that some of the older women were child prostitutes once, and they perhaps never had the luxury of a caring resource to help them escape the vice. THE HOUSE distinguishes between what we term Child Prostitutes and Old Child Prostitutes, and we hope to teach our Government that it is necessary to lift the restriction against working with persons older than 18 years.

**Healing and community, the two are mutually inclusive - This remains the final and most important challenge for all therapists.**

# College for Whores

The South African Government is considering the legalisation of prostitution. Under the new dispensation, if the authorities have their way, girls from the age of eighteen may take jobs as prostitutes.

This is good news for girls who find school life boring and burdensome. If you would like your daughter, girlfriend or wife to earn an above average income and enjoy a very interesting life as a sex worker, whore or prostitute - be responsible, enrol her for a course in whoredom.

We present this course in the spirit of Masakhane and in line with the RDP - to assist the young girls to learn the skills of this trade. Thank our enlightened new Government (who also brought us legal pornography) for the millions of jobs they are creating for all those young women who are tired of school and cannot find jobs.

## **Curriculum (reality oriented tuition)**

### ***About the services you will be performing***

Vaginal penetration - penises, bottles, toys, firearms  
Oral sex - to swallow or not, dirty penises  
Anal sex - stretching the rectum, dealing with piles  
Fetishes - shoes, faeces, plastic, leather, playing sex games  
Sadism - dealing with pain, hygiene and healing of scars, basic first aid  
Masochism - drawing blood, using devices  
Sex with animals - do's and don'ts, dangerous germs  
Group sex - with the customer's wife, two clients at a time, large orgies  
Lesbian sex - shows for male clients, pleasing a woman  
Pornography - live shows, modelling, video

### ***About your workplace***

Brothels, Massage parlours, Escort agencies, Hotel Rooms, Street whores

### ***Skills you will need to be a professional***

Acting - faking pleasure, playing to his ego, the 'ecstatic climax'  
Techniques - rapid ejaculation, escape, hand to hand combat  
Getting the business - soliciting, negotiation, dealing with pimps  
Surviving assault - rape, beatings, mutilation  
Dealing with Syphilis, gonorrhoea, infections  
HIV - how to die with dignity  
Surviving drugs and alcohol damage  
Dealing with society's attitude, early retirement preparation  
Parenting - pregnancy, abortions, preparing your children for shame

In the event of the Government's continuation of their plans, The House in Hillbrow, an organisation known for its endeavours in healing broken juvenile prostitutes, petitions President Mandela to fund a school to prepare girls for their careers as juvenile prostitutes - and to provide ample mental health services to deal with the aftermath of such a disaster.

### ***You can stop such a sick idea from becoming a REAL necessity***

We need your support to pressurise the Government in making the age limit for legal prostitution 21 years of age

Please join THE HOUSE's campaign against the legalisation of juvenile prostitution  
Box 18557, Hillbrow, 2038

**jobs - jobs - jobs**

The Government is creating thousands of jobs for women and girls. Rush your application to the State President's office today - TEL (012) 212222, P BAG X1000 PRETORIA 0001

**Are you tired of mindless, low-paying jobs or school?** Would you like a career with flexible working hours? Working with people? Offering a professional service?

- \* No experience required
- \* No matric certificate needed
- \* A minimum age requirement is in place (but the police turn a blind eye)
- \* On-the-job training provided
- \* Special opportunities for young girls, poor women, single mothers, disadvantaged women
- \* More than 50 000 positions already filled (7 000 in Gauteng) - many thousands more available
- \* This amazing project made possible by international funding administred by the RDP.

**Women and girls applying for this position will provide the following services:**

- Being penetrated orally, anally, and vaginally with penises, fingers, fists, and objects, including but not limited to bottles, brushes, dildoes, guns and/or animals
- Being bound and gagged, tied with ropes and/or chains, burned with cigarettes, or hung from beams or trees
- Being photographed or filmed performing these acts
- Being the objects of kinky sex entertainment to men, women and their friends

**Workplace:** Job-related actives will be performed in the following locations: in an apartment, hotel, a 'massage parlour', car, doorway, hallway, street, executive suite, university and college residence, convention, bar, public toilet, public park, alleyway, military base, on a stage, bar, in a glass booth.

**Wages:** Wages will be negotiated at each and every transaction. Payment will be delivered when client determines when and if services have been rendered to his satisfaction. Corporate management fees range from 40-60% of wages; private manager reserves the right to impound all moneys earned.

**Benefits:** Benefits will be provided at the discretion of management.

**No responsibility or legal redress for the following On-the-Job hazards:**

- Non-payment for services rendered
- Sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy
- Injuries sustained through performance of services including but not limited to cuts, bruises, lacerations, internal haemorrhaging, broken bones, suffocation, mutilation, disfigurement, dismemberment, and death

*Note: Accusations of rape will be treated as a breach of contract by employee.*

Name of applicant .....

Signature of manager on behalf of applicant .....

**Do You Want This Job?**

Prostitution is euphemized as an occupational alternative for women, as an answer to low-paying, low-skilled, boring dead-end jobs, as a solution to the high unemployment rate of poor women, as a form of sexual liberation, and as a career women freely choose. By condoning juvenile prostitution to prosper, and by decriminalising prostitution, our authorities are acting as national pimps.

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