



In Partnership with York Region Anti-Human Trafficking Committee (YRAHTC)

# Preventing and Reducing the Trafficking of Women and Girls through Community Planning in York Region: **A Gender-Based Analysis**

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**Canada**

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These activities gave much information towards this text.**

## **Introduction**

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The sexual exploitation of persons through human trafficking is a crime that disproportionately affects women and girls.

Marginalized and exploited populations of women – for example, youth, socioeconomically disadvantaged and Aboriginal women – are most vulnerable to being targeted. Certainly, social location and its impact upon women’s economic independence, victimization by crime and safety is integral to the phenomenon of human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Ontario’s The Learning Network notes:

“Some of the factors that make someone more vulnerable [to trafficking] are social (e.g., gender inequality, history of colonial exploitation, poverty, lack of access to education, restrictive immigration policies resulting in forced migration), economic (e.g., supply and demand for labour in many sectors, low risk – high reward for perpetrators), and political in nature (e.g., wars and other situations resulting in displaced persons/refugees). Results include increased economic vulnerability, isolation and forced displacement, all of which contribute to the push and pull factors underpinning human trafficking”<sup>1</sup>.

Ontario’s Sexual Violence Action Plan agrees, identifying that a coordinated response to human trafficking is needed in Ontario communities so to increase capacity in addressing the complex supportive, practical and safety needs of trafficked persons. A variety of community-based organizations need to be involved “in order to assist victims with everything from safe housing to navigating immigration processes”<sup>2</sup>.

For these reasons, the Women’s Support Network of York Region (WSN)’s *Preventing and Reducing the Trafficking of Women and Girls through Community Planning in York Region Project* includes an intentional application of a gender-based analysis<sup>3</sup>.

The work conducted within the overall Project acknowledges that different women and girls are targeted for and experience human trafficking differently. A woman’s race, socioeconomic status or age affects her level of risk for being targeted for trafficking and sexual exploitation, her safety concerns, her community support system, as well as resources available to her should she consider exiting a situation of trafficking. As example, a transient youth who is lured into sexual trafficking may present different needs than an adult woman; and women who have no legal status in Canada experience different barriers in reaching help than women who have status in Canada.

GBA+ analysis has been integrated into the components of this Project, including:

- York Region Anti-Human Trafficking Committee (YRAHTC)
- Local needs assessment
- A community plan of action to address human trafficking, based on the results of the needs assessment

This Report will review the Project, identify where GBA+ analysis was implemented, and share information and innovations that this process informed.

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<sup>1</sup> The Learning Network. *Human Trafficking* (Issue 2, September 2012). p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives: Ontario’s Sexual Violence Action Plan*. 2011. p. 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> Women’s Support Network of York Region. *Request for Proposal (RFP): Gender Specialist*. June 2013.

## **Definitions**

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The following definitions are relevant to the Project:

### ***Preventing and Reducing the Trafficking of Women and Girls through Community Planning Project in York Region***

In 2013, the Women's Support Network of York Region (WSN) received funding from Status of Women Canada to engage the local community and implement actions to address human trafficking over a two-year Project. Within the Preventing and Reducing the Trafficking of Women and Girls through Community Planning in York Region Project, WSN aims to increase community safety by addressing the needs of women and girls at risk of sexual exploitation and human trafficking in York Region in Ontario.

The Project's focus is to develop inter-agency protocols, guidelines and best practices to ensure appropriate responses by service providers to intra-regional trafficking of girls and women. Businesses across the region are being engaged through workshops to help them recognize signs of exploitation and human trafficking. Results are being shared with organizations working on similar issues<sup>4</sup>. The Project includes:

- Engagement of a local coalition (York Region Anti-Human Trafficking Committee, or YRAHTC) established to guide the Project and respond to trafficking. The YRAHTC committee has over 25 member agencies, representing stakeholders from a diversity of sectors including social services and community-based organizations, criminal justice partners, faith groups, youth organizations and women's organizations
- A local needs assessment that engaged young women at-risk of and experiencing human trafficking to share their thoughts on the root causes of trafficking
- A community plan of action to address human trafficking, based on the results of the needs assessment

WSN works closely with stakeholders in engaging the community in initiatives to address sexual violence. WSN is the lead organization for this Status of Women funded Project. WSN also coordinates the planning, meetings and activities of the York Region Anti-Human Trafficking Committee.

### ***Gender-based analysis (GBA)***

Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an analytical tool the federal government uses to advance gender equality in Canada<sup>5</sup>. It looks at how gender impacts the way a person interacts with and experiences the world around her or him.

The "plus" in the name highlights that Gender-based Analysis goes beyond gender. It includes the examination of a range of other identity factors, such as age, education, language, geography, culture and income. These identity factors are also known as *social location* – that is, where you are "located" or situated by definition of gender, race, socioeconomic class and other social categories.

A category is not just a name or designation. GBA+ also acknowledges that different social locations hold different political and social power than others. For example, societally, we know

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<sup>4</sup> Status of Women Canada. *Harper Government: Making a Real Difference in the Lives of Women and Girls Across Canada*. Online: <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/initiatives/unsw-cfnu/2013/difference-eng.pdf>. p. 8

<sup>5</sup> Status of Women Canada. *What Is GBA+?*. Online: <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acis/intro-eng.html>

that persons of color experience more discrimination than white persons. We also know that in Canada, men make more money than women and are overall more financially secure than women for a range of reasons related to gender inequality<sup>6</sup>.

GBA+ retains this awareness and uses it to assess the potential impacts of policies, programs or initiatives on diverse groups of women and men, girls and boys, taking into account gender and other identity factors. GBA+ helps recognize and respond to the different situations and needs of the Canadian population<sup>7</sup>. A project or strategy might look different, depending on the population it is meant to target or support.

A GBA + analysis has been used throughout the Project and its work to develop a comprehensive picture of the realities of trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation.

### ***Intersectional analysis***

An intersectional analysis is a term similar to GBA+. Like GBA+, intersectional analysis recognizes that gender is not the only part of our social identity that shapes and informs our life experiences. These parts of our social identities intersect to affect women and girls' experiences of systems, social relations, discrimination, access barriers, cultural expectations and many other larger systemic issues<sup>8</sup>. For the purpose of this Report, we will use the terms GBA and GBA+.

### ***Human trafficking and Human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation***

Human trafficking consists of exploitation in conjunction with force, coercion, deception, fraud, and threat. Exploitation can occur through forced labour, organ removal, forced sexual service, or more than one of these<sup>9</sup>.

Commercial sexual exploitation is the exploitation of an individual for things of value, particularly of a sexual nature, sexual services, or related services<sup>10</sup>. In this, human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitations involves the use of force, coercion, deception, fraud, and threat to sexually exploit another (i.e. make her provide sexual services) for money or in exchange for other valuables.

While people can be trafficked and exploited for a number of reasons (and certain populations are more vulnerable to differing situations of trafficking and exploitation), the scope of this Project focused on addressing human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.

### ***Marginalized***

A marginalized population is one that is constructed as less-powerful than other populations within a larger society. To be marginalized is to be thought of as less powerful, less important, or less deserving of social supports. Nonetheless their experiences of marginalization, marginalized persons can and do resist social inequities.

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<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report - Economic Well-Being*. Online: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11388-eng.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Status of Women Canada. *What Is GBA+?*. Online: <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acis/intro-eng.html>

<sup>8</sup> Girls Action Foundation. *Understanding Your Social Location*. Online: <http://girlsactionfoundation.ca/en/amplify-toolkit-/section-2-considerations-for-facilitators/facilitator-identity-and-facilitating-across-difference/understanding> .

<sup>9</sup> Women's Support Network of York Region. 2013. *The Educator's Resource Manual: Addressing Trafficking For The Purpose Of Commercial Sexual Exploitation*, p. 6

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 2.

Social marginalization is based on social location. Some marginalized populations of women and girls in Canada that are relevant to this Project include:

- Women and girls living in poverty
- Racialized populations (that is, persons of color)
- Aboriginal women and girls
- LGBTTTQI community
- Trans persons
- Young women
- Immigrant, refugee, and undocumented women
- Under-housed and street-involved women
- Women labeled with a mental health diagnoses
- Women engaged in substance use
- Women who are sex workers

Being socially marginalized has a direct impact on a person's access to resources (financial, housing, etc.), information and social supports, such as services. As we will see, it can also have an impact on one's vulnerability to experiencing violence or getting trapped inside an abusive situation.

Socially marginalized populations also face more *barriers*. Barriers are things that get in the way of a person – in the case of this Project, a woman or girl's – ability to participate in something (such as a program, a service, or a survey). Barriers are not always obvious. In order to reduce barriers, we ought to think about what kinds of things can get in the way of someone's participation and act to remove these in advance.

**How was Gender-Based Analysis+ implemented into the Project?**

A Gender-based+ analysis was implemented into a number of places throughout the Project's process. The following is a summary of how and where GBA was implemented, and to what purpose:

<b>GBA+ Analysis or Process</b>	<b>Timeframe (When in the Project?)</b>	<b>Why? (What reason or purpose? What did we hope to discover?)</b>
<p>Presentation and facilitate Q &amp;A at YRAHTC Meeting</p> <p>Presentation: Integrating a Gender-Based Analysis Into the Work: <i>Preventing and Reducing the Trafficking of Women and Girls through Community Planning in York Region</i></p>	<p>August-September 2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support community stakeholders to understand GBA+ analysis and its function in the Project</li> <li>• Support WSN and Project staff in articulating the innovation and usefulness of GBA+ to community partners</li> <li>• Outline where and how GBA+ will be used in the course of the Project</li> </ul>
<p>Apply gender-based analysis to Project outreach materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posters</li> <li>• Flyers</li> <li>• Call-out to professionals to refer participants</li> <li>• Outreach plan</li> </ul>	<p>September 2013</p>	<p>Ensure that materials used to outreach to at-risk young women include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible (easy-to-read) language</li> <li>• Accessible definition of terms</li> <li>• Non-triggering language</li> <li>• Engaging graphic and layout</li> </ul> <p>Ensure that materials used to outreach to women and young women with lived experience of trafficking include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible (easy-to-read) language</li> <li>• Accessible definition of terms</li> <li>• Non-triggering language</li> <li>• Engaging graphic and layout</li> </ul> <p>Support to Project staff concerning developing an accessible and wide-reaching outreach plan</p>
<p>Apply gender-based analysis to Project needs assessment processes:</p>	<p>September-November 2013</p>	<p>Ensure clarity of process so that participants understand confidentiality, limits to confidentiality, benefits to participation and risk to participation</p>



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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Group questions</li> <li>• Key Informant questions</li> <li>• Meet with Project staff</li> </ul>		<p>Review needs assessment description for clarity of process so that participants understand how WSN and YRAHTC will use information collected</p> <p>Ensure that Focus group/Key Informant questions reflect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and consistent process</li> <li>• Accessible (easy-to-understand) language</li> <li>• Non-triggering and non-invasive questions</li> <li>• Questions that focus on HT and sexual exploitation</li> <li>• Questions that aim to identify participant strengths and resilience</li> <li>• Flexibility</li> </ul> <p>Support to Project staff concerning additional access considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location of Focus Groups and interviews</li> <li>• Referrals/on-site support to participants</li> <li>• Practical assistance to participants</li> </ul>
<p>Gender-based+ Summary and Reporting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with Project staff (December 2013)</li> <li>• Collect and review Focus Group and Key Informant interview notes</li> <li>• Gender-based analysis Report</li> </ul>	<p>December 2013-February 2014</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review needs assessment participation (who took part? Who was missing?)</li> <li>• Review diversity of needs assessment participants (i.e. representation of various ages, racial identifies, socioeconomic classes)</li> <li>• Review barriers identified by needs assessment participants: how do these reflect systemic marginalization or systemic access barriers?</li> <li>• Review recommendations and strategies for change, as identified by needs assessment participants (what support is missing? How do these intersect with barriers in women`s lives?)</li> <li>• Compare barriers, needs and social factors as identified by needs assessment participants to root causes of HT identified in Canadian studies</li> </ul> <p>Information in the Report will be used</p>

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		in identifying a community plan/strategies for change/priorities in the subsequent stage of the Project.
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GBA+ within the context of this Project supports the community in thinking about – and concretely problem-solving – the root causes of trafficking. This includes contextual (practical) constraints, barriers to accessing community-based supports, identifying the intersectional needs of multiply-marginalized women and girls, and identifying implicit (hidden or unspoken) barriers, such as social stigma.

Information learned from the GBA process (and in this Report) will be used in identifying a community action plan, strategies for change, or priorities to be addressed in the subsequent stage of the Project.

## **Local Safety Audit: Preparatory Stage and Stage 1 Summary**

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Preparation for the needs assessment component of the Project included the *Preparatory Stage* and *Stage 1* of the overall Local Safety Audit process. Together, these stages undertook:

1. An assessment of collaborative and multi-sector partners available to respond to victims of human trafficking in York region
2. Collating the key concerns and priorities identified as important to partners
3. A review of the demographics in York region
4. A review of at-risk factors operant in York region/at-risk populations of women and girls York region
5. A review of human trafficking cases identified in York region
6. Identification of priority populations to be targeted and consulted in the needs assessment process

A summary of these components are outlined below.

### ***Collaborative and multi-sector partners available to respond to victims of human trafficking in York region***

The Preparatory Stage succeeded in striking the York Region Anti-Human Trafficking community-based committee (YRAHTC), which participating groups and individuals agreed would function to support the needs assessment process, outreach to needs assessment participants, and the community plan that followed. Active partners in the YRAHTC included (listed alphabetically):

- AIDS Committee of York Region
- Addiction Services of York Region
- Blue Doors Shelter
- Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness
- Canadian Mental Health Association of York and South Simcoe
- Children's Aid Society of York Region
- Community Living Services of York
- Crown Attorney's Office
- ETA Vaughan
- Family Services York Region
- John Howard Society
- JVS Youth Reach
- Loft Community Services
- 360 Kids (formerly Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region)
- Sandgate Women's Shelter
- Social Services Network
- TrueCity
- University of Toronto Mississauga Gender Studies Program
- Valley View Alliance Church
- Victim Services York Region
- Victim Witness Assistance Program
- World Women Changers
- Yellow Brick House
- York Region Abuse Program
- York Region Centre for Community Safety

- York Region District School Board
- York Regional Police

***Key concerns and priorities identified as important to partners***

Stakeholders identified the following priorities:

- Identify the needs of trafficked women and girls (supportive and practical needs)
- Identify the needs of at-risk populations of women and girls (supportive and practical needs)
- Networking and information-sharing on human trafficking
- Understanding what each social service organization offers in the community/can offer to trafficked women and girls
- Understanding referral processes for social service organizations
- Increasing young women's awareness of human trafficking and sexual exploitation
- Increase strategies for reaching hard to reach young women: for example, transient and homeless young women, women with addictions, women engaged in sex work<sup>11</sup>
- Engage additional community partners, sectors and service providers in creating community protocols to address the needs of women and girls who have experienced trafficking
- Create processes for effective referral
- Develop service provider training (with the goal of identifying and assisting women and girls who are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation in York Region)<sup>12</sup>

***A review of the demographics in York region***

***A review of at-risk factors operant in York region/at-risk populations of women and girls York region***

For a comprehensive review of:

- York region demographics
- At-risk factors operant in York region
- At-risk populations of women and girls York region

Please see *Preventing and Reducing the Trafficking of Women and Girls through Community Planning in York Region Project: A Local Safety Audit* (2014).

***A review of human trafficking cases identified in York region***

Timoshkina (2013) notes that as of the end of 2012, there have been:

- 15 charges of human trafficking laid in York Region
- affecting 16 victim-survivors
- resulting in 1 conviction
- with four (4) cases still before the courts
- All but 2 of the above involved cases of sex trafficking.<sup>13</sup>

Since the publication of Timoshkina's work, additional human trafficking charges have been laid in Canada and in York Region specifically. Please see *Preventing and Reducing the Trafficking of*

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<sup>11</sup> York Region Anti-Human Trafficking Committee (YRAHTC). 2013. York Region Anti-Human Trafficking Committee Workplan: Committee Workgroups

<sup>12</sup> Women's Support Network of York Region. 2013. *The interest in your community for this project; partnerships and other linkages indicating support for this project: Summary*. Submission to: Department of Justice Canada. p. 8-9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 5.

*Women and Girls through Community Planning in York Region Project: A Local Safety Audit* (2014) for more detailed synopsis.

***Identification of priority populations to be targeted and consulted in the needs assessment process***

At the close of the Preparatory Stage, stakeholders identified priority populations to be targeted and consulted for the needs assessment process (Stage 2 of Local Safety Audit: ‘narrow and deep’ analysis) to follow. These were:

1. Youth demographic
2. Women and youth engaged in substance use/dealing with addictions
3. Youth in shelter and child protection settings, where possible
4. Women in the sex trade

The findings from the *Preparatory Stage* and *Stage 1* outlined here informed the processes that follow:

- Needs assessment with trafficked women and at-risk populations (summarized in this Report)
- Gender-Based Analysis+ (summarized in this Report)
- Developing the Action Plan – Information learned from the GBA process (and in this Report) will be used in identifying a community action plan, strategies for change, or priorities to be addressed in the subsequent stage of the Project

## **Gender-Based Analysis+: Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation**

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The sexual exploitation of persons through human trafficking affects women and girls differently than men. There are a number of contexts that inform this reality. *Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking—Linking Community Support in Peel Manual* notes the following contexts that set the stage for situations of trafficking of women, for both *the trafficker* and the *trafficked person*:

“The sex and entertainment industries are in high demand which increases the possibility of trafficking for exploitation to thrive. The high demand [also] transforms women into commodities, thus being sold as objects. Persistent gender inequities manifested in lack of opportunities push women into the sex industry where they become prey for the traffickers. This increases the vulnerability of women marginalized by intersectionality of race, class and sexuality. Hence...women of color will have a higher vulnerability to human trafficking. These women are also likely to be poorer, and therefore their risk for being trafficked is greater”<sup>14</sup>.

These contexts are rooted in gendered terms, as well as in additional, intersecting situations of social inequity. In applying a GBA+ lens to the question of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, we can see a consistent relationship between sexual victimization, gender and other intersections of age, race and socioeconomic class.

Consider the following **correlations between social location and sexual violence in Canada**:

- A 2011 summary on police reported crime found that sexual crimes were by far the most common offence against girls. In particular, 47% of all violent crimes against girls under 12 reported to police were sexual in nature<sup>15</sup>
- Police data show that girls were sexually assaulted by a family member at a rate close to 4 times that of boys. Sexual assaults against children in families “overwhelmingly” (97%) involve a male relative<sup>16</sup>
- Women and young women from marginalized racial, sexual and socioeconomic groups are more vulnerable to being targeted for sexual violence<sup>17</sup>

Further to this, consider the following **correlations between social location and human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in Canada**:

- Women and girls represent the majority of victims identified in Canada as a whole
- At least 26 of 118 victims in reported cases were under the age of 18 (about 22% of all police-reported cases)
- Most domestic cases include young women trafficked by pimps within a city and province, and inter-provincially as prostitutes
- Young Aboriginal women are trafficked from rural reserves to cities by gangs for sexual exploitation<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sexual Assault Centre/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel. May 2012. *Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking—Linking Community Support in Peel: Train the Trainer Manual*. Module 7: The Exploitation of People Through Trafficking.

<sup>15</sup> Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Released on February 25, 2013. *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends*. p. 15

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada, as quoted in DeKeseredy, W. *Understanding Violence Against Women and Children: The Need for a Gendered Analysis*. Presented at: Critical Connections symposium, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, March 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Wolfe and Chiodo, CAMH, 2008, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> These facts from: Public Safety Canada. 2013. *Local Safety Audit Guide: To Prevent Trafficking In Persons And Related Exploitation*,

While these statistics tell us *who* is affected by trafficking, it is important to consider the root causes of human trafficking – that is, the *why* and *how* – in order to identify solutions.

***Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation: The Supply and Demand Logic***<sup>19</sup>

Human trafficking is based on market logic of supply and demand. As long as there is a demand for cheap labour in the countries where trafficking takes place and a poverty gap, trafficking will continue to flourish. Factors like inadequate employment opportunities, civil conflicts and the feminization of poverty act like *push factors*, influencing women to look for better opportunities...whereas the demand for unskilled workers and the commercialization and commodification of women’s bodies act as *pull factors*, driving women’s migration<sup>20</sup> [into spaces and jobs that make them vulnerable to exploitation].

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Supply</b>	<b>Demand</b>
<i>Socio-cultural</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate educational opportunities</li> <li>• Inadequate employment opportunities</li> <li>• Gender and racial discrimination</li> <li>• Gendered/racial division of labour</li> <li>• Vulnerability to violence (and the impacts of violence)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriarchal attitudes and perceptions of women</li> <li>• Commodification of sex and bodies for sexual services</li> <li>• Consumerist acceptance of the commodification of sex and bodies for sexual services</li> <li>• Normalization of inequitable relationships, including abusive relationships</li> </ul>
<i>Economic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage inequities</li> <li>• Feminization of poverty (systemic gender inequities mean that women represent disproportionate percentages of the world’s poor; and work in lower-paying jobs)</li> <li>• Trafficking: a lucrative business with high monetary returns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand by employers for cheap labour</li> <li>• Market demands for cheap labour/products</li> <li>• Confinement of women’s labour in customer service, entertainment and domestic spheres</li> <li>• Increased commercialization of sex</li> <li>• Development of policies and practices in wealthier countries that rely on the labour of temporary and migrant workers</li> </ul>
<i>Political (impacting international situations of trafficking; some domestic)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminization of international migration (women seeking a better life)</li> <li>• Civil and military conflicts</li> <li>• Transnational and domestic crime</li> <li>• Inadequate enforcement of the law/criminalization of victims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal and exploitative global political/economic relationships</li> <li>• Underground prostitution in military operations</li> <li>• Weak law enforcement</li> </ul>

<sup>19</sup> This model and summary thanks to: Sexual Assault Centre/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel. May 2012. *Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking–Linking Community Support in Peel: Train the Trainer Manual*. Module 1: The Root Causes of Human Trafficking.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

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<i>Psycho-social needs<sup>21</sup></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of safe living conditions</li> <li>• Lack of support persons (i.e. supportive and reliable family members or friends)</li> <li>• Loss of community or family/family breakdown through historical situations of abuse (i.e. child sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence in the home)</li> <li>• Lack of supportive care professionals/access to care (i.e. medical, counselling, educational guidance, drug and alcohol treatment)</li> <li>• Lack of belonging/acceptance in community or family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camaraderie or community with other sexually trafficked women</li> <li>• Love/"boyfriend" relationship or perceived relationship with trafficker</li> <li>• Family/friend relationship with the trafficker or recruiter</li> <li>• Access to medical attention through the trafficker's associates</li> <li>• Access to drugs and alcohol through the trafficker and his associates/acceptance of substance use practices by the trafficker and his associates</li> <li>• Acceptance and belonging with the trafficker/associates/other trafficked victims</li> </ul>
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In addition, these *push* and *pull* factors can impact different populations of women and girls differently.

***Preventing and Reducing the Trafficking of Women and Girls through Community Planning in York Region Project: Applying the Supply and Demand Logic Framework***

Within the Project, a needs assessment consulted with local experiential and at-risk women about their thoughts and experiences of trafficking, sexual violence, exploitation and factors that contributed to these.

What did women share in the course of the needs assessment that revealed:

- Experiences of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation *that were informed by gender?*
- Experiences of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation *that were informed by other intersections of social location (such as race, age, income level)?*
- Thoughts about participants' community (i.e. age group, ethnicity, sexual orientation), other women and girls from that community, and what puts these women and girls at-risk of trafficking?
- Socially-constructed *push and pull factors*, as above, affecting women in York region?
- *Recommendations* for prevention and reduction of harm (particularly those that address root causes)?

The following section of this Report will review the Project needs assessment findings while considering these questions.

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<sup>21</sup> Some of the information in this row of the table thanks to: World Health Organization. 2012. *Assessing mental health and psychosocial needs and resources: toolkit for humanitarian settings*, 26.



## Gender-Based Analysis+: Participant Summary

### *About the needs assessment*

The Project's needs assessment took place over the course of 5 months. It included gathering information through focus group (group) interviews and key informant (individual) interviews.

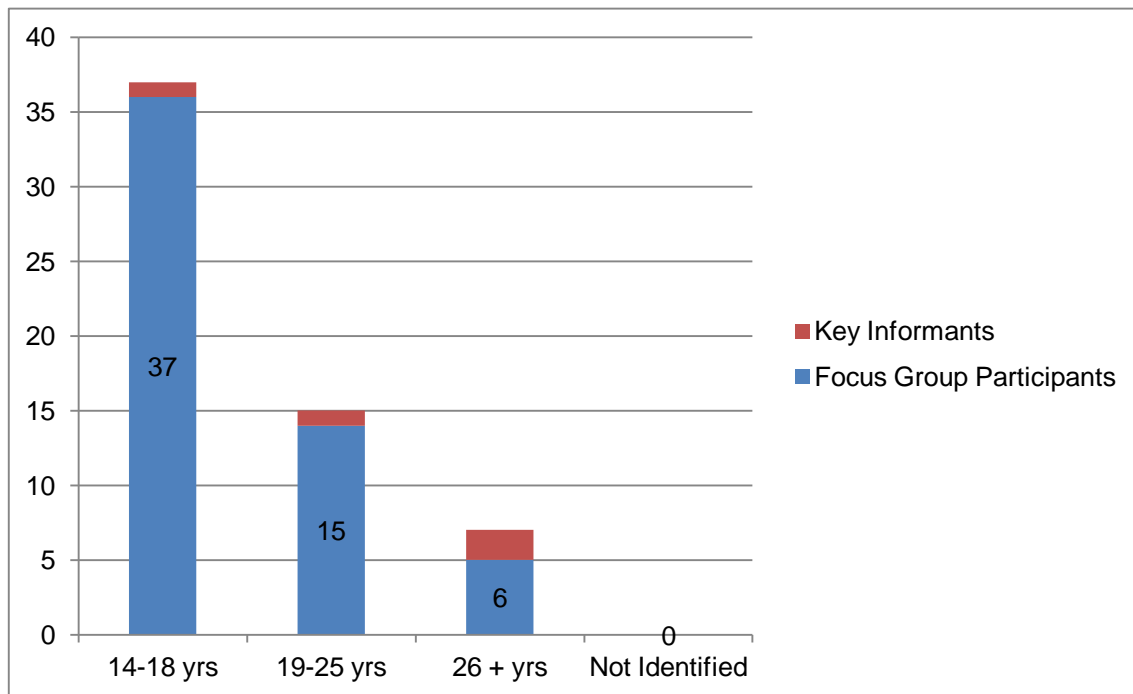
Key informant interviews were conducted with women with lived experience of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Focus groups were conducted with women with lived experience; as well as populations of women deemed at-risk of experiencing human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

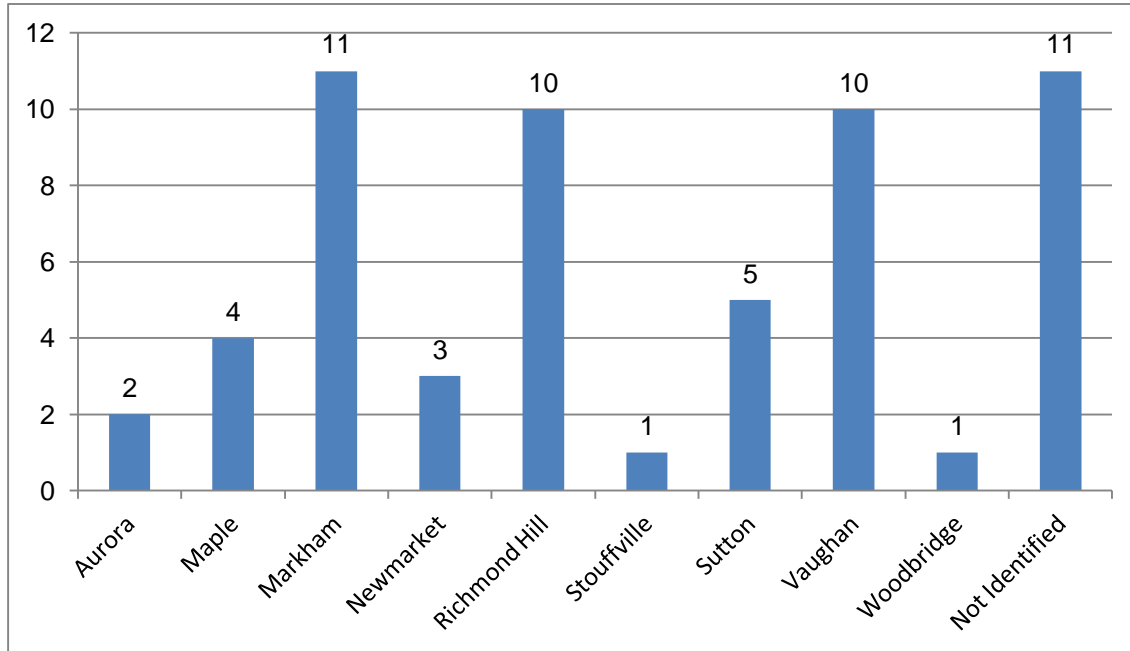
- In total, 58 women participated
- 4 unique women in key informant interviews
- 54 unique women in focus groups (women with lived experience of trafficking/women in at-risk population)
- Note: women with lived experience of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation were self-identified. It's possible that women with lived experience of trafficking also participated in the at-risk groups, but chose not to self-identify as experiential women

*Identified demographics of needs assessment participants (note: demographics are self-identified)*

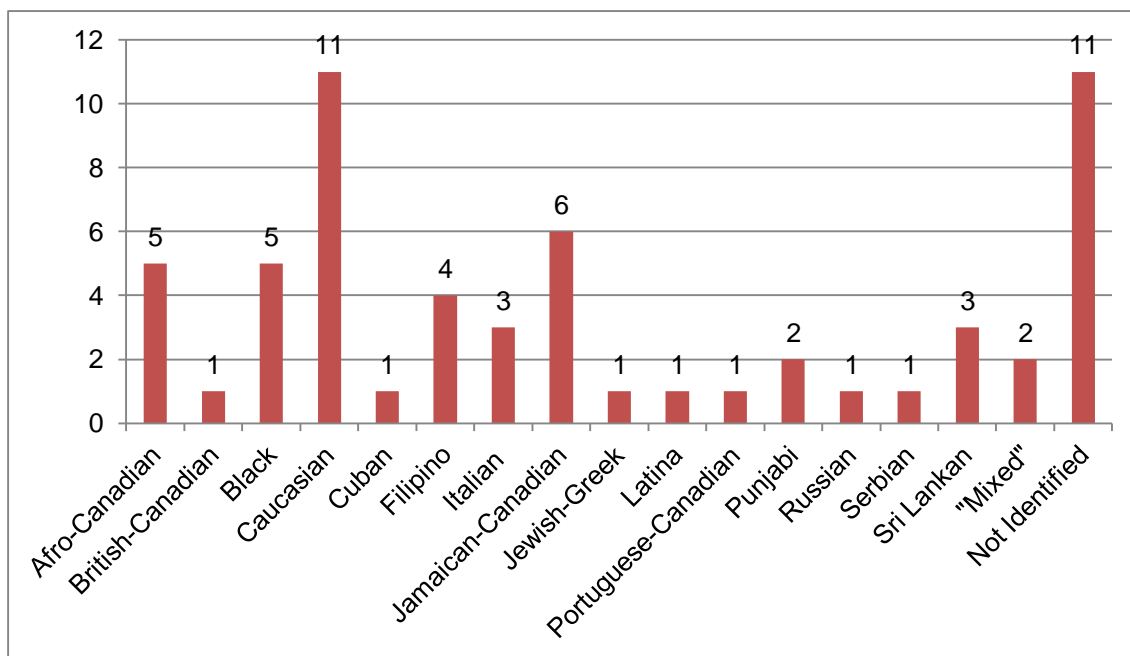
### 1. Participants by Age Group (self-reported)



## 2. Participants by Location (self-reported)



## 3. Participant Ethnicity (self-reported)



**Other self-identified demographics** include:

- 2 *focus group participants* self-identified as married
- *Focus group participants* and *key informants* self-identified as residing or attending school in a variety of different locations across York region, Barrie and the Toronto area
- *Focus group participants* and *key informants* self-identified as living with a variety of different family members:
  - Mother
  - Mother and father
  - Blended family
  - Grandmother/grandparents
  - Siblings
  - Husband
  - Living single/alone, with dependent child

**In addition:**

- *Key informants* (women with lived experience of human trafficking) self-identified with:
  - A history of transience (2 or more moves over the last three years): 3 of 4 key informants
  - A history of childhood sexual abuse or suspected childhood sexual abuse: 4 of 4 key informants
  - A history of substance use: 3 of 4 key informants

## Gender-Based Analysis+: What did we learn?

The *Human Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation: Supply and Demand Logic*<sup>22</sup> identifies root causes of human trafficking. As we have seen, these *push* and *pull* factors operate to draw women into trafficking and at-risk situations; they also function to trap them there.

When we apply this logic to the information shared by participants in the needs assessment, we learn more about the *push* and *pull* factors that are operating in the lives of trafficked and at-risk women in York Region.

### Socio-cultural Factors<sup>23</sup>

Factors	Supply	Demand
<i>Socio-cultural</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate educational opportunities</li> <li>• Inadequate employment opportunities</li> <li>• Gender and racial discrimination</li> <li>• Gendered/racial division of labour</li> <li>• Vulnerability to violence (and the impact of violence on young women)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patriarchal attitudes and perceptions of women</li> <li>• Commodification of sex and bodies for sexual services</li> <li>• Consumerist acceptance of the commodification of sex and bodies for sexual services</li> <li>• Normalization of inequitable relationships, including abusive relationships</li> </ul>

The following is what we heard about **Socio-cultural factors** impacting women and young women in York region:

#### **Patriarchal attitudes and perceptions of women**

All women confront socio-cultural expectations of femininity in their lives. In Elizabeth R. Cole and Alyssa N. Zucker's *Black and White Women's Perspectives on Femininity*, the authors describe a socially-constructed "prescriptive set of normative feminine behaviors" and attributes: these include, amongst others, "beauty, demeanour, marriage and family arrangements, sexuality, and race"<sup>24</sup>. Dominant femininity, the authors argue – as well as the "women who can achieve it" – are "conspicuously valued within mainstream [North] American culture"<sup>25</sup>. Women who meet this ideal fit with patriarchal notions of womanhood, and these "women gain power and status through accommodation to them"<sup>26</sup>. Women and girls who do not appear to meet this ideal "often face social censure", including socio-cultural marginalization<sup>27</sup>.

Socio-cultural expectations of women can be subtle or explicit. Needs assessment participants unanimously commented upon both subtle and explicit patriarchal expectations of womanhood/girlhood in their lives:

<sup>22</sup> Excerpted from: Sexual Assault Centre/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel. May 2012. *Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking–Linking Community Support in Peel: Train the Trainer Manual*. Module 1: The Root Causes of Human Trafficking.

<sup>23</sup> This model and summary thanks to: Sexual Assault Centre/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel. May 2012. *Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking–Linking Community Support in Peel: Train the Trainer Manual*. Module 1: The Root Causes of Human Trafficking.

<sup>24</sup> Cole, Elizabeth R. and Alyssa N. Zucker. 2007. Black and White Women's Perspectives on Femininity. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 13: 1

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

- “[What is expected of a girl?] To be compliant...[and] she has to have the body” (FG participant, October 15, 2013: 21)
- “Flirty, nice, kind...men don’t like women who rebel. They want someone who complies” (FG participant, October 16, 2013: 6)
- “You have to look a certain way, you have to dress a certain way...and if you don’t, if you’re not like that, then I guess you get put down” (FG participant, October 28, 2013: 16)

Racialized young women identified how patriarchal expectations of young women also reproduced stereotypes that marginalized young women of color, and constructed them as different than white women:

- “Some guys are like I don’t date Jamaican [girls], they are too rowdy”
- “I heard so many people say...they don’t date black girls [because] they don’t listen...we are too aggressive” (FG participant, October 15, 2013: 22)

Participants unanimously noted expected standards of feminized sexuality. Young women recognized that being an acceptable or “proper” woman hinged upon narrow, often punitive, expectations of modest dress, behavior and sexual inaccessibility. These expectations of feminized sexuality functioned to differentiate “good” women and girls from other women and girls. Other women and girls who were constructed as sexually available or identifiably sexually active were given a lower social status:

- “You’re taught socially to look down on people who use their body in that way” (FG participant, October 16, 2013: 4)
- “My dad said to me when I was younger, you know the movie *Pretty Woman*? He said this doesn’t happen, this isn’t really [how it is]: once a whore, you’re always a whore” (KI, November 18, 2013: 9)
- “In our school I could say that there are certain girls that we judge, we call them sluts and hoers because they do things that are classified as inappropriate; like things that are classified as not lady like behaviours” (FG participant, December 12, 2013: 5)

Participants were able to identify that socio-cultural expectations were different for females than for males. Participants noted that inequities between males and females were created and maintained by these differing social expectations – that is, that social norms associated with males held more social and political currency than those of females:

- “Guys want...dominance over women, that’s what they get” (FG participant, October 28, 2013: 29)
- “Usually the man is in control because it is expected for a man to be in control, to wear the pants and be in charge in the house – like you need a man and he is expected to pay all the bills and the woman is supposed to stay at home...And if there is a woman who is doing the same things a man would do, you call her a bitch...she isn’t expected to do what a man does” (FG participant, December 12, 2013: 9)
- “When I am around men in general...I feel intimidated, knowing they are stronger and could [do] anything to you. It’s like a survival instinct [when] I go along with them” (KI, November 26, 2013: 5)

Last, participants identified that social norms associated with males resulted in less punitive outcomes for males. This particularly includes gendered sexual norms:

- “If they [boys] have sex with a lot of people, they’re not whores...They’re not anything. But as soon as a girl does something, oh...you’re a whore.” (FG participant, October 28, 2013: 16)

These patriarchal attitudes and perceptions of women serve to create inequities between men and women; as well as inequities and different categories of “women” amongst all populations of women. In these ways, social stigma is produced and reproduced.

Patriarchal attitudes also serve to minimize the harm done to sexual violated women by maintaining and reproducing victim-blaming social misconceptions. These attitudes focus on the woman/victim’s failure to be a “good woman,” highlighting a “woman’s unfeminine actions—for example, intoxication, sexualized behaviour, or simply being unaccompanied in the company of men—in order to substantiate the blamelessness of the assailant”<sup>28</sup>.

These attitudes impact sexually trafficked women by increasing stigma and social isolation, and decreasing community support to them.

### **Commodification of sex and bodies for sexual services and consumerist acceptance of the commodification of sex and bodies**

Over time, women’s bodies have been commodified in many ways. Like patriarchal attitudes about women, commodification serves to create gender, racial and other social inequities. Commodification does so by reducing persons (in this case, women and girls) into purchasable objects.

Historically, enslaved women and children were bought and sold to privileged populations for labour and sexual purposes. In this, commodification reduced women and girls of color into objects to be consumed and owned by white persons; this arrangement was sanctioned by the state<sup>29</sup>. Colonial history in North America and the accompanying “grotesque abuses of slavery” furthermore linked the lives of women of color with a constructed legacy of sexual accessibility, commodification and exploitation<sup>30</sup>.

Women’s bodies, sexual activity and bodies for sexual use have been constructed as purchasable products over many decades. Products take the form of pornography, sex work for pay, and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Today, consumerist acceptance of the commodification of sex and bodies has grown as sex, media and entertainment industries have proven financially lucrative. Women and girls most vulnerable to the *pull* of these economically-fruitful sectors include young women, women with addictions and mental health problems, poor women, and women of color who are impacted by poverty.

Despite expected standards of feminized sexuality and modesty (see section above), women and girls face the contradictory message that women’s sexuality is a commodity that can be used to gain status, attention, power or money.

Needs assessment participants unanimously noted this commodification of sex, particularly the commodification of women’s bodies and women’s sexual services to men:

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<sup>28</sup> Pietsch, N. “I’m Not That Kind of Girl”: White Femininity, the Other and the Legal/Social Sanctioning of Sexual Violence Against Racialized Women. *Women Resisting Rape, special issue. Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme*. November 2010: 137

<sup>29</sup> Hillman, Philipia Lauren. L. *Negotiating the Dominant Script: Middle-Class Black Girls Tell Their Story*. Unpublished diss. Faculty of Arts & Sciences, American University, Washington, DC. 1999

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 13

- “You watch these videos and see girls that are half-naked, right. And then you go online and you post pictures [of yourself] that are half-naked and get like 50 ‘likes’” (FG participant, October 15, 2013: 16)
- “Music is telling you to do this, this and this... Iggy Azalea<sup>31</sup> used to be a stripper. Everyone in the States are strippers.. If you can live with it at the end of the day, then it’s all you. ” (FG participant, October 9, 2013: 3)
- “Girls could be watching a video on YouTube.com and they could watching Juicy J video and see girls naked in every video...Who wouldn’t want to get with Lo when he’s attractive, he’s a rapper, he’s got money...Look at Miley Cyrus and little girls used to look up to her and look at what she’s doing now” (FG participants, October 16, 2013: 5)
- “Guys refer to girls as ‘tings’. I’m going to call your brethren a ‘ting’ [*I’m going to call your brothers a thing*]...girls are not people, they’re like things, objects” (FG participants, October 16, 2013: 7)
- “My friend had done naked pictures, like they had made like a [web]site...with just in her bra and underwear and under a fake name and then they had paid her \$1000... So I was talking about it to a guy friend and he was like ‘oh if I was a girl, the things I would do to make money’ and...I was like yeah” (KI, December 12, 2013: 2)

The commodification of sex and women’s bodies for sexual services is an effective *push factor* related to trafficking for sexual exploitation. This factor impels women towards spaces and employment, such as massage parlours, strip and dance clubs and erotic photography, which increasingly expose them to exploitative or potentially exploitative situations.

### **Inadequate educational and employment opportunities**

While women’s bodies and sexual services are easily utilized for financial gain, other employment opportunities (and educational opportunities that lead to gainful employment) are not as easily accessible to young women.

Statistics Canada agrees, noting that women in nearly all age groups were affected by recent downturns in the labour market, but women aged 15 to 24 were particularly hard hit: their employment rate fell from 60.3% in 2008 to 57.1% in 2009. Further, even though women are more likely than men to go to college or university, they do not necessarily end up with higher employment earnings than men when they enter the job market. In 2005, young women aged 25 to 29 with full-time work over a year’s time were earning 85 cents for each dollar earned by their male counterparts<sup>32</sup>.

Needs assessment participants echoed these concerns:

- “I never got my high school diploma...so I’m thinking how am I going to make money? ...This is as good as it’s going to get. If I can do this [sexual service for pay] then maybe I can make enough money where I won’t have to do it all the time” (KI, December 12, 2013: 8)
- “They [social workers] would say, you did Grade 12, you have enough [education]...but it wasn’t enough. Sorry, we can’t hire you because you’re not qualified. I make more money

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<sup>31</sup> Amethyst Amelia Kelly, better known by her stage name Iggy Azalea, is an Australian recording artist and model from New South Wales, UK.

<sup>32</sup> Statistics Canada. *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report – Paid Work*. Online: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11387-eng.htm>

than these lawyers and these whatevers [providing sexual services for pay], so it gets you to go back 'there' [the sex industry]" (KI, January 18, 2013: 5)

Inadequate opportunities for education, employment and income are a *push factor* related to trafficking for sexual exploitation. Within this context, sex work is "fast" and easier income to young women. For young women additionally marginalized by poverty, transience, lack of community and social supports or drug and alcohol addiction, the *push* into sex work and the critical need for practical resources presents a guaranteed income. At the same time, it also presents an increased exposure to exploitative situations.

### **Vulnerability to violence and the impact of violence on young women**

Sexual violence is a too-common reality in the lives of young women. A 2011 summary on reported crime found that sexual crimes were by far the most common offence against girls<sup>33</sup>. As girls grow older, the imminence of sexual violence remains present in their lives. Young women between the ages of 15 and 25 years are at the highest statistical risk of experiencing gender-based violence – such as sexual or relationship violence – than other populations of women<sup>34</sup>.

Early experiences of violence, sexualized violence, and poor community/family support in the face of violence can have lasting impacts on young women's perceptions of relationships. This includes their expectations of partners, family and friends; and their sense of personal rights in relationships.

Some needs assessment participants reflected on the impacts of violence on their self-worth, relationships, and their capacity to identify and escape later abuse, including situations of trafficking and sexual exploitation:

- "I was 14 at the time. My stepfather was my sexual abuser. You're here trying to protect your family. You know you're family has to be broken up, but you prefer that you are the one that has to be taken out. My worker told me to tell my brother why I was putting my father in jail...That's too much to put on a kid...Stage one [for recovery from violence]...we teach you that you're not on your own. Self-respect, dignity." (KI, January 20, 2014: 7, 8)
- "I told my mom's family [about childhood sexual abuse]. My father started screaming and he said no one had raped me and then they stopped communication [with me]. It really hurts deep down. You would think you were worth more to these people" (KI, November 21, 2013: 5)
- "her pimp...he was like beating her in front of me and I was scared because...the reason I got into drugs or whatever is my brother. [He] used to beat me and abuse me and now here I am just like putting up with [something similar]...I felt so, like I couldn't help her and I let her down" (KI, January 18, 2013: 4)

A participant of Aboriginal descent noted that historical patterns of racial and social marginalization, violence against Aboriginal women and children and trauma informed her experience of being vulnerable to traffickers who were employing women for sexual exploitation:

- "I think that people that have a history of [marginalization] in their family [are vulnerable to trafficking]...The struggle with racism and abuse, it makes more chances for abuse. [for] Aboriginal people, it is a great threat...The more vulnerable someone is, the more they will be targeted. I was on a bus once and I was wearing this clubbing outfit. And this guy [said

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<sup>33</sup> Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Released on February 25, 2013. *Measuring violence against women: Statistical trends*. p. 15

<sup>34</sup> Canadian Women's Foundation, 2012, as cited in *An Exploratory Study Of Women's Safety At The University Of Toronto Mississauga: A Gender-Based Analysis* by Paula DeCoito Ph.D. Social Planning Council of Peel. July 2013, 19.



he] wanted to take me to Amsterdam and he could give me work” (KI, November 21, 2013: 5)

Violence against young women, particularly sexual violence, and its effects is a significant *pull factor* impacting women at-risk of trafficking.

World Health Organization information agrees, noting that sexual victimization can lead to mental health outcomes such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress; and behavioral outcomes such as high-risk behaviour (e.g. unprotected sexual intercourse, early consensual sexual initiation, alcohol and drug abuse) and higher risk of experiencing subsequent sexual violence for women<sup>35</sup>.

### Economic Factors<sup>36</sup>

Factors	Supply	Demand
<i>Economic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wage inequities</li> <li>• Feminization of poverty (systemic gender inequities mean that women represent disproportionate percentages of the world’s poor; and work in lower-paying jobs)</li> <li>• Trafficking: a lucrative business with high monetary returns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demand by employers for cheap labour</li> <li>• Market demands for cheap labour/products</li> <li>• Confinement of women’s labour in customer service, entertainment and domestic spheres</li> <li>• Increased commercialization of sex</li> <li>• Development of policies and practices in wealthier countries that rely on the labour of temporary and migrant workers</li> </ul>

The following is what we heard about **economic factors** impacting women and young women in York region:

#### **Feminization of poverty**

##### **Wage inequities**

##### **Confinement of women’s labour in customer service, entertainment and domestic spheres**

Gender, racial and other social inequities create systemic wage gaps between different populations. In Canada, women make up the majority in all groups that experience poverty (including Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, people of colour, new Canadians, seniors and youth). One-parent led families are especially poor and most of them are led by women<sup>37</sup>.

A number of factors contribute to this reality. In addition to market trends that impact women’s employment opportunities, women’s work is paid less than other sectors of employment. Women are also more likely to be employed part-time; and 67% of all working women are employed in

<sup>35</sup> World Health Organization. 2012. *Understanding and addressing violence against women: Sexual violence*. p. 7. Online: [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77434/1/WHO\\_RHR\\_12.37\\_eng.pdf](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/77434/1/WHO_RHR_12.37_eng.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> This model and summary thanks to: Sexual Assault Centre/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel. May 2012. *Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking—Linking Community Support in Peel: Train the Trainer Manual*. Module 1: The Root Causes of Human Trafficking.

<sup>37</sup> Step It Up! Campaign. 2011. End Poverty Now. Online: <http://stepitupontario.ca/the-10-steps/step-4-end-poverty-now>

lower-paid sectors traditionally held by women such teaching, nursing, clerical or other administrative positions, or sales and service occupations<sup>38</sup>.

Needs assessment participants noted the *push factor* of poverty in human trafficking, and how poverty propels women to seek out a better and more economically-advantaged way of life:

- “I have a really good friend that is an escort and she is 18. She bought herself a car and she has a lot of money, but she’s really messed up. Right now, she lives with these people that kind of brainwash her and tell her school is a waste of time and they convince her that money is the most important thing in the world and it’s an easy income and she’s living that” (FG participant, October 16, 2013: 3-4)
- “I feel like the monetary gains is the biggest factor. When you compare \$11.00/hr. compared to several hundred dollars a night” (FG participant, October 8, 2013: 4)
- “I had a girlfriend and [she became] a stripper and she’d tell me...every time she’s on stage, every song that plays for 3 or 4 minutes, she’s making \$20. So I felt like you could make a lot of money” (KI, December 18, 2013: 19)
- “The money was always the easy part, because you needed the money. You just got in there and did what you gotta do...You don’t want people’s hands on you. You do it anyway because you know you need the money. You just feel like you’re not getting the help you need from social services” (KI, January 20, 2014: 2)

The feminization of poverty is also a *pull factor* related to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. When living in poverty, the things women do to survive financially are more informed by need than by choice. They are forced to make compromises based on need.

In addition, poor women may not have the means to move, leave a job or buy the security they need to get safe. Returning to school to upgrade or train and paying for child care may be out of reach financially. For all these reasons, women who are poor are more likely to be sexually exploited for the purpose of financial or other resources, trafficked, or forced into the sex trade to survive financially. Women also recognized that gender impacted their capacity to earn a wage overall:

- “[I heard that] a woman makes 69 cents to every man’s dollar” (FG participant, October 15, 2013: 21)

Last, needs assessment participants noted that traffickers are *pulled* to the business of sexually trafficking women for realistic economic reasons as well:

- [How are these expectations of boy and or men related to the risk factors that put girls at risk of human trafficking?] I think, to make a lot of money, for guys. Yeah, that’s what people expect [of guys] (FG participant, November 11, 2013: 30)
- “Who wouldn’t want to get with [him] when he’s attractive, he’s a rapper, he’s got money” (FG participant, October 16, 2013: 5)
- “He [the trafficker] could kill me...[and] I’m not the only one working for him, so it’s not like he would lose all sorts of money [if he killed me]” (KI, November 26, 2013: 3)

## Political Factors<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Statistics Canada. *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report – Paid Work*. Online: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11387-eng.htm>

<sup>39</sup> This model and summary thanks to: Sexual Assault Centre/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel. May 2012. *Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking–Linking Community Support in Peel: Train the Trainer Manual*. Module 1: The Root Causes of Human Trafficking.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Supply</b>	<b>Demand</b>
<i>Political (impacting international situations of trafficking; some domestic)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminization of international migration (women seeking a better life)</li> <li>• Civil and military conflicts</li> <li>• Transnational and domestic crime</li> <li>• Inadequate enforcement of the law/criminalization of victims</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unequal and exploitative global political/economic relationships</li> <li>• Underground prostitution in military operations</li> <li>• Weak law enforcement</li> </ul>

There were considerably less political factors identified by young women who participated in the needs assessment than other factors. However, complex political and institutional factors are more likely to be subtle, or obscured beneath other observable or socially-constructed factors (such as economic, individual or social factors).

In addition, needs assessment participants in this study remarked upon political factors impacting domestically-trafficked women and girls only. One participant<sup>40</sup> came to Canada from El Salvador in response to civil war as a child; this migration did not directly inform her experiences of sex work and trafficking as an adult, although it may have had some indirect influence. The needs of internationally-trafficked women, and awareness of related international political factors, did not surface in this study. This may be a reflection of who responded to the needs assessment and who took part in interviews.

The following is what we heard about **political factors** impacting women and young women in York region:

**Inadequate enforcement of the law  
Fear of criminalization of victims**

Sexual assault and other forms of sexualized violence are exceedingly difficult to prove in justice systems<sup>41</sup>. This has an impact on women and girls perceptions of systems meant to support survivors of sexual crimes, including trafficking and sexual exploitation.

The majority of all reported sexual assault cases are simply not resolved through the criminal justice system. According to Statistics Canada, only 6% of all sexual assaults are reported to police (a lower stat than in other crimes). Of the 6% of sexual assaults that are reported, only 40% result in charges being laid<sup>42</sup>. Should a sexual assault case progress through the criminal justice system, much is expected of the survivor and her testimony during the case. Sexual assault prosecutions must prove that sexual consent did not occur between the offender and the victim, or that force or fear was used to obtain consent. This means sexual cases often focus on scrutinizing the victim, her actions, or her reputability as a witness. Unfortunately, this creates opportunities for sexual assault myths to continue to be present and used against victims in cases within the Canadian criminal justice system<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Key Informant, January 20, 2014: 1

<sup>41</sup> Sexual Assault: Dispelling the Myths. Online: <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd/english/resources/publications/dispelling/dispellingthemyth.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Sexual Assault: Dispelling the Myths. Online: <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/owd/english/resources/publications/dispelling/dispellingthemyth.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> The Learning Network. *Overcoming Barriers and Enhancing Supportive Responses: The Research on Sexual Violence Against Women A Resource Document*. May 2012: 17.

When we consider that the majority of sexual assault offenders are known to the victim in some way<sup>44</sup> – and that acquaintances, dates, employers or friends are more likely to use verbal pressure, threats, or mild force during episodes of assault – it becomes clear that sexual assault is difficult to prosecute<sup>45</sup>.

These factors, in addition to socio-cultural expectations of women's sexuality, concerns over confidentiality, and concerns that disclosure could cause safety problems to escalate reveal that sexually-exploited women face many implicit barriers to telling their stories. These concerns are informed by political factors such as ineffective, weak or inconsistent laws and law enforcement.

While there is a "paucity of research on the influence of racist and sexist stereotypes in rape blame attribution", one 2002 study measuring mock jurors' ratings of guilt asked participants to comment on the *presumed guilt of a perpetrator* after reading transcripts depicting a sexual assault case. Here is a summary of some of the findings:

"In the transcripts, the race and ethnicity of the woman and the accused varied, although the details of the case itself did not. Participants rated an Aboriginal accused as significantly *more guilty* than the English or French Canadian accused if the woman was English or French Canadian. More specifically, "participants rated the Native Canadian defendant significantly more guilty than the English or French Canadian defendant if the victim was portrayed as English Canadian or French Canadian. In addition, participants rated the English Canadian defendant as significantly less guilty if the victim was portrayed as Native Canadian rather than French or English Canadian"<sup>46</sup>.

Here, we see how systemic issues of race, gender and class can implicitly impact systems meant to support survivors of sexual violence. The Learning Network's review of sexual assault convictions, in general, notes the following about inconsistent conviction rates:

Sexual assault "cases are very difficult to prosecute successfully. The phrase 'she said/he said' is often used to describe them. Essentially, there are no witnesses other than the victim witness and her account differs from his. Defense strategies focus on discrediting the only witness/the victim"<sup>47</sup>.

Needs assessment participants reflected these thoughts and concerns as *pull factors* that kept women silenced or trapped in situations of sexual exploitation:

- "I think it would be hard to go to the police [if something sexual on Facebook went viral without her consent]. I remember thinking that if you go to the police, everyone is going to know about it. When the whole investigation happens, everyone is going to know what happens and don't want to have everyone find out" (FG participant, October 8, 2013: 5)
- "I don't know if you guys are going to go to the cops. I had drugs and vice come to my house, and not knowing if they were going to get in touch with him. And [if] he were to talk his way out of it, the next time I go to work for him...instead of beating me up he would kill me" (KI, November 26, 2013: 3)

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<sup>44</sup> Statistics Canada, 2003, *The Daily*, 25 July

<sup>45</sup> Hakvag, H. *Does Yes Mean Yes?: Exploring Sexual Coercion in Normative Heterosexuality*. Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme. Volume 28, Number 1. York University Publication: 122

<sup>46</sup> Pietsch, N. "I'm Not That Kind of Girl": White Femininity, the Other and the Legal/Social Sanctioning of Sexual Violence Against Racialized Women. *Women Resisting Rape, special issue*. Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme. November 2010

<sup>47</sup> Deidre Bainbridge, as quoted in The Learning Network newsletter. May 2012. *Few Sexual Assaults Lead to Court Convictions*. p. 2

- “Of course I would want to get out of it. If I needed help, yeah...I would want to know from the police that I am going to be protected from danger. But, I don’t trust them” (FG participant, October 16, 2013: 9)

Women and girls are also aware that social marginalization – for example, being a women of color, being poor, young, or being a sex worker – can impact one’s experiences with systems meant to support survivors of violence -- including that system’s efficacy in protecting them. Marginalized women also share fears of being criminalized:

- “...if I get someone to help me, they’re going to like judge me...because they’re going to think low of me [as a sex worker], you know what I mean?” (KI, December 18, 2013: 5)
- “There was one time when we all had to run [from the massage parlour where sex work was taking place] because the police were coming...You saw the managers run and whatever happened to you, was going to happen to you. The managers told us the police were there. There was a buzzer, so you gotta run for it” (KI, January 20, 2014: 3)
- [a participant talking about cases of sexual explicit “sexts” or photos sent via email by a girl to her boyfriend are then redistributed without the her consent] “For young people today, I think it’s hard for them to go to the police. I think if we think the police...is going to charge a girl as the bad guy” (FG participant, October 8, 2013: 5)

Finally, while there are newer laws related to human trafficking and sexual exploitation in Canada, needs assessment participants did not comment on their awareness or experiences of these laws. This may be due to a lack of awareness or lack of experience of them. It may also be that the concerns raised above appear to operate more significantly as *pull factors* informing human trafficking (i.e. the application of laws, socio-cultural attitudes imbedded in systems and individuals that apply and interpret the laws) than the laws themselves.

### Psycho-Social Factors<sup>48</sup>

Factors	Supply	Demand
<i>Psycho-social needs<sup>49</sup></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of safe living conditions</li> <li>• Lack of support persons (i.e. supportive and reliable family members or friends)</li> <li>• Loss of community or family/family breakdown through historical situations of abuse (i.e. child sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence in the home)</li> <li>• Lack of supportive care professionals/access to care (i.e. medical, counselling, educational guidance, drug and alcohol treatment)</li> <li>• Lack of belonging/acceptance in community or family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camaraderie or community with other sexually trafficked women</li> <li>• Love/”boyfriend” relationship or perceived relationship with trafficker</li> <li>• Family/friend relationship with the trafficker or recruiter</li> <li>• Access to medical attention through the trafficker’s associates</li> <li>• Access to drugs and alcohol through the trafficker and his associates/acceptance of substance use practices by the trafficker and his associates</li> <li>• Acceptance and belonging with the trafficker/associates/other trafficked victims</li> </ul>

<sup>48</sup> This model and summary thanks to: Sexual Assault Centre/Rape Crisis Centre of Peel. May 2012. *Breaking the Chains of Human Trafficking–Linking Community Support in Peel: Train the Trainer Manual*. Module 1: The Root Causes of Human Trafficking.

<sup>49</sup> Some of the information in this row of the table thanks to: World Health Organization. 2012. *Assessing mental health and psychosocial needs and resources: toolkit for humanitarian settings*, 26.

*Psycho-social* refers to the interrelation of social factors and the individual. Psycho-social needs include things like safety, belonging, biological needs, and becoming the person you want to be<sup>50</sup>.

There were considerable more psycho-social factors identified by young women who participated in the needs assessment *than any other factors* (the next closest, in this author's opinion, was socio-cultural factors). This is a significant outcome of the Project's needs assessment and the GBA+ analysis. It presents opportunities in York region, as well as challenges. (These possibilities will be discussed in more length under Recommendations).

The following is what we heard about **psycho-social factors** impacting women and young women in York region:

### **Lack of safety**

Women noted that isolation, fear for their safety and a lack of safety functioned as *pull factors* which kept them from escaping situations of trafficking.

- "They [recruiters] were like don't ever say you're going to call the police again. So I was feeling nervous about doing it. They were like you're [trafficker's] your boyfriend now and you're working for me" (KI, December 18, 2013: 3)
- "I know many girls that have been killed in this industry. There are people that look at you like you're just at the bottom of the barrel. She's from the streets, who cares" (KI, January 20, 2014: 8)

### **Lack of support persons (i.e. supportive and reliable family members or friends) Loss of community or family/family breakdown through historical situations of abuse (i.e. child sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence in the home)**

Needs assessment participants unanimously commented upon the need for family, friends and community supports in women and girls' lives. Key informants and their experiential stories supported this.

They understood lack of family and community support to be a significant *push factor*, which impelled young women into high-risk employment (such as sex work or selling illegal drugs), risk-taking behavior (such as drug use and unsafe sex), abusive relationships and situations of exploitation. They also spoke of these factors as *pull factors*, which kept marginalized women isolated in exploitative situations:

- [Based on like your experiences and your observations, what do you think trafficked women need from their community?] "They need someone there for them ...Appreciation...Self-respect...Or even if it isn't just like family, like, help to, I don't know, guidance, to be able to make like, better decisions, healthier decisions" (FG participants, October 28, 2013: 5)
- "I kind of tried to lean on my own family and they're Christians and you think they're going to help you out...I felt like an outcast, like I don't belong...later I felt like the loyalty of people in the massage parlours were like my family" (KI, January 20, 2014: 5)
- "For example, say your dad is an alcoholic maybe he is abusive verbally and physically. So maybe that doesn't motivate you to do better and maybe it may motivate you to...go to the club, hook up with a guy, do something bad. Because you have no motivation because your family is not there for you, so you feel like you need someone else. Someone to be

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<sup>50</sup> Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Summary. Online: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's\\_hierarchy\\_of\\_needs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs)

there for you and you choose the wrong person because your vulnerable” (FG participant, October 15, 2013: 7)

- “[some] people are in so deep that it's so hard for them to get out” (FG participant, October 28, 2013: 5)

Needs assessment participants noted how patterns of social marginalization, lack of community and at-risk behavior contributed to additional experiences of social marginalization and isolation for sexually-exploited women. Lack of psycho-social support lead to further vulnerability and exploitation:

- [Participant discussing her relationship with a friend who has been sexually exploited for sexual purposes since age 12]: “She had family problems. She didn't have the proper support [for] life problems, and me and [my friend] cut her off. Like every time she called me, we wouldn't answer because she always wanted us to come down to see her. And we told her No. We're not seeing you, because...you need to get your shit together...And there's people looking for you, and I don't want to get involved with it. And she's like 'Yeah you guys hate me...And that's not the case at all” (FG participants, October 28, 2013: 12)
- “I worked with a teen at my last job...she was part of a prostitution ring... Her Dad passed away [and] her Mom treats her like crap. She was such a great person and so stuck in those ways and thinking that was the only way...I think at the end of the day she just wants to be loved. Now she's actually in her early 30s and she has been exploited in every relationship she's been in” (FG participants, October 8, 2013: 3)
- “My boyfriend was totally into the webcams, nude photos...you think that's all your fault...I feel ashamed of myself” (KI, November 21, 2013: 4)

The experience of sexual violence functioned as *pull factors* in these women's lives, constructing both a negative sense of self and disorganized expectations of others in subsequent relationships. They also functioned to keep women isolated and trapped in self-blame and abusive situations.

**Love/”boyfriend” relationship or perceived relationship with trafficker  
Family/friend relationship with the trafficker or recruiter  
Camaraderie or community with other sexually trafficked women**

Needs assessment participants unanimously commented upon the trafficker or recruiter himself/herself, as a *pull factor* to young women who feel isolated, abandoned or alone:

- “Anyone could be a trafficker. Like even women...persuading other women...that connection...it's almost like, playing that mother or sisterly role instead of the boyfriend role...Yeah. Like, 'it's ok, like I've been there, or I know lots of people” (FG participants, October 28, 2013: 20)
- “I prostituted myself for you [the trafficker/”boyfriend”] and for me it was to get money and like I'd been trying to support him for so long! I thought I was in love with him and I was wrong, he was just a user and they were just all users” (KI, December 18, 2013: 4)
- [reflecting on a friend's experience, who was also sexually-trafficked]: “My friend, she's doing it and she's just like whatever, this guy said he was going to marry me and love me. And then he took all the money and I'm like well that's what happens, that's what happened to me” (KI, December 18, 2013: 5)

This highlights the vulnerability of women and girls who have experienced family breakdown, have fled situations of abuse at home, or who have lost connections to family or community through child protection orders and plans meant to protect them.

Certainly, the need for social and community connection is significant. Numerous social studies have indicated that social rejection, including loneliness, oppression and social stigma have an impact on human outcomes ranging from mental health to physical health, including decreased immune system functioning, increased white blood cell count and high blood pressure and mortality<sup>51</sup>. A sense of social inclusion or community is an integral human priority. One research study notes that “magnetic resonance imaging scans showed that the experience of being [socially] snubbed lit up a part of the subjects’ brains (the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex) that also lights up when the body feels physical pain”<sup>52</sup>.

In the needs assessment, women agreed that community was important. Many noted how connections to other sex-working or exploited women created a community in the absence of other supportive family and friends.

- “I was there [massage parlour] for a long time...I built a bond with the girls. I felt protected. It was like a family to me...You go with girls that you know” (KI, January 20, 2014: 3-4)
- “I’m kind of feeling the impulse to move on and let her [female friend connected to the trafficker] go but...I’m forcing myself to let her go, I’m finding out that she’s setting me up but I’m wanting to hold onto her specifically. Because I love her...I miss her friendship. But I’m moving on, like I’ve found a new friend in the school that I can open up with and it all takes time, it’s just starting fresh, it’s hard to start fresh” (KI, December 18, 2013: 14)

### **Access to drugs and alcohol through the trafficker and his associates**

#### **Acceptance of substance use practices by the trafficker and his associates**

Key informants also noted where substance use impelled them towards a relationship with a trafficker, or forced them to remain in sexually exploitative situations.

Traffickers utilized women’s poverty, social marginalization, and addictions in order to forge a relationship, enforce their compliance, and coerce them to continue in exploitative situations.

- “I went to pick up [drugs]. I asked a guy down there and he introduced me to him [the trafficker]...he gave me a lot of drugs for super cheap and [I was thinking] like this is a friend I would want to have sort of thing...He said I can make you a star, I can make a lot of money off of this...I didn’t go to the assumption that he wanted to pimp me out. I just thought I would pick up [drugs] and I would avoid working for him but it didn’t work like that” (KI, November 26, 2013: 2-3)
- “I was desperate and I wanted him [boyfriend, who was also a trafficker] to stay and I wanted money. And I thought I could do it just one time [sexual service] and get a bunch of money...they promised me, they said they would give me all the meth and all the drugs that I wanted if I did it” (KI, December 18, 2013: 2)
- “They were giving me drugs and brought me clothes and stuff, and their other friends were there...all in the hotel room” (KI, December 18, 2013: 3)
- “I remember thinking: this really sucks, like having nowhere to go and not having money, and really, you need money for everything. I can’t get anything without money or selling myself ...for drugs or whatever...Guys kind of force you to do it, you know what I mean?” (KI, December 18, 2013: 8)

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<sup>51</sup> Shulevitz, J. 2013. The Science of Loneliness. *New Republic Magazine*. Online: <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/113176/science-loneliness-how-isolation-can-kill-you>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.



Key informants noted that psycho-social needs -- such as a need for connection, community, acceptance, basic needs and emotional safety – were continuous in women and girls lives, thereby making practical concerns like finding safe living conditions and dealing with addictions more complex. Often, women who were socially marginalized or isolated opted to maintain a connection with exploitative persons because no other alternatives were present.

While psycho-social needs are complex, the social service sector offers competencies in its programming and services (i.e. counselling, youth services, drop-in programs) that can address them. In addition, addressing psycho-social needs can be useful as a preventative measure in the lives of at-risk girls and women.

## **Recommendations: Needs Assessment Participants**

**Socio-cultural:** *Address and challenge sexist expectations of girls and girls sexuality (in the media, in schools) (FG Participant, October 9, 2013)*

- “Teach girls not to see themselves as objects. See yourself as a good person” (KI, November 21, 2013: 2)

**Psycho-social:** *A community that cares (FG Participant, December 12, 2013)*

- Teach about sexual exploitation in sexual education classes (FG Participant, October 8, 2013: 7)
- “Personal counselling...[or] a counselling group” (FG Participant, October 15, 2013: 29)
- “A safe place to go. I don’t need to spill [my] entire story. A drop in place that is safe” (KI, November 26, 2013: 4)
- Include sexual abuse and exploitation (what it is) in sexual education classes for girls (FG Participant, October 16, 2013)
- “A survivor needs to be reminded that she is strong” (KI, November 21, 2013: 5)
- “I’d need to know that there’s a future for me” (FG Participant, October 16, 2013: 8)
- “Non-judgemental support. Someone to talk to” (KI, December 18, 2013: 10)
- “Someone helps to empower you. So you don’t feel like you’re alone all the time” (KI, January 20, 2014: 7)

**Economic/Practical:** *Practical assistance (food, shelter, income) when a young person is in a crisis (FG Participant, October 9, 2013)*

- “If someone is in those situations where they got kicked out of their house they might turn to someone who has a home....this guy told me if I slept with him he would let me stay with him. It got me thinking some people just don’t have the resources” (FG Participant, October 15, 2013: 29)
- “[shelter] if they are on the streets if that are in a situation they can’t get out of (FG Participant, October 15, 2013: 29)

**Other: Outreach and community awareness:** *Outreach is important (FG Participant, October 8, 2013: 7)*

- “I’d want education about the programs I could go...to know my options, so providing options so they have alternatives. When you are young you think you have no options, [and there is] no way out” (FG Participant, October 15, 2013: 29)
- “That card, I still have the card, I kept it....And then when I worked at Howard Johnson or whatever and I found they had human trafficking [information] there, pamphlets or whatever in the office, and it made me think about it too” (KI, December 18, 2013: 18)

## **Gender-Based Analysis+: Additional Recommendations**

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In order to address the root causes of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, it is wise for the Project to address recommendations that relate to a variety of contributing *push* and *pull* factors.

This GBA+ analysis also notes the following:

### **There were considerable **psycho-social factors** identified by young women who participated in the needs assessment (more than other factors).**

- Psycho-social needs often complicated women's ability to or willingness to access practical supports (A psycho-social priority/action might accompany an economic/practical priority action)
- Social service agencies have existing services and programs that address psycho-social needs; and competencies in delivering services to marginalized populations in accessible ways. These competencies could be built upon in the Project's next steps
- Examples of programs, services and activities that address psycho-social factors for sexually-trafficked women:
  - Training for professionals on challenging sexual assault myths and reducing stigma
  - Tips/training on responding to disclosures of sexual exploitation
  - Training for professionals on creating a welcoming space for sex workers and sexually-exploited women
  - Inter-agency protocols, guidelines and best practices that intentionally consider psycho-social needs, and ensure appropriate responses by service providers to trafficked girls and women
  - Drop-in/group/safe space support for marginalized women and girls
  - Drop-in/walk-in counselling for women engaged in sex work
  - Outreach material in clear, accessible language that is non-judgemental and welcoming to sexually exploited women

### **There were considerable **socio-cultural factors** identified by young women who participated in the needs assessment.**

- Young at-risk women identified a few concrete ideas in Recommendations, above, that involve skill-building and increased information for young women
- Some social service agencies, advocacy groups and women's organizations have strong competencies in providing educational programs and services that challenge socio-cultural factors (i.e. sexism, racism, systemic inequities, patriarchal expectations of women and girls) already. These competencies could be built upon in the Project's next steps
- Examples of programs, services and activities that address socio-cultural factors for sexually-trafficked women:
  - Inter-agency protocols, guidelines and best practices that consider socio-cultural expectations of women and girls and intentionally challenge these; and ensure appropriate responses by service providers to trafficked girls and women
  - Drop-in/group/safe space support for marginalized women and girls
  - Include activities that critiques patriarchal expectations of women and girls, and encourages consciousness-raising
  - Include discussion that critiques patriarchal expectations of women and girls, and encourages consciousness-raising
  - Ask young women what they want to learn more about (engage their expertise)

- Sexual education, including information on sexual violence and exploitation
- Sexual education that challenges patriarchal expectations of women and girls' sexuality
- Educational and positive skill-building workshops for sexually violated women/at-risk young women
- Training for professionals on challenging sexual assault myths and reducing the stigma of sexual violation
- Training for professionals on creating a welcoming space for sex workers and sexually-exploited women

**There were considerable practical/economic factors identified by at-risk young women who participated in the needs assessment.**

- Practical and economic priorities/actions can include identifying *where and how* to access supports
- Practical and economic priorities/actions can include *targeted outreach and outreach materials* on how to access supports
- Outreach strategies targeting marginalized women and girls, including sexually trafficked women and girls and sex-trade workers, are appreciated by at-risk and experiential women in York Region
- Examples of programs, services and activities that address economic/practical factors for sexually-trafficked women:
  - Emergency shelter and practical assistance
  - A fund for emergency assistance such as clothes, hygiene and transportation
  - Targeted outreach on how to access emergency shelter and practical assistance
  - Transitional/subsidized housing: can trafficked women apply for these programs? Do they meet criteria for accelerated wait-lists, as do women fleeing domestic violence?
  - Case management/collaboration between social services to meet complex needs
  - Consider ways to audit local social services for ease-of-access to marginalized women (are these services non-judgemental, welcoming and accessible?)
  - Training and educational programs for marginalized women
  - Inter-agency protocols, guidelines and best practices that acknowledge the economic inequities impacting women and girls; and ensure appropriate responses by service providers with these considerations in mind
- Remember that psycho-social needs can complicate women's ability to or willingness to access practical supports (A psycho-social priority/action might accompany an economic/practical priority action)

## Appendix I Needs Assessment Interview Questions

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### Questions for One-to-One Key Informant (Experiential) Interviewees/Focus Group Experiential Participants:

A1 Please tell me a bit about yourself (prompt: where are you originally from?)

B1 Where have you lived in the last 3 years? What brought you to York Region? (Explore transience; moves, including homelessness, stays at shelter and issues related to underhousing. Explore patterns of travel, i.e. urban, rural, motivations for moving)

C1 What concerns or problems did you raise (talk about) when you accessed services? (Explore imminent needs, identified needs, motivation for accessing support, and systemic issues affecting the interviewee).

Examples may include:

- Sexual exploitations
  - Abusive situation
  - Historical abuse (for example, exposure to violence as a child or young woman)
  - Sexual violence
  - Lack of economic support
  - Coming into conflict with the law
  - Information on my legal rights
  - Drug and alcohol misuse
  - Managing emotions
  - Strategies for coping
  - Discrimination based on race, sexual orientation or gender self-identification, or disability
  - Involvement with Children's Aid Society
  - Referral to other community services
  - Other
- 
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D1 Feeling safe means feelings of comfort, being protected, and feeling in control of your own life. What, if anything, *helped you to feel safe* throughout your trafficking experiences? Examples may include: talking to friends, support from family, having my own money, or having a safe place to stay the night. Please share as many as you want.

E1 Feeling unsafe means feelings of being in danger. What, if anything, made you feel *not safe* throughout your experiences? Examples may include: having little or no support people, being financially dependent on another person, isolation, having no income, or feeling that you lack options. Please share as many as you want.

F1 What made it hard for you to reach out for help? Please include practical concerns (i.e. no childcare, isolation, poverty, fear of getting into trouble with the law) as well as emotional concerns (i.e. shame, fear of not being believed).

G1 Take a moment to consider a service that was helpful to you when you reached out for support. What was most helpful about that particular organization, service or staff? (What did staff do/raise/say; how did they approach you; how did the organization/staff make you feel)

H1 Take a moment to consider a service that was less helpful to you when you reached out for support. What was most helpful about that particular organization, service or staff? (What did staff do/raise/say; how did they approach you; how did the organization/staff make you feel)

I1 What made it possible for you to escape/consider to leave the trafficking situation?

J1 What are some things that have helped you survive in difficult times (in the trafficked situation and up until today)?

K1 In your opinion, what are the most important things that a trafficked woman needs from her community? Please feel free to include emotional concerns (i.e. being believed, someone to talk to, social support) as well as practical concerns (i.e. housing, income).

L1 Based on your experiences and observations, which women are most vulnerable to being trafficked in York Region? For example, what is their age range, their background; who is their support system; what is their personal history?

M1 Based on your experiences and observations, what role does social media play in human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in York Region? (How is it used by johns, traffickers, women, other groups?)

N1 Please take a moment to think back on your experiences when you were just beginning to seek support for your situation. If you were to offer advice to the community, including helping professionals (i.e. counsellor, doctor, police officer), in order to help them support other trafficked women, what kind of things would you tell them?

Questions for One-to-One Key Informant (“At-risk”) Interviewees/Focus Group “At-risk” Participants:

A1 Please tell me a bit about yourself (prompt: where are you originally from, what is your background?)

B1 Please tell me a bit about the important people in your life. For example, this might include your family, friends, boyfriend, counsellor, or others. (Explore support system and vulnerabilities).

C1 Where have you lived in the last 3 years? What brought you to York Region? (Explore transience; moves, including homelessness, stays at shelter and issues related to underhousing. Explore patterns of travel, i.e. urban, rural, motivations for moving)

D1 What are some things that have helped you survive difficult times in your life?

E1 As you know, this interview/focus group is about sexual exploitation in York Region.

Sometimes women and girls choose to offer up sexual activity to men they know, in exchange for things that they really need – for example, a place to stay, cash, alcohol, or a ride home. In your opinion, does this happen in York Region?

If yes, what sort of things are the women/girls seeking (what do they need)?

F1 Do you know of a girl/woman who has been through that kind of a situation [offering sexual services for money, housing, etc.]? If yes, can you share a little about her story? Please tell as much or as little as you want (to respect her privacy, do not use her real name).

G1 [You will have to define human trafficking and CSE before asking the question: insert definitions here].

Based on your experiences, what makes a woman/girl vulnerable to being trafficked in York Region?

H1 In your opinion, are these vulnerabilities present in your community (i.e. in your age group; in your cultural community; in your group home; in your circle of friends; etc.)

I1 What is a healthy relationship to you? What does a respectful partner look like/act like to you?

J1 In your opinion, who is leading (doing) the trafficking in York region? How does this person appeal to/get close to girls?

K1 Based on your experiences and observations, what role does social media play in human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in York Region? (How is it used by johns, traffickers, women, other groups?)

L1 If you knew a girl/woman that looked to be getting close with a bad guy, what kinds of things would you say to her?

M1 What, in your opinion, might help her to prevent or get out of the situation?

Please include emotional supports (i.e. friends, support people, someone to talk to) as well as practical supports (i.e. her own income, a place to stay, getting clean from drug use).

N1 If you were to offer advice to your community [including helping professionals (i.e. counsellor, doctor, police officer)] in order to help prevent a woman/girl from being trafficked, what kind of things would you suggest?

**Appendix II**  
**Needs Assessment: Consultation with Project Staff (December 2013)**

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*WSN Meeting*

*December 2013*

*Present: Loren Delaney and Ashley Nicholls*

*Facilitator/Recorder: Nicole Pietsch*

1. How many interviews/FGs were you able to complete? How do you feel about them (how'd it go?)
  - About 50 participants in interviews and Focus Groups
  - More took part in groups than in one-to-one interviews
  - Groups had about 4-7 participants in each
  - Women mostly identified experiences with:
    - At-risk situations (luring, tactics used by others to motivate women and girls to get involved in sex work, at-risk/vulnerable circumstances that could lead to trafficking)
    - Recruitment
    - Engaging in sex work for survival (i.e. to fund basic needs such as food and shelter)
  
2. Can you share a bit about the social location of the girls and women you spoke with? Age, ethnicity, background?
  - See transcripts for details
  - All participants were 29 and under (at-risk and trafficked women)
  - Socioeconomic class affected almost all women who participated (i.e. living in poverty or with very limited income)
  
3. Did the women and girls share a little about their personal backgrounds (i.e. family supports, personal supports)?  
Many participants identified:
  - Lack of support (emotional, financial) from family
  - Childhood neglect
  - Absent parents
  - Advisory and key informant interviews identified childhood abuse, including sexual abuse
  
4. Did women talk about transience; moves, including homelessness, stays at shelter and issues related to under housing; patterns of travel, i.e. urban, rural, motivations for moving?
  - Yes. Many young women identified having moved around a lot
  - Most living with a variety of different relatives as they grew up
  - Some lived with friends/other single women as young adults
  
5. What services are these women accessing? Did they positive or negative experiences with services? What were their experiences with services?
  - Sutton youth shelter
  - 360 Youth Services
  - Ontario Works
  - Addictions counsellor



- Mental health worker
  - Counsellors for women/youth
  - Drop-in Centre
6. What made it hard for women to reach out for help? This might include practical concerns (i.e. no childcare, isolation, poverty, fear of getting into trouble with the law) as well as emotional concerns (i.e. shame, fear of not being believed).
- Being homeless/having a consistent place to stay is very important. When you have no consistent home, everything else (having a job, going to school, having income) is much more complicated
  - Survivors of HT/at-risk women want options – not to be told, what to do
  - Services ought to be prepared and available to trafficked/at-risk women. When the women are ready, she will approach the service. But the service needs to be aware of HT and its related concerns. If the service provider is not prepared, the women may be deterred from coming back for support
  - Women mostly wanted to know their rights
  - What services are available? How does she access them easily?
7. What needs did they identify (from service providers, from their community, etc.?)  
As above, and:
- Fear of police/being criminalized
  - Lack of trust
  - Fear of loss of control once she engages the support of service providers
  - Fear that “things will get worse” if helpers are involved
  - Fear of victim-blame (many women experienced blame in the past)
8. For your team, what have been the challenges of interviewing/reaching these women?
- Youth were not used to being consulted on their needs – this was an innovative process for them
  - It was a challenge for them to conceptualize what they wanted from service providers (never been asked the question before)
  - Service providers ought to ask youth/at-risk young women what they need – it is a good starting point

Additional concerns:

- Young women themselves engaged in victim-blaming of other sex-working and trafficked women
- They use sexual violence myths and negative constructs of sexualized women to differentiate between other women and girls and the self (distancing self from the stigma of sex work, “survival sex”, victimization and trafficking)
- Both males and females participate in digital violence and sexually exploitative activities because these are normalized and minimized
- Many young women wanted to talk about power and control in relationships, and what does an equal relationship look like
- This is relevant to their relationships with men who buy sexual services, recruiters, potential recruiters and traffickers
- Systemic concerns for young women are prevalent and put them at risk:
- Engaging in “survival sex” for funds for basic needs

- What work is available to young women? Can they survive on the pay from these jobs?
  - This affects women's "choices" (options that are available and viable)
  - Sex work provides financial or other resources; but it also means that young women engaging in it are at-risk/vulnerable to exploitative johns, "boyfriends" and other exploitative support people
9. What work is coming up next?
- The research period is extended until the end of January 2014
  - The team aims to engage youth through different service providers in York Region
  - A training/activities to raise awareness of HT for York professionals will occur
  - A January event (Jan 22) will focus on First Nations communities in York regio
10. Can a get a copy of your interview notes/summary?
- Yes. (Nicole to email Loren for e-copy)
11. Is there anything you need next from me?
- Nicole will consider being on the educational panel in the new year (will email some information to Loren on HT and First Nations populations)
  - Stats/information on systemic issues impacting vulnerable women

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