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SOCIAL PLANNING

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HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES:

A Research Project with Street-Involved Aboriginal Youth

Submitted to the Aboriginal Justice Directorate
Department of Justice Canada

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HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES:

A Research Project with Street-Involved Aboriginal Youth

Executive Summary

The following proposal is for a six month research project to be completed by the Edmonton Social Planning Council. The focus of the research is to identify ways to reduce the number of Aboriginal youth who are getting involved in street prostitution. A project advisory committee will be established with representatives of the Aboriginal community, including some who have been involved in street life. Aboriginal people will be contracted to conduct the research. A series of interviews, surveys and focus groups will be utilized to gather data.

The research will seek answers to the following questions:

1. When Aboriginal youth have been identified as "at risk", what factors influence their future "success" or "failure"? How can youth at risk be encouraged to make positive choices?
2. What interventions, at what point in their lives, can prevent Aboriginal youth from drifting into street life? What alternatives are available to these youth? What will make healthier alternatives more attractive to Aboriginal youth?
3. Once Aboriginal youth have become street involved, what assistance or support do they need to change their lifestyle?
4. Given the correlation between dropping out of school and street involvement, what factors stand in the way of Aboriginal youth completing school? What factors lead Aboriginal youth to complete high school and continue their education? How can the positive factors be enhanced and the negative factors reduced?

Aboriginal youth and adults are over-represented in Canada's justice system. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that involvement at a young age in a street lifestyle is one of the factors leading to a long term association with police, the courts and the prison system. Intervention to reduce street involvement, therefore, should help to reduce the number of Aboriginal people who come into conflict with the law.

Research on street prostitutes identifies common histories involving poverty, child abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, family breakdown and other negative factors which lead to street involvement. Recent studies demonstrate the need for a proactive approach to address these concerns within the Aboriginal community. This includes reports from the justice system, social services, health and inner city organizations, as well as material specific to Aboriginal people in western Canada.

While many of these reports identify a need for positive alternatives, they do not identify what those alternatives should be. The history and lifestyle of the young people involved requires that innovative approaches be developed in order to have a long term impact. The study being proposed will identify effective prevention approaches which can be implemented throughout the prairie provinces.

Description of the Organization

Background

The Edmonton Social Planning Council was founded in 1940. During the past 53 years, the organization has changed and grown, but remained faithful to the goals of improved human services and a healthy community.

The Council has played an important role in the establishment of many community service agencies in Edmonton. These include such varied organizations as the Christmas Bureau, the United Way of Edmonton and Area, the Boyle Street Co-op, the Sexual Assault Centre, and others.

Many of Alberta's leading citizens have close ties with the Council. Mayor Jan Reimer sat as a Board member during the 1970's. Former alderman and current Alberta Official Opposition deputy leader Bettie Hewes was a Board member and Executive Director of the Council. Former provincial treasurer Lou Hyndman was Board President, and current alderman Michael Phair was Board President from 1990 to 1992.

In recent years, the Council has played a large role in facilitating inter-agency collaboration and more efficient and effective program delivery. The Council's various organizational development publications and programs have assisted numerous organizations to work better together and to improve their own functioning. In the Spring of 1993, the Council hosted a major conference, *Meeting the Challenges of the 90's*, designed to help agencies accommodate to the reality of shrinking budgets through mergers and other forms of resource sharing. Currently, the Council is working with the Police Commission Task Force on Inner City Crime to implement a collaborative model for service improvement to Aboriginal people.

Throughout its history, the Council has been supportive of self-help initiatives of various kinds. It is the organization's conviction that solutions to social problems can be effective only to the extent that they involve the people affected by those problems, empowering them to design and implement structures and services which can help them to overcome barriers to independence and personal fulfillment. For example, the Council is working on a major initiative to develop a self help organization for street prostitutes.

For the past eleven years, the Edmonton Social Planning Council has published the bi-monthly *First Reading*, Alberta's only social issues magazine, as well as the occasional social-demographic factsheets *Alberta Facts* and *Edmonton Facts*. Annually, the organization publishes *Tracking the Trends*, a comprehensive socio-demographic report on the metropolitan Edmonton region.

The Edmonton Social Planning Council was a charter member of the United Way of Edmonton and Area, and retains membership in the Canadian Council on Social Development. We are represented on the national steering committee of the new National Consortium of Voluntary Social Planning Organizations, as well as holding many other more specialized local, provincial and national affiliations.

Mandate

The mission of the Edmonton Social Planning Council is as follows:

"The Edmonton Social Planning Council believes that all people should have the social rights and freedoms to live and work in an environment that enhances individual, family and community growth without restricting the same rights and freedoms for others. The Council seeks to create, advocate, and support changes in policies, attitudes and actions in order to enhance these social rights and freedoms."

Membership

The Edmonton Social Planning Council has 400 paid members, including 97 organizational memberships. Membership is \$25. per annum for individuals and \$45. for organizations.

Membership has grown approximately 30% in the past two years.

Activities

Currently, the Edmonton Social Planning Council has several priority areas. These include: improving the circumstances of urban Aboriginal people, promoting economic independence for low income people, ensuring human services are accessible to an increasingly diverse society, and addressing substance abuse among disadvantaged people.

Of greatest relevance to this proposal is the *Street Prostitution Project*, sponsored by Alberta Region Health Promotion and Social Development, the Government of Canada. The project is essentially a needs assessment of adult street prostitutes in Edmonton. The preliminary findings from this project help to substantiate the need for the research proposed here.

We are involved in a number of other major projects at present. These include:

- *Helping Inner City Families Conquer Substance Abuse*, a two year project funded by the Alberta Family Life and Substance Abuse Foundation. Its goal is to build natural support networks which can provide a healthy alternative to street life while not creating dependency upon professionals.
- *Children and Families Initiative*, a multi-sectoral project to develop consensus on the most effective ways to reduce child and family poverty, and to direct funding resources to those priority areas. Funded by the United Way and the City of Edmonton.
- *Trend to Temporary and Casual Labour*, a research project designed to assess the quantitative shift to temporary and casual work, and document the qualitative impact on workers and families affected by labour force changes. Funded by National Health and Welfare.
- *Workplace Multicultural Training Manual*, a manual to assist organizations become accessible to and supportive of a changing workforce. Funded by the Government of Canada, Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship.

- *The Other Welfare Manual* and *The Other Child Welfare Manual*, two users' guides to these government support systems. Funded by the Muttart Foundation and the Wild Rose Foundation respectively.

The Council is involved in a number of other projects and regular activities. For information on these activities, refer to our Annual Reports for the calendar years 1991 and 1992.

Why The Council Should Be The Sponsor Of This Project

The Edmonton Social Planning Council has been working extensively on issues relating to prostitution and the inner city for the past two years. Apart from the projects mentioned above, the Council retains membership on many joint committees dealing with these issues, including the Mayor's Task Force on Prostitution, the Police Commission Inner City Violent Crime Task Force, the Urban Core Support Network, the Child Poverty Action Group, and others.

The Council has established links with the Aboriginal community in Edmonton, both through the involvement of Aboriginal members of the board and through projects such as those listed above. We believe in the importance of self-determination. The projects we have been involved in, including the one proposed here, are designed to provide the technical experience and expertise which will facilitate a process, enabling the Aboriginal community to develop their own solutions to problems which they have identified.

As noted above, the Council has over fifty years of experience in developing and 'spinning off' innovative services. In fact, few of Edmonton's leading human service organizations were established independently of the Council.

Background to the Proposal

Over the past ten years, the issue of prostitution has received much attention from the media, various levels of government and government departments and community residents and agencies in most major Canadian cities. A number of common themes stand out in all the available literature:

1. Street prostitution is a poverty-related issue, i.e. women who sell sex do so for survival, not because they enjoy the activity.
2. Most street prostitutes come from dysfunctional families which may have involved physical abuse, sexual abuse, or substance abuse, and sometimes all three. Many have also had previous involvement with child welfare or the juvenile justice system.
3. Street prostitution is not a victimless crime. As the above point indicates, most sex-trade workers are victims themselves. Also, people residing in the communities where they work become victims as they are harassed on the street by "johns", pimps, and sometimes prostitutes, when used condoms are left on the ground, and through the increased drug use and crime in the community.
4. Particularly in the prairie provinces, there is an over-representation of young aboriginal women among the street population.
5. Most street prostitutes get involved in the trade at an early age, usually when they are 14 to 16 years old.

Many projects have been developed to look at how these concerns can be addressed. There have also been numerous studies completed to examine the reasons why Aboriginal people are over-represented in the justice system and child welfare. Data gleaned from some of the relevant reports provides an appropriate background to this proposal.

In 1985, the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, established by the Government of Canada in 1983, tabled its report. The committee held hearings across Canada in addition to conducting research on legal aspects and international comparisons. Its findings indicate that people who get involved in prostitution have relatively low levels of education and few job-related skills, making them less competitive in the job market. The report suggests that the difference between prostitutes and other people with similar backgrounds may be "that prostitutes already know someone in the business who encourages them and who can facilitate their entry."¹

As a result of the report, Bill C-49 was introduced and adopted by Parliament. In 1990, the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General completed its three year review of Section 213. They found, among other things, that the anti-solicitation laws are very expensive to enforce (Toronto police spent \$4.5 million in 1988) but had little impact on the incidence of street prostitution.²

Two studies, one in Alberta and a second in Manitoba, examined issues around juvenile prostitution. In Alberta, it was estimated that 75-80% of juvenile prostitutes were female, up to 80% had previous experience with the child welfare system, 30% were of Aboriginal ancestry, and most had run away from home or a government facility (including foster care, group homes, institutions, etc.). The most commonly cited reason juveniles engage in prostitution is financial need and lack of alternative means of survival. Once a child has become street involved, it can be very difficult to break away:

"a child's self concept and self esteem have been beaten down by her experiences on the street as well as in her home environment. Children who've engaged in prostitution are labeled as deviants, as outsiders according to social values and norms. Children tend to internalize this concept of themselves and consequently may have little hope or confidence that they can succeed in the straight world. ... Leaving the streets is also difficult because it means being cut off from the support and acceptance of street peers, the only source of a sense of belonging in the lives of these children."³

The Manitoba study involved in-depth interviews with 45 juvenile prostitutes and 37 non-prostitutes who were comparable in age, race and family socioeconomic status. This study population was quite similar to the one described in Alberta. One major difference between those involved and those not involved in prostitution was the number who left home, either voluntarily or because they were forced out, and became homeless. These youth generally drifted to the inner city and turned to prostitution for survival. The author concluded that early intervention programs to keep youth at home, combined with appropriate services for those who must leave, could reduce the incidence of juvenile prostitution.⁴

Two more recent efforts to address the issue of street prostitution have been the Action Group on Prostitution convened in Edmonton in 1992 and the National Meeting on Prostitution in Canada, held in Calgary May 10 and 11, 1993. Both of these projects placed a major emphasis on juvenile prostitution. The January 5, 1993, report from the Action Group suggests that the first public indicator that a youth might be getting street involved is her or his absence from school. Therefore, prevention would include a more serious view of absenteeism. They also recommend the development of prevention programs through the child welfare system.⁵

In their June 1993 report, dealing with adult prostitution, the Action Group included recommendations from the sub-committee on Aboriginal concerns. Seven recommendations were made to address these concerns:

- a) That the one-stop centre for youth, recommended in the first report, be responsive to aboriginal youth. Aboriginal people should be involved in planning the centre to ensure a sensitivity to aboriginal issues, and aboriginal people should be included in the staff component for the centre.
- b) That the Inner City Shelter Consortium be requested to include one home for aboriginal youth in its plans for four inner city shelters for youth.
- c) That more aboriginal counsellors be hired by Alberta Family and Social Services to work with aboriginal youth and families, particularly in the following areas: investigation of child neglect and abuse; placement of aboriginal children in foster homes; and in-home support services.
- d) That more aboriginal people be hired as counsellors or liaison workers by the Edmonton Public and Separate School Boards to work in local schools, to start a tutoring program, and to conduct home visits, designed to reduce the number of aboriginal children who drop out of school.
- e) That a group of aboriginal elders be identified by Edmonton aboriginal agencies and organizations and designated to provide positive role models for young people. This could happen formally or informally through existing aboriginal agencies.

- f) That an aboriginal cultural centre be established in the inner city, in cooperation with local aboriginal organizations and agencies. It would provide a range of services including: cultural and spiritual teaching, community celebrations, advocacy, addictions counselling, and youth work. The centre would be open to all people and seek to promote a better understanding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people.
- g) That City Council request the Edmonton Public and Separate School Boards to provide an aboriginal cultural awareness program for teachers, especially those working with aboriginal children.⁶

The Calgary Police Commission and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities co-hosted the National Meeting on Prostitution in May. This was a round table discussion with a cross section of experts present. A national committee has been established to further examine the problem. Some of the key points summarized from the meeting are as follows:

- Exploitation and abuse of children and youth must end. A zero tolerance stance must be taken.
- Juvenile prostitution is child sexual abuse.
- Programs for juvenile prostitutes and programs in general for youth must be developed and maintained with youth/user involvement.
- There is no one point of intervention for youth at risk of becoming involved in prostitution or youth engaged in prostitution.
- Prevention plays a dominant role in intervening before the fact; decreasing the risks of engaging in prostitution. Identify potentially dysfunctional children and intervene at an early stage.⁷

Another sub-set of literature relevant to this project is that which pertains to Aboriginal involvement in the justice system and the inequities faced by Aboriginal people across the country. In the past three years, at least seven reports have been released with information specific to Edmonton, Alberta, or the prairie region.⁸ All of these identify common issues of poverty, lack of culturally appropriate services, and an over-representation of Aboriginal people in intrusive systems (i.e. the justice and child welfare systems). Excerpts from this material help to highlight the concerns:

- "A significant number of off-reserve Native people have been confined to substandard housing and their housing conditions are often appalling. Edmonton unemployment rates for Native people are more than double those of the general population and educational attainment remains below that of the general population. The average income of Native people is one-half to two-thirds the national average. Nearly half of the Native-led families in Edmonton live below the poverty line, and the majority of Native people have an income of less than \$15,000 per year."⁹
- youth "often reveal a sense of hopelessness or fatalism about their prospects and often also lack the positive influences that would be provided by having a grounding in aboriginal culture and language."¹⁰
- "Aboriginal youth live in extremely disadvantageous conditions with little chance of improvement unless a concerted effort is made by various levels of government and community groups. ... Many of the urban youth have no

roots and lack family support. The young offender centres may be the only available alternative for the youth because the police or young offender's court are unable to find suitable accommodation for them."¹¹

Recent statistics also help to explain the need to address Aboriginal street youth:

- In Edmonton, 49.8% of the Aboriginal population are under 20 years old, compared with 29.6% of the general population.¹²
- Almost 40% of the Aboriginal households in Edmonton, compared with one out of eight in the general population, are headed by single parent women.¹³
- Aboriginal families account for about one third of open child welfare files in Alberta and over 45% of those with permanent guardianship orders.¹⁴
- Aboriginal youth make up 29.7% of the population in Young Offenders Centres in Alberta.¹⁵
- About 70% of the women in custody in Edmonton are native.¹⁶
- Alberta and Saskatchewan together account for 64% of the Aboriginal women in custody in Canada,¹⁷ but for less than 29% of the total adult Aboriginal population.¹⁸
- Ninety percent of all Aboriginal women in custody have been sexually or physically abused.¹⁹
- In 1989, 87% of Aboriginal adults in correctional facilities in Alberta had less than high school education.²⁰

The tables below provide a few statistics for the prairie region from the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. This data helps to explain the need for a focus on the prairie provinces.

Canada and the Prairie Provinces Health and Social Indicators

	Canada		Alberta		Saskatchewan		Manitoba	
	#	% ¹	#	%	#	%	#	%
Total age 15+ reporting Aboriginal identity	388,900	100	61,250	15.75	49,275	12.67	61,415	15.79
Total age 0-14 reporting Aboriginal identity	236,810	100	42,405	17.91	37,420	15.80	37,805	15.96
Adults who see an alcohol worker	10,365	100	1,745	16.84	1,650	15.92	1,280	12.35
Families for whom availability of food is a problem at least once per month	13,075	100	2,385	18.24	1,905	14.57	2,180	16.67
Adults assaulted within the past year	28,270	100	4,360	15.42	3,670	12.98	5,130	18.15

1. % equals per cent of the total Canadian figure.

Major Prairie Cities Cultural Indicators

	Edmonton	Calgary	Saskatoon	Regina	Winnipeg
	#	#	#	#	#
Total age 15+ reporting Aboriginal identity	17,375	8,805	6,595	6,530	22,475
Total age 0-14 reporting Aboriginal identity	11,860	5,270	5,320	4,490	12,675
Adults who speak an Aboriginal language	3,400	1,240	2,085	875	5,190
Adults who participate in traditional activities	7,240	3,295	2,880	3,525	8,090
Children who speak an Aboriginal language	1,190 (Alberta)		1,295 (Saskatchewan)		565 (Manitoba)
Children who participate in traditional activities	2,175	785	695	1,115	1,725

- 1 *Pornography and Prostitution in Canada: Report of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, Vol. 2, Ottawa, 1985, P. 377.*
- 2 *Fourth Report, The Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, Section 213 of the Criminal Code (Prostitution-Soliciting), Ottawa, October 1990.*
- 3 Anna Pellatt, "Juvenile Prostitution: A Consideration of the Child Welfare Response", Alberta Family and Social Services, Legislative Planning Branch, pp. 12-13.
- 4 Susan M. Nadon, "Childhood Victimization: Antecedents to Prostitution", Department of Psychology, University of Manitoba, June 1991.
- 5 Action Group on Prostitution, "Juvenile Prostitution", Interim Report to Edmonton City Council, December 1992.
- 6 Action Group on Prostitution, "Adult Prostitution", Second Report to Edmonton City Council, June 1993.

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- 7 "National Meeting on Prostitution in Canada Summary of Meeting" (Draft), May 1993.
 - 8 Canada, *Aboriginal People and Justice Administration: A Discussion Paper*, Department of Justice, September 1991.
Community Trends Working Group, *Tracking the Trends: Future Directions for Human Services in Edmonton*, 1993 Edition, Edmonton, May 1993.
Gaede, Lisa, "Agency Perspectives of Native Health in Edmonton's Inner City", Edmonton, February 1993.
Justice on Trial, Volume II, Summary Report, Report of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Metis People of Alberta, March 1991.
LaPrairie, Carol, *Dimensions of Aboriginal Over-Representation in Correctional Institutions and Implications for Crime Prevention*, Solicitor General Canada, APC 4 CA (1992).
Premier's Council in Support of Alberta Families (The), *Forum on Indian and Metis Families*, Edmonton Alberta, November 4, 1991.
Sklofsky, Jack, Murphy, Jonathan and Sinclair, Jeannette, "Inner City Service Improvement for the Aboriginal Community in Edmonton", Edmonton Inner City Violent Crime Taskforce, July 23, 1992.
 - 9 Gaede, op.cit., p. 7.
 - 10 Canada, op.cit., p. 41.
 - 11 Sklofsky et. al, op.cit., pp. 23-23.
 - 12 Gaede, op.cit.
 - 13 Ibid.
 - 14 Edmonton Social Planning Council, "Edmonton's Native People: Surviving in a Racist Society", *Edmonton Facts*, Vol. 1, September 1991.
 - 15 Statistic provided by Alberta Justice, July 1993.
 - 16 Edmonton Social Planning Council, "In Justice to Women", *Alberta Facts*, Number 12, March 1993.
 - 17 Ibid.
 - 18 Canada, *Language, Tradition, Health, Lifestyle and Social Issues*, 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Statistics Canada, 1993.
 - 19 Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1993, op.cit.
 - 20 Community Trends Working Group, op.cit.

Detailed Project Description

Identification of the Need

Over the past few months, the Edmonton Social Planning Council has been conducting a needs assessment of adult street prostitutes. The preliminary data supports the information in the literature and the need for a project of this nature:

- 51% of the study sample identify themselves as Native or Métis
- of those, 78% began "working the streets" as juveniles (i.e. under age 18)
- the average age at which juveniles got involved in the sex trade was 14
- the average level of education completed by the sample is less than Grade 10
- all of the sample reported negative childhood experiences including:
 1. being raised in the child welfare system (15%)
 2. sexual abuse (41%)
 3. physical abuse (19%)
 4. early involvement with the street lifestyle (56%)
- 15% reported that family members got them involved in the sex trade

Project Goals

The goal of this project is to determine what specific programs or services will reduce the involvement of Aboriginal youth in street prostitution. Four target areas have been identified in the preliminary planning for this research:

- 1. When Aboriginal youth have been identified as "at risk", what factors influence their future "success" or "failure"? How can youth at risk be encouraged to make positive choices?** Whether they live on reserves, in rural communities or in cities, many young people have childhood experiences which increase the likelihood that they will become street involved. These experiences may include difficulties in the school system, loss of a parent, abuse, racism and poverty. Frequently, these children have been identified at some point as being "at risk", but the services provided to them have not resolved the trauma.
- 2. What interventions, at what point in their lives, can prevent Aboriginal youth from drifting into street life? What alternatives are available to these youth? What will make healthier alternatives more attractive to Aboriginal youth?** Many young people leave reserves and come to the city in search of a new life. They drift to the inner city because it's cheaper, to access services, or because there are hundreds of people with similar backgrounds in the area. When they arrive, they have few skills and little money. Few find the "new life" they came searching for.
- 3. Once Aboriginal youth have become street involved, what assistance or support do they need to change their lifestyle?** There are many Aboriginal youth currently living in inner city areas across the prairies who have little connection to their family or other positive influences. Many consider their "street" friends to be their "family". Peer support helps these young people to maintain their street involvement, including substance abuse, criminal activities and prostitution. New supports are needed for these youth.

4. What factors stand in the way of Aboriginal youth completing school? What factors lead Aboriginal youth to complete high school and continue their education? How can the positive factors be enhanced and the negative factors reduced? Early school leaving has been correlated with an increased likelihood of street involvement. Youth who drop out of school have few employment options and have too much unstructured time to fill.

Strategies

Key to the success of this project will be the involvement of the target population in planning and carrying out the research. It will also be essential to have the support and participation of Aboriginal leaders. Discussions about the project to date have been held with Aboriginal women who were involved in street prostitution as juveniles, Aboriginal juveniles who are currently involved in the street lifestyle and an Aboriginal person working in the juvenile justice system. Their advice and assistance have been invaluable and it is anticipated that they will continue to support this project as it progresses.

The first activity will be to establish a project advisory committee comprised of Aboriginal people with a street history, representatives of relevant inner city agencies and leaders from the Aboriginal community. This committee will help to further define the research questions, identify potential study participants and help select project staff.

Two Aboriginal people will be hired to conduct the research. At least one should have a strong research background and at least one should have a history involving street prostitution. Ideally, both will have experience in both areas. They will be responsible for developing the research tools, with the guidance of the project coordinator and the advisory committee, and for gathering the data.

The researchers will need to develop relationships with appropriate Aboriginal groups and be accepted into the communities. It is expected that the first three months will be primarily utilized to make connections and build support for the project goals. This will include meeting with Aboriginal government leaders, elders, social service workers, teachers and others, to explain the goals of the project and obtain their input. Suggestions and concerns raised in these discussions will be incorporated in the development of the research tools.

The research area will focus primarily on Edmonton, Calgary and rural Alberta, including reserves and Métis settlements. Smaller samples will be surveyed in Saskatchewan and Manitoba to provide comparisons. Given the similarities noted in the background research, it is expected that the results will be fairly consistent and that the recommendations arising from the research will be applicable throughout the prairie provinces.

The data gathering process will take ten weeks. One week will be spent in each of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and travel will be extensive throughout Alberta. A wide range of people will be included in the study population. The preliminary targets are as follows: (numbers in brackets indicate the approximate sample size)

- juveniles currently involved in street prostitution - in Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon and Winnipeg (40-50)

- juveniles currently involved with child welfare and the juvenile justice systems - in Edmonton, rural Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (15-20)
- other juveniles who have been identified as "at risk" - in Edmonton, rural Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (15-20)
- other Aboriginal juveniles on reserves or in Métis settlements (10-15), in rural communities (10-15) and in urban areas (10-15)
- adults who were involved in prostitution when they were youths - in Edmonton (10-15) and Winnipeg (10-15) (The Council has connections with Prostitutes and Other Women for Equal Rights - P.O.W.E.R. - in Winnipeg which would facilitate this contact.)
- Aboriginal elders and other community leaders - in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (15-20)
- educators, health practitioners, social workers and others who may be involved in identifying "at risk" individuals - in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (15-20)

The research will focus on solutions rather than problems. There is already sufficient data available on the conditions affecting Aboriginal youth. The research will be completed through a combination of surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews and an examination of what programs and services are currently available. The broad range of participants will help to identify why some juveniles turn to the streets while others are able to find more constructive alternatives. It is important to include youth in the sample who are not part of the high risk or street populations to develop these comparisons.

In the final two to three weeks of the project, the researchers will develop their report summarizing the data and making recommendations based on the findings. The advisory committee will play a key role in the analysis of the data and in formulating recommendations which are both achievable and appropriate to the needs. The recommendations will be sorted according to who has the ability to respond to them. Strategies for implementation will be suggested.

The final report will be distributed to all the groups and organizations that participated in the study, as well as other relevant bodies. The findings will be presented at forums, providing an opportunity for questions and further discussion. The major focus again will be on involving the Aboriginal community and encouraging their continued support through the implementation process.

Budget

Budget Item	Amount
Project Coordination 8 hours per week @ \$25/hour	\$ 2,600.00
Researchers 2 @ \$2200 x 6 months	26,400.00
Fringe Benefits @ 9%	2,610.00
Travel (local @ \$.25/km)	600.00
Air Fare (to Winnipeg and Saskatoon x 2)	1,580.00
Travel Expenses	4,410.00
Incentives	500.00
Materials	500.00
Printing and Distribution of Final Report	500.00
Long Distance Charges	200.00
Administration Costs	2,400.00
Total	\$42,300.00

Budget Notes

1. Personnel costs are based on the assumption that two people will be hired as co-workers with equal responsibility.
2. Fringe benefits are determined using provision for UI, CPP and WCB premiums.
3. Local travel is based on an average of 400 km per month.
4. Travel expenses are based on an average of \$70/person/night hotel expenses for three weeks out-of-town research plus a per diem rate of \$35/person/day.
5. Incentives are offered in the form of food, tobacco, coffee, transportation, etc. for people who agree to participate in the study. For example, we have found that a pizza party attracts youth for a focus group session.
6. Materials include paper costs, printing, postage, and office supplies. The figure is based on the Social Planning Council's standard material costs for a project of this size.
7. Final report costs include cerlox binding and postage.
8. Long distance charges are an estimate based on previous project experience.
9. Administration costs include secretarial support and accounting.

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Aboriginal youth and adults are over-represented in Canada's justice system. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that involvement at a young age in a street lifestyle is one of the factors leading to a long term association with police, the courts and the prison system. Intervention to reduce street involvement, therefore, should help to reduce the number of Aboriginal people who come into conflict with the law.

Street prostitutes ^{frequently} ~~tend to~~ have similar histories involving child abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, family breakdown and other negative influences. Recent studies demonstrate the need for more proactive ways to address these concerns within the Aboriginal community. This includes reports from the justice system, social services, health and inner city organizations, as well as material specific to Aboriginal people in western Canada.

While many of these reports identify a need for positive alternatives, they do not identify what those alternatives should be. The history and lifestyle of the young people involved requires that innovative approaches be developed in order to have a long term impact. The study being proposed will identify effective prevention approaches which can be implemented throughout the prairie provinces.

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The following proposal is for a six month research project to be completed by the Edmonton Social Planning Council. The focus of the research is to identify ways to reduce the number of Aboriginal youth who are getting involved in street prostitution. A project advisory committee will be established with representatives of the Aboriginal community, including some who have been involved in street life. Aboriginal people will be contracted to conduct the research. A series of interviews, surveys and focus groups will be utilized to gather data.

The research will seek answers to the following questions:

1. When Aboriginal youth have been identified as "at risk", what factors influence their future "success" or "failure"? How can youth at risk be encouraged to make positive choices?
2. What interventions, at what point in their lives, can prevent Aboriginal youth from drifting into street life? What alternatives are available to these youth? What will make healthier alternatives more attractive to Aboriginal youth?
3. Once Aboriginal youth have become street involved, what assistance or support do they need to change their lifestyle?
4. Given the correlation between dropping out of school and street involvement, what factors stand in the way of Aboriginal youth completing school? What factors lead Aboriginal youth to complete high school and continue their education? How can the positive factors be enhanced and the negative factors reduced?

Aboriginal youth and adults are over-represented in Canada's justice system. There is a growing body of evidence to suggest that involvement at a young age in a street lifestyle is one of the factors leading to a long term association with police, the courts and the prison system. Intervention to reduce street involvement, therefore, should help to reduce the number of Aboriginal people who come into conflict with the law.

Research on street prostitutes identifies common histories involving poverty, child abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, family breakdown and other negative factors which lead to street involvement. Recent studies demonstrate the need for a proactive approach to address these concerns within the Aboriginal community. This includes reports from the justice system, social services, health and inner city organizations, as well as material specific to Aboriginal people in western Canada.

While many of these reports identify a need for positive alternatives, they do not identify what those alternatives should be. The history and lifestyle of the young people involved requires that innovative approaches be developed in order to have a long term impact. The study being proposed will identify effective prevention approaches which can be implemented throughout the prairie provinces.

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