



**EMBRACE
DIGNITY**

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Summary Internship Report- SWK5012H

Masters of Social Development

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Organisation Supervisor: Mr Jeremy Routledge

Time Frame: 29 July- 20 October 2016



UCT KNOWLEDGE CO-OP

The UCT Knowledge Co-op facilitated this collaborative project between
Embrace Dignity and UCT.

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Sign: Olga Simanga

Submitted: 22 January 2017

Table of Content	Page
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Aims and Objectives of the internship.....	1
3. Internship Programme.....	2
4. Placement findings.....	2
6. Conclusions and Recommendations	4

Acknowledgements

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The intern would also like to take this opportunity to thank the various colleagues at Embrace Dignity who helped her to gain further insight of the organisation. In addition, the intern would also like to give a big thank you to the Sisters at Embrace Dignity for sharing their heartfelt experiences and for being motivators for Embrace Dignity to continue their work. Their openness about prostitution and how it is affecting the lives of women and men is courageous and deserves appreciation.

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1. Introduction

The University of Cape Town motivates Master's students to undertake a graduate internship programme during their first year of studies. The importance of the graduate internship is recognised by reputable organisations such as Embrace Dignity (ED), which has provided a space for the intern with the overall objective of skills and capacity building for graduate students. This internship formed part of the internationally recognised culture that commands Master's students to submit a written report of their time experiences at the internship organisation. This summary report is therefore an account of the intern completed internship period from 29 July to 20 October 2016.

In this report, the intern has described her experiences during her internship period. Specifically, the aims and objectives of the internship and the internship programme in terms of engaged activities. The findings of the placement have been provided and finally the conclusions and recommendations of the report.

2. Aims and Objectives of the internship

The objectives of the graduate internship plan were as follows:

- To understand the social problem that ED is trying to alleviate
- Understand the challenges of ED in regards to the policies and programmes at the organisation
- Understand the position of prostitution in South Africa by analysing the implications and expectations of the organisations
- To develop proficiency in resource mobilisation, skills training and strategic planning through writing fund raising reports and making contact with the partners of the organisation
- Reflect and gain professional objectiveness in social development by looking at the author's objectives and what the author would like to achieve by the end of the internship
- Look at the present and future policies of the organisation.

3. Internship Programme

South Africa applies the criminalisation of prostitution, which entails the institution of criminal sanctions against the seller of sexual acts and the purchaser or facilitator. To this extent, the criminalisation seeks to reduce or eliminate the sex industry and is supported by those who are opposed to prostitution on moral, religious or feminist grounds.

Based on the goals set, the intern engaged in three programmes during the internship, namely EXIT, Arise and Advocacy programmes. The intern was engaged in activities at the organisation through attending meetings and workshops, as well as on-the-desk research by studying the organisation policies, position papers, concept papers and current position of South Africa on prostitution. The information gained as well as performed activities allowed the intern to analyse the organisation viability and the impact achieved on the issues of prostitution. The internship can be said to have been informative and based on the materials studied, the intern was able to learn about Embrace Dignity in details.

4. Placement findings

Based on the activities performed and information studied, the intern concluded her findings as follows:

- Whilst prostitution remains a very contentious issue, little is understood about it due to the lack in concrete empirical research.
- Prostitution embodies violation and discrimination against women within the aspects of economy, politics, culture and gender. Based on the work at Embrace Dignity, it is evident to see that women do not develop their full potential or build economic security through prostitution. Many women want to exit, however the limited exit strategies keep them in prostitution.
- It is a complex matter to work and possibly can never be resolved. There are also high levels of abuse in the business. Violence against prostitutes is perpetuated because they are not afforded the protections afforded to them in the Constitution and are prevented from reporting instances of violence for fear of secondary victimisation from law enforcement officials and health care workers.

- Female prostitutes are predominantly victims of sexual and physical violence due to existing inequalities in society and particularly in sexual roles. These issues should be looked at as a whole and in working on the issues, it is important to have a holistic approach. This approach is of crucial need to Embrace Dignity.
- Unlike organisations such as Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Task Force (SWEAT), Embrace Dignity does not view prostitution as an economic development or a solution to unemployment. Though women may obtain some funds, it is still considered as a degrading method of getting financial support and has no stability and overall harmful and dangerous.
- Though we can measure prostitution, the number of women or men that are in prostitution is unknown and cannot be known in these circumstances. As a result, it is hard for the nation to deal with the matter.
- It has been said that there are women who enter prostitution by choice and that issue should not be overlooked, however, one may also argue that due to the lack of opportunities, vulnerable women are inclined to make decisions, in favour of possible children, that are dangerous and unsafe.
- In South Africa, sex work is highly stigmatised and this stigma results in direct discrimination, violence and abuse against sex workers, which is more often than not, publicly condoned. Moreover, it is suggested that the criminalisation of prostitution actually leads to the increase antecedent crime rather than reduce it.
- The international legal framework emphasises the right of each country to implement a legal approach to prostitution that best speaks to its individual circumstances, the Swedish government has implemented a legislative framework that best speaks to both the demand and supply for prostitution. In this way, its approach is entrenched in human rights in that it speaks to removing vulnerable men and women from the harms involved with prostitution. It is therefore recommended that in developing a legal approach to prostitution, the South African government draw on the successes of the Swedish/Nordic Model.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Embrace Dignity has offered a deeper understanding of the issues about prostitution especially when it comes to policy development. This gave the intern the chance to acquire vast experience and at the same time, finding out which areas the intern needs to work on and further develop both academically and professionally.

Based on the conclusions and the findings during the internship, the intern recommend Embrace Dignity to:

- Keep training interns from different educational backgrounds especially in Social Development and Social Work so they can gain further knowledge and improve their skills.
- The organisation should also ensure that the interns are provided with detailed job descriptions. This will help when the intern is planning their activity log. It will help to keep their focus on school but also help the organisation achieve their goals. The intern struggled to get activities running because her work was too independent. However, if what is needed comes from the organisation, this will make the work and activities for the student more flexible and easier to organise.
- The organisation should be focused on achieving results. -For instance, in terms of the EXIT programme, the organisation seems to have not fully helped the sisters to exit prostitution. Therefore, further counselling, group work and skills development need more attention. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation is highly encouraged.
- The organisation should strive to keep its integrity and reputation in research and development so that they can attract several funding partners and other key stakeholders thus, keeping up in doing good work for the development of South Africa. In addition, the research requires that the sisters be more involved in the organisation.
- The organisation is doing a lot of work; however, they lack the capacity. This is also due to the financial constraints. The intern therefore recommends that the organisation open their door to more volunteers who are qualified and can put in the extra work. The intern believes that it is not because people are from the poor communities, rather it is the absence of good advertising and high poverty levels. Embrace Dignity could recruit students from the

department of Social Development and Social Work from the University of Cape Town who can go out in school in the Cape Flats who want to learn, get working experience and wish to contribute to the development of the organisation. Communication on the needs of the organisation could be corroborated with Knowledge Co-op.

- Embrace Dignity should link and emphasis on Social Work and Psychological departments in order to embrace the complete emotional stability of the women. The organisation does not have the capacity to help the sisters with their emotional trauma. The services of Social Workers and Psychologists is needed.
- Finally, the term “SISTERS” implies that male prostitutes are not being advocated for. The organisation should therefore also seek to involve male prostitutes who want to exit prostitution.