

Pacific Women's Watch [New Zealand]

**Report and proceedings
of
4th Annual Conference**

**Young Women of Tomorrow
*Changes and Challenges***

to honour

**20th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on
the Rights of the Child**

**Universal Children's Day
and**

World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse

**Somervell Church & Community Centre
497 Remuera Road
Remuera
AUCKLAND**

Saturday - 21 November 2009

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FOREWORD

Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) held its Fourth Annual Conference this year on 21 November, which immediately followed Universal Children's Day and the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse was celebrated on 19 November. It was timely, therefore, we believed, to highlight the issues relating particularly to girls and young women in our Conference theme for 2009:

Young Women of Tomorrow – Changes and Challenges

We were also aware that as an NGO monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the status of women, especially New Zealand women, we had a special mission in regard to the implementation by the New Zealand Government of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

in preparing the New Zealand NGO Country Report for the 15th anniversary appraisal and review of progress on the Beijing Platform to be taken in March 2010 at the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York the Conference gave the opportunity for Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) to gain the views of a wide cross-section of NGOs and individuals to assist in identifying progress, gaps and ongoing challenges affecting the lives of children and young women.

The proceedings of the Conference will become a valuable resource for the Beijing review and for the next NGO shadow reporting to the CEDAW Monitoring Committee (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women).

We thank the Conference presenters and all those who participated in this year's Conference. The large number attending reflected the concern we all have to ensure girls are encouraged and supported in all aspects of their lives to become the leaders of the future.

It was a great pleasure to have the views of the many young women who joined our interactive discussions this year. We celebrate their contribution to the sharing of outstanding issues which demand effective action. Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) is committed to taking such effective action beginning with the Petition to the House of Representatives on the issue of cultural underage marriage. Only through determination to bring about change will the enjoyment of their full human rights and fundamental freedoms be achieved for all New Zealand girls and women.

Jane Prichard Q.S.O.

Chairperson,

Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand)

President, International Council of Women's Asia-Pacific Regional Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In her statement to open the Conference, Jane Prichard, PWW(NZ) Convenor, stressed the significance of the day which followed the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Leaders and global funders have been slow to grasp that women are at the economic heart of the developing world. Jane stated that health, education, leadership training and well-being of girls must be at the centre of policy and planning to assure girls and women their full human rights and fundamental freedoms. Poor communication and culture clash are at the forefront of discussion. Outcomes from the Conference would be included in the New Zealand NGO Country Report for the 15th anniversary review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Platform for Action to be taken in 2010.

The Statement issued from the Conference highlighted four outstanding issues for women and girls – the growing sexualisation of young children through the designing and merchandising of clothing; the urgent need for research and scrutiny of activities which could involve people trafficking in New Zealand; the high level of child abuse; and the impact on girls of cultural underage marriage.

In her keynote address Nura Taefi began by asking why girls have been forgotten and what can we do to bring them to the vanguard? How can we think about women's rights in a way that is meaningful for girls? Nura explored the meaning of rights which shift control and power from dominant groups to those who are otherwise powerless.

She went on to consider a theoretical framework for "girls' intersectional marginalisation". Girls fall to the margins in two categories – in the category of women as minors and the category of children as females. Nura argued that the two main treaties which should address girls' rights, CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) fail to acknowledge the issues which are unique to girls. Girls are viewed as gender-neutral and are born into a world of adult dominance. Violence against girls occurs across every culture, arising from paternalistic attitudes.

Nura proposed that to address girls' rights there needed to be a new way of understanding the relationship between women and children that was both interrelated and complementary. The potential for recognising women's rights from a young age has tremendous value for the realisation of equality between men and women in general. We have to stop seeing children as the passive recipients of adult decisions. She acknowledged the value of the Conference to bring girls' concerns to the fore, incorporating their voices to inform discussions on gender equality.

Nura advocated abandoning the gender neutral approach to girls' rights that has prevailed so far. If girls have a voice they will become visible, pulled out of the margins and into the limelight.

The sexualisation of children was of concern to the National Council of Women (NCWNZ) when the Cotton On Company introduced to New Zealand inappropriate slogans on baby wear. Elizabeth Bang described the action NCWNZ had taken to mount a campaign to ban the Cotton On clothing from New Zealand shops. She described how a successful media campaign and a kit for all NCWNZ branches and members who wished to take up the issue in their own region had been very effective. Elizabeth contended that products for children which convey a sexual message, or misrepresent the child in a manner that conveys adult sexuality harm girls' self image and healthy development. A Resolution on sexualisation of children which she presented at the General Assembly of the International Council of Women in Johannesburg, South Africa in October 2009 had been passed unanimously.

On the topic of *People Trafficking – Impact on Women and Girls*, Dr Jacqui True highlighted the very high number of persons, most of whom are women and children, trafficked annually across international borders. Associated with human trafficking are enormous financial profits for organised crime globally. Although trafficking for prostitution is considered by the Government to be absent from New Zealand the US State Department classes this country as a receiving destination. Jacqui emphasised the need for research into whether liberalised/legalised prostitution has stopped “trafficking” of women and girls for prostitution in New Zealand, or whether such trafficking does in fact exist.

In considering *Violence against the Girl Child*, Dr Teuila Percival showed how Pacific Island traditions shape outcomes for girls. Traditional culture has made the girl child vulnerable to discrimination through her low social status. Traditional culture has produced particular problems for girls in the New Zealand community. Harsh physical discipline, multiple perpetrator injury events and “unsupportive” families are key concerns.

Sexual abuse has life-long effects on girls. Teuila raised a number of questions to the Conference. The reasons why girls face discrimination, who should be in charge of making changes regarding issues for girls, and why violence and sexual abuse continue despite laws preventing them, were posed for further consideration.

Dr Lesley Salkeld presented data relating to research undertaken by Dr Heidi Walker into issues of consent for the medical treatment of children. Key points covered the ethical and legal reasons for obtaining consent and whether the current law applying to children’s consent was acceptable. Several case examples were discussed to show how issues of consent could be resolved for the best interest and welfare of the child.

The Clash of Cultures through the experiences of an immigrant woman was presented by Farida Sultana, of the Shakti Community Council. She described how being an Eastern woman in a Western society had enabled her to make choices and avail herself of the best of both worlds for herself and her daughter. The importance of understanding the differences between culture and religion and to be able to identify cultural and religious oppression was crucial to not accepting such oppression. For young Muslim women growing up and being educated in a western system there were difficulties living with parents who refused to integrate.

A young Muslim woman shared her experience of having no choice about entering into an early marriage and outlined the consequences for her future.

Conference participants chose one workshop to attend where they had an opportunity to take part in discussion, give opinions and propose action from the meeting.

On the *Sexualisation of Children* the wider consequences for children, and especially girls, were the focus. Competitive “showing off” with fashions and preoccupation with body image leading to eating difficulties required parental attitude change and education for young boys and men. Education earlier about gender issues was seen as a solution.

Issues to deal with in *People Trafficking* were related to immigration, international sports events such as the ‘World Cup’, mail order brides, back packers and casual workers entering New Zealand. Defining and identifying ‘trafficking’ is needed.

In *Violence against the Girl Child* the question of how to stop it covered how to intervene and how to help families. The causes of teen pregnancy and the ‘silence’ still surrounding the issue require opening up of dialogue before change can take place. The marginalisation and targeting of girls who chose to live outside traditional female roles was raised along with the need to change how violence is ‘normalised’. Four actions were recommended: that professionals in privileged positions work with families; acting on the message that ‘Violence is not OK’; teaching girls to know who they are; encouraging their self worth.

The *Clash of Cultures* Workshop took questions from participants as the basis for discussion. Information about Shakti's support services was shared which covered advice and advocacy on forced marriage, arranged early marriage and parental abuse. Despite New Zealand law relating to the minimum legal age for marriage religious leaders in ethnic communities continue to conduct marriages to underage females.

Immediate action was taken by the Conference when a Petition to Parliament was prepared and signed by 46 of those present asking the House of Representatives to examine the practice of cultural marriages to underage females and to initiate legislation that will effectively intervene in the prevention of abuse of human rights arising out of such marriages in New Zealand.

The Petition was submitted by Dr. Jackie Blue M.P. in the name of Jane Prichard, Conference Convenor.

OUTCOME

Those in attendance at the conference were outraged to know that some religious leaders in the Moslem and Sikh temples in New Zealand sanction the practice of parents forcing their daughters into an arranged marriage at the tender age of 14 years. This is contrary to New Zealand law which states that sex with a child under the age of 16 years is illegal.

At the conclusion of this presentation the participants, under the guidance of Jackie Blue, M.P. prepared and signed a petition in the name of Jane Prichard to be presented to Parliament expressing their concern and stating categorically that such practices cease through legislation that will effectively intervene to prevent them from occurring.

STATEMENT FROM THE CONFERENCE

Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) at its Conference "Young Women of Tomorrow – Changes and Challenges" honouring the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on Saturday 21 November 2009 considered the sexualisation of childhood, the impact on women and girls of people trafficking, violence against the girl child, and the effects on girls and young women of the clash of cultures.

The Conference agreed that in the growing sexualisation of young children through the designing and merchandising of clothing, gender becomes a commodity. We call for vigilance towards such activities, based on commercial gain, which are a denial of the human rights of children and especially girls. We also call for constant pressure through the media and complaints procedures to prevent sexualisation. It was stressed that NGOs must educate the community to take action to curb the negative portrayal of all children.

Research and scrutiny of activities which could involve trafficking in New Zealand, are needed urgently, with provision of adequate funding to include analyses of the findings. Co-operation with the Police and the Immigration Authority will be of critical importance. We also call for the raising of community awareness to overcome the risks involved with mail order brides, back packers and casual workers.

The Conference expressed great concern at the high level of child abuse which continues to increase regardless of action to prevent its occurrence. The strong message coming from the conference was that attitudes towards violence must change.

In considering the clash of cultures and its impact on girls, underage marriage was targeted. The Conference took direct action in submitting a Petition to Parliament requesting that the House of Representatives examine the practice of cultural marriages involving underage females and initiate legislation that will effectively intervene in the abuse of human rights that arises out of such marriages in New Zealand.

Jane Prichard

Convenor
Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand)

INTRODUCING THE CONFERENCE

Jane Prichard
Chairperson of the Conference

Kia Ora, Kia Orana, Talofa Lava, Malo Leilei, Bula Vinaka, Greetings

We hold this Half-Day Conference on a significant day. We have had on Thursday 19 November the World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse and yesterday the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Universal Children's Day. The Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) Committee therefore decided the focus of our 4th Annual Conference should be on girls and young women. Girls are our future – the women who will help to build strong families and strong communities.

For those attending this Conference as part of their professional development programme (PWW(NZ)) offers a certificate to verify participation. We invite any registrants wishing to have a certificate to make a request to a PWW(NZ) Committee member.

Apologies have been received from the Hon. Paula Bennett, the Hon. Phil Goff, the Hon. Rodney Hide, the Hon Maurice Williamson, Nikki Kaye M.P., Lynne Pillay M.P. and Carmel Sepuloni M.P.

At our Annual General Meeting in July we announced our intention to appoint Patrons for PWW(NZ). It gives me the greatest pleasure to announce that Dr Marilyn Waring, Professor in the Institute of Public Policy at Auckland University of Technology, has accepted our invitation to be a Patron of PWW(NZ). We had hoped to be able to introduce her to you today but at the moment she is travelling overseas. Marilyn has, however, sent a message with good wishes for the success of the Conference today.

She says

I am sorry I cannot join you for your conference on November 21. I am travelling at the moment – on 'women's business' – and when you meet I will just have spent time in Lebanon and Jordan and in the Palestinian camps with extraordinary women, en route to work further with the Commonwealth Secretariat on the human rights of 24/7 carers of those with HIV/AIDS, and then to a roundtable in Ottawa dissecting the levels of women in parliaments around the world: a vital issue for the Pacific which now boasts the worst record of women in office – fewer even than in the Middle East.

I wish you a great morning's work, and I am especially delighted that you have a focus on younger women.

*With my best wishes,
Marilyn Waring*

Leaders and global funders have been slow to grasp that women are at the economic heart of the developing world. The health, education, leadership training and well-being of girls must be at the centre of policy and planning if the world of the future is to assure to the girl child, young women and older women their full human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Regrettably, our recent record in New Zealand of appalling child abuse statistics, family break-ups and domestic violence is an indictment on our ability to build strong families and violence-free communities. Eight children are killed each year; many more are hospitalized through battering at the hands of family members. New Zealand has the fourth-worst child murder rate in the OECD at 0.9 deaths for every 100,000 children. Poor communication and culture clash are at the forefront of discussion.

Where are the missing links? At our first Conference in November 2006 Principal Family Court Judge, Peter Boschier, gave the keynote address. In last Thursday's *New Zealand Herald* he was quoted as saying "a radical rethink is required in the delivery of both prevention and intervention in domestic violence". But why has it not already happened?

This morning we will be privileged to hear from some of those at the front edge of problems related to the New Zealand girl-child. We would like to see coming out of this short Conference, some positive messages about doing it better for girls, building confidence and looking at how we can all be catalysts for change.

Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand) is about to complete the New Zealand Country Report for NGOs for the 15th anniversary review and appraisal of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to be taken next March at the United Nations 54th session of the Commission on the Status of Women. One of the chapters in the Platform for Action specifically focuses on the girl-child. Strategic Objectives and Actions in this important chapter include: the elimination of all forms of discrimination against the girl-child, the elimination of negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls, the eradication of violence against the girl-child and the strengthening of the role of the family in improving the status of the girl-child. This Conference focuses on all of these objectives.

Let's hope we can take some positive action and above all celebrate our young women and their future full participation in all spheres of society.

I now introduce our keynote speaker Nura Taefi, a young woman human rights lawyer who has recently returned to New Zealand following study towards a Master of Laws degree and time spent working with several NGOs focusing on the human rights and promoting the well-being of girls and young women. She had experience in presenting an NGO shadow report to the UN CEDAW Committee when she attended its 42nd session as the representative for Justice for Girls, a grassroots Canadian NGO and Justice for Girls International. Nura is a Board member of Pacific Women's Watch (New Zealand). She brings a young women's perspective to set the scene for our discussions today. The title of her statement is "The Marginalisation of Girls" a subject at the core of our conference theme.

Please welcome Nura Taefi.

THE MARGINALISATION OF GIRLS

Nura Taefi

Over the years, I have done a lot of thinking about girls and girls' rights:
Why it is that they have been forgotten and what we can do to bring them to the vanguard?
How can we make the invisible, visible?
How can we think about human rights in a way that is meaningful for girls?

I am going to begin by explaining why I talk about girls' *rights*. Why not just focus on how to protect girls? Or how to empower girls? The emphasis on rights has faced much resistance by critics. Feminist critiques of rights often assert that the human rights regime is limited by male-centred concepts that emphasise hierarchy. Some are concerned that women's experiences and interests do not translate into the narrow, individualistic language of rights. Critics of children's rights are similarly concerned about the suitability of rights rhetoric for navigating child-parent relations. They argue that human rights are for adults, that the language of rights is overly individualistic and that children lack the capacity to exercise power wisely.

I like to think about rights as conveying equal respect and equal opportunities for fulfilment. Rights are interests worthy of protection. Rights shift control and power from dominant groups to those who are otherwise powerless. Rights are also the currency in use. In courts, at the United Nations, rights are the language in which political priorities are settled. If rights are the language everyone else is speaking, why not join the conversation?

Like all sociologists, I want to pave a theoretical framework for what I will call 'girls' intersectional marginalisation'. Intersectional feminist theory first emerged in the context of African American women's experience with the law in the United States. Feminists like Kimberle Crenshaw observed that although women were often situated at the margins of race and gender, feminist and anti-racist practices seldom took their experiences and needs into account. This model is equally applicable to young women. Girls fall into two categories. The category of women and the category of children - in both these groups, they fall to the margins. Girls are marginalised within the category of children as females, and within the category of women as minors. The issues that affect them are thus invariably eclipsed by larger concerns general to children or women.

Girls' marginalised status is exemplified in international human rights law. There are two main treaties which should address girls' rights. One is the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women ('CEDAW') and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC'). However both CEDAW and UNCROC fail to acknowledge the issues which are unique to girls. CEDAW deals mostly with adult women and only refers to children in the context of schooling and mother's rights. Similarly the UNCROC deals with concerns general to all children, but fails to address issues that specifically affect female children, such as child marriage or female genital mutilation.

Feminists have always outlined why it is important to understand the emerging context in which a woman is marginalised. The same is true for children. The experience of childhood cannot be extracted from its context. Gender, race, class, time and place shape the way in which a young person experiences the world.

The first question asked when a child is born is whether it is a girl or a boy. Perhaps this is because we cannot relate to a child without first knowing his or her gender. Girls are born into a world that is gendered, yet ironically, the approach we take to youth and children is gender-neutral. As a male dominated society, this 'neutral' approach discounts the experiences of female children and youth altogether. Unfortunately for girls, this reality is masked because the statistics for children and youth are seldom separated by both age and

gender. The juvenile justice system is a good example. The disproportionately high levels of violence, mental health problems, poverty and racism experienced by young women in the criminal justice system indicate they have particular needs that are not being addressed. Ironically, the criminalisation of these girls in the first place, is frequently motivated by the desire to act in their 'best interests' by supposedly protecting them from further abuse.

Simultaneously, girls are also born into a world of adult dominance. Children's emotional and economic dependence on adults, in addition to their developing intellectual abilities have fostered a view of children as lesser beings. So the experience of being a woman is inevitably defined by what it means to be an *adult* woman. As minors, girls' views are given less weight - but unlike adult women or racial minorities, they are less able to voice their concerns.

Paternalistic attitudes and the desire to 'protect' girls intensify their experience of discrimination. Violence against girls is a problem that occurs across every culture, race and class. Research indicates that girls experience sexual abuse up to three times the rate for male children, and that most of this occurs within the family. The violence that girls experience is inextricably tied to discrimination. A gender-neutral approach to children's rights obscures the role of gender-bias in the abuse of girls. Patriarchal attitudes in the family and wider community reinforce the perception of girls' lower status. These perceptions often materialise in emotional, physical and sexual violence. The dual marginalisations that girls experience reinforce one another, placing them even further at the margins.

So why are girls' rights overlooked? Why don't women speak for them? Why do they not feature in discussions about children's rights? Intersectional theory explains that multiple marginalisations can place individuals within two subordinated groups with conflicting political agendas. There are two models that traditionally explicate the relationship between women and children. Both of these models heighten the tension between the two groups. The first is a conjunctive relationship, referred to as 'women and children.' Grouping together women and children has been resisted by the women's movement for two main reasons. Firstly, some are concerned that to speak of the two groups as one unit essentialises women as mothers and caretakers. Others argue that grouping women and children paints a picture of the girl-child as incomplete or deficient in some way. The second configuration is one of 'women versus children.' This is an even more problematic model. Women are (rightly) wary that historically an expressed interest in children's welfare has been used to control them. In the past, efforts to limit women's access to public life were often justified under the guise of children's welfare. For example, women's access to paid employment was initially opposed on the basis that children would suffer disadvantage. A more recent example is the section 59 anti-smacking debate here in New Zealand, where a child's right to be free from violence is pitted against a mother's supposed 'parental rights.' Neither of these models is helpful. In order to address girls' rights, we need a new way of understanding the relationship between women and children as one that is both interrelated and complementary. This requires a paradigm shift and a dually informed understanding of girls' position between the two groups.

The first step to achieving this is to examine the similarities between both agendas. This requires us to recognise that many of the policy achievements of the children's rights movement owe their success to theoretical frameworks that were cultivated within the women's movement. This is illustrated by similar struggles for legal personality and the use of rights-rhetoric to enter the global agenda. The women's movement was also the catalyst for unveiling how child abuse often stems from the misuse of male power. Feminist critiques of the law exposed how the domain of the family or 'private sphere' provided no protection against marital violence by the 'public sphere' of the law. Children's rights academics often draw analogies to how the public/private divide impacts children, remarking that the control once deemed oppressive for women is still seen to be good for children. The interrelationship is also well demonstrated by feminist critiques of the criminal justice system that revealed how the criminal process tends to devalue women's experiences. Over the

past two decades, a similar framework has been applied to the silencing effect of court procedures for child witnesses, and has been instrumental in advocating for their participation rights.

It is also important to acknowledge the compatible principles that underpin women and children's rights. Concerns that a focus on children can trap women in an oppressive situation, or limit their role to one which is exclusively aimed at nurturing children are misplaced. We need to move towards a holistic understanding of family and focus on the strengthening of supportive relationships within an environment that is free from all forms of discrimination.

What's more, the potential for recognising women's rights from a young age has tremendous value for the realisation of equality between men and women in general. Childhood is not an end in itself, but part of the process of forming the adults of the next generation. Girls who realise their potential as rights-bearing individuals will be in a stronger position to articulate and exercise their rights as adult women. As a corollary, children benefit from the full realisation of women's rights. Women will be in a better position to provide for and advocate for their children only once they themselves are able to fully exercise their own rights. This is particularly relevant considering that in most cases, women are the primary care-givers and educators of children.

Given that girls are at particular risk of having their needs ignored, we need a more comprehensive approach to their inclusion. But first we have to move away from adult dominance, and abandon notions of children as fundamentally ignorant or irrational. Children's rights advocates often make the analogy that just as women were once constructed as non-competent beings, children are socially constructed as lesser beings. We have to stop seeing children as the passive recipients of adult decisions, and start conceptualising them as social actors and active agents in the decisions that affect them. Gatherings such as this are a suitable forum for allowing girls concerns to come to the fore. This does not necessarily mean speaking for girls, but placing a microphone in front of them, and ensuring they are heard. Greater emphasis on the autonomy of girls, and the importance of incorporating their voices must inform discussions on gender equality.

One of the great difficulties we are then faced with when thinking including girls is how to balance their participation rights with their need for some protection. Children's need for protection is the salient feature that distinguishes girls from women. Article 3 of the UNCROC acknowledges this by requiring that 'in all actions concerning children, the best interests of a child shall be a primary consideration.' The problem is that everyone has a different idea of what is best for a child. One of the key concerns for girls is this best interests principle can cloak sexist attitudes within public and private institutions. An integrated approach to girl's rights therefore requires us to ensure that actions taken in a child's best interest are free of gender bias. Likewise we must abandon the gender neutral approach that has prevailed so far.

A combined analysis of the way gender and age interact is central to the articulation of girls' rights. That is what I believe we have gathered here to do today. To give girls a voice, to make the invisible visible, to pull girls out of the margins and into the limelight.

Introducing Elizabeth Bang, National Council of Women of New Zealand:

Elizabeth has had leadership roles in the National Council of Women for a number of years in Dunedin and then Auckland, becoming National President in 2008 after serving as First Vice-President. She has had considerable success in promoting issues through the media. Elizabeth is a very capable administrator and in her professional life is the CEO of Hospice Waikato.

Sexualisation of Children presented by Elizabeth Bang

In 2007 NCWNZ passed a remit indicating we needed action on this issue which gave us the policy to immediately react when the Cotton On company introduced the slogans on baby wear to NZ

- The main areas that give rise to sexualisation of children, include advertising and marketing campaigns and the production of products for children, which convey a sexual message, or misrepresent the child in a manner that conveys adult sexuality.
- This harms girls self image and healthy development. The American Psychological Association explored the impact on emotional development and physical health.
- Research links sexualisation with three of the most common mental health problems for girls and women: eating disorders, low self esteem and depression or depressed moods.
- It deprives children of the opportunities to be a child and encourages the child and adults in age inappropriate behaviour
- Sexualisation is recognized as being driven by adults through the production, marketing and purchase stages.

NCWNZ was aware that the Cotton On Companies had caused problems in Australia when the baby t-shirts and sleepwear with slogans such as "I'm a tits man", "I'm bringing sexy back" and many more hit the shelves.

When they arrived in NZ a year later we already had the policy for action and our campaign began with a press release which was taken up immediately by *The New Zealand Herald on Sunday*, and by lunch time I had heard from TV One and other media sources. The campaign was expanding rapidly and after a lengthy talk to our EO in Wellington that evening we had a plan. This plan included a kit for all branches and the membership who might like to join the cause;

Points to note:

- On Monday, TV 3 was on the phone, followed by calls from Australian Channels TV channels 7 and 9,
- Requests for permission to use NCWNZ's press releases came from China, the Indian cotton suppliers and BBC World.
- We continued to issue media releases throughout the campaign, updating them as needed.

- We acknowledge that we had superb support from so many unexpected sources. We always knew that we as an organization would differ on some subjects but agree on others. Family First were right behind us on this however diametrically opposed they were re Section 59 (Crimes Act 1961, Sectn. 59 permitted an adult to use 'reasonable' force to correct a child)
- It took one month to gain victory, small but important. We were heard!
- Branches were mobilized and several took up the challenge to action in their own regions, Auckland Branch was very active and continues to work with the campaign. Manawatu Branch organised media and managed to buy and cut up the offending shirts outside the shops.
- One reporter asked: "Is this just about girls?" My response was "Well essentially it is but it does affect boys as it teaches them that sexy is good."
- NCWNZ challenges where we can go to complain about such issues as it is not the Advertising or Broadcasting Standards, not the Press Council, who regulates such products.
- We have taken a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority, we do not expect to win because we understand it is beyond their brief BUT we need to make a point.
- This campaign was about products bought by adults for their children. It becomes more difficult to address the decisions made by older children for themselves, based on media, peers and advertising.
- It is a global issue, we knew this and are really pleased to have had our Resolution on this topic passed unanimously in Johannesburg at the ICW Conference, October 2009.
- At least four countries have asked for copies of our whole campaign as they feel they can adapt and use this information /approach too and wish to achieve a success on the wider stage.

Introducing Dr Jacqui True, University of Auckland:

Jacqui True is Senior Lecturer in International Relations in the Department of Political Studies, University of Auckland. She has published a number of papers on violence against women. Jacqui has recently completed a report on violence against women and the political economy which was released by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women. This report examines the current political economic order that is often neglected in analyses of women's human rights and violence against women but which profoundly affects both the prevalence of this violence and the efforts to eliminate it. In it Jacqui explores global change in economic terms and how women are affected by economic change.

Jacqui's research interests include international relations theory, globalization and trade politics, feminist research methodologies, gender mainstreaming and global governance. She is one of the organizers of the Fourth Oceanic Conference on International Studies to be held late June 2010 in Auckland.

People Trafficking – Impact on Women and Girls presented by Dr Jacqui True

With 80 per cent of the 600-800,000 people trafficked across international borders annually being female, 50 per cent of whom are underage, the impact of trafficking on children and young women is immense.

While eliminating human trafficking requires governments to take the leading role it also involves the effort of social workers, psychologists, lawyers, immigration officers and a network of people to bring cases to closure. Repatriation and restoration is laborious and thankless.

It is estimated that US\$9.5 billion is generated annually by human trafficking, ranking it behind only arms and drugs as a source of profits for organized crime globally, according to the US Congressional Research Service.

Despite the many victims of sex trafficking, and the diffusion of anti-trafficking legislation, there were only 3000 convictions related to trafficking in the year April 2004-March 2005. Sex trafficking is a high-tech, globalised electronic market and predators are involved at all levels. Sex trafficking may occur within or across international borders. Thus women may be either domestically or internationally trafficked, or both. Young women are trafficked for sexual use from the countryside to the city, from one part of town to another, and across international borders to wherever there are men who will buy them.

Prostitution is widely socially tolerated, with the buyers socially invisible. Even today, many mistakenly assume that prostitution is sex, rather than sexual violence, and a vocational choice, rather than a human rights abuse. Prostitution is an institution akin to slavery, one so intrinsically discriminatory and abusive that it cannot be fixed – only abolished. At the same time, its root causes must be eradicated as well; sex inequality, racism and colonialism, poverty, prostitution tourism, and economic development that destroys traditional ways of living. The conditions that make genuine consent possible are absent from prostitution. Until it is understood that prostitution and trafficking can appear voluntary but are not in reality free choices made from a range of options, it will be difficult to garner adequate support to assist those who wish to escape but have no other choices. Enforcement of international agreements challenging trafficking and prostitution can aid in this effort as can laws challenging the purchase of sex.

Although trafficking for prostitution is considered by the government to be absent in New Zealand there is concern that this country is classed by the US State Department as a receiving destination and research has not been done to assess the degree of threat both

across our borders and within New Zealand. New Zealand has liberalised/legalised prostitution but there is no current research evidence that this has stopped forced prostitution or "trafficking" of women and girls for prostitution in New Zealand.

Research needs to be commissioned to properly assess whether or not sex trafficking exists in New Zealand, the extent to which current laws potentially legitimise or mask trafficking, and if it is found to exist what measures our government can take to halt the victimisation of trafficked women and girls. University students might well be encouraged to take up research opportunities.

THE GIRL EFFECT

THE WORLD IS A MESS – POVERTY – AIDS – HUNGER - WAR

SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

WHAT IF THERE WAS AN UNEXPECTED SOLUTION THAT
COULD TURN THIS SINKING SHIP AROUND?

WOULD YOU EVEN KNOW IT IF YOU SAW IT?

IT'S NOT – ~~THE INTERNET~~ – IT'S NOT SCIENCE – IT'S NOT THE GOVERNMENT –
IT'S NOT ~~MONEY~~ IT'S A GIRL

IMAGINE A GIRL LIVING IN POVERTY – NO, GO AHEAD, REALLY – IMAGINE HER:

FLIES GIRL FLIES BABY FLIES HUSBAND FLIES HUNGER FLIES HIV FLIES

NOW – PRETEND THAT YOU CAN FIX THIS PICTURE

GIRL - OK

NOW SHE HAS A CHANCE

LET'S PUT HER IN A SCHOOL UNIFORM

AND SEE HER GET A LOAN TO BUY A COW

SHE CAN USE THE PROFITS FROM THE MILK TO HELP HER FAMILY AND

PRETTY SOON HER COW BECOMES A HERD

AND SHE BECOMES THE BUSINESS OWNER WHO BRINGS CLEAN WATER TO THE VILLAGE, WHICH
MAKES THE MEN RESPECT HER GOOD SENSE AND INVITE HER TO THE VILLAGE COUNCIL

WHERE SHE CONVINCES EVERYONE:

THAT ALL GIRLS ARE VALUABLE

SOON, MORE GIRLS HAVE A CHANCE AND THE VILLAGE IS THRIVING:

**PEACE, LOWER HIV, FOOD, HEALTHIER BABIES,
EDUCATION, COMMERCE, SANITATION, STABILITY**

WHICH MEANS THE ECONOMY OF THE ENTIRE COUNTRY IMPROVES

AND THE WHOLE WORLD IS BETTER OFF.....

ARE YOU FOLLOWING WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

**GIRL > SCHOOL > COWS > \$\$ > BUSINESS > CLEAN WATER > SOCIAL
CHANGE > STRONGER ECONOMY > BETTER WORLD**

IT'S CALLED THE GIRL EFFECT

MULTIPLY THAT BY 600 MILLION GIRLS

AND YOU'VE JUST CHANGED THE COURSE OF HISTORY.

INVEST IN A GIRL AND SHE WILL DO THE REST

IT'S NO BIG DEAL

–

JUST THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY

Text of a short video "Girl Effect" contributed by Dr Jackie Blue, M.P. www.girleffect.org

Introducing Dr Teuila Percival, University of Auckland:

Dr Percival has been a Samoan Consultant Pediatrician at KidzFirst Children's Hospital in South Auckland for a number of years and currently is Head of Pacific Health in the School of Population Health, University of Auckland. From 1992-1999 she was a pediatrician at Starship Hospital, Auckland, specialising in child abuse. She is Chairman of South Seas Healthcare and Director of the South Seas Kids Project. Teuila has undertaken a great deal of research on the subject of the health of Pacific Island people.

Violence against the Girl Child

presented by Dr Teuila Percival

Pacific Peoples

Study after study has taught us that there is no tool for the development more effective than the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, or to reduce infant and maternal mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health – including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation”

Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, International Women's Day 2005

Pacific Island Countries and Territories

Cultural area and Country	Total Population (2004)	Population under age 20 (female and male) (2004)	Population under age 20 (% of total population) (2004)	Female Population under age 20 (2004)	Female population under age 20 (% of total population under 20) (2004)
Melanesia					
Fiji	838,000	339,542	40.6	164,416	48.4
Papua New Guinea	5,695,301	2,835,858	49.8	1,353,060	47.7
Solomon Islands	460,104	236,051	51.3	113,408	48
Vanuatu	215,836	113,250	52.5	54,628	48.2
Polynesia					
Cook Islands	14,000	6,042	43.2	2,844	47.1
Niue	1,583	669	42	326	48.7
Samoa	182,750	92,315	50.5	44,141	47.8
Tonga	98,321	44,146	44.9	20,904	47.3
Tuvalu	9,639	4320	44.8	2004	46.4
Micronesia					
Federated States of Micronesia (FSM)	112,708	55472	49.2	26,750	48.2
Kiribati	93,098	45717	49.1	22,289	48.8
Marshall Islands	55,366	28,782	52	13,985	48.6
Nauru	10,100	4918	48.7	2370	48.2
Palau	20,703	6435	31.1	3104	48.2
Total	7,805,509	3,813,327	-	1,824,229	

Source: SPC Demography and Population Programme, 2004, "Pacific Island Populations by sex and age groups"

Girl Child status

- Subordinate to boys/men based on gender
- Subordinate based on chiefly status
- Girls valued for fertility but severe restrictions to ensure reputation of girl and family honour
- New effects of Globalisation and media
- “Girl Child” not included in national policy/strategy

Forms of gender discrimination

- Access to education
- Girl child labor
- Increased health risk
- Sexual abuse
- Early/forced marriage
- Female Infanticide
- Selective Abortion
- Female Genital Cutting (FGC)
- Virginity
- Honor Killing

The Girl Child - vulnerable

- Socialised to serve, inferiority
- Dependent on family
- Secrecy/silence around abuse
- Family/collective vs individual
- Sexuality/Family planning not discussed

“Culture, custom, tradition”

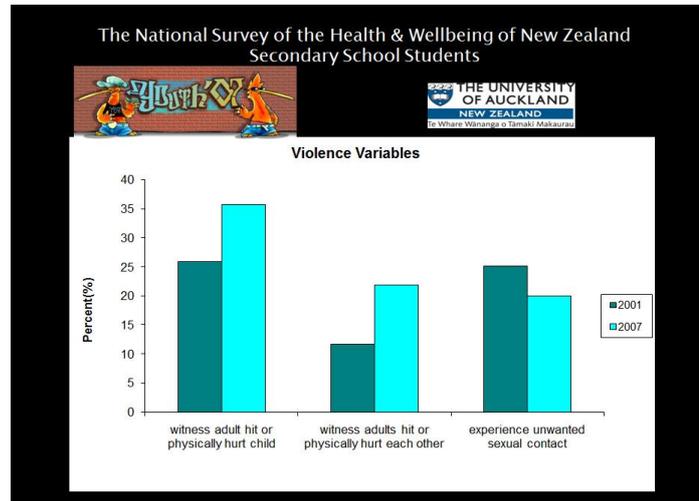
- Communal base
- Collective survival
- Hierarchy
- Social acceptance of violent punishment
- Traditional apology/restitution
- “Cultural gatekeepers”
 - Religious leaders
 - Chiefs
 - Women’s Committees

Particular problems in our community

- Harsh physical discipline
- Multiple perpetrator injury events
- Girl victims blamed
- “Unsupportive” families
- Girls sent to live with relatives

NZ Pacific Girls ?

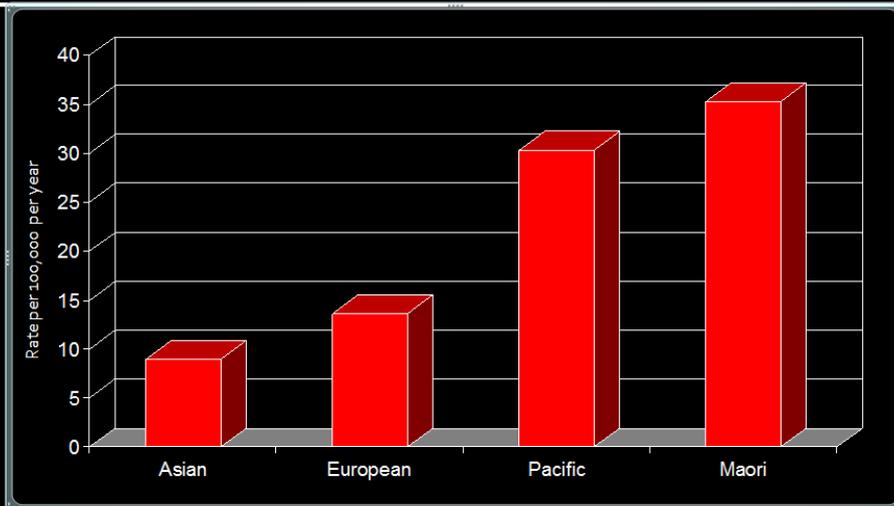
- The “migration experience”
- Socio-economic stressors
- Intergenerational conflict
- Silence & secrecy
- Access to information and support
- Level of violence tolerated



Sexual abuse of girls

- Familial sexual abuse
 - Immediate family
 - Extended family living situations
- “Date rape”
- Authority figures
- Stranger rape
- Prostitution
- Sexual tourism

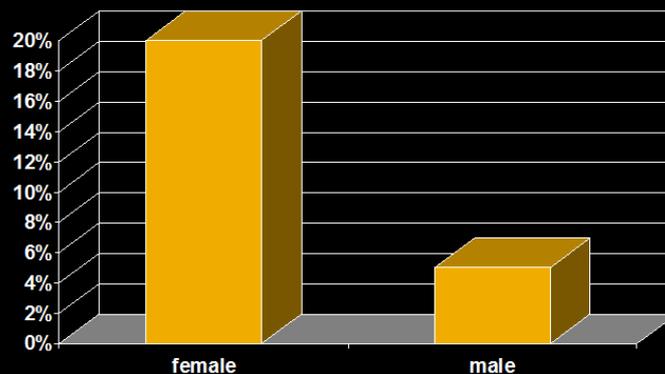
Hospital admission for Assault, Neglect & Maltreatment by ethnicity, Total NZ children 0-14 years, 2000-2004



Source: NZ Paediatric Epidemiology service
Health Status of Children, CMDHB

Pacific students reporting unwanted sexual behaviour from another person

Youth 2007, NZ National Health and Well-being Survey of Secondary School students
Siosaia Helu, Pacific Research Fellow



- 50% of unwanted sexual episodes in past 12 months
- 27% of episodes “pretty bad, really bad or terrible”
- 57% had not told anyone yet

Sexual abuse of girls

- Low social status
- Socialised to inferior/subordinate
- Dependent on “protection” of family
- Available so can't say “NO”
- Contribute to family economy
- Mass media images
- Statutory child protection systems
- Inadequate law/Court procedures

Sexual abuse of girls

- Familial sexual abuse
 - Immediate family
 - Extended family living situations
- “Date rape”
- Authority figures
- Stranger rape
- Prostitution
- Sexual tourism



Family violence, maltreatment & neglect

- Social capital associated with less risk of family violence, neglectful parenting, and psychologically harsh parenting
Zolotor A et al. Pediatrics, 2006
- Lower rates child abuse associated with neighborhood cohesion, high levels of trust, valuing local friendships
Vinson V et al. Aust Inst Criminology, 1999

The Girl Child: Discussion

- What are some reasons why girls face discrimination in the Pacific?
- Would equal education of girls and boys provide more equal rights and less discrimination against girls?
- What protection and risk does tradition/culture provide for Pacific Girls?
- Who should be in charge of making changes regarding the issues we have discussed today?
- Why do you think people continue to commit violence and sexual abuse, even though there are laws against them in some places?
- What do you think you can do to help?

Introducing Dr Lesley Salkeld, Starship Children's Health:

Lesley is a New Zealander who obtained her medical degree at University of Auckland then completed specialty training in Otolaryngology (Ear, Nose and Throat Surgery) in British Columbia, Canada. She then served on Active Senior staff at Children's Hospital in Vancouver for 15 years and was appointed Associate Clinical Professor for University of British Columbia.

In 1998 she returned to Auckland where she works in public medical practice at Starship Children's Health and for Counties Manukau District Health Board. Her daily work includes the care of children where issues of consent and issues of abuse or injury may be factors in their treatment.

Issues of Consent for Medical Treatment for Children presented by Dr Lesley Salkeld

Dr Salkeld shared data relating to the research undertaken by Dr Heidi Walker into issues of consent for the medical treatment for children. This represents the only current medical evaluation of its kind in New Zealand. The main focus of this research is detailed below; the presentation was centred around:

- Ethical reasons why we obtain consent
- Legal reasons why we obtain consent
- Shifting concepts of childhood
- Current law as it applies to children's consent...is it acceptable?
- Discussion of case examples

Concepts of childhood vary and Dr Salkeld discussed a range of ways in which children who can be regarded as 'dependants' are categorised and compared these with the status of adults or 'agents' involved in medical treatment.

- An essential reality of children's status is that they are "incomplete, immature" and in the process of "becoming a biologically determined adult". By comparison, adults are considered to be complete persons, socially creative "beings"
- When considering the intellectual and/or emotional status of children, they are deemed to be "incompetent, vulnerable, weak, innocent, inarticulate, irrational and irresponsible", while adults are regarded as "competent, resourceful, resilient, knowledgeable, articulate, rational and responsible"
- A child's legal, civil and political status is that of a minor, a passive possession who has welfare needs and needs protection. On the other hand, adults are citizens who have rights, are active self-determining participants in society
- The collective status of adults (agents) is that they are all diverse and individual - structurally, culturally, and historically differentiated one from another whereas children (dependants) are categorized as all being collectively uniform, all from one ideal, 'natural' mould

Along with these concepts there are also a number of legal instruments, protocols and provisions that must be observed within New Zealand

Relevant Laws:

- Statute law
 - Care of Children Act 2004 (COC)
 - Health and Disability Commissioner Act 1994 (HDC)
 - Bill of Rights Act 1990
- Case or Common Law
 - New Zealand & Overseas
- International Law
 - The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC)

Caveats

- UNCROC and COC 2004 precede legislation with statements to the effect that in all matters the best interests and welfare of the child is to be of paramount concern.
- This is known as the “paramountcy principle”

Care of Children Act 2004 *

- Section 36 confers upon 16-18 year olds the right to consent to, or to refuse to consent to, any medical, surgical or dental treatment or procedure, including a blood transfusion, carried out for their benefit.
- Section 38 allows a female child of any age to consent to, or refuse a termination of pregnancy.
- Special provision regarding blood transfusion (s37)
- With regard to consent provided by children less than 16 years the Act is silent.

The Law....

- recognises that children have a right to be heard and have their views taken into consideration;
- has clearly demonstrated that parental rights DO NOT over-ride the best interest and welfare of the child;
- is yet to take a position regarding the validity of consent provided by children under the age of 16 years;
- still seems to strongly favour the paramountcy principle.

* The Care of Children Act 2004 introduced important and far reaching changes to the way in which children are consulted and involved in the Family Court process. The Act also reinforces the joint responsibility of parenting even after separation, and contains new enforcement provisions when parents frustrate orders and interfere with the other parent's role - Judge Peter Boshier, Principal Family Court Judge, Wellington; February, 2006.

Introducing Farida Sultana, Shakti Community Council:

The Shakti Community Council had its origins in the Shakti Asian Women's Support Group founded by Farida and seven other Asian women in 1995. It is now a national umbrella organisation providing Life Skills programmes, encouraging women to overcome the barriers that come with migration, and in particular cultural acceptance of domestic abuse. Shakti now has four ethnic women's refuges in New Zealand. In 2007 Farida accompanied Jane Prichard as the second representative to the 39th session of the CEDAW Committee when the PWW(NZ) NGO Alternative Report was presented during the examination of the New Zealand Government's Sixth Report.

Cultural Clash presented by Farida Sultana

I am an immigrant woman. I migrated from my country of origin, Bangladesh, as a young mother with a three-month old daughter. I lived in Iran, UK, and Brunei and for the last 15 years, New Zealand has been my home.

I have been living outside my home country for almost 24 years. I spent most of my adult life being an eastern woman in a western society. I have also been exposed to extreme Islamic views, especially during the time of the Iran-Iraq war where I lived for over 5 years. As a single mother, I brought up my daughter within the western culture and she studied and now works in the western environment. I am very lucky that I had the opportunity in my adult life to make a choice and making a decision to avail myself of the best of both worlds. My daughter also had the choice to have the best of both worlds and exercise her choices.

For me, what is important is to be able to understand the difference between culture and religion and to be able to identify religious and cultural oppression and not accept that. As a Muslim woman I understand that extremist Islamic views exist and which is widely publicised in society and in the current environment. It is difficult for a young Muslim woman growing up in within the western culture and within the western education system. And, at home to be with parents who make a conscious decision to live within the same western culture and environment and yet refuse to acknowledge and integrate. Instead, they choose to focus on negative stereotypes of western culture.

Every culture contains good and evil. Sadly, even today, many young ethnic women cannot exercise their choices, even while living in New Zealand. I believe in human rights and that human rights should be the yardstick for society to determine how one individual or group treats the other.

I would like to introduce a young, single 19 year old Muslim mother of three who grew up in New Zealand. She did not have the choices we talk about and was forced to marry when she was 14 years old. She was very courageous and left her abusive husband and has now decided to lead her own life with her three children. She has enrolled for education in social work and is determined to change the way her community and the rest of ethnic society treat young women.

WORKSHOP REPORTS

Workshop 1 - SEXUALISATION OF CHILDREN

Issues raised by the Group

Q: Where do we start to look at this issue?

A: Ref: *APA task force report decries culture's sexualisation of girls* by T.DeAngelis in 'Monitor on Psychology' April 2007.

See: American Psychological Assn. website: www.apa.org/monitor/apr07/apatask.aspx

Cotton On campaign has opened a wider perspective - that of the marketing of 'Corporate Paedophilia'

- Emphasis on production and marketing by adults about children and for children – untapped markets, image; gender is a commodity
- Definition of sexualisation of children varies in different cultures
- Were children sexualised by families as babies and children?
- Incestuous families
- Female genital mutilation (FGM) in New Zealand
- Parental coercion
- Mobilisation of community by Cotton On campaign
- U tube/facebook/twitter/videos/music - risk and concern about safety of pre-teens and younger age group
- Competitive behaviour – showing off with latest fashions
- Barbie dolls and other similar toys emphasise female sexual attributes
- Eating difficulties are tackled by EDEN – Eating Difficulties Education Network who offer support and education around issues which include self empowerment, body image, consequence and actions, peer sexuality.
- People power – media – stereotypes
- Role of education in changing parental attitudes
- Re-think of 'sexualisation' issues needed
- Education for young boys/men essential
- Children are maturing earlier – research shows this...
- Necessity for continuing advocacy and lobbying

Solutions

- Educate family groups/NGOs earlier about gender issues
- Take complaints including TV advertising complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority

We applaud the New Zealand practice of school students wearing uniforms because this has a protective effect and avoids pressure on girls to wear sexually explicit clothing at school.

Workshop 2 - PEOPLE TRAFFICKING – IMPACT ON WOMEN and GIRLS

Issues to deal with

1. **Immigration**
 - No evidence; but anecdotal evidence
 - Prostitution Reform Act separated prostitution and trafficking clearly
 - Dept of Labour – trafficking consultations 2008 towards Action Plan ¹
 - Australian Institute of Criminology – 4 year study, midway review 2009²
 - Pacific – concerns with migration of labour
2. **Events**
 - How to monitor arrivals – Rugby World Cup 2011
 - Criminalisation of worker
 - Hospitality – abuses
 - Farm workers – casual workers
3. **UN Definition**
 - Different groups have differing definitions of trafficking - need clarification
 - Problems in NZ? Denial of occurrence?
 - Position of girls/children
 - Trade in people for economic benefit
4. **New Zealand**
 - Close relationship between Immigration and Prostitutes' Collective
 - Monitoring of trends
5. **Mail Order Brides**
 - Case study
 - Changes in Procedure
 - Vetting men more
 - Cultural Section
 - Partnership scheme
6. **Backpackers into NZ**
 - Money problems
 - Questionable work
 - Passports being held etc.
7. **Employment Issues**
 - Casual workers – hospitality etc. Rugby World Cup
8. **How to find out what's happening**
 - Signs → problems
 - No research funds
 - On US list as a country receiving women – children
 - Lack of academic research
 - NZ seen as liberal – distance
 - Learn to ask right questions
 - NGOs may have people able to do research

¹ Plan of Action to Prevent People Trafficking, pub: Dept of Labour, July 2009

² Pacific Trafficking in Persons Forum www.aic.gov.au/events/aic%20upcoming%20events/2009/peopletrafficking.aspx

9. **Definition of Trafficking* in NZ**
 - Who is facilitating it
 - How?
 - Trafficking under different guises
 - Police co-ordination relating to trafficking
 - Who collates these stories [Pacific Women's Watch → NGO support]
 - Close to destinations → non-support for trafficking
10. **Signs to look for**
 - Assimilating information – deportation figures – cases – court cases = evidence – immigration courses
 - Passports being held by employers
 - Arms, drugs [force], gender issue, coercion
11. **Immigration Advisers**
 - New regulatory body
 - Passport trades
12. **Misconception of New Zealand**
 - Credit and fraud
 - Economic advantage
 - Free holidays
13. **Information needs to be documented and kept**
 - Trends
14. **Money needed**
 - For University
 - Encourage social services agencies to provide
 - Research projects – masters, doctorate degrees
 - Advocacy – who to?
 - Ministry of Women's Affairs – take some interest
15. **Problem with financing overseas students**
 - Using education and employment from trafficking – holding passports
 - "I'll organise it – cost to you is"

Ref: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/index.html?ref=menuaside>

Workshop 3 - VIOLENCE AGAINST THE GIRL CHILD

Aims:

- How to stop it
- Dealing with everyday 'here and now' events
- Intervening – now!
- How to help families
- How and why violence happens in New Zealand

Teen Pregnancy

- Causes
- 'Silence'
- No dialogue about sex or relationships.
- Girls treated differently from young age
- Normalise the violence or abuse and change
- Violence considered OK by Bible and 'tradition'

Section 59

- approval eg praise for good behaviour vs punishment for bad behaviour

Family

- Community 'face' vs. individual self worth
- Developing a more holistic value of self
- Teaching girls to know who they are
- Teen pregnancy can be a result of harsh physical discipline/physical abuse at home
- Teen pregnancy can lead to harsh physical discipline/physical abuse at home
- Marginalisation/targeting of girls who choose to live outside traditional female roles
- Need to change how violence is 'normalised' – Section 59 repeal has helped.

Important:

- Education/awareness for
 - Women
 - Families
 - People in power
- Highly skilled professionals are needed to work with families.
- There should be no tradition that "Violence is OK" – it is against the law
- Teaching girls self worth and self esteem
- Girls deserve greater valuing

Postscript:

November 25 is the International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women (White Ribbon Day) and white ribbons were distributed at PWW(NZ) Conference for wearing at any time but especially on White Ribbon Day and during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence campaign; from 25 November until 10 December.

The White Ribbon campaign celebrates the many men willing to show leadership and commitment to promoting safe, healthy relationships within families and encourages men to challenge each other on attitudes and behaviour that are abusive.

The Families Commission is committed to ending violence within families and is now the 'anchor organisation' for nation-wide '**It's NOT OK**' project.

Workshop 4 - CLASH OF CULTURES

Workshop conversations:

Open dialogue with questions from the floor on:

- Information about Shakti
- Women's organisations
- Women's refuge
- Crisis centre
- Counselling service

Shakti has been operating for 14 years with Middle Eastern, Asian and African women who experience

- Forced marriage
- Arranged early marriage
- Parental abuse

In the last four years, five attempted suicides in the age group of 14 – 16 years of age
One case – Waitakere hospital admission was a life/death situation.

Many girls taken out of NZ to get married forcibly

Shakti has put an advocacy package into Parliament.

Instead of unregistered marriages taking place in mosques/temples the priest should be advised by the government agency / Ministry that this is not permitted.

These groups (clerics) do not abide by New Zealand law and the family can arrange marriages for girls as young as 14. These marriages are not legal in New Zealand but this practice is continuing. This matter has been brought to the attention of the media and CEDAW Committee at UN.

Question Should your organisation stop this?

Answer We want to but this is so much of a risk that we want the government to take the initiative.

Question Is it illegal in NZ to have sex with underage girls?

Answer Yes it is but at the same time these girls are very young and are scared to 'open up' in front of the police, but they will talk to Shakti.
Their clients' trust in Shakti also poses a great risk to the Shakti organisation e.g. a case in Tauranga where the Sikh Temple forced women to withdraw Protection Orders and Shakti are now receiving threats from gangs.

Recommendations:

Ethnic community representatives to go to schools and local communities and speak to ethnic girls about the laws in New Zealand.

Ethnic marriage must be registered under NZ law.

Question Which community has predominant incidence of underage marriages?

Answer Asian, Indian, African, Afghani, Pakistani

At the same time people of different ethnic groups, even if they are not members of the same ethnic group should stand up and challenge these practices as they are a violation of human rights.

Inform girls about their rights under NZ law and within the international framework.

The results of recommendations may not be seen immediately as change can be a slow process.

Religious Leaders – Underage marriage is one aspect of the practice of these customs by some religious leaders. Islamic law is still practised within these communities
NZ Government needs to take active responsibility in stopping this.

Contact religious leaders and meet in forums conducted by the police/government advising that these practices are inappropriate in New Zealand and must stop.

Young women should speak up on their own behalf.

We must not forget that these marriages are conducted by male priests/members.

Further Recommendations

The priests need to be informed that they can be prosecuted if they continue to carry out underage marriages.

Legal pressure needs to be put on these people and on parents who are consenting to underage marriages as it is unfair to put pressure on these girls to come and speak about it.

Mosque/temple should not conduct marriages unless they are registered within the New Zealand framework and abide by New Zealand law.

Now the situation is that the responsibility is on the 16 year old who needs to come up and prosecute her parents - the responsibility needs to be shifted onto the person/ party to the same marriage.

At the same time, information and awareness needs to be spread with the help of police, social workers and other professionals

Question How do you see the current laws inadequate?

Answer The current laws aren't inadequate but they do need to be adhered to.

Question At the same time schools and hospitals need to take responsibility, also the Ministry of Education. How can we help?

Answer People in the community need to challenge their own cultural practices which /whenever they are inappropriate. The New Zealand Government authority needs to support women asking if it is OK legally to proceed with the marriage.

Important that the marriage is registered first and then a cultural marriage can follow.

This is not an easy process but a long term process to bring about social change.