



CFUW BC Council

Fact Sheet On Prostitution and Human Trafficking

Canadian Federation of University Women / Fédération Canadienne des Femmes Diplômées des Universités, founded in 1919, is a voluntary, non-profit, self-funded, non-governmental organization women graduates, associate and student members in 112 Clubs in every province across Canada.

CFUW/FCFUDU members are active in public affairs, working together for equality for women and girls, to raise the social, economic, political and legal status of women, as well as to improve education, the environment, peace, justice and human rights.

CFUW/FCFUDU is the largest of the 79 member affiliates of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW/FIFDU). CFUW has special consultative status at the United Nations. CFUW BC Council's mandate is to encourage and initiate studies with respect to matters of provincial concern, consistent with CFUW goals.

CFUW BC Council represents women graduates, associate and student members in 23 clubs in BC.

THE BACKGROUND

In 2010 the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) adopted a resolution proposed by UWC Vancouver, to enact legislation which prohibits the purchasing of sexual services wherever it occurs, including the internet, and which imposes criminal sanctions on the purchasers of these services

The resolution further called for amending the Criminal Code to eliminate sanctions on prostituted persons. Additionally, the resolution called for municipal and provincial governments to provide support services to aid persons exiting prostitution.

THE CASE FOR THE NORDIC MODEL

CFUW policy which followed from the resolution is based upon the Nordic Model of prostitution law which began in Sweden. This model was then adopted in Norway, and with modification, in Iceland and Finland. It is now moving beyond the region to other countries, including Scotland and Ireland.

THE FACTS

- In 1999 Sweden criminalized the buying of sexual services and decriminalized the selling of sexual services. A Swedish government publication of the law's first ten years shows that street prostitution has been cut in half; that there is no evidence that there is an increase of indoor prostitution; and that the ban has had an effect on traffickers who find Sweden an unattractive market in which to sell children and women. (1)
- Canada is considered a transit and destination point for human trafficking; BC is recognized as having a trafficking problem which cannot be ignored; and Vancouver is listed as a "port of major concern." (2)
- Laws which criminalize the demand for women and children decrease that demand which leads to a decrease in supply (trafficking). Countries which have allowed the legalization of prostitution such as the Netherlands and Germany have experienced an increase in human trafficking, organized crime, and violence against women. (3)
- "Harm reduction" proponents claim that decriminalizing prostitution (thus allowing for an indoor setting in brothels) would result in less violence or harm to women. Abolitionist groups, including former prostitutes who now represent victims and survivors of the trade, state that violence against women, including murder, is dangerous in all settings even indoors (4). Abolitionist groups, such as those supporting the Nordic Model, seek "harm elimination" altogether rather than "harm reduction".(5)

- Prostitution is not a “choice” (a) if the individual is trafficked, (b) if the individual is underage and cannot legally consent, or (c) if the activity is part of survival on the streets. That is, the majority, up to as much as 97% of girls and women would leave if they could. (6)
 - Implementing laws criminalizing the buying of sexual services would align Canada with existing international agreements it has already endorsed including UN protocols. The 2000 UN “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Traffickers in Persons” is the first international instrument to identify the demand that leads to exploitation and trafficking. (7)
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WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Read publications such as: Prostitution, Trafficking, and Traumatic Stress (Melissa Farley), The Johns: Sex for Sale and the Men Who Buy It (Victor Malarek), Half the Sky (Kristof and WuDunn), “The Swedish Approach: A European Union Country Fights Sex Trafficking,” Solutions, Vol. 2 Issue 2, Mar. 02, 2011 (Ekberg, G. and Wahlberg, K.)
 - Participate in local community groups and/or events which raise public awareness about this issue; or hold your own meeting, lecture, or event.
 - Check on line for organizations which can provide a speaker for your group’s next meeting.
 - Support laws that assist the victim not the profiteer.
 - Work with provincial and local governments in the pivotal role they have in developing and funding exit services for women such as education, job training, detox and housing.
 - Contact government representatives at municipal, provincial, and national levels. Insure that MP’s, MLA’s, and all officials are aware of and understand CFUW’s policy.
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References:

1. Raymond, J. (2010). “The Swedish Approach to Trafficking, Prostitution and the Sex Industry.” Janice Raymond serves on the Board of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW), the first NGO to have the issue of trafficking as it’s mandate.
2. Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. Office to Combat Trafficking in British Columbia, Victoria, BC. octip@gov.bc.ca
3. Perrin, B. (2010). “Sweden’s Fix: Jail the Johns.” *Globe and Mail*, September 20, 2010. Article 1735817. Benjamin Perrin is a professor of law at UBC and the author of Invisible Chains.
4. Taber, J. “The Nation as Pimp,” *Globe and Mail*, September 29, 2001.
5. Bramham, D. “Why it would be wrong to legalize prostitution,” *Vancouver Sun*, October 6, 2010.
6. CTV, ca News Staff. “Federal Government to Appeal Prostitution Ruling.” <http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/CanadaAM/20100929/prostitutionlaws-100929/> September 29, 2010.
7. Ekberg, G. (2004). “The Swedish Law that Prohibits the Purchase of Sexual Services,” Violence Against Women, 10, 1187-1218.

