



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Shakti Community Council Inc.





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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR PERSON

Kia Ora and greetings to all,

I present this 2022-2023 annual report with great appreciation in the first instance for all our staff, council members and custodians who worked tirelessly over the recent critical times. I also extend my gratitude to those who support us financially, who have stood by us and allowed us to provide support and empowerment of women and children who were in desperate situations, even while the whole world was challenged by COVID and other natural disasters.



The year 2022-2023 highlighted the post-COVID impact on the community as we all went into recovery mode. The escalating cost of living further made it challenging for struggling single mothers and other victims of domestic violence. Shakti worked to the best of our abilities even as we received an increasing number of calls seeking help. We continued to deliver services with great tenacity with an OAC committee to give stability while the reform and restructure was undertaken.

Shakti has served the community for the past 28 years. The organisation had grown organically responding to the needs of the ethnic communities. Through the reforms we will now be focusing predominantly on servicing women and their children going through crisis, and our refuge services.

We welcome the recent changes in the immigration policies which have widened the scope of supporting immigrant domestic violence survivors in New Zealand. However, this has not filtered down towards required support services for them and Shakti is receiving an increasing number of women who are not permanent residents seeking shelter and help to free themselves from abuse.

Shakti continues to undergo its reforms as unforeseen delays prevented us from completing the process by March 2023 as initially envisaged. However, we will hope to complete the reforms process by the end of 2023.

I am also proud of our achievement in developing and releasing the Best Practice Guidelines for responding to Asian, African and Middle Eastern communities in family violence. This work was formally recognised and released in the form of a book at our last AGM. We sincerely hope that these Guidelines will offer the required ethnic cultural perspectives to those involved in the family violence sector.

The unexpected weather in Auckland that occurred early this year also directly impacted one of our refuges which was affected by flood. We have never seen such weather before in Auckland and is a stark reminder of climate change. This is something we cannot ignore anymore. SDETAT which is affiliated to Shakti focuses on environmental well-being and climate change. We have to develop a plan to address this - as individuals, as organisations and as communities, while those government also recognise it as a responsibility.

Finally, in review of the past twelve months I would like to again sincerely thank our staff, volunteers, supporters and well-wishers for their continued support. I would also like to thank our funding bodies including MSD, MOJ, MBIE, Lotteries Commission, Foundation North and many others who walked alongside us and the women and children we serve.

Yours sincerely,

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

NATIONAL OVERVIEW

This year has seen the team build from post - Covid disruptions to improve service delivery. The team across the country has experienced an increase in demand for refuge services as well as an increase in demand of calls being received at the crisis line. This has brought about new challenges for the team nationally as the increase in demand for visa support, residency support, protection orders and demand on other services has put pressure on our team to perform often beyond expectations.

As with the increase in pressure on our wrap-around end-to-end service so comes the need to provide effective, quality, culturally responsive and culturally competent services to those who seek our support. Nationally, we have seen a shift in the clients seeking support, with clients under 35 years age increasing in number as well as an increase in clients from South Asian ethnicities. The service delivery and support teams have performed exceptionally well this year, embracing all the challenges with the view to providing the best possible service to clients, and to help empower all in their care to live the life they choose, with dignity and freedom from fear.

We have seen an increase in client cases relating to family violence, domestic violence, honour-based violence, arranged marriage, forced/underage marriage, and dowry abuse. We are grateful to our agency associates and funders in their support for our work. Our refuge services have been operating at full capacity, and our team had to often resort to alternative temporary accommodation solutions to ensure that victims are serviced and not turned away.

Our team of registered social workers nationally have serviced our clients using best practice, providing casework support, legal advocacy, accommodation advocacy alongside facilitating counselling and life skills support towards self-reliance.



SHAKTI CRISISLINE 24/7 Service



The reporting period has seen an increase in calls to Shakti 24/7 Crisisline, Shakti is recognised as the trusted point of contact for Woman, Mothers and Children and Young Woman from Asian, African Migrant and Ethnic Communities across Aotearoa.

During the period 0800 SHAKTI crisis line which runs on a 24/7 basis received 20,608 incoming calls. The team has seen an increase in calls from the following ethnicity mainly 50% India, 25% Fiji Indian, 10% Chinese, 10% Afghanistan and 5% Bangladesh. Language and cultural competency in service delivery and coordination was achieved through our team of trained staff and volunteers.



SERVICE DELIVERY

Auckland Region

Auckland has experienced an increase of referrals and high-risk clients via NZ Police, Shakti Crisis line and other partner organisation referrals. This has resulted in the refuges running at full capacity most of the time. Auckland has also experienced during the last two quarters significant flood impacts to both refuges. Most significantly impacted has been the Refuge for non-permanent resident women and their children who are at high risk and for whom we had find alternate accommodation, increasing the pressure on funding.

The increase in cases has resulted in the need to expand the team particularly in terms of Social Workers, Case Workers and Youth Case Workers.

All cases are monitored daily which, provides accurate case and client management, enabling the Shakti team to provide the best culturally specialised client experience. Supervision is availed of by the team on a weekly basis.

One of the themes we identified during this period was the need for more pro-bono immigration lawyers and legal aid family lawyers. Currently we have only one lawyer who does pro bono Work Permit Visa work for non-permanent resident victims of domestic violence and we are grateful for their support. Our advocacy to improve the threshold for legal aid also continues as many of our clients are unable to access legal aid which deters them from seeking Protection Orders and Parenting Orders.



Collaboration and Joint Activities



Networking with Police Forum

The team works closely with a multitude of partners that enables Shakti to deliver our support and service, our partners include lawyers, counselling services, WINZ, Ministry of Social Development, Oranga Tamariki, Kainga Ora, Te Whatu Ora, University of Auckland, Unitec, Massey University, and NZ Police to ensure Shakti services are client centric and coordinated to enable the best possible integrated service to the Asian, Middle Eastern, African Migrant & Refugee Communities.

Shakti staff including our service delivery team, refuge team, community risk management team, social work advocacy, counselling, legal, MoJ safety programme team, Life skills programme team and GP support, are integral to Shakti being able to achieve the results it has.

Our sincere thanks to the ongoing supporting organisations such as, HUI, SAM South Auckland, SAM Central Auckland, Whanau Protect, NZ Police (South Auckland), NZ Police (Central Auckland), Waitemata Police, OT, Family Start, NZESS, PRICE, PYKE, West SAM, University of Auckland Campus Care, Te Puna Aonui, Central FSS NGO coordinator, Coordinator of Ethnic Community Network, Kahui Tukaha and Landmark Chambers.

CASE STUDY 1

A is a 38-year-old woman from South Asia who is now a New Zealand permanent resident. She has fluent English language capability as well as is highly educated. She met her husband through an arranged marriage in her original home country. Her family and her husband's family had been living in the same neighbourhood. They got married a decade ago and have three children together. Client was a victim of several forms of abuse A was granted a Protection Order and an Interim Parenting Order and has three children who came to Shakti Refuge

A experienced domestic abuse during their ten years of marriage. She stated that he assaulted her on several occasions since she visited him in the Middle East where he is employed, she experienced physical, verbal, emotional and financial abuse. Since he worked out of country, A and the children were living with her parents in Pakistan. He moved to New Zealand early last year and A, and her children joined him in New Zealand after few months. Unfortunately, A was diagnosed with breast cancer soon after she came to New Zealand. She was uncared for and unsupported during her cancer treatment. He held his expectation for her to do all housework and look after the children. He even abused her in front of her mother who came to assist her during the treatment. He did not financially support her and asked her sisters and her parents to send clothes for her.

A was traumatized with the abuse she endured from her husband for many years. She was very upset and felt lonely and was worried about her children and her own safety and wellbeing.

Securing full custody of her children was a difficult first step as her husband denied assault charges. Employment, financial issues, accommodation problems were dealt with, besides providing her legal advocacy to secure a Protection & Parenting Order as well as Adult Safety Programme. Collaborative work was also done with OT, Housing agencies and other allied services to keep hers safe and self-sufficient.

Central North Island Region

Tauranga

Shakti Tauranga is proud to say that we are the leading organisation in the wider Bay of Plenty in supporting the ethnic women and their children who are victims of domestic violence. Shakti worked together with other organisations and agencies toward a common goal that is to secure the safety of the mother and her children and to support clients efficiently to achieve better outcomes. Through collaboration, we managed to contribute, plan, and support the services needed by the client. Together we can intervene and stop the cycle of abuse. Collaboration with other agencies has helped meeting good outcomes for the client in terms of her needs and safety.

Shakti Tauranga received most referrals from the police, self-referral, and other agencies. Many ethnic women referrals are based on living the experience of physical, verbal, emotional and psychological abuse. Some referrals reported conflicts within the family members, mother and children's issues and others were that of sexual abuse. The clients were offered applicable services and support that would help them in the future should they require assistance. Despite the complexity of each clients' circumstances, we were not disheartened to pursue and support the client. Our staff were hopeful and positive to persuade more undecided clients to seek support and education about their rights.

The Tauranga team works closely with a multitude of partners that enable Shakti to deliver a wide range of support and services. Our partner agencies, include Tauranga Women's Refuge, Tauranga Living Without Violence, Kainga Ora, ACORN Foundation, Bay Trust, TECT, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay District Council, New Zealand Police, Tauranga Regional Multicultural Council Inc, DHB Tauranga, ZONTA Club, English Language Partners New Zealand/ Bay of Plenty Centre, Family Works Northern, Bay Financial Mentors, Kaiārahi Family Court Navigator (MOJ), Tau Tokomai Sexual Harm Support, Oranga Tamariki, CHAMS DHB and other agencies.



Tauranga Historic Village - Shakti Tauranga

CASE STUDY 2

A is an elderly woman of Southeast Asian descent with two adult sons from her previous relationship. Husband is 29 years older than her, he travelled to her country of origin, got married and returned to New Zealand. She and her youngest son came to New Zealand in a year later under his sponsorship. Her husband has a disabled son who lives with him and needed 24/7 care and support. She was happy to look after his son because she stated that it is her duty as a wife to look after her husband including his son too. She has a limited English language capability.

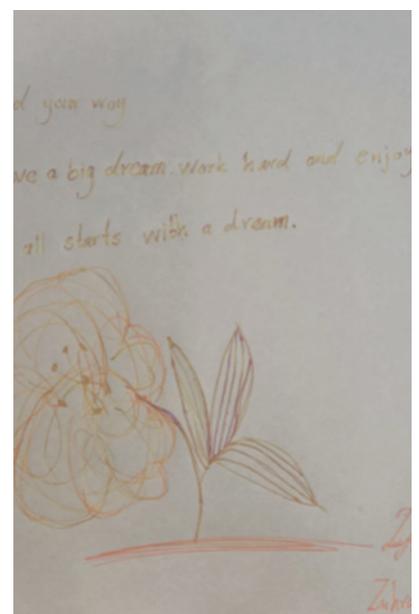
Over the first two years in the relationship, A stayed with him, she was treated nicely by him because she treated his son so well. Unfortunately, in the third year, he started to abuse her emotionally by yelling at her for no reason which later escalated to physical harm. He was often caught by her chatting with other Asian girls through the internet. And when she confronted him because of this, he got angry towards her and started hitting, yelling, restricting, and controlling the client. He restricted her from using her phone as he always said that he didn't have a phone as well. She was traumatized with the abuse she endured and was worried about her safety and the implication of abusive incidents in relation to her Permanent Residence Visa status.

The situation got out of hand, and it ended up with her husband denying any assault and him being granted a Temporary Protection Order against her. Her lawyer declined to support her application for a Protection Order as he believed she was using the Order to gain support for her Residence Visa application. Her English language being limited, we believed her husband took advantage of the domestic violence situation and implicated her in the violence.

Intervention and collaboration with other agencies

Shakti assisted her make an affidavit to object to attend the court referred Anger Management. We also had to work with Work and Income for Emergency benefits, collaborate with a willing law firm and Tauranga Living Without Violence, besides using our internal resources of Shakti Safehouse accommodation with allied support services including language assistance. Shakti also assisted her to apply for Permanent Residency Visa.

With Shakti's support, she was granted an Emergency Benefit from WINZ, granted a private rental house and the Counselling services. We were also successful in helping her get a successful intervention in her having to attend the Anger Management programme as well as she was eventually able to have the Protection Order against her withdrawn. She has now secured a full-time job and is living life independently with resilience.



Lower North Island Region

Wellington

The number of new clients has increased, while most clients experienced a short term stay at the safehouse, we have had two clients who have been at the safehouse for over three months due to the difficulty to secure private accommodation. The roadblocks faced is due to the client's age factor (under 18 years) and the availability to secure Kainga Ora accommodation.

Majority of the clients are of Indian ethnic group, Fiji Indian specifically. Ninety per cent of the clients at the refuge were married however, fifty per cent of those at the refuge did not have children or are not accompanied by their children.

Partnership with Police, OT, Kaibosh, NewWorld, lawyers, Barnados, MSD was undertaken. The most effective combination service was Safe accommodation, counselling, MoJ Safety Program, OT support, legal advisory services, Police, and Shakti's Woman Empowerment program.



CASE STUDY 3

M is a 38-year-old East Asian woman. She moved to NZ with her European husband and has a good English language capability. She is a teacher who, met her husband overseas during his work trip, and through common religious events. They got married overseas in 2017. They have two children. She came to NZ under partnership visitor's visa and is now a NZ citizen. Due to family violence, the client called OT services this year. She moved to the safe house soon after she called Crisisline as she did not feel safe living in the same house with her husband.

The client experienced psychological, emotional, and financial abuse from her husband since being in New Zealand. Disagreement where to best educate their children was the cause of conflicting behaviour. Her husband wanted their children to be home-schooled. Their seven-year-old son suffered physical abuse in the name of education and religion by the husband. She stated that he assaulted her and their son on several occasions on top of the constant belittling, blaming, and financial abuse. He was a jealous and controlling person and threatened her several times that he would take the children away from her. Client is the sole income earner for the family and husband has full and total control of all the finances. The client decided to call Oranga Tamariki because of constant abuse on her son. Her son was hit with a cricket bat client called Shakti Crisisline.

Intervention and collaboration with other agencies

Once client consented to engage with a Shakti case worker, shared her story, and went through the assessment process (including Returning Risk Assessment), an intervention plan was agreed. She moved to the Shakti Safehouse and, legal support for protection order, parenting order and non-removal order was put in place, counselling referral took care of ensuring mental/emotional wellbeing while safe stay arrangement included food, medical, and day to day needs. Longer term intervention plans involved participation in the Shakti women's Empowerment Programme and MOJ Safety Programme. These plans were finalised and client with the support of case worker set out to achieve them.

Being granted legal support gave the client the confidence and encouragement to continue focusing on her goals. She was granted child support by WINZ with accommodation supplement, she registered her children at a primary and pre-school. Shakti also used the whanau protect support to get an alarm system installed at her house and, health and safety matters were monitored as well. The children were granted Police Children Flexi Fund which helped them purchase of a new laptop for education purposes. The Client continued with counselling and is currently, enjoying her financial independency. The client is living safely and independently in the community.

SOUTH ISLAND REGION

CHRISTCHURCH/DUNEDIN



Case Study 4

Immigration challenges

Non-Permanent Resident Visa's

Z was referred to Shakti services by YWCA in early 2019. Z has been married for 10 years. They were married in South-East Asia and lived in another South-East Asian country for five years intermittently. Between them one child was born in one country and other one in the other country. The husband was already a resident in New Zealand but lived back in one of the countries. Back in 2016 Z and the children came to New Zealand on a Work Visa through partnership. Since then, they have had a strained relationship. She found worked at a fast-food business. She was required to live independently in terms of food there were arguments about the fact she had to pay her own way. In 2018, husband became angry as Z raised her voice to him, he grabbed her and dragged her to the bedroom and pushed her onto the bed and attempted to strangle her. He threatened her that if she calls the police, she and children would get deported. Since then, she slept in the same room as her children. Within a few months, the husband got very violent and chased the children and client out of the house in middle of night. They had to walk almost 20 km to reach YWCA as the client had no phone or money. Besides Safe house accommodation, food and medical needs, our team worked with her to file a police report and get a lawyer to secure her a protection and parenting order. Children's school plan was done with Ministry of Education involvement and Emergency benefit was applied for. A domestic violence special work visa was applied for, and student visa was applied for the children. services. With the support Shakti provided the client was able to get a part-time job in health care. Driving lessons were also arranged for her.

Permanent Residency Application

This process was very challenging and stressful for Z. It took nearly two and half years to get the residency for her and children. Z is citizen of one country and children are citizens of another country which complicated matters. Within a month the finding was INZ (Immigration New Zealand) said that they can't put children under Z's residency application, they must apply separately.

Shakti emailed immigration ISR (Integrated Service Response) coordinator to intervene and explain the domestic violence situation to the officer. ISR coordinator could not do anything as he said that INZ follows policy, and we all have to abide by it. After six months INZ sent a letter requesting a court order for full custody of children, although parenting order was provided. Shakti had to explain to them that the court is not using the word custody but day to day care of children. INZ did not acknowledge that and completely ignored the domestic violence situation and asked for father's written consent.

In order for children to stay in New Zealand. INZ did not believe that Z went through domestic violence and told Z to go back to Philippines. Shakti explained to INZ that Z can't go and leave the children as father did not want to take care of the children and has also got the stay order on children being moved out of country. Since last three years, Z had a change of six case officers on her INZ process and all of them requested the same documents over and over, failed to understand the Domestic Violence visa category, with no positive result. INZ also asked the client to get consent from the country-of-origin government for the children to remain in NZ.



Over the last two years, Shakti engaged in extensive advocacy with local MPs, Immigration Minister and battled with INZ to understand the Domestic Violence situation the client was in and the effect it is having on client's and children's health and mental situation. After a two-year battle, INZ rejected the residency application and was told to go for appeal. The appeal process had to go through the immigration lawyer whose cost was \$4000 regardless of the outcome of the case. Z did not have the money to pay the fees and got so stressed by the situation, that she fell very sick and was admitted to hospital for a week. Seeing the INZ result and client's situation, Shakti conducted extensive research on domestic violence laws in the two countries of origin, their women's rights and social service and support to prove why the client and children cannot return. To put the case forward, Shakti compiled a comprehensive report, stating why it was unsafe for client Z and children to return and how their future, education and livelihood would be compromised. Shakti sent the compiled report outlining the gaps in INZ policy. The Residency Visa was approved later that year. It was such a proud moment for Shakti for the achieving justice for Z and her children.

Client Z and the children are now back in the community. The children's school and housing issues are sorted. Application is already made with WINZ and Kainga Ora for housing and other financial needs. Client Z and the children are living free of violence and can move forward in building a better future for themselves.



Christchurch Community House - Shakti Christchurch

CASE STUDY 5

B is from Asia-Pacific in her thirties and who was referred to Shakti by the Police in early 2023 following an episode of physical and verbal abuse from her partner. He has been abusive after marriage and there were multiple unreported instances of violence. When the couple got into a verbal argument over rent payment that escalated very soon into physical violence, B had to escape from her place and approach the police. The Police officer who was aware of Shakti services rung Shakti Christchurch office and planned with case workers to do crisis pick up. When case workers reached the station, it was observed that the client appeared restless and confused over her current situation and was crying. Our Safe house was fully occupied that time, so we had to arrange motel accommodation for two nights. Case workers arranged food and other essentials for two of them and made sure they were doing ok. Face to face assessment with the client revealed more episodes of violence and how it had been affecting her and her son on a regular basis; both psychologically and physically. Lack of proper support system around her made her feel helpless and she always felt no one else could support her. However, B informed us that she approached some agencies for help but disengaged due to several reasons (didn't specify or preferred not to say). Case worker discussed the possible options and took through the process of case planning and in client's words that was the moment she realised there is hope.



From the assessment, it was imperative that she required a protection order in the first place. Shakti discussed about the order in detail and how this court order could ensure safety for her and son. She was unaware of such support and was glad to hear about it. Shakti helped her preparing the affidavit, submitted application for protection order and furniture order the very next day and got granted. B and her son were moved to Shakti refuge the same day while staying there, they made some good friends with other women survivors, and she said that helped her a lot through her healing journey. There was significant financial abuse from her partner, and she was still paying rent even when she moved out of their home. Shakti engaged with the property manager with the help of a lawyer (since property agent refused to respond initially) and supported her with the tenancy withdrawal process. Advocacy with Kainga Ora was done, and B also received emergency benefits and family tax credit support through WINZ. Shakti supported her with legal advocacy through a lawyer and a parenting order was granted as a result. Shakti also considered her child's well-being and with mother's consent he attended the child safety program with our Shakti facilitator.



Thank you very much for your presentation on Tuesday. We really admire the work you do and appreciate the deeper insights you gave us into your mahi. Thank you for your valuable contribution to our ongoing learning.
Ips Kowrie
CAB Christchurch
L&O Team

B stayed in our refuge for three month and after ensuring there was no safety concerns, she moved to an emergency housing accommodation arranged by Kainga Ora. She was able to find a full-time employment as a care giver while in safe house and now can support her child better. There is a significant difference between the woman we saw for the first time in the police station and the strong woman she is in terms of risk management and community resettlement. There is a plan in place and a case worker is regularly in touch with her. Shakti was able to identify her needs and collaborate with appropriate networking agencies to upgrade her well-being and keep her safe. In addition, Shakti's effort to provide culturally sensitive support services helped her feel connected to her roots and empowered her more than ever before.

SHAKTI YOUTH



Shakti Youth has a number of steering groups set up throughout various high schools, as well as the University of Auckland. Essentially a steering group is a student-run club, which is supervised by a staff member.

Pre-COVID, Shakti advocates were heavily involved with these groups. Visitations to schools would happen regularly, as well as official SYNC training taking place in the middle of the year.

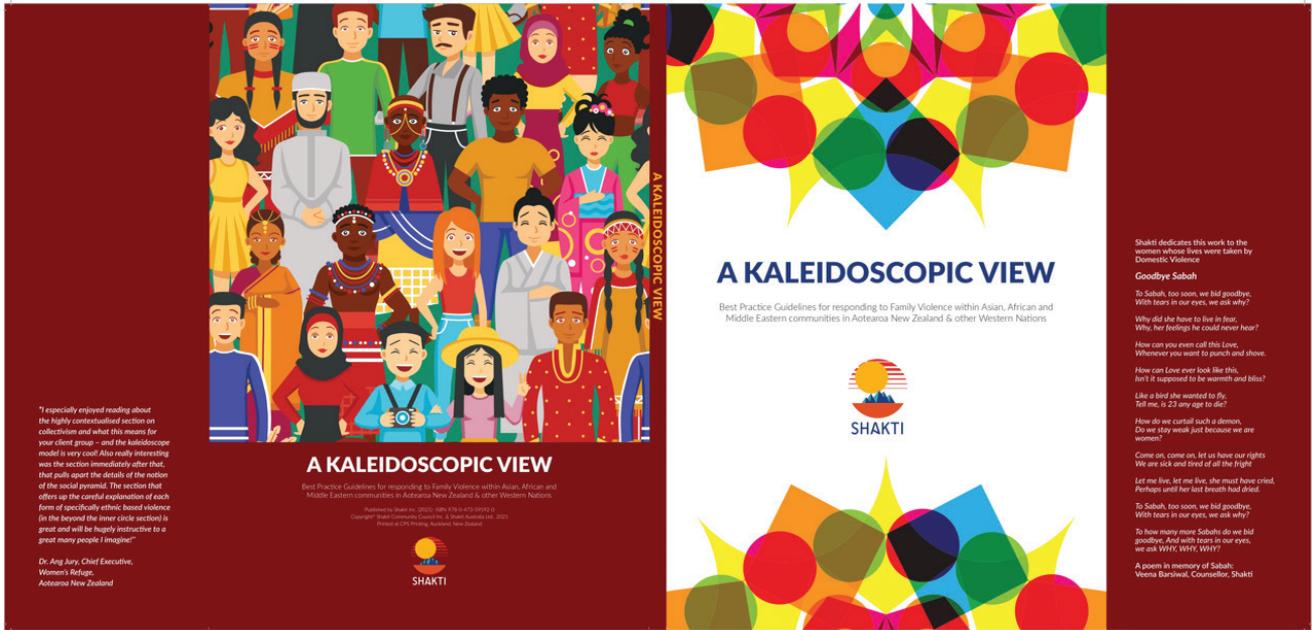
The University of Auckland actively promote the Shakti Youth Club and Shakti. Shakti has received many clients through exposure at the university, and many youth clients who wish to volunteer also join the club. It also serves as really good exposure in the community as social media upkeep is taken care of by the club as well.

During the club's first year, social media pages have gained an exponential number of followers.

The club has also collaborated with other allied groups on campus such as Women in Law UoA, Thursdays in Black, Amnesty on Campus, Equal Justice Project, Student Justice for Palestine, and Rainbow Youth UoA. Through this collaboration, Women in Law UoA have also reached out to Shakti to discuss a potential volunteer opportunity at the organisation.



RELEASE OF ETHNIC BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES





AGM 2022







Overview

As the COVID-related traffic lights system was further relaxed during the reporting period, our services resumed normalcy. Online methods of delivering services made way to enable the resumption of face to face service delivery with our clients, which was welcomed all around.

While our Counsellors and Safety Programme Facilitators were able to better engage with clients through face-to-face sessions, the challenges in the aftermath of COVID and the way of life that had been enforced through the pandemic, surfaced as many survivors requested for online sessions, so that they could spend more time at home with their children rather than travelling to the venue. This became particularly more evident among single mothers for whom coming to the venue for the programme was challenging. However, our Facilitators and Counsellors persevered and continue to encourage our service users to seek face to face sessions. Since some clients did not have access to computers and a few others did not have credit on their phones, it made it hard for the service delivery team to establish contact with clients as and when needed, particularly to check if they were at risk.

Despite the challenges, our facilitators made maximum attempts to contact them and complete the programme. During the reporting period, we also had some clients who declined the Programme due to work related or other time constraints or transport issues while a few were not contactable at all. Such clients were notified to relevant support people and the referring agency.

Ministry of Justice contracted Protected Person Safety Programme

For the Annual Reporting period April 2022 – March 2023, we received 194 referrals of women and children, in Auckland, Wellington, Tauranga and Christchurch.

Shakti is contracted for Strengthening Safety Services (adult victims who have PSO and or are awaiting Protection Order outcomes in the criminal court or family court) and Safety Programme services (adult and child victims with Protection Orders). Our Safety Programme runs for approximately 15 hours for individuals and longer hours for groups. However, the predominant choice of programmes by our women survivors have been individual, while children with siblings were supported in groups.

At the start of the reporting period, Shakti had 16 Facilitators to deliver this programme in the four regions Shakti was contracted in. Three of the Facilitators left to take on counselling/psychology orientated jobs outside of Shakti since Shakti could not afford to provide them full-time jobs. One of the children programme Counsellor-Facilitator retired from Shakti services as she wanted to focus on her health and personal life. One of the Facilitators decided to leave as her full-time job elsewhere did not permit her additional time for the facilitation work. Another Counsellor-Facilitator left Shakti to concentrate on her private practice.

Hence, we had to recruit and train new facilitators. We recruited three new facilitators, two for children and one for adults in Auckland region and two Facilitators in Wellington region for adult's programme.

Ministry of Justice (MOJ) Review

MOJ Advisors and the Review team visited our centres to review our work and expressed satisfaction with our service performance despite the challenges we endured. We informed them we were in the process of recruiting an additional part-time administrator to cope with the work requirements as well as were recruiting new facilitators. We sincerely appreciate the MOJ team for their guidance and ongoing support.

MOJ reviews are centred around compliance of the programme delivery standards which includes checking of turnaround time of clients, when the first contact is made, how safety concerns were addressed, etc. Our challenges reported included staff retention and turnover both in terms of administration and facilitation as they sought better paying, full-time jobs outside of Shakti. Our National Administrator left in October 2022 for other prospects and in January we had a new National Administrator come on board. Due training was provided to all new recruits.

Due to the heavy rains, flooding, and cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023, client sessions were disrupted for a few weeks. Moreover, due to holidays declared by schools because of the devastation from floods and cyclone, the clients were unable to meet the Facilitators for those weeks. The clients' priorities were to re-settle with their children or to get back to their workplaces.

Our Facilitators, however, continued to do safety checks on them during such days to make sure they felt supported and could reach out if they felt unsafe. We are pleased to report that none of the referred clients during this reporting period, reported risks that could not be addressed.



Shakti Counselling Services

During the April 2022 to March 2023 reporting period, our counselling unit received around 222 counselling referrals from within the Shakti group, predominantly of adult women victims. The sessions were delivered via face to face as well as through online medium.

The ethnicities included Fiji-Indian, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Afghani, Omani, Thai, Syrian, Filipino, Japanese, Iranian, African, Chinese, Indonesian, Sri Lankan, Nigerian, Malaysian, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Egyptian, Israeli, Ethiopian, Kurdish, Iraqi, Burmese.

Overall, approximately 359 hours of counselling were provided to vulnerable women. Of the total of 222 clients, only 39 were eligible for Work & Income fee subsidy for counselling. This indicates the highly restrictive eligibility criteria of Work & Income which renders a large number of vulnerable victims of violence without funded support to address their emotional trauma. Shakti had to deliver the counselling free of cost to such clients.

During the reporting period, we had 2 fully registered counsellors on board and one provisionally registered counsellor. We had a total of 4 students on placement studying counselling and or counselling-psychology. Both our fully registered counsellors are registered with ACC for Sensitive Claims which enables sexual abuse survivors from within Shakti to be referred to them.

Lack of funding in the counselling/mental health area is a huge issue as most counsellors after gaining full registration/membership of a counselling body opt for government jobs or set up their private practice which enables them to earn higher incomes. Shakti continues to face challenges in this regard in retaining registered counsellors.

Case Studies

Jia (pseudonym) is a 34-year-old female with a one 8-month-old daughter. She is from South-East Asia. She and her partner had been together since 2022, after he moved to stay at her property. He paid rent to her. Two months after he moved in, he raped her after which she got pregnant. He repeatedly raped her while she was pregnant as well. When he would drive them around, she noticed his road rage and aggressive behaviour towards other people. He threatened and swore at other drivers. He once told her that he is a narcissist. Jia said he always said strange things and she believed he may have a mental health disorder. He made remarks about someone going missing and referenced to someone being in a coffin, which scared Jia.

In one incident, she was playing with her infant daughter, and he started slapping her asking what she was doing with the child. That was the only incident of physical violence. He also once shot a gun and the bullet hit the door, which frightened Jia. He then said it was only a BB (airgun).

Jia had later discovered that he had a Protection Order against him from overseas from a previous partner. All these red flags finally encouraged Jia to seek help and apply for a Protection Order. Despite the Protection Order she continued to face his control in matters of child access, by repeatedly going to mediation to challenge the interim Parenting order.

Jia attended the MOJ referred Adult Safety Programme and completed it. The Facilitator believes that Jia engaged well during the programme and was eager to learn more about Family Violence and her legal and human rights in New Zealand. The Facilitator believes that Jia has benefited from the programme and understands the signs of abusive relationships better now. With the knowledge gained during the programme she feels more confident, in not only keeping safe but also on how to use the law and rights to keep her and her child safe from further harm.



Play Therapy

A 21-year-old young woman, **Behan (pseudonym)** of Middle Eastern origins who had earlier accessed Shakti's youth services eventually came through to the Safety Programme after she secured a Protection Order against her father. She presented herself as being well-aware of her rights and was determined to lead a life free of violence and abuse.

However, once the programme commenced the Facilitator found that she was not fully aware of the dynamics of abuse and how it can manifest in various forms and the ways in which it can impact on her and various other family members.

In the initial session, she was very upset that instead of her father feeling remorseful, the entire family appeared to have collaborated against her to take legal action against her, which they did, filing a Protection Order against her. The Facilitator understood that such actions are part of Honour-Based Violence practices and immediately alerted her to her high-risk levels, even though she had moved cities to be away from him and the family. We spent additional hours of the programme in getting her to understand how the New Zealand law works and what options were there for her and working through such probabilities.

Behnaz talked about suffering long term abuse in the household, especially through the respondent and another relative. It involved predominantly physical, psychological and verbal abuse, being controlled, manipulated emotionally, stalked through the phone and by being followed, made to do hard household work on a regular basis, put down very often, isolated, and compelled to care for her several younger siblings. She was distressed that her mother had not stood up for her as she had expected and felt betrayed. We discussed how abuse manifests among partners of perpetrators and how years of abuse and isolation can lower self-esteem and self-confidence and make the mother-victim voiceless. She said that was a new learning for her.

The sessions extensively covered New Zealand laws for adults and children in the Family Violence Court; her responsibilities that go with her rights, how and why domestic violence gets perpetrated, how abusive behaviour is a choice and how people can behave in alternate ways other than abusing someone.

The Facilitator worked with her in unpacking how culture becomes an excuse for abuse in many communities and how in the name of culture and religion various atrocities against women and children are perpetrated. We drew the social structure, and she learnt how men in general in her community assumed power and control over women and how the abuse manifests in fear and violence. If change were to occur on the part of her perpetrator it would take a long time, as he was used to being privileged and in a position of power. She said her family had already accused her of tarnishing their family honour. Such threats are particularly real for Behnaz as her respondent and family are well connected in her community in New Zealand. She understood that such connections meant they had the capability to cause her further harm or to carry out their threats of honour-based killing, using their networks. She said her family would see her action of taking a Protection Order against them, as having named and shamed the family honour.

Since she faced childhood abuse, the Facilitator also went through the children's section on reactions to witnessing abuse in various ages and stages and some trauma for her emerged from that process.

Since she was now a youth they also explored the challenges of immigrant youth like her in the context of living New Zealand and how hard it was for her to conform to strict eastern cultural family values while having to integrate and socialise with classmates and friends; and how and why she was not allowed to have friends.

Since she presented issues of trauma, grief and loss (of family) and ongoing fear of honour-based violence from people she had taken a protection order against, the Facilitator (who is also a Counsellor) processed some of that, in a therapeutic way.

Risk Review was done at every session and before the final session, the safety plan was also reviewed. By the end of the Programme, Behnaz was adequately informed and resourced with knowledge and strategies to keep safe while she navigated the court process related to the Protection Orders.



Rebecca (pseudonym) was married to the respondent 16 years ago by way of an arranged marriage. They are of South Asian origin and have three children together aged all below the age of 11. The children were referred for the Safety Programme but given the family age of the children and their vulnerability, the mother was involved throughout the programme.

The abuse began at the start of the marriage and much of it was psychological from the respondent and his family. The respondent worked overseas and had not cared for Rebecca and their children who lived in their home country. The respondent also refused to eat together with Rebecca and would ignore her in front of his family.

In 2018, the respondent moved to New Zealand from overseas. Rebecca and the children followed suit a few years later. Soon after, Rebecca was diagnosed with cervical cancer. The respondent was merciless and started physically hitting her and verbally abusing her on a daily basis. He had no interest in the education, health and well-being of the children. His relationship with the children deteriorated, and the abuse affected them mentally. The children witnessed abuse inflicted on the mother. He was also financially abusive, and refused to support the family. Rebecca's mother had to travel to New Zealand to support her during the treatment period. The respondent verbally abused his mother-in-law

as well during her stay, forcing her to return to her home country. Rebecca was left to bear the brunt of the respondent's abuse and until one day she could no longer endure it: Her daughter had got caught up in the abuse. Rebecca decided to draw the line and escaped to a safe house with her 3 children as she no longer felt safe at home with the respondent.

During the assessment, Rebecca expressed her concern about his harmful language that had been negatively impacting her health as she was going through cancer treatment while looking after the three children on her own. The sessions with the children helped them understand domestic violence and how and why it occurs. The children shared with the facilitator that they felt content and safe after moving out from the respondent's home. Rebecca also expressed how the programme had brought about changes in her children and felt grateful that they have been listened to as the Facilitator unpacked the situation with them about what had happened and how they can now look forward to a future knowing how to stay safe at all times.



Mandala

Fatima (Pseudonym), an Afghani woman residing in New Zealand was being abused by her brother and sister-in law. The abuse extended towards her parents and included psychological, physical and verbal abuse in the form of threats, swearing, belittling and the use of degrading name-calling. Fatima relocated with her child and her parents to another country in the face of the escalating threats made from both her brother and sister-in-law.

As she was out of the country the programme was conducted via zoom. While undergoing the programme, it was clear Fatima was afraid for her life even after being out of the country as the brother knew where she was residing and could easily come and carry out his threats. The Facilitator and Fatima went through an extensive safety plan, ensuring she was aware of all the emergency contacts of agencies where she was residing. They also discussed emotional well-being and safety and the need for emotional stability while with children.

Additionally, the Facilitator put her in touch with Shakti's sister agencies overseas and in New Zealand to help her follow up with legal matters and provide additional safety as the risks were high.



Bella (pseudonym) is a 12-year old child of African ethnicity, was abused by the father physically, verbally and sexually. Bella along with her mother and siblings were in the Safehouse for a while before they settled back into the community. Bella came to the programme somewhat reluctantly. Understanding the sensitivity of the abuse she had been through, the Facilitator first processed her hopes and goals for the sessions as well as her anxieties around it.

By going through the sessions gently and respecting her wishes, Bella's trauma was not made explicit in words while discussing safety, abuse, consent, and clients right to her body. This was done through drawing, story- telling, making up a

mood-meter to be able to identify and recognise emotions in the body, creating physical boundaries with a 3D object to understand trust and personal space, etc. As time went by, Bella opened up about her experiences. The sessions which were held by a Counsellor-Facilitator were delivered with extreme sensitivity to unpack the trauma. The programme ended with ensuring that Bella had a good understanding of setting boundaries; learning about her rights and healing from the abuse and keeping herself safe. A discussion was also had with the mother around seeking counselling for the child when she is ready to have it.



Working with art

In Conclusion:

In this reporting period, while we focused on service delivery and client well-being as we usually do, we also faced challenges in terms of staffing especially towards the end of 2022. However, recruitment efforts were stepped up and by January we had a new National Administrator and additional Facilitators on board. Since most Facilitators are on contract (as employment is not feasible with the current contract dynamics) we face a continual turnover, which fortunately, we have been able to cope with and grow. We would like to focus in the coming months on the growth prospects of our services and to create a more sustainable future for Shakti Counselling and Well-being Services.

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to our client groups and our committed team of Administrators, Facilitators and Counsellors. We once again thank our funders. Together, we can hope for a better and brighter tomorrow.



Sustainable Development Education Training & Advisory Trust & Sustinnoworx



Sustainable Development Education Training and Advisory Trust (SDETAT) was established in 2022 and is currently in stages towards becoming a fully-functioning entity. It is an offshoot of SETAC Ltd and a member affiliate of Shakti Community Council Inc.

Sustinnoworx is a project of SDETAT and operates under the trading name of SDETAT. During and post-Covid several businesses suffered, and the impact felt on Sustinnoworx's retail activities was no different to that of others. In November 2022, the landlord of our main upcycling shop at Central Park Drive in Auckland, decided to sell his premises and Sustinnoworx had to close its shop and activities related to such work, for a while. The team spent considerable time and energy shifting all the trading goods to the storage facilities, while coping with the losses. Our search for a suitable venue for another shop began and it was a stressful process with limited budget for rent and landlords in general, hiking rentals. We would like express our sincere thanks to the Rotary Club members of West Auckland who literally did the heavy-lifting and supported Sustinnoworx with the shifting and moving.

The Organic Pantry of Sustinnoworx

Our second shop based on the Earthsong premises in Ranui Auckland, survived the Covid period and took a new business strategic direction as an organic food/refill product store. This development phase is extending longer than anticipated and is enabling the loyalty of customers. Sustinnoworx is in the process of offering light refreshments to add value to the sales and to encourage returning customers. We would like to thank Earthsong for their continued support.



Our Organic Pantry produce counter at Ranui

Campaigns and Workshops

Sustinnoworx's national campaign to reduce textile waste continued throughout the year with various workshops and awareness sessions within the wider community. Sustinnoworx collaborated and participated in the community markets (Te Atatu, Massey, Northcote, Auckland CBD and Ranui areas).

Sustinnoworx's continued effort through the online workshops with the focused purpose of reducing textile landfill waste were highly successful.

Thursday 23 March | 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Te Atatu Peninsula Community Centre
Thursday 30 March | 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Te Manawa Community Centre, Westgate
Bookings essential

Sustinnoworx!
Working with Communities for Collective Wellness

Crochet Upcycling Workshop

Auckland Council
Te Kauhēra o Tāmaki Makaurau

FOUNDATION NORTH
*Pūtea Hōpai Oranga
Funding to Enhance Lives*

Eco FEST

Sustinnoworx

Empowering Survivors

Shakti clients are migrant women who are survivors of domestic violence. Shakti clients receive on-the-job training at Sustinnoworx. Clients receive training in sewing (cut and make, mending and alterations) and retail. Retail training includes store maintenance, customer service and using a till. Sewing training gives clients an opportunity for creative expression and holistic wellbeing. So far, every client who has trained in Sustinnoworx has found a job.



Tackling Textile Waste

Textile waste is a critical problem which is growing every day. Overproduction of clothing, combined with decreased lifespans of each garment, has left our landfills full of textiles. This is worse overseas, where textiles fill their natural environment. While in landfill, they leach toxins into water supplies and emit carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, accelerating climate change. Overproduction also devalues the skilled labour of garment workers globally, who are generally underpaid.

Educating the community

As part of our Textile Waste Campaign, we are holding multiple in-person and online workshops throughout the year to empower the community with upcycling skills. Visit our Facebook or Instagram to learn when we are holding one next!



Reaching a wider audience

On our Facebook, Instagram, website and Youtube channel we share educational content about textile waste. Please give us a follow, and share the learning amongst your friends and family!



sustinnoworxshakti.org.nz
0278080008
Address TBC

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SDETAT Education and Training

Life-skills Programme (LSP) and Computer Course for Domestic Violence Survivors

A Computer course for women survivors with the Family Connect literacy programme began during the reporting period. SDETAT's Women's Life Skills Program was delivered through online workshops and face to face sessions using a hybrid learning method. The purpose of our programmes is to upskill and educate the women who can then take the initiative to rebuild their confidence and plan their future through employment and training options towards self-reliance.

SDETAT encourages women to explore their understanding of New Zealand and develop future goals through specialised facilitator workshops such as Inland Revenue, Net Safety, NZ Police and Community law sessions. Wellbeing and health workshops were also delivered to capture the holistic healing approach.

The Family Connect basic computer programme also offered laptop devices at a very low cost which helped women survivors buy the laptops towards gaining digital literacy and reconnect with learning using technology.

Staff Training

Post pandemic, a hybrid training method continued to prove cost effective. Most of the training could be do using such a method, but some training required face to face sessions. The resuming of face-to-face training during the reporting period gave better results in terms of capability building.

Beside the regular Domestic Violence Awareness Training which is statutory for all new staff and volunteers at Shakti, we also delivered as series of other training ---Work Ready Training, Specialised Case Management, Youth Case Management and Community Risk Management training. SDETAT took the initiative to provide a number of additional workshops for staff towards their ongoing professional development.



Upcycled mat from rags

SDETAT would like to thank our funders, donors and well-wishers besides the survivors of violence who facilitate our vision and mission



Launch of the Kaleidoscopic View - Ethnic Best Practice Guidelines for responding to family & sexual violence in migrant and refugee communities in Aotearoa

The Ethnic Best Practice Guidelines, the work for which began in 2018 came to fruition at our last AGM in 2022 and was formally published and released at the event. We are grateful to MSD and Lotteries Commission which partially funded this work.

The General Manager- Safe, Strong Families and Communities at the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Mark Henderson formally released the Guidelines. Present with him on stage were lead writer Shila Nair, Senior Counsellor as well Advisory Committee members /Contributors, Dr Selina Akhter - Lecturer Bicultural Studies and Dr Elias Martis – Lecturer Social Work (Te Wananga Aotearoa). Mark Henderson applauded the work and expressed that it would contribute significantly in supporting immigrant victims of violence with the required cultural knowledge and sensitivity. Copies were distributed to NGOs and government officials present at the venue.



It can take 200+ years for the materials to decompose in a landfill. During the decomposition process, textiles generate greenhouse methane gas and leach toxic chemicals and dyes into the groundwater and our soil.

(Via Roadrunner)

FROM THE FUNDING DESK

This last year we have been focusing on our organisations reform and we are ever so grateful for the continued support from all of our funders. We are delighted to report the ongoing commitment from Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to support the work of Shakti's Refuge and Crisis services nationally. The continued funding has enabled us to provide critical support during trying times to vulnerable ethnic immigrant women experiencing domestic violence, which exhibited an upward curve during the reporting period.

MSD also extended support to our clients along with other food donation agencies that enabled the Shakti team to supply grocery and other health-safety items to our clients based in the communities and safehouses.

Support through government funding and private funders, trusts, and philanthropic groups has been paramount to Shakti in providing continued culturally specialist support for our women clients and their children. While government funding through MSD, MBIE and MOJ contributed significantly towards operational costs across Shakti's five refuges and ten drop-in service centres, our additional sources of funding from other groups and private trusts enabled us to continue providing services that were unfunded, for vulnerable victims of family violence.

We extend a big THANK YOU to all of our funders, well-wishers and donors who have stood by us and supported the work that we do.

Our funders for the period April 2022 to March 2023 include the Ministry of Social Development; Oranga Tamariki; Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (Immigration); Ministry of Justice; Department of Internal Affairs; Work and Income; Ministry of Women; Kaianga Ora; Ministry of Youth Development: COGS; Lottery Grants Board; The Todd Foundation; Foundation North; Christchurch City Council; JR McKenzie Trust; and all of our private donors.

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and THAT
IS your
POWER ♥



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SHAKTI

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