



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

**Shakti Woman's Refuge Trust &
Shakti Community Council Inc.**





*Support
your
sisters*

An illustration featuring several hands of different skin tones (light, medium, and dark brown) reaching towards the center. The hands are arranged in a circular pattern, with fingers slightly curled as if holding or supporting something. Some hands have painted nails in various colors (yellow, orange, purple, blue, green). The background is white, and the text 'Support your sisters' is written in a cursive, orange-brown font in the center.

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MESSAGE FROM SHAKTI'S CHAIRPERSON



Having been involved with Shakti in New Zealand for over 25 years, I have been thinking about the many ways we have made a difference in our communities.

Besides changing lives, we also influence government policy changes. We made the issue of domestic violence visible, which had until then been unacknowledged within migrant and refugee communities of Asian, African, and Middle Eastern origins, as well as remained invisible to the broader communities of New Zealand.

As a General Practitioner with my own Practice and as the Chairperson of a valuable organization like Shakti, I am aware of how the impact of Domestic Violence is intergenerational and that the safety of our children becomes paramount. Keeping that in focus, for the last 30 years, Shakti has dedicated itself to supporting women to get out of abusive environments. Through our 24/7 crisis line, run by volunteers providing thousands of hours of voluntary crisis response, providing safe accommodation nationally through our refuge services, providing counselling to the survivors, also providing necessary skills through our women's empowerment-based life skills programs to be employed and become contributing citizens to New Zealand. Shakti has consistently sought to improve the lives of those affected by Domestic Violence.

Over the years, we have noticed an increasing number of elder abuse cases. This vulnerable group of women carry the shame and stigma of exposing the behaviour of their adult children and grandchildren and does not engage in seeking police or other help. Some elderly support groups do exist for immigrants, offering day-care services and activities and ethnicity-based rest homes. Still, there is no specific service for victims of Domestic Violence within the elderly groups.

In response to the referrals for the elderly coming in, Shakti has begun work on developing policies and procedures for abused elderly ethnic women, and we are training our workforce to respond to such situations.

Service gaps also exist for Rainbow, LGBTQI+ and Disability groups. All three groups are highly vulnerable when it comes to family violence. Shakti aims to address such gaps in the years to come.

As regards abused victims who are Non-Permanent Residents, resources to respond to the increasing numbers remain inadequate. The number of clients in the Non-Permanent Resident category has increased substantially since the COVID-19 pandemic. Shakti has also been receiving an increased number of referrals from women whose husbands abandon them upon arrival in New Zealand. Such abandonment does not come with Domestic Violence, and therefore, essentially, they are not eligible for Refugee services. However, such victims of abandonment end up by the roadside as they have nowhere to go, and Shakti needs to take them in and house them until we can advocate for their visas. In the current housing crisis, it is extremely difficult to house them, not only in Auckland but also in Christchurch and Wellington. This group of women are not eligible for any Government subsidy or support.

Shakti will continue to lobby for resources and suitable policies regarding Non-Permanent Resident client issues, including those who are brought into New Zealand and then abandoned.

Shakti reported to the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) under the United Nations in 2024. This is in continuance of Shakti's commitment to highlight and address the inequalities that exist towards migrant and refugee women of colour.

My gratitude goes out to all our Funders, Sponsors, Donors, and Supporters. Without your generosity and willingness to support and work with us, we would not be here, serving our community for the last 30 years.

To keep the organisation going, we need committed Trustees, Custodians, Staff, and, most importantly, Volunteers. Thank you to all of them, as well as all our other Stakeholders, including the women we service.

We plan to organise our 30th Anniversary celebrations nationally for all of you to join in.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Shanthi Selvakumar
MBBS, Dip (Obs) FRNZCGP
Chairperson, Shakti

SHAKTI NATIONAL OFFICE - OVERVIEW

2024–25 has been a milestone year in Shakti’s journey as we entered our 30th year of operation. We started small — just seven passionate women coming together with a shared vision of empowerment — and today, we stand proud with 44 employees and a large number of volunteers working nationally to make Aotearoa a safer, more inclusive place for all women.

This year also brought significant transitions in leadership. We warmly welcomed Dr. Hoa Nguyen to our Shakti team to lead the National Service Delivery. Under her leadership, we are confident that our capacity and impact will continue to grow stronger.

The foundational work we undertook in 2021 to establish a clear organisational structure is now beginning to bear fruit, with strong, capable teams anchored in each branch. However, the nature of our mahi presents ongoing challenges in staff retention. It remains critical that our teams continue to reflect the communities we serve, ensuring cultural responsiveness and authenticity. Despite these transitions, we remain hopeful that we have built a resilient team to navigate the unknowns ahead.

The demand for our services continues to rise yearly, as growing awareness and the courage of women seeking lives of dignity fuel the need for support. Our clients came from across the country, spanning from the far north in Whangarei to the deep south in Invercargill. These highlight both the rising need within the sector and the reach we can achieve through Shakti’s strong presence across New Zealand.

We are actively working to strengthen and expand our services to more effectively support elder women (aged 55 and over), young people (aged 14–25), members of the rainbow community, and people with disabilities, in response to a growing demand from these groups.

Our Community Risk Management (CRM) initiative—a 72-week programme—was successfully rolled out nationwide, offering comprehensive, wrap-around support to assist women in resettling into the community in a safe and sustainable manner. Additional initiatives, such as our “Train the Trainers” workshops and Best Practice Guidelines (BPG) workshops for government and NGO staff, have already demonstrated a meaningful impact.

We have also prioritized the enhancement of our quality assurance processes, including the digitalization of documentation and case records, and the development of quality assurance systems to more effectively gather and respond to client feedback. These efforts aim to ensure continuous improvement of service.

As you read through this report and reflect on the progress and highlights of the past year, we invite you to consider the collective resilience, growth, and commitment it has taken to sustain and evolve this movement for 30 years. We are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed to Shakti's journey – and we look forward to continuing this mahi together.

Ehara taku toa e te toa takitahi, engari he toa takimano
My strength is not that of an individual but that of the collective.

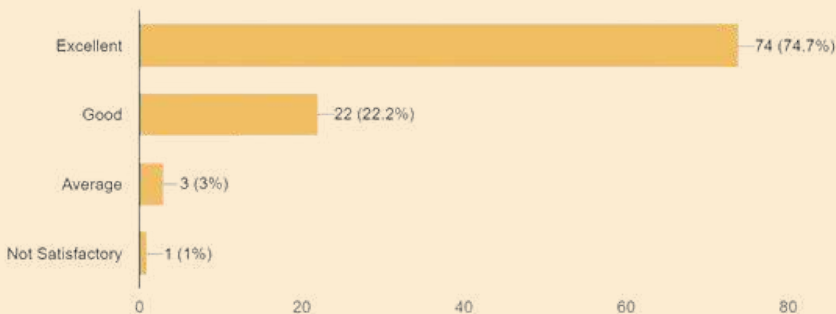


CLIENT EVALUATION OVER THE YEAR

Over the course of this year, we have consistently conducted service evaluations with all of our clients. Their feedback provided valuable insights into the quality and effectiveness of our services, as well as feedback for continuous improvement. The following are some key results from the evaluation.

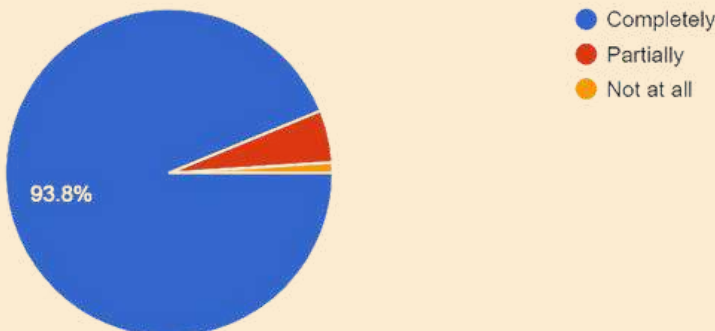
Rating of Shakti's Services

The majority of clients (96%) expressed high levels of satisfaction with the services, rating the service either excellent or good.



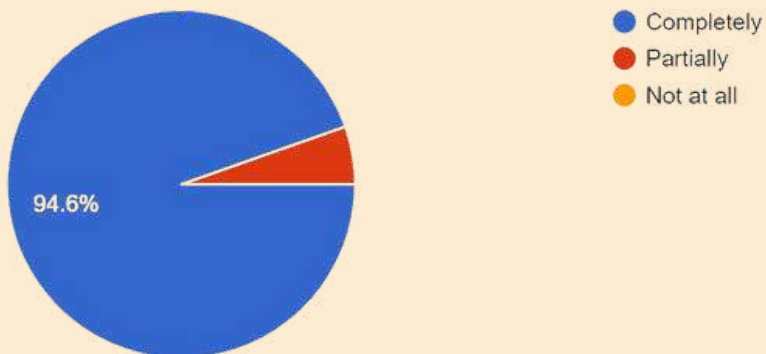
Case Workers Communication and Relationship Building Skills

The majority of clients (almost 94%) reported that their support worker was able to establish a strong rapport with them, fostering a sense of trust and understanding throughout their stay.



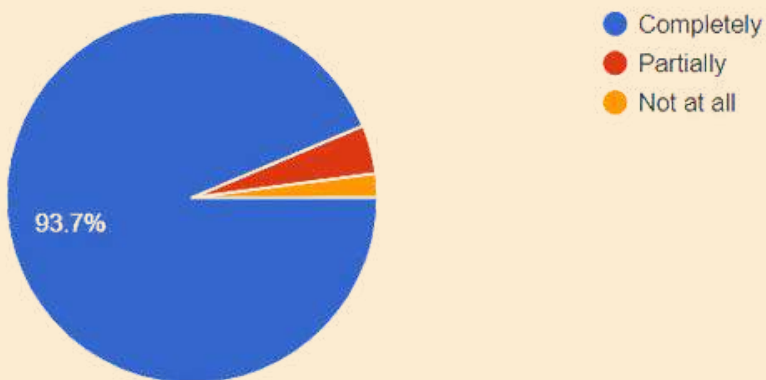
Information Provided to Clients

Almost all clients reported that they received timely and relevant information, which enabled them to make informed decisions during their stay.



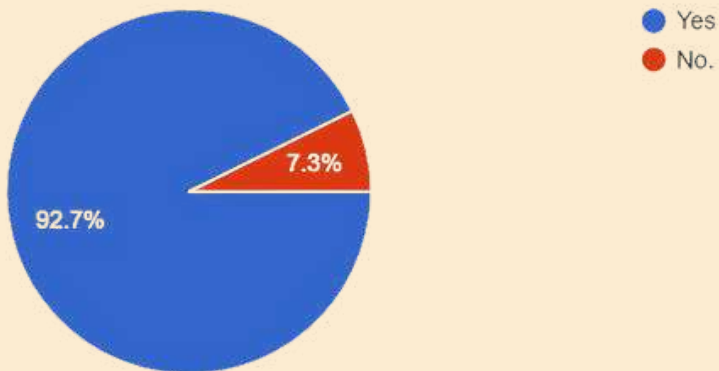
Support from the Case Worker

Most clients felt that the case worker was very supportive to them and helped them to a great extent.



Life Skills Gained through Shakti Programs

We have consistently strived to empower our clients by designing Life Skills Programs tailored to their specific needs. It is deeply encouraging to hear that most clients felt that they have gained better life skills to deal effectively with their problems through the association with Shakti services.



FEEDBACK FROM CLIENTS

Most clients expressed deep appreciation for the support they received from Shakti. For many women and children, the care and guidance offered by our case workers has been truly life changing.

“I was hopeless. I could not see any way forward. Because of Shakti, and that is why I want to stay in contact with them. Whenever I need help, they will assist me. I sincerely thank Shakti.”

“I have received a very good treatment and have been well looked after for the past 5 days. It has been like a therapy for me.”

“Shakti people were every supportive in every way. They go beyond their limits to support the mother and their children. They work through the weekend. My case worker was excellent with everything. She supported me when my daughter was sick.”

“Shakti is like a family.”

“I believe helping others is the better work. You are here to help me and other mothers and I would like to say thank you for all your helpful jobs.”

We also received heartfelt thank-you letters from clients, describing our support as “unwavering,” “tremendous,” and “critical companionship in their darkest moments.” At the same time, clients have shared constructive feedback on areas for improvement. These include enhancing safehouse facilities, offering a wider variety of cultural food, providing quicker access to counselling and more quality time with case workers, and having staff available at the safehouse 24/7.

We are committed to listening and responding to clients feedback, and will continue working to strengthen our services to better meet the diverse and evolving needs of the communities we serve.

NATIONAL CRISISLINE



Over the past year, Shakti Crisisline has continued to serve as a vital lifeline for ethnic women and families experiencing domestic violence. Our services maintained consistently high engagement—a testament to the trust placed in our culturally responsive crisis support.

Of the calls received, 63% were related to domestic violence, with 11% of those qualifying as crisis calls requiring urgent intervention. The remaining 26% were general support or information calls. This data reflects an overwhelming demand for support in domestic violence, housing, and immigration—particularly among non-resident women.

Our 24/7 Crisisline is primarily volunteer-led, and this year, we successfully trained many new volunteers, equipping them with the knowledge and tools to respond confidently and compassionately to DV-related calls. Our volunteers, along with Shakti staff, are helping us to keep the 24/7 crisis line active.

Our callers came from more than 25 different ethnicities, such as Indian, Fijian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, African, Sri Lankan, Vietnamese, Burmese, Thai, and Middle Eastern. Many of the callers are not able to converse in English effectively. This diverse demographic highlights the importance of culturally sensitive and language-accessible services, which Shakti is uniquely positioned to provide.

A persistent challenge this year has been the lack of protection and support for non-resident women in Aotearoa, particularly those who arrived under partnership visas. When these relationships—often marked by abuse—come to an end, many of these women face significant barriers to remaining in the country, through no fault of their own. Returning to their home country is often not a safe or viable option, as it may expose them to harm, humiliation, and an uncertain future for both them and their children. This systemic failure places them in precarious and unsafe situations, made worse by immigration uncertainty, housing insecurity, financial vulnerability and concerns for their children's well-being.

One of our most pressing operational challenges has been the limited availability of refuge accommodation. At several points during the year, all our safe house spaces were full, requiring us to redirect clients to alternative providers. This shortage has sparked ongoing strategic discussions about expanding safe housing options and creating smoother transitions into private rentals, an essential step in supporting our clients beyond crisis.

In the face of immense challenges, Shakti's Crisisline continues to be a sanctuary for ethnic women experiencing domestic violence. Our work is more vital than ever. With continued investment, collaboration, and compassion, we will push forward in our mission: to ensure safety, dignity, and empowerment for every woman who reaches out for help.

SHAKTI AUCKLAND

Over the past year, Shakti Auckland stood as a trusted and steady source of support for ethnic women and children facing the trauma of domestic violence. Our work was grounded in compassion, cultural understanding, and deep connections with our communities.

More and more women contacted us on their own, a powerful sign that our services are trusted and accessible. Our 24/7 crisis line brought in other referrals, while strong relationships with New Zealand Police and the Family Harm Team led to more women being safely referred. Others came to us through Oranga Tamariki, Women's Refuge, hospitals, GPs, counsellors, and even friends and family, showing that word of our support continues to spread.

As women came through our doors, we made sure their healing journey didn't stop with us. We connected them with the right services for their needs. Counselling was the most common referral, reflecting how important emotional healing is after trauma. We also supported women through legal services, court safety programs, WINZ for financial help, immigration services, and medical care. A key part of this was our Life Skills Program in collaboration with SDETAT, which helped many women gain confidence, independence, and tools for the future. These referrals are a testament to our wraparound support model, walking beside every woman as she begins a new chapter of life.

Throughout the year, hundreds of ethnic women were supported through our Safe Houses and Outreach programs. A large number of our clients are from Indian, Fiji Indian, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Thai and Vietnamese backgrounds. Our Outreach team worked with women who were navigating their healing journey from home. The largest groups were again Indian and Fiji Indian women, followed by Chinese, Sri Lankan, and African clients.

We also supported hundreds of children, each one carrying their own story of survival. These children had often seen or experienced violence, and our team was there to provide not just safety, but also school support, emotional care, and space to heal—all in ways that respected their culture and identity.

Shakti Auckland also provided advocacy support. Whether it was standing with a woman in court, helping her talk to a doctor, arranging food, or translating important documents, we were there. We assisted with WINZ, justice processes, immigration, banking, education, and housing, ensuring that no woman had to face these challenges alone.

Through every call, every referral, and every moment of advocacy, Shakti Auckland remained committed to healing, safety, and empowerment. By working closely with partner agencies and truly understanding the cultural backgrounds of our clients, we've continued to build a place where migrant women and children can begin again with strength, dignity, and hope.



CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1:

Background:

G.K. is a 31-year-old woman from South Asia. She was working as a professional and supported her parents financially after she graduated from university. She entered an arranged marriage with her husband. After the wedding, her husband stayed with her for a few weeks before returning to New Zealand. Meanwhile, G.K. remained at home, living with her in-laws before arriving in New Zealand on a Visitor Visa.

History of abuse:

After arriving in New Zealand, G.K. experienced emotional, psychological, and verbal abuse. Her husband frequently called her names, swore at her, shouted, yelled, and humiliated her in front of others. G.K. was strangled multiple times—so many that she lost count. G.K. is also subject to financial control. Her husband opened a joint bank account but never provided her with a card or access to their finances. He also made threats to kill her and repeatedly threatened to have her deported. G.K. was isolated from her family, as her husband forbade her from calling her parents. During an assault involving both her husband and brother-in-law, G.K. was severely injured. The police arrested both men, and she was admitted to the hospital for a week to receive medical treatment. Following their arrest, the abusers' parents began threatening G.K.'s family. They warned that once she returned, they would take her to the police station and have her imprisoned.

Observation:

During a face-to-face assessment, G.K. expressed extreme fear that her husband and brother-in-law might find and kill her. As a newcomer to the country with limited English proficiency, she was struggling to navigate her situation. While discussing the abuse, G.K. was visibly distressed—crying and shaking. She was conflicted about leaving the abusive relationship and repeatedly stated that she still loved her husband. She was also deeply upset and anxious after receiving an email from Immigration New Zealand informing her that her husband had cancelled her visa.

Additionally, G.K. was worried about her parents' reputation back home. In her community, women who leave their marriages are often ostracised, and she feared that both she and her family would face isolation and loss of respect.

Intervention:

- Provided safe accommodation and food
- Provided counselling for emotional well-being
- Supported applying for Protection Order
- Provided medical support- GP provided a DV declaration letter
- Provided immigration support – DVWV was granted
- Provided workshop – NZ work experience and LSP to attend English class, computer class, made CV and DV awareness
- Provided MOJ safety program.

Outcome:

G.K. had been staying at Shakti accommodation for five months. G.K. got final protection order and completed counselling, MOJ and LSP. She also got DVWV. LSP team supported the client to make CV and provided reference letter to the client. G.K. got full time job as customer service person. She is living in the community independently and safely. She is working with immigration lawyer to get RV which is in process. She even returned and volunteered at Shakti to help other women who faced situations similar to hers in her free time.

Case Study 2:

Background

AB is a client in her 30s, of Southeast Asian descent. She met her husband while he was visiting home. They got married, and she came to New Zealand the same year. The couple has one son together.

History of Abuse:

During the initial years of the marriage, the husband often shouted at her, and their arguments would sometimes escalate. However, each time, he would apologise, making her believe things would get better. The husband owned a business; however, he was addicted to gambling and alcohol, which led to severe financial instability, frequent shop closures, and increased aggression towards her. His abusive behaviour became worse over the years, including physical violence, verbal threats, and destruction of property.

One time, when severe physical violence occurred, she called the police, and they placed her in emergency accommodation at a motel. After a few days, she reconciled with him, hoping he had changed. However, things did not change, and abuse started again in a matter of weeks. With the support of a friend, AB fled to another rural town, but one day, the abuser showed up at her new home unannounced. His presence caused her severe distress. He yelled at her and attempted to physically assault her. Luckily, her neighbours intervened and called the police, but he fled before they arrived. A month later, he returned again, begging for forgiveness and pressuring her to live with him again. His controlling behaviour terrified her. This time, she didn't hesitate. She called the police, gave her statement, and reached out to Shakti for support, determined to break free from the cycle of abuse.

When arriving at Shakti, the client displayed a high level of distress and fear, particularly regarding the abuser's unpredictable behaviour. She experienced sleep disturbances due to ongoing threats and harassment. She expressed frustration with the justice system, as she felt initial police responses did not adequately address the abuser's breaches of the Protection Order. She was deeply concerned about her son's well-being and safety, particularly due to the abuser's attempts to manipulate her through their child.

Interventions:

Through trauma-informed care and culturally responsive support, the team provided AB with the reassurance and resources needed to rebuild her life.

Short-term interventions:

- AB and her son were placed in Shakti's refuge.
- Legal support was provided to get Protection order and Parenting Order

Medium-term interventions:

- AB joined Shakti's Life Skills Program (LSP), where she learned about the legal system in New Zealand, financial literacy, English and self-confidence skills.
- Employment preparation workshops helped her build a CV, practice interviews, and understand her workplace rights.
- She attended counselling for her well-being.
- AB was also referred to the MOJ safety program.

Long-term interventions:

- AB was supported to resettle in the community through the Community Risk Management (CRM) program
- A home safety alarm was installed at her place

Challenges:

- Language barrier: The client did not speak English fluently, particularly regarding legal documents, requiring interpreter services.
- Legal delay: The police had difficulty locating the abuser, delaying the serving of legal documents.
- Emotional Trauma: The client struggled with fear and guilt, making her hesitant to take legal action initially.

Outcomes:

The final protection order and final parenting order were successfully granted. AB completed the Ministry of Justice's Safety Program and Shakti's Women's Empowerment Program, which helped increase her understanding of domestic violence and her rights. She received trauma-informed counselling, supporting her healing journey. She secured stable housing and achieved financial independence through WINZ support. The client and her son are now settled in a safe community, free from the abuser's influence. The abuser was served the legal documents and has been formally warned regarding further contact. The client gained independence, resilience, and self-confidence, breaking free from the cycle of violence.

**EMPOWERED WOMEN
EMPOWER WOMEN**



SHAKTI WELLINGTON

This year, Wellington has been marked with lots of growth as well as challenges. Our small team worked hard to support migrant women and children who were going through difficult situations. Even though we had staff changes during the year, the team stayed committed to giving comprehensive, effective and culturally appropriate support.

Our clients came from 11 different ethnicities, many of whom were going through serious abuse with a varied age range from 20 to 65. Some of the main issues included physical, emotional, sexual, financial, and immigration-related abuse, along with isolation, threats, family pressure, and honour-based violence. Most of our new clients were Indian women from Punjabi-speaking, Hindu backgrounds, often on temporary visas and unsure about their rights in New Zealand. Their situations were made harder by language barriers, health issues, and cultural expectations around marriage and family roles.

In total we supported 61 children throughout the year. These children had been through a lot, including family violence and big life changes.

We made sure every referral was done with care and cultural understanding. We worked closely with immigration lawyers, health professionals (especially female doctors), counsellors, and food banks that offer halal or vegetarian options. Women who wanted to build independent lives were connected training courses, and English classes.

Our advocacy works this year made a real difference. We helped clients extend their visas, access better care during pregnancy, and made sure their dietary needs were respected in the safe house. We also worked with other organisations to help them understand the special types of abuse migrant women face—like pressure from family, fear of shame, and threats of honour-based violence.

In terms of service delivery, we improved how we offer legal help, made sure our safe houses had food that matched clients' cultural and religious needs, and offered mental health support. We also got more volunteers involved, and our Life Skills Program helped women learn new tools for independence.

One of the most moving moments was a shared community lunch organised by the safe house residents themselves. Clients brought recipes from their cultures, cooked together, and created a space of shared understanding and bonding. For many, it was the first time in weeks—or even months—that they had felt joy in a communal setting. We noted that this gathering helped break down language and cultural barriers among clients, creating an informal support network within the refuge itself. These pictures show a few cultural celebrations we had in the safehouse.

Many women told us they finally felt safe, respected, and understood—often for the first time in a long while. That, for us, is the heart of our work.



Networking and collaboration:

This year, the Wellington team focused on building strong relationships with other organisations to better support migrant and refugee women affected by family violence.

We regularly attended local domestic violence interagency meetings with groups like NZ Police, Oranga Tamariki, Kāinga Ora, and health providers. These meetings helped us share updates, discuss high-risk cases, and ensure that cultural factors were included in safety planning. At the Women's Wellness Forum, we presented on the challenges faced by women on temporary visas, especially around maternity care, interpreter access, and legal support. This led to interest from health professionals wanting training from Shakti on culturally safe practice.

We also met with faith and cultural leaders from South Asian temples and Muslim centres to discuss how culture can influence family violence. A key outcome was a local temple agreeing to display Shakti's helpline and referral posters. A meeting with Immigration NZ gave us a chance to raise concerns about the struggles temporary visa holders face and explore ways to improve support pathways. We continued working with groups like Kaibosh, health nurses, and resettlement agencies to ensure clients receive timely, wrap-around support.

These efforts strengthened partnerships, improved client referrals, and raised awareness of Shakti's work across the community.



CASE STUDY

Background:

N.C., a woman in her late 20s, moved to New Zealand after a marriage arranged by her family. She entered New Zealand on a visitor visa, sponsored by her New Zealand citizen husband. However, the marriage soon turned abusive. After moving to New Zealand, N.C. experienced emotional, verbal, and physical abuse from her husband, as well as from her in-laws.

History of Abuse:

Her husband repeatedly pressured her to return to their home country. When she did go back, the client discovered that she was pregnant with the abuser's child. However, her family in New Zealand refused to take on the responsibility of her pregnancy. As the situation was viewed as taboo for a single mother in her home country, the client had no choice but to return to New Zealand, where she stayed with extended family members.

The abuser was aware of the pregnancy but showed no interest in being involved with the child. Feeling isolated and without support, N.C. eventually reported her situation to the police and was referred to Shakti for help.

Intervention:

Initial Support and Intervention: When N.C. arrived at the Shakti safe house, she was dealing with pregnancy complications, including dietary issues, high blood pressure, and mental health concerns. Her situation required immediate medical attention, and she was admitted to a hospital where she received the necessary medical care and emotional support. Shakti's caseworker worked closely with her to create a safety plan that included immediate medical support and ongoing care.

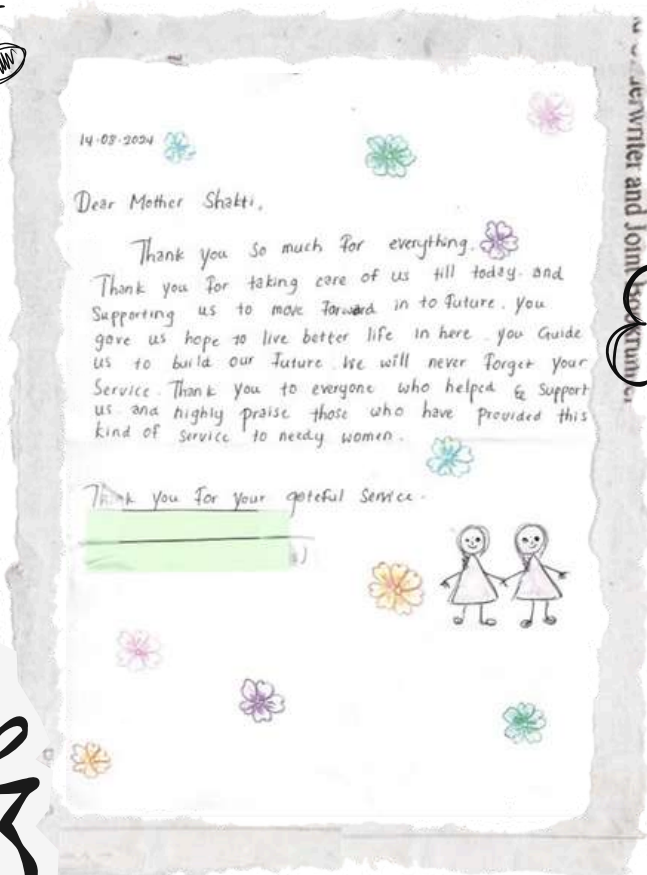
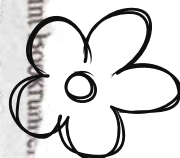
Short-Term Support: Shakti provided a safe and supportive environment for N.C. to recover and heal. We assisted with her legal issues, including immigration support and ensuring her safety through protection and parenting orders. Emotional support was provided, helping the client regain her confidence and stability. Additionally, the client received midwifery support throughout her pregnancy to ensure both her and her child's health.

Long-Term Plan: The long-term support plan involved relocation to a safer environment, far away from the abuser and his family, in order to provide the client with a fresh start. Shakti continued to provide emotional support, helping the client cope with the trauma of the abuse she had experienced. The goal was to ensure that the client and her child would be born into a safe environment, free from violence and fear.

Outcome:

After many months of abuse and rejection, the client finally began to feel supported and empowered. The safe environment provided by Shakti allowed her to regain confidence in herself and her future. She looked forward to the birth of her child with a sense of hope, feeling safe, emotionally stable, and positive for the first time in a long while. N.C. expressed a deep sense of gratitude for the support she received, which helped her overcome the trauma and uncertainty she had faced.

Through Shakti's intervention, N.C. transitioned from a state of fear and emotional instability to one of safety, support, and optimism. The outcome of this case demonstrates the power of a safe, supportive environment in helping individuals heal from abuse and regain control over their lives.





SHAKTI TAURANGA

This year marked a period of growth and transformation for the Tauranga team. While the journey brought its challenges, it also reinforced our resilience and strengthened our sense of purpose. Through change and transition, we emerged as a vibrant, united team—renewed in energy and deeply committed to the communities we serve.

Our team reflects a dynamic mix of passionate young people and experienced staff. This blend has fostered creativity, adaptability, and strengthened partnerships with local organisations, sparking meaningful new collaborations across the region.

The majority of our referrals came directly from the New Zealand Police. Other sources included the Shakti crisis line, Tauranga Women's Refuge, self-referrals, Plunket, and other local agencies. While not every referral resulted in a client service, often due to complex personal reasons such as fear of community backlash or family pressure; we always respect each woman's choice. Their voice, their agency, and their safety remain at the heart of everything we do. And when they do reach out, we are there, fiercely standing by them with unwavering support.

Most of the women we worked with were of Indian descent, followed by those of Fijian Indian and Filipino backgrounds. The majority were young women between the ages of 20 and 45. The stories they shared were often marked by emotional pain, verbal abuse, financial control, and physical violence—but also by immense courage and resilience.

To provide holistic, wraparound support, we worked closely with key partners including the District Health Board (DHB), Women's Refuge, Tauranga Living Without Violence, Oranga Tamariki, and Sexual Harm Support services. These partnerships were vital in ensuring our clients received comprehensive care and protection.

This year was not just about statistics - it was about meaningful change, personal transformation, and the strength found in every journey we supported. As individuals and as a team, we grew stronger. We stood beside our clients with compassion and conviction. And in doing so, we were reminded that even in times of hardship, there is strength—and through that strength, there is hope.



CASE STUDY

Background:

When the police referred the client to Shakti, T.L. arrived frightened and unsure of what lay ahead. She came to New Zealand from South Asia on a work visa, full of hope for a new beginning. Unfortunately, she found herself trapped in an abusive marriage with a man much older than her.

History of abuse:

Her husband controlled every aspect of her life. He withheld money, isolated her from the outside world, and subjected her to relentless emotional and physical abuse. His severe drinking problem made matters worse, fuelling his violent outbursts. For years, she endured in silence, unsure where to turn. Language barriers and cultural stigma around seeking help made her hesitant to reach out. But after a severe domestic violence incident, she finally found herself at a turning point and sought for help.

Interventions:

Shakti assured her that she was not alone. Through trauma-informed care and culturally responsive support, the team provided T.L. with the reassurance and resources needed to rebuild her life.

Short term interventions:

- T.L. was placed in Shakti's refuge, ensuring she had a secure place to stay.
- Legal aid helped her apply for a Protection Order and DV visa
- She was connected with a GP and mental health services for trauma-informed counselling.

Medium-term interventions:

- With legal guidance, she gained clarity about her immigration status, reducing her dependency on her abuser.
- She joined Shakti's Life Skills Program (LSP), where she learned English, financial literacy, and self-confidence skills.
- Employment preparation workshops helped her build a CV, practice interviews, and understand her workplace rights.



Long-term interventions:

- Shakti supported her in securing stable housing, allowing her to move forward without fear.
- With support from the community, she started forming meaningful social connections.
- With the knowledge and skills learned in LSP, she found a job, achieving financial independence for the first time in years.

Outcomes:

Her transformation was remarkable. She gained confidence in speaking English and managing daily life on her own. With a new job, a safe home, and a growing support network, she no longer felt powerless. Instead, she felt empowered, independent, and hopeful. She expressed deep gratitude for the support she received, saying she never imagined she could rebuild her life from the ground up. Her journey is now a beacon of hope for other women facing similar struggles—proof that with the right help, freedom and self-worth can be reclaimed. As she moves forward, she continues to work on strengthening her financial stability and expanding her support network, ensuring long-term safety and well-being.



*Adversity is not a stumbling
block. It is a stepping stone to
GREATNESS.*

- Shawn Anchor



SHAKTI CHRISTCHURCH

This year, our Christchurch team continued to be a strong pillar of support for migrant and refugee women across the South Island, reaching as far south as Invercargill with the support of our Dunedin office. Shakti Christchurch is now firmly recognised and trusted as a specialist ethnic service provider in the region.

Our team is also growing to meet the increased demand across various services, including crisis support, counselling, and safety planning. Despite limited resources, we worked tirelessly to tackle challenges such as housing insecurity, immigration barriers, language difficulties, and limited agency coordination – extending our outreach into rural areas like Otago.

Most of our clients were women aged 30–45, often with young children. Most of them identified as Indian, followed by other Asian countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia, while others came from Fijian Indian, Middle Eastern, and African backgrounds. Emotional, psychological, financial, and physical abuse were the most common forms of violence reported, often worsened by alcohol abuse, dowry pressures, and cultural stigma. Many clients struggled to identify forms of violence like marital rape due to entrenched cultural norms.

Self-referrals made up majority of our caseload, reflecting growing trust in Shakti's culturally matched services. The remainder came from police, GPs, and other agencies seeking culturally responsive support. Immigration-related abuse, insecure housing, and financial exploitation were common among non-resident clients, often prolonging their stay in safe housing.

Key successes included providing culturally respectful legal and immigration support, specialised counselling, and education on recognising harmful practices like dowry demands and forced marriages. Our Christchurch office became a trusted safe space, working closely with police, housing providers, and lawyers to secure homes and protection for survivors, including those in isolated rural areas.

Strong partnerships with the New Zealand Police, healthcare providers, legal services, and housing agencies allowed us to build a more coordinated response for clients. Through these collaborations, we continue to advocate for better, culturally sensitive services for migrant and refugee survivors across the South Island.



The Shakti Christchurch Team



Dear Masato, Irene, Satou,

Thank you for all the support that have been provided to me since Jan 2017. I'm very grateful that I've encountered all of you during the more challenging time in my life.

Our path might cross again in the future (in a different way). I wish always with you success and happiness always and around.

All the best to

Zita & Miles

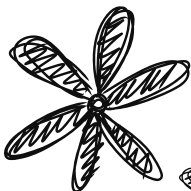
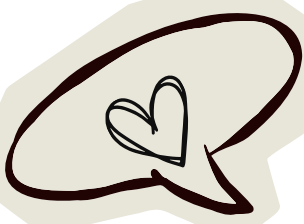


Q11) How do you think we can provide you a better service?

Would you like to give any further comments or suggestions?

SHAKTI HAS WORKED AFTER US AND MY 2 CHILDREN'S WELL BEING SINCE WE FIRST EXPERIENCED THE RABBIT INCIDENT WE TRUST THEM AND ARE GRATEFUL FOR EVERYTHING THEY HAVE DONE TO MAKE OUR LIVES BETTER AND US TO FEEL BETTER. IMPROVE OUR SITUATION AND MAKE USX NEXT.

I'D LIKE TO THANK SHAKTI FOR TAKING US UNDER THEIR WINGS AND GIVING US HOPE, CONFIDENCE AND WISDOMTH TO MOVE FORWARD. ME & MY CHILDREN WOULD FURTHERMORE COULGE TO STAND UP FOR OURSELVES IF IT WASNT FOR THEIR GUIDANCE ALONG THE WAY ALL THIS TIME. THEY TAKE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SERIOUSLY AND ILL ALWAYS BE THANKFUL TO THEM. FROM THE TIME THEY HAVE GAVE A BELTFAST COKE ON ME/US 2 THE CHILDREN WHEN WE WERE STILL LIVING IN THE HOME WHERE VIOLENCE WOULD USUALLY OCCURE, TO THE TIME THAT THEY'VE REMOVED US A FEW BACKS FROM THEM THAT HAVE, UNTIL NOW THAT VIOLENT ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN SET, SHAKTI HAS BEEN PROVIDING US WITH NEEDED ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION TO HELP US GET THROUGH. THANK YOU FOR HELPING US WITH A CHILDREN OUT THERE GET OUT OF THE VIOLENT CIRCUMSTANCES. SHAKTI STAFF HAS BEEN PROFESSIONAL & FAMILY ACCOMMODATION. APPROACH



CASE STUDIES

Case study 1:

Background

MX, a young mother, approached Shakti after enduring verbal, physical and psychological abuse from her ex-partner and his family. She had met her ex-husband when he returned to his home country, and they later married in New Zealand. The couple relocated from the North Island to the South and lived with his extended family, after which the abuse escalated. Her husband began hiding things from her and subjected her to emotional and physical abuse repeatedly under the influence of his mom. The mom controlled the household, shamed MX on social media, and encouraged her husband's manipulative and controlling behaviour.

History of Abuse

MX experienced sustained emotional abuse from both the partner and his mother. She reported that her partner was heavily influenced by his mother, who encouraged him to withdraw financial and emotional support, criticise MX's role as a mother, and suggest removing her from the household.

His mother also took issue with MX and her child speaking in their native language, accusing them of being disrespectful. When MX raised concerns, her partner dismissed or avoided the conversation.

MX also reported intimidation involving spiritual threats and controlling behaviour. A significant moment came when her daughter revealed that her father had been monitoring her and sharing the information with his mother. The child was distressed and sought support from school counselling services.

MX later found messages confirming these actions, revealing a pattern of surveillance and control. Both she and her daughter were left feeling fearful and isolated within the home. Her husband showed little interest in their daughter, creating a sense of fear and detachment.

Intervention and Collaboration with Other Agencies:

Shakti facilitated collaboration with various agencies to ensure comprehensive support for MX:

- Portia Law: Provided legal advocacy, resulting in a Protection Order (PO) and Parenting Order.
- Ministry of Justice (MOJ): Enrolled MX and her elder daughter in the safety program to enhance their understanding of legal rights and personal safety.
- Work and Income (WINZ): Assisted with emergency motel accommodation and secured sole parenting benefits.
- Cancer Society and Open Home Foundation: Referred MX for additional emotional and community support following her cancer diagnosis.
- Support during medical appointments and the Chemo treatment period.
- Shakti's In-House Counselling Services: Offered ongoing emotional support and guidance through an ethnic counsellor.
- Halo Guard Safelets through Christchurch Aunties: Provided safety bracelets as an additional measure for her protection.
- Community resettlement support: Gathered resources for setting up her new home in a safe location.

Challenges

The intervention process progressed smoothly, with no major challenges reported. However, during her time with our service, the client received a cancer diagnosis, which added another layer of difficulty to addressing her family situation. Although this news was a significant shock, the ongoing support from her caseworker, counsellor and her mother helped her build confidence in handling the situation. Due to these additional needs, the client and her kids remained engaged with our services for an extended period beyond the usual timeframe.

Outcomes

MX achieved several milestones during her recovery journey:

- Secured safe accommodation during critical periods and later transitioned to a suitable housing in the community.
- Successfully established legal protections, including a PO and a Parenting Order.
- Completed the MOJ safety program with her elder daughter.
- Accessed consistent counselling services through Shakti.
- Volunteered at the Cancer Society, fostering a sense of purpose and community engagement.
- Actively participated in the SDETAT Life Skill Programme, as well as practical sessions with Dress for Success and other SDETAT partner agencies. This helped boost her confidence and decision to do well in terms of pursuing further studies and developing a career.
- MX has successfully resettled into the community and is adjusting well to her new environment as an independent mother. She has emerged as an empowered woman and is looking forward to restarting her studies next year—something she had to abandon in the past.

Case study 2:

Background:

M.J. is a client in her 30s with two children, originally from the Middle East, referred to Shakti by police after numerous domestic violence incidents. M.J. comes from a cultural background where familial harmony and marriage sanctity are heavily emphasised, making the decision to confront and leave an abusive relationship profoundly difficult. In her culture, both religious and societal norms often discourage divorce, viewing it as a failure to uphold marital vows, which added layers of guilt and conflict to her situation.

History of abuse:

M.J. grew up in a family where gender roles were fluid, which starkly contrasted with her married life dominated by her husband and his mother's traditional views. They got married in their home country and lived with her husband and his dominating mother. The husband and his mother started abusing her emotionally and physically, not long after the marriage. The abuse even escalated when she was pregnant and continued despite multiple police interventions. After relocating to New Zealand, the abuse evolved, with her husband using both verbal assaults and economic control to maintain power, including using their children as emotional leverage. Multiple incidents where her husband threatened deportation during a verbal outburst led her to seek help. He had a knife with him that he used to threaten her and the kids.

When she first came to Shakti, her emotional state and fear posed significant challenges to engagement and cooperation in the initial stage. Her efforts to engage were also complicated by her husband's controlling behaviour, even following her to an appointment, which she cleverly evaded by altering her route.

Interventions

Short-term intervention: Shakti implemented immediate safety measures by relocating the client and kids to our refuge with the support of NZ Police, considering the risk.

Medium-term interventions

- Legal advocacy was provided to assist the client in obtaining a Protection Order and a parenting order.
- Enrolment in the MOJ Adult and Children Safety Programme
- Shakti in-house Counselling
- Life Skill Programme is designed for survivors of domestic violence to foster independence.

Long-term interventions: Assistance with Community Resettlement: Safety upgrades, Furniture/appliances for new house, Continuous home-based support was provided by case worker. The client and her kids were eventually transitioned to the community.

Outcome:

The client found a safe rental and job for herself. The client continues her emotional healing, engages in educational and training programs to enhance her job prospects, and has a goal to secure her own housing for herself and her children, marking significant strides toward rebuilding her life post-abuse.

SHAKTI YOUTH SERVICE

Over the past year, Shakti Youth has been steadily carving out its place in the youth advocacy space, quietly but purposefully. We've made significant strides advocating to youth nationally. Each youth worker who has passed through Shakti has contributed meaningfully to laying the foundation for what we hope will become a robust, youth-led movement in the years ahead.

We visited several universities and high schools to talk about important topics that affect many young people, such as forced marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and family or cultural pressure. These visits gave young people the chance to speak openly with our youth workers in a safe, private space without fear of judgment. Often, they feel more comfortable talking to someone closer to their age who understands their background.

In the past year, we supported many youth clients across the country. Most of the young people came to us by themselves. Others were referred by the police, schools or universities, hospitals, and some through Women's Refuge, Red Cross, Ministry of Justice, and similar organisations.

The young people we supported came from many different backgrounds. Most were Indian, followed by Sri Lankan, Fijian-Indian, Afghan, and Filipino. We also worked with youth from Chinese, Korean, Burmese, Thai, Middle Eastern, and Vietnamese communities.

While we may be in the early stages of our youth engagement journey, the past year has shown us the immense potential that lies in creating culturally responsive, youth-centered spaces. With every school visit, conversation, and referral, we are reminded of the importance of amplifying young voices—especially those navigating complex intersections of culture, identity, and safety.



CASE STUDY

Background:

L.M., a 21-year-old female, originally from the Middle East, was referred to Shakti by another agency. She relocated to New Zealand two years ago with her mother and brother on a resident visa. Her father, who has been residing in New Zealand for an extended period, holds a Permanent Resident Visa. L.M. completed her secondary education back home and is currently enrolled at a University in New Zealand.

History of Abuse:

Throughout her life, L.M. experienced verbal and mental abuse from both her mother and brother, who frequently told her that she should be dead and threatened her. Her father, who was mostly absent due to living overseas, would verbally and physically abuse her and her mother during his visits. Despite her mother's attempts to leave the relationship, she remained due to pressure from her grandparents. L.M.'s father, an alcoholic, has threatened her and her mother with a knife.

Upon moving to New Zealand, L.M.'s parents and brother pressured her to work at her father's restaurant, prioritizing her role as a housewife over her academic pursuits. L.M. was forced to work at the restaurant, where her father physically abused her in front of her colleagues and withheld payment for her work. He would also come to her university unannounced to monitor her interactions and frequently call her throughout the day to inquire about her whereabouts and companions.

Intervention:

L.M. sought help from Shakti, fearing for her and her partner's safety due to her father's threats to kill her and harm her partner or anyone she is seen with. She had already obtained a Protection Order. Lucy was also concerned about being sent back home for a forced marriage.

Short-term intervention:

After assessing the risks in Christchurch, L.M. was transferred to another city for her safety. A comprehensive safety plan was implemented, including advising her boyfriend to contact the police if her father made any threats.

Medium- and Long-term intervention:

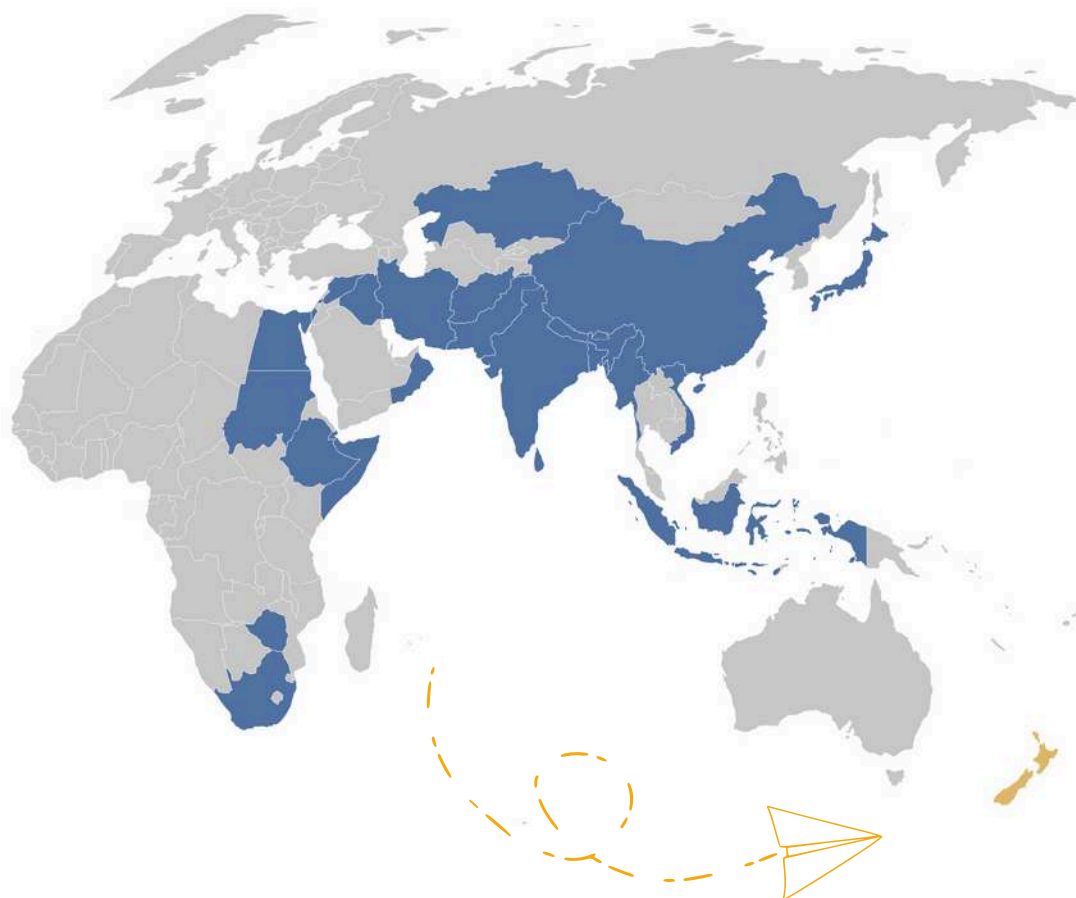
In the new city, L.M. received counselling and participated in the Life Skills Program through Shakti. A safety watch was provided to her to keep her safe. Additionally, her lecturers were also contacted to ensure she received the necessary support. With the assistance of the safety watch, counselling, and regular meetings, L.M. regained confidence and was able to navigate the city without fear.

Outcome:

With the help of Shakti, L.M.'s mental health has significantly improved, allowing her to live the life she had always desired, free from fear and with newfound freedom.



COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF OUR CLIENTS



BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The Ethnic Best Practice Guidelines for Government departments were successfully delivered in 2023, accompanied by four workshop sessions held across Christchurch, Dunedin, Wellington, and Auckland.

Following this success, we secured additional funding to deliver further workshops in 2025. Given the high demand from the Government departments and non-profit groups, the 2025 rollout began in the South Island.

In April 2025, Shakti conducted the first training session in Timaru. The session was divided over two days—one day dedicated to Government department representatives, and the other to NGO groups from surrounding regions.

The following week, we delivered the second workshop session in Christchurch. We extend our sincere thanks to the Christchurch Ministry of Social Development (MSD) office for generously providing their training room. Despite the windy and rainy weather on both days, all registered participants attended and actively engaged in the workshop.

We look forward to continuing our national workshop delivery throughout 2025, reaching all major cities across both the North and South Islands.





Become
The
Change

SHAKTI COUNSELLING & WELLBEING SERVICES

Overview

Shakti Counselling & Wellbeing Services supported women and children impacted by family violence through safety and counselling programmes. This year, we received 340 referrals under the Ministry of Justice's Protected Persons Safety Programme—217 for women and 123 for children—marking an approximate 33% increase from the previous year. Services were delivered across Auckland, Wellington, Tauranga, and Christchurch, with additional referrals from other regions, reflecting our expanding reach. One-on-one Strengthening and Supporting Safety Programmes remained the preferred format, addressing privacy and language needs.

The team underwent key transitions, including the departures of two facilitators, six new facilitator trainings, and the appointment of a new Programmes Manager. A new Administrator also joined the counselling team, helping streamline operations. During this period, we also secured funding from the Lottery Community to support the appointment and sustainability of registered Counsellors nationally, as well as to support the administration team's wages.

Our counselling team, comprising student counsellors, provisionally registered counsellors, and fully registered counsellors, provided counselling to hundreds of clients, representing over 30 different ethnic backgrounds. In Christchurch, our Oranga Tamariki-funded Children Witnessing Violence Programme successfully met its service targets for the year.

A Ministry of Justice site visit in March 2025 acknowledged Shakti's strong operational systems, timely reporting, and continued delivery of high-quality, client-centred services.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ) contracted Protected Persons Safety Programme

During the reporting period, we received referrals for women and children across Auckland, Wellington, Tauranga, and Christchurch, with additional referrals from other regions, demonstrating the broad reach of our services. Shakti is contracted by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to deliver both Strengthening Safety Services (for adult victims under Police Safety Orders or awaiting Protection Order outcomes in the criminal or family courts) and Supporting Safety Programmes (for adult and child victims with Protection Orders or those awaiting Protection Orders). Our Safety Programmes typically range from 5 to 15 hours for individual participants and may extend further for group sessions; however, the majority of women survivors have preferred individual programmes due to concerns around confidentiality, varying English language abilities, and other personal circumstances. Children participate either individually or alongside their siblings, based on age suitability for effective group work.

At the start of the reporting period, we had 10 active Safety Programme Facilitators working either part-time or as independent contractors, bringing professional backgrounds in counselling, psychology, education, and creative therapies. During 2024, two facilitators left our services—one returning to Australia to reunite with her family and another transitioning to a different career opportunity. To address these vacancies and support programme expansion, we trained three new Children’s Safety Programme facilitators and three new Adult Safety Programme facilitators. In addition, we made a conscious effort to recruit facilitators from diverse ethnic backgrounds to better meet the cultural and linguistic needs of our clients. A key development during the year was the appointment of a new Manager for the Women’s Safety and Wellbeing Programme, who has brought fresh leadership and stability to the growing team.

While the reporting period has had its highs, we also experienced some challenges especially when one senior staff who is also the Lead Counsellor and Facilitator as well as Supervisor, had to go on leave suddenly for a few weeks after a serious fall early this year. However, she continued to be available for consultation, casework and management guidance, through which the team felt supported. Despite such challenges, the Manager and her team did some exemplary work in ensuring that the work we do continued as usual and that no client services were neglected.

MoJ Site Visit

On March 10, 2025, Shakti Counselling & Wellbeing Services hosted a site review/audit visit from the Ministry of Justice. This valuable in-person meeting provided an opportunity for review of our service delivery, programme operations, and reporting processes. The Ministry commended Shakti for strong operational systems, timely data management (including Exess database updates and programme documentation), and consistent service delivery, despite recent staffing transitions.

Key areas of discussion included Shakti’s proactive approach to meeting clients’ immediate needs (e.g., safety alarms, food support, social work referrals), culturally responsive service delivery, and the seamless integration between safety and wider organisational supports. The Ministry acknowledged Shakti’s strategic use of individual contractors, recent onboarding of new facilitators across regions, and the diverse skill sets of the team. The growing demand from Arabic and Middle Eastern clients was also noted, alongside the innovative use of remote sessions and potential inclusion of dance therapy in support services.

The Ministry also praised our accurate record-keeping, risk assessments, detailed session notes, and client observations during file reviews. Discussions on the FVPP01A (concern of notice to MOJ) process highlighted Shakti’s concern about the restrictive criteria for raising safety issues post-Protection Order. The Ministry welcomed this feedback and encouraged timely referrals to enable urgent judicial review.

Shakti remains committed to meeting Ministry standards and continuously improving client outcomes through culturally safe, accessible, and innovative practice. Besides the site visit, MOJ engages in periodic monitoring of our client work through examination of completed client files.

It is heartening to learn that as per MOJ's recent assessment in terms of how MOJ services are delivered nationally through many different agencies, Shakti's performance was deemed as strong and as above average.



An example of Mandala work done by a participant during an MOJ safety programme session

Shakti Counselling Services

During the reporting period from April 2024 to March 2025, our counselling unit provided a total of 965 hours of counselling to 193 individuals, referred internally from within the Shakti group. The majority of these referrals were adult women survivors of violence. Sessions were delivered both face-to-face and online, providing flexible support options to meet the needs of clients.

Clients self-identified with a wide range of ethnicities, reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve. These included: Chinese, Filipino, Sri Lankan, Fiji-Indian, Afghani, Pakistani, Thai, Korean, Irani, Indian, African, Ethiopian, Iraqi, Indonesian, Taiwanese, Nepali, Bangladeshi, Malaysian, Jordanian, Uyghur, Middle Eastern, Syrian, Palestinian, Egyptian, Tunisian, Bhutanese, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and South African Indian.

Our team included six registered counsellors and one student counsellor on placement. One fully registered counsellor is accredited with ACC for Sensitive Claims, which allows survivors of sexual abuse within Shakti to access specialised support through referrals.

However, access to the Work & Income subsidy for counselling remained low. Many women were either not-Permanent Resident or ineligible due to their incomes exceeding the subsidy threshold. In such cases, Shakti provided counselling services free of cost, and we are grateful for the contribution of our student counsellors, whose support helped us maintain service delivery despite funding challenges.

As highlighted in previous years, the lack of sustainable funding in the counselling and mental health sector remains a significant barrier. Many counsellors, once fully registered, transition into government roles or private practice due to the higher earning potential. This has made it increasingly difficult for Shakti to retain experienced, registered counsellors, given the high wage expectations.

We are pleased to report that new funding was secured through the Lottery Grants Board, thanks to the initiative of our Lead Counsellor and Supervisor. This funding will help sustain our counselling services and improve support for our clients moving forward.

The way I see myself

Circle the statements that describe you

Handwritten responses to the statement "The way I see myself" are shown below, with the statements that were circled by the participant:

- I have many talents
- I do embarrassing things
- I am funny
- I am good at sharing
- I like to help people
- I am loud
- I follow rules
- I am mostly happy
- I don't say how I feel
- I worry a lot
- I am boring
- I have many friends
- I care about the way I look
- I like to laugh a lot
- I like to be bossy
- I am often unhappy
- I am moody a lot
- I work hard
- I like to fight
- I am shy
- I am lazy
- I talk too much
- I do what others tell me
- I get angry easily
- I'd rather be on my own
- I am smart
- I get others into trouble

Sample of session work

Phoenix (a pseudonym) is a young Asian woman who lives in New Zealand. Phoenix was an orphan and was adopted when she was a baby. She quit school just after her intermediate years and worked as a labourer to earn income and help out her adoptive parents. When she married the perpetrator, she worked endlessly with odd jobs to raise their daughter and pay debts due to the perpetrator's long-time gambling habit.

The history of abuse started when Phoenix's husband (the perpetrator) groomed her into an underage intimate relationship. Phoenix was pregnant with their child at the age of fourteen. She married the perpetrator when she came to the legal age of marriage. Since then, her life has been controlled not only by her husband but also by his family. The abuse had been going on for many years in their home country and continued when they arrived in New Zealand as new migrants. In New Zealand, there are multiple incidents where the perpetrator escalated his violence from jealousy and control to grievous bodily harm (GBH) towards Phoenix. The GBH incident prompted Phoenix and the daughter to escape to the street without personal belongings, and a neighbour contacted the Police. Phoenix and the daughter were later taken to the hospital and moved to the refuge.

The facilitator identified several key issues in Phoenix's case. As a new migrant, Phoenix was reluctant to seek help in New Zealand due to language barriers and her non-Permanent Resident status. Phoenix disclosed that the perpetrator and his family members in New Zealand, along with those in her home country, had abused her psychologically, physically and financially for many years. The perpetrator showed no remorse toward Phoenix and her daughter and continued to cause emotional distress to them even after the Temporary Protection Order was granted. He withheld their IDs and passports and exposed them on social media. This fact emphasised that the perpetrator's abusive behaviour was intentional and selectively targeted toward Phoenix and her daughter.

Cultural factors were also highlighted when Phoenix revealed the perpetrator's grooming and coercion behaviour. Still, his abusive behaviours had been enabled by his family members back in their home country and even in New Zealand. In New Zealand, the perpetrator and his family members kept Phoenix and her daughter isolated in their home, prevented her from reporting any abuse to the authorities and threatened her deportation if she sought help.

When the Safety Programme was completed, Phoenix expressed gratitude for the support and guidance she received. The programme gave her strength and determination to take control of her life and protect her child from violence. Phoenix also highlighted that having a facilitator who can speak her native language was helpful in understanding the materials and resources provided through the programme.



A sample of work done with a child during a session

CASE STUDY - CHILD SAFETY PROGRAMME

Terry is an eight-year-old boy who, originally from East Asia. He and his younger brother experienced physical, emotional, and verbal abuse from their father, a practice their father attributed to traditional parenting methods. Since early childhood, both boys were also exposed to their father's abuse of their mother.

During the initial assessment at our Safehouse, the boy appeared relaxed and trusting the facilitator, openly expressing his feelings about his situation. He shared that he felt safe in the Safehouse for the first time and had a clear understanding of why they were there. Shortly after, a Protection Order and other court orders, including an Occupation Order, were granted, the family returned to their home.

However, during the first session upon their return home, the boy revealed that he felt scared again, particularly due to the belief that his father was spying on him. He expressed that he didn't feel safe, even at school, and was hesitant to share these feelings with his mother, not wanting to worry her. He was acutely aware of his mother's distress, particularly since she had taken legal action against his father. Furthermore, he understood that his mother had repeatedly forgiven his father in the past, influenced by her religious beliefs. It became clear that his fear stemmed from the possibility of his mother forgiving his father once again and allowing him to return home.

During the programme sessions, the boy was encouraged to safely identify and express his emotions, learning to recognize and describe his feelings. He was also taught to distinguish between genuine threats and false alarms. Additionally, the programme provided education on the unacceptability of family violence and reinforced that he was not to blame for his father's abusive behaviour towards him, his brother, and his mother.

The child engaged in various activities, including colouring, drawing, and play therapy, aimed at building his self-worth, self-esteem, and confidence. Towards the end of the programme Terry said had learnt a lot and felt confident about keeping safe with his brother, irrespective of whether or not his mother would forgive his father again and reconcile.

Children Witnessing Violence Programme – Oranga Tamariki

Shakti Christchurch has a small contract with Oranga Tamariki for working with children witnessing abuse. We are happy to report that our local children's programme facilitator successfully fulfilled the contractual obligations having provided the programme to 15 children during the period.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges of limited funding and an increasing workload, this reporting period has been a testament to the resilience and commitment of the Shakti Counselling & Wellbeing Services team to community wellbeing. The growing needs across regions have highlighted the importance of expanding our support capacity. Budget constraints posed real challenges, but they have also fuelled our determination to grow stronger.

Looking ahead, we are excited to focus on securing additional resources through external grants and partnerships. Our goal is to expand our capacity, deepen the impact of our work, and reach even more women and children seeking safety and healing.

We are incredibly proud of our team whose compassion and dedication continue to drive our mission forward. Above all, we are honoured by the trust placed in us by the women, children, and families we serve – their journeys inspire our commitment to continue empowering strength and building new beginnings.



**WE ARE ALL ENTITLED
TO BE FREE AND
EQUAL**



LIFE SKILLS PROGRAMME, IN COLLABORATION WITH SDETAT

The Life Skills Program is a 12-week course focused on providing basic education and awareness, followed by the option to undertake a digital computer course. It is designed for survivors of domestic violence, serving as a bridge to open new opportunities for employment and future career pathways. The Second Chance Life Skills Program aims to educate, empower, and emphasize the importance of becoming employable and self-reliant, supporting survivors in their safe transition toward a new future.

Shakti works collaboratively with Sustainable Development Education Training and Advisory Trust (SDETAT) to deliver the Life Skills Program, offering various training for 12 weeks based on the individual needs of survivors. This extension provides valuable work experience and exposure to New Zealand's workplace culture.



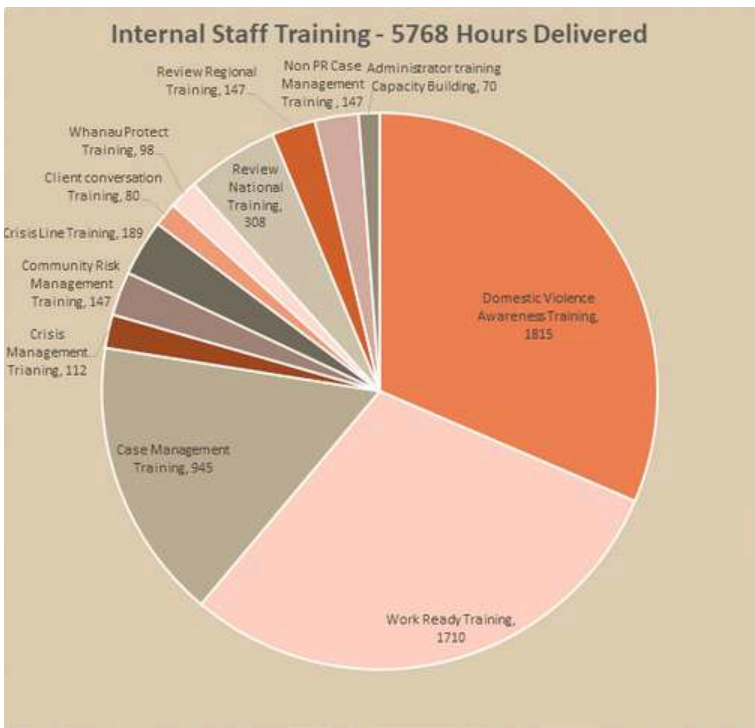
SHAKTI STAFF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL TRAINING

Internal Training

SDETAT undertook various training programs during the year to provide in-house training for Shakti's new and existing staff e.g. Social workers, Counsellors, Ministry of Justice Facilitators, Case Workers, Administrative Staff, and Youth Workers. It also engages external facilitators to deliver staff capacity-building workshops.

In 2024- 25, 5768 hours of internal training were delivered, covering special topics such as Work Ready, Crisis Management, and Domestic Violence Awareness, alongside in-house training, supervision, and external workshops focused on capacity building and professional development.

Workshops and ongoing capacity building were provided by SDETAT to all staff and volunteers during the year. New recruitment staff and volunteers took Domestic Violence Awareness training equivalent to 1815 hours which is a significant increase from last year's training hours.



EXTERNAL WORKSHOPS FOR STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING

During the year Shakti collaborated with SDETAT to engage with staff, volunteer and clients using variety of topics and specific subjects to deliver in total of 366 hours of workshops.

The Staff participated and had questions that relate to the better understanding of the case work files and case management. The aim of the workshop being sharing the most recent changes to the legislation, policy and procedure that impact the case solving for the clients. The Facilitators professional resources added value to the understanding and grasping the new knowledge in effective way.

- Whanau Protect Safety and Home Alarm Workshop
- Postnatal Depression Workshop
- Child Abuse Services Workshop
- Stress Management Workshop
- Alcohol and Drug Workshop
- Legal and Immigration Workshop
- HR Workshop
- Environmental Sustainability Workshop



FROM THE FUNDING DESK

In today's tough economic climate, securing consistent funding remains one of the biggest challenges for charities like ours. That's why every contribution makes a meaningful difference. It's not just about keeping our services running, it's about changing lives.

We are deeply grateful to our government partners for their ongoing support and commitment to our work. Their contributions have enabled us to continue providing specialist services for ethnic communities affected by domestic violence. Their support sustains vital services across the country, including our 24/7 crisis line, which responds to thousands of calls from women in urgent need. Their trust in our work allows us to remain strong and consistent, even in uncertain times.

Additional project-based support has been instrumental in extending our reach to more remote areas and strengthening the capacity of frontline service providers. These initiatives are already showing promising outcomes, and we look forward to continuing this important work.

To all our other funders and private donors, your generosity uplifts us every single day. Whether it's a one-time gift or ongoing support, your generosity makes a difference every day. Your belief in our mission makes you a vital part of this journey.

Together with our funders, partners, and community supporters, we've helped create safer futures for hundreds of ethnic women and children for the last 30 years. And we're just getting started!



OUR PARTNERS



**MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**
TE MANATŪ WHAKAHIATO ORA



Lottery Grants Board
Te Puna Taonga
LOTTO FUNDS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY



**MINISTRY OF
JUSTICE**
Take o te Ture



**NEW ZEALAND
POLICE**
Ngā Pūhanga o Aotearoa



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

kaibosh
FOOD RESCUE



Kāinga Ora
Homes and Communities

Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand



SDETAT



**WOMEN'S
REFUGE**



**ORANGA
TAMARIKI**
Ministry for Children



FULL FAMILY CARE
BFMB
MEDICAL CENTRE



waves
Waikare Ati Violence Essential Services



**ACORN
FOUNDATION**
WESTERN BAY OF PLENTY



KIWI HARVEST
FEED MORE • WASTE LESS • KAI ATU



Epsilon
LAB



Kāhui Tū Kaha



good bitches
BAKING



Visionwest
Waka Whakakitenga



Portia
Family Care



**TAURANGA
Living Without
Violence**



**FAMILY ACTION
WHĀNAU TOA**



Carpe Diem
kids

FOLLOW US

This October, Shakti will celebrate 30 years of transformative service in New Zealand.

As we mark this significant milestone, we will embark on a journey through time, revisiting the remarkable achievements and pivotal moments that have defined Shakti's history.

Follow us to keep up with events, news and updates as we reflect and honour 30 years of service



<https://www.facebook.com/ShaktiNZ>



<https://www.instagram.com/shakti.nz/>



www.linkedin.com/in/shakti-community-council-355a89167

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!



Join the movement!

Join Shakti in empowering women, youth,
and communities across New Zealand.

If you would like to volunteer, contact us from your region:

Auckland Head Office comms@shakti.org.nz

Auckland & Hamilton aucklandadmin@shakti.org.nz

Tauranga & Wellington wlgadmin@shakti.org.nz

Christchurch & Dunedin chchadmin@shakti.org.nz

For all counselling placements: counselling1@shakti.org.nz

We look forward to hearing from you!





CRISIS LINE 0800 SHAKTI (0800 742 584)

Shakti Community Council Inc.

scc@shakti.org.nz

comms@shakti.org.nz