

CANADIAN WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Violence Against Aboriginal Women

Scan and Report

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Executive Summary

Despite more than twenty years of advocacy, initiatives and programs intended to address the problem of family violence in Aboriginal communities, the rate of violence against Aboriginal women still remains much higher than that of Canadian women. Part of the explanation for such stubbornly high rates is due to the political, historical and socio-economic contexts that are specific to Aboriginal communities. Intergenerational violence and trauma which are so pervasive in Aboriginal communities increase Aboriginal women's exposure to both systemic and interpersonal violence. This has shaped their perceptions surrounding violence as something common while lack of resources within the community all too often limits their options when it comes to ensuring their safety and that of their children.

A review of the Aboriginal-specific literature on family violence produces widely varying estimates of the rate of family violence in Aboriginal communities, ranging from three to eight times the rate in mainstream society, but there is a consensus that Aboriginal women are at higher risk of suffering some form of violence or abuse than their mainstream counterparts. Several interrelated factors contribute to the high levels of family violence experienced in Aboriginal communities. These include poor socioeconomic conditions, high rates of alcohol and substance abuse, systemic discrimination and racism against Aboriginal peoples, as well as the trauma and intergenerational cycle of violence resulting from the residential school legacy, and the impact of colonialism on traditional values and cultures (Andersson, 2010).

Although there are many challenges facing Aboriginal women living in both urban and rural areas, there is currently growing movement to break the cycle of violence within Aboriginal families and communities. This includes the National Native Women's Association in Canada (NWAC) "Sisters in Spirit campaign", The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres "Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women" Pauktuutit's "National Strategy for Abuse Prevention in Inuit Communities" as well as regional initiatives from Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network, Ontario Native Women's Association in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship

Centres, the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association, and Mothers of the Red Nation (Manitoba).

In a number of Aboriginal communities and urban centers, various community agencies and women's groups have implemented a variety of programs such as the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (NWT), At^lohsa Native Family Healing Services (London, ONT), Minawaashin Lodge, (Ottawa, ONT), Tamara's House (Saskatoon, SK), La Ronge Native Women's Council, Ka Ni Kanichihk (Winnipeg, Manitoba). Many of these programs integrate both contemporary and cultural traditions to respond to the healing needs of victims, those who use violence, extended family and communities. Some of these practices include: talking circles that enable women to share stories of strength and success and strategies of resistances; spiritual support; counselling provided by elders; participatory action projects on violence conducted by Aboriginal women; emergency response teams; shelters and rehabilitation services for those who have used violence that incorporate both holistic therapeutic and learning opportunities.

While there is a broad movement against violence in Aboriginal communities, the network of over 41 Native Women's Shelters remains at the heart of the struggle. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) Family Violence and Prevention Program (FVPP) which funds on-reserve shelters is by far the largest program devoted to stopping violence against Aboriginal women. At a recent forum of Native Women Shelter Directors organized by the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAV), participants identified their major needs and gaps to include: the lack of adequate funding, particularly multi-year funding for prevention and awareness, a need for continuous training for staff, the development of support services and programs for specific audiences such as young mothers, children who witness violence, Elders and men. Another area of concern surrounds the issue of staff burnout and high turnover rates among shelter staff. Finally, many shelters, particularly those in rural and remote areas.

Among the successes and accomplishments, the extensive use of partnerships with community services, Aboriginal networks and mainstream shelters were most often cited. As part of its five-year plan, NACAV is proposing to support Native Women's shelters through a series of training workshops, the creation of a knowledge sharing portal with the

assistance of the Assembly of First Nation's Women's Council and continuing activities that will allow shelter directors to share their stories, their successes and best practices.

Most shelter directors felt that in order to adequately address prevention, shelters will need to become more strategic with regards to the nature of their services. Prevention project funding offered by various government department and agencies should be better linked to the idea of supporting the development of a continuum of care, which would enable abused women to move step by step out of situations of abuse into more secure and self-reliant lifestyles. The strategy should also address the family as a whole – specifically men, as well as helping children who have witnessed abuse – in order to try to break the cycle of violence. There is a consensus that the best practices for Aboriginal women generally build upon culturally-relevant practices and are usually found in a holistic approach that is blended with proven mainstream therapeutic practices.

While Inuit and urban native women's shelters do not fall under INAC's FVPP program, they identify similar needs and concerns although the urgency is perhaps greater in the far north where the rates of violence and homicide are the highest in Canada. The situation facing Inuit women is further exacerbated by the fact that few shelters and support services have been established in the North and women are often forced to leave their communities, families and support networks for extended periods in order to seek safety.

Introduction

Violence in the lives of Aboriginal girls and women has received increasing attention in recent years especially in the wake of the work undertaken by the Native Women's Association and its "Sisters in Spirit Campaign" which has highlighted the muted response by Canada's social and legal system to the problem. According to the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996), violence is the most important issues facing Aboriginal communities and yet despite nearly two decades of advocacy, programs and initiatives, women living in Aboriginal communities and urban centers all across the country must still contend with high levels of violence in their families and communities. Part of the reason can be explained by the enormous disparities between Aboriginals and the rest of the population with regards to health status, revenue, employment rates and educational attainment in conjunction with factors related to colonialism, systemic racism, loss of culture and traditions and unequal access to resources and power. Violence against Aboriginal girls and women must be linked to the political, historical and socio-economic contexts that are specific to Aboriginal communities. Intergenerational violence and trauma which are so pervasive in Aboriginal communities increase Aboriginal women's exposure to both systemic and interpersonal violence. This has shaped their perceptions surrounding violence as something common while lack of resources within the community all too often limits their options when it comes to ensuring their safety and that of their children.

Methodology

This project began with calls to such national women's organizations as the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), Pauktuutit and the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAFV), Quebec Native Women and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. In each case documentation was forwarded to me or arrangements were made to have documentation sent at a later date, once final versions become available. Based on their recommendations, attempts were made to contact other sites and projects but the response rate was very limited. This was due in large part to the timing of this project which overlapped the Christmas holidays. Arrangements were subsequently made to attend the

Native Women's Shelter Executive Director Forum organized by NACAV as an observer in order to gain a better understanding of the issues, concerns and best practices in dealing with family violence in Aboriginal communities. This report is therefore based on this first-hand knowledge gained through these contacts and the forum. In keeping with the original mandate, every effort has been made to provide as complete a portrait of the current environment for Aboriginal women experiencing violence as possible, to identify the current obstacles to providing appropriate services to Aboriginal women as well as to highlight some of the most promising and successful approaches as determined by those who deal with Aboriginal family violence on a daily basis. It has been supplemented through the review of current and relevant published literature as well as by documents or website links provided by the people and organizations consulted as part of this environmental scan. Arrangements have also been made to have key documents forwarded to the Canadian Women's Foundation by NACAV when they become available. This includes a booklet developed by Quebec Native Women in consultation with other Native Women's shelters which presents the perspective of Aboriginal women in regards to family violence. It is intended for other mainstream women's organizations and services that deal with Aboriginal women clients.

Scope

In 2006, Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) represented 4% of the Canadian population. Nearly half of Canada's Aboriginal people is aged 24 and under; 43% of this population is female (Statistics Canada, 2008). A review of the Aboriginal-specific literature on family violence produces widely varying estimates of the rate of family violence in Aboriginal communities but there is a consensus that Aboriginal women are at a higher risk of suffering from some form of violence or abuse than their mainstream counterparts. Brownridge (2003) found rates of violence against Aboriginal women to be much higher in community based studies than in government surveys: from 48% of women in a reserve-based sample in rural southern Ontario, to 80% of 104 women in north-western Ontario, to 70 to 100% of Mi'kmaq women living on-reserve in Nova Scotia. While published rates of violence against Aboriginal women vary depending on the methodology of the study, common to all these reports are the shocking levels of violence experienced by Aboriginal

women. In the late 1980s, the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) was one of the first organizations to draw attention to the issue of family violence in Aboriginal communities. They reported that Aboriginal women were eight times more likely to suffer abuse than non-Aboriginal women (ONWA, 1989). Studies involving small numbers of Aboriginal women reported physical abuse in pregnancy: 16.6% in Saskatoon (Muhajarine and D'Arcy, 1999), 17.9% in Vancouver (Janssen et al., 2003) and 18% in Winnipeg (Heaman, 2005). The results presented later in this report add further evidence, dimension and urgency to an issue already demanding immediate action.

Statistics Canada, in 2006, reported that nearly one quarter of Aboriginal women experienced some form of spousal violence in the five years preceding the survey (Statistics Canada, 2006). The report also indicates that Aboriginal peoples have higher rates of non-spousal violence and are threatened with violence in and around their homes to a greater extent than non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal women also report experiencing more severe and potentially life-threatening forms of family violence, such as being beaten or choked, having had a gun or knife used against them, or being sexually assaulted (54% of Aboriginal women versus 37% of non-Aboriginal women) 44% reported fearing for their lives, compared with 33% of non-Aboriginal women and 27% of Aboriginal women reported experiencing 10 or more assaults by the same offender (as opposed to 18% of non-Aboriginal women) (Statistics Canada, 2006).

The Canadian Centre for Justice also reported elevated rates of nonphysical abuse with 37% of Aboriginal women and 30% of Aboriginal men reported experiencing emotional abuse (such as insults, jealousy, and the attempt to control and limit the activities and social relationships of one's partner) during the previous five-year period (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 2001). The same report also found that of the Aboriginal women who experienced abuse, 57% indicated that children witnessed the assaults against them. Aboriginal women were more likely than non-Aboriginal women to contact police regarding spousal violence and more likely to use social services (Statistics Canada, 2006). As a result of this severe violence, it is reported that Aboriginal women are significantly more likely than non-Aboriginal women to suffer physical injury, receive medical attention or take time off daily activities as a consequence of these assaults. Statistics Canada also reports that

Aboriginal peoples are severely overrepresented as victims of homicide. While Aboriginal peoples made up about 3% of the population between 1997 and 2004, they represented 17% of homicide victims where the Aboriginal identity of the victim was known (Statistics Canada 2006). Between 1997 and 2000, homicide rates of Aboriginal females were almost seven times higher than non-Aboriginal females. According to a 1996 report by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Aboriginal women between the ages of 25 and 44 with Indian status are five times more likely than other women of the same age to die as the result of violence (Amnesty International Canada 2004).

Contributing factors

Several interrelated factors contribute to high levels of family violence experienced in Aboriginal communities. These include poor socioeconomic conditions, high rates of alcohol and substance abuse, systemic discrimination and racism against Aboriginal Peoples, as well as the trauma and inter-generational cycle of violence resulting from the residential school legacy, and the impact of colonialism on traditional values and cultures (RCAP, 1996). Research has also identified certain socio-demographic characteristics that are associated with higher rates of violence against women: age, rates of violence are highest among young women; emotional and psychological abuse as spousal assault rates are up to 20 times higher for women whose male partners demonstrate these behaviours; alcohol and addictions, common-law unions, lone-parent family, overcrowding in homes, large number of children, high mobility rates, past experiences of sexual abuse, and homelessness (Brownridge 2003; NWAC 2008; Statistics Canada 2006).

In recent years, however, research sponsored by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, has tied family violence in Aboriginal communities to a complex web of factors at the individual, extended family, community and social-environmental levels. The violence involves a number of social problems that operate as a syndrome, and it is linked to the historical experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Bopp, Bopp, & Lane, 2003). For Aboriginal peoples, the experience and devastating consequences of colonization—in particular, the undermining of traditional beliefs and values, and family and community

structures through the residential school system—have contributed to social problems, including family violence, that are experienced in some Aboriginal communities today.

In some Aboriginal communities, family violence and abuse have become part of their way of life and are connected to a larger pattern of intergenerational abuse. Bopp, Bopp, and Lane (2003) argue that violence in Aboriginal families and communities is almost always linked to individual or collective trauma and the need for healing stemming from colonialism and the impact of residential schools. All of these factors and the resulting behaviours have profound implications that must be considered when developing appropriate community responses.

Programs, Services and Initiatives

Although there are many challenges facing Aboriginal women living in both urban and rural areas, there is currently growing movement to break the cycle of violence within Aboriginal families and communities. The National Native Women's Association in Canada (NWAC) with the collaboration of other national women's organizations is leading a national campaign to raise awareness about violence against Aboriginal girls and women with their "Sisters in Spirit Campaign". In 2005, NWAC signed a five-year agreement with the Federal government to systematically document all known cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in Canada. Since its inception, the project has documented the cases of 582 Aboriginal women girls who are missing or have been murdered. Of the 582 cases, 115 (20%) involve missing women and girls, 393 (67%) involve women or girls who died as the result of homicide or negligence, and 21 cases (4%) fall under the category of suspicious death (incidents that police have declared natural or accidental but that family or community members regard as suspicious). There were 53 cases (9%) where the nature of the case remains unknown, meaning it is unclear whether the woman was murdered or missing or died in suspicious circumstances (NWAC, 2009).

NWAC's goals are to make Aboriginal girls' and women's lives free of violence by addressing the root causes of violence, by raising national awareness of the need to address multiple forms of oppression encountered by Aboriginal women and by ensuring that Aboriginal girls and women are integrated in processes around policy reform and

development (NWAC, 2009). NWAC is also calling for national law reform projects aimed at improving the response of the justice and social service systems in addressing violence, litigation activities and local education and awareness campaigns.

Key Resources for Aboriginal Women Victims of Violence

Across Canada, a variety of initiatives have been implemented to address the effects of violence. In a number of Aboriginal communities and urban centers, various community agencies and women's groups have implemented a variety of programs such as the Liard Aboriginal Women's Society (NWT), At^lohsa Native Family Healing Services (London, ONT), Minawaashin Lodge, (Ottawa, ONT), Tamara's House (Saskatoon, SK), La Ronge Native Women's Council, Ka Ni Kanichihk (Winnipeg, Manitoba), as well as regional initiatives from Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network, Ontario Native Women's Association in partnership with the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association, and Mothers of the Red Nation (Manitoba). Please see the appendices for project descriptions. Many of these programs integrate both contemporary and cultural traditions to respond to the healing needs of victims, those who use violence, extended family and communities. Some of these practices include: talking circles that enable women to share success stories, spiritual support and counselling provided by Elders, participatory action projects on violence conducted by Aboriginal women, the creation of emergency response teams, emergency shelters and rehabilitation services that incorporate both holistic therapeutic and learning opportunities

The single largest source of funding for family violence programs in Aboriginal communities is the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Family Violence Initiative which provides operational funding for 41 shelters and supports community-based prevention projects. In 2009, FVPP is reported to have served 1,900 women and 2,300 children in 235 First Nations communities (INAC Website). The primary goal of the Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP) is "to reduce family violence and create a more secure family environment for children on-reserve, by providing abuse prevention and protection services for children and their families". At an annual cost of \$11.5 million dollars, the FVPP currently supports 41 INAC-funded emergency women's shelters on reserve. It also funds

approximately 350 prevention projects aimed at reducing the incidence of violence on reserves at a cost of \$7 million dollars annually. Prevention activities in FVPP are community-based projects that aim to reduce the incidence of family violence and support a more secure environment for families on reserves. Activities can include public awareness, training, community program development, workshops, research and evaluation. This program is one of several federal government programs which address the root causes of family violence, but it has been reported by many to fall way short of being effective or practical. In the World March of Women of 2000 and 2005, Aboriginal women's organizations drew attention to the great disparity between funding provided to mainstream shelters and to Native Women's shelters in the communities.

Native Women's Shelters

Native Women shelter directors face a number of key challenges, many of which were discussed during the Native Women's Shelters Directors forum sponsored by NACAV from January 26 – 28, 2011. There were several issues that cropped up again and again around funding, staffing, staff training, and the need for outside support. Shelter directors and staff reported that they need capacity building training for themselves and for their Boards, but most importantly, for their clients and for the communities which they serve. The level of funding plays a significant role in determining the breadth of organizational capacity. Shelter directors depend on annual INAC operating funds. The need for additional staff to meet the demand is a serious capacity issue. Shelter staff are few in number, work long hours and double up on jobs, on an as-required basis. Training is a key organizational capacity issue. Inadequate funding continues to be an area of concern. Additional budget allocation in 2007 for operational costs was granted by the federal government and has helped the situation and allowed for some catch-up after years of stagnant budgets but directors mentioned that they are often faced with the choice of paying their staff an adequate salary or between developing services and programs that are so desperately needed by the community. As a result of such choices, shelter workers in the communities earn much less than their Canadian counterparts.

Traditional and Holistic Approaches

As the review of the literature indicates, Aboriginal family violence is a community-wide problem which requires community-based solutions. Given that the root causes are complex and historic in nature, most shelter directors feel that breaking the cycle of violence requires a more holistic and long-term approach. Short-term prevention project funding is insufficient to address root causes. A number of the shelters had taken advantage of project monies obtained from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation – funding which is not longer available given its recent closure - and funding through the Status of Women Canada, but such approaches have also created additional administrative burdens given that reporting requirements are not consistent. For those who also access provincial funding, the administrative headaches are further increased.

Shelter directors also believe that a holistic approach requires them to move beyond the mainstream model of short-term crisis intervention with women and their children. In several communities, shelters have taken the lead in promoting a non-violent way of life. This has led some to expand their prevention and outreach services to include other groups within the community including men, Elders, child victims, pregnant teens in care and others with mental and physical handicaps. The growing prevalence of foetal alcohol syndrome children in the schools is an additional looming threat to peace and stability on reserves. Thus many find that they cannot limit their scope to the plight of women and children. In some cases, existing Shelters found the resources to reach out to these groups such as Akwesasne which has developed a 16-week program for violent men based on the Duluth Method. Other shelters have been able to combine prevention funding from a variety of sources to expand their services to include not only prevention but also outreach and specialized services for target segments.

Organizational Capacity

There are currently several forms of governance within the Shelter system. Some Shelters are autonomous not-for-profit bodies with an independent Board of Directors. Others are semi-independent organizations which have Band Council appointed Board

members or in a few cases the Board is composed of entirely of Chiefs and councillors. NACAV, as part of its five-year training plan, will be organizing Board and Governance training for shelters in the future. Clients who come to shelters often face a range of interrelated problems and this requires staff to be trained in a number of areas including counselling, suicide, addictions and trauma. There has also been a strong need for staff to be trained in child therapy particularly since so many children have witnessed violence. There has been the additional demand for shelters to provide educational and outreach services. Communities have approached Shelters and continue to do so with requests to help with prevention programs for men and women; child therapy programs and overall family violence awareness sessions which require additional training. While programs funded by the Aboriginal Health Foundation and through Status of Women of Canada have helped to support projects aimed at addressing these needs, INAC provides funding support to the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence (NACAFV) which addresses the on-going shelter staff need for support and training. Other shelters have also received support for capacity development and networking through their affiliations with provincial shelter organizations and First Nation Women's organizations such as Quebec Native Women and the Native Women's Shelters Network.

Partnerships

Partnership arrangements have also been seen to be critical to success at the community, provincial, regional and national level. The most important partnerships have been forged within the community. Most shelters reported depending on very close relationships with other community services for support, cost sharing, information exchange, referrals, capacity building and strength. Local support services include local health centres, social services, addiction treatment services, mental health support and policing services. Most shelter staff and government personnel stated that shelter and prevention programs cannot survive without strong partnerships with other groups and organizations including the Band Councils. It was felt that such connections helped to optimize limited resources and avoid duplication of services. It is also based on a perception that family violence cannot be addressed solely by shelters who often deal with clients in

crisis. The long-term solutions must involve the entire community and many recognize that they are called upon to play a leading role in dealing with the gaps which prevent them from breaking the cycle of family violence that is so pervasive within Aboriginal communities.

Shelters have also developed partnerships with other mainstream shelters and transition houses through provincial networks. Such is the case in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Quebec and Manitoba. While Shelter directors find the support and learning opportunities to be invaluable, many also express concerns that mainstream shelters do not fully appreciate the scale and scope of the problem of family violence within Aboriginal communities. Quebec Native Women and its network of Native Women's shelters is presently preparing a booklet and guide for non-Aboriginal shelters which shares the Aboriginal women's perspective towards family violence as well as an introduction to a holistic approach. The document is scheduled to be available in March 2011 and a copy will be included once it has been finalized and approved.

A number of the shelters have also partnered with local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups and organizations, as well as with other federal and provincial departments. This enables shelter directors and staff to get together to learn from other experiences which is an essential part of organizational learning and capacity development. While such experiences are invaluable, such initiatives are limited in scope as resources were scarce to enable staff to travel and participate in events.

Shelter staff and Board members want to build up their individual and collective capacities to plan, manage, evaluate and report on their work. Some best practice sharing was evident, but mostly it was ad hoc and accidental. Given the need to innovate in the area of healing and responses to abuse, more knowledge needed to be shared on a consistent basis. Shelter meetings at the regional level were seen to be especially helpful and regional associations to promote inter-Shelter support and knowledge-sharing were reported as being useful. In a few instances, Shelter staff exchanges happened and were seen to have been supportive initiatives, but too infrequent and under resourced given the need to hire replacement staff. One potential solution proposed at the Forum was offered by the Assembly of First Nations representative who discussed the possibility of using its resources

to create a dedicated portal which could be used for sharing best practices, insights, and even online training in the future.

Training Needs

The testimonials provided by shelter directors were proof of their strong commitment and that of their staff to serving the needs of Aboriginal women and children. They also illustrated the increasingly complex issues and situations which are being faced by staff, sometimes in dangerous surroundings. The knowledge and capacity which the existing staff possess are hugely valuable, and maintaining this commitment requires an ongoing investment in training and self-care support. Given that wages and benefits lag behind those of provincial shelters, other incentives to remain on the job are critical for staff retention. There is a demonstrated interest on the part of Shelter directors in networking on a regional and national basis. A number of shelters participate in provincial shelter organizations in order to obtain access to support and training. The National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence has created training tools and has now developed a five-year plan with the intention of strengthening the networking and knowledge sharing between shelters. While some regional groupings have been created (e.g. in Manitoba, Quebec, Alberta, etc.) which have been bringing together shelter staff and directors on a regular basis to network and share promising practices, there was a consensus that a national network was not only needed but preferable particularly to help and support smaller shelters in more remote communities. Those who were already part of regional or provincial networks also expressed their desire to share their toolkits, best practices and knowledge with a wider network of Native women's shelters.

Outreach, Awareness and Prevention Services

During the Forum, participants stressed the need for more outreach and prevention programs for youth and young mothers, especially those under 18 years of age; for children who witness violence and for Elders who have suffered abuse, the need for programming for men; the need for 2nd stage housing. The most urgent need is for staff training and

certification in these areas. As part of its five-year training plan, NACAV will be providing such training for shelters in order to better equip them to take on these roles.

The need for outreach, awareness and prevention was expressed throughout every discussion at the Forum. Building public awareness about the prevalence of family violence and developing prevention activities are central to the long-term goal of bringing about behavioural change and healing to Aboriginal families and communities. It is hoped that once communities start to talk about the issues, healing can start to happen and lead to a healthier environment and long term programs aimed at behavioural change. Methods vary from community to community. While most have introduced traditional practices (e.g. healing circles, the sweat lodge, back to the land, the use of Elders), others have used more mainstream therapeutic approaches including Western therapeutic methods, workshops and training or a blended approach of both. Whatever the approach is utilized, the current support for prevention programs does not adequately meet the demand. With the end of funding grants provided by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation in March 2010, the situation has become more acute with many shelters and their partners being forced to cease such programs or to drastically cut their support services.

Support for Men

The loss of program funding from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation is being most felt most acutely with regards to larger education, awareness and programming to help men learn a different way of behaving. While the mission of most shelters continues to be to provide women and children a safe place, more shelters are faced with the dilemma of helping and dealing with the whole family including men particularly if one wishes to find long-term sustainable solutions to the issue of family violence within Aboriginal communities. The issue of offering support and services to men (and as a corollary, the notion of restorative justice) still remains a subject for debate among shelter directors but most widely acknowledge that they should play a participatory role in helping the community to address the issue and provide support and the benefit of their knowledge if long-term solutions are to be found. The predominant view is that prevention and outreach

are fundamental components to addressing the long term set of interrelated problems that characterize family violence within their communities.

A majority of the shelters have established preventative activities aimed at addressing root problems in a holistic way. The shelters have had to find additional resources for prevention projects in order to develop an effective outreach into the community. In some cases, funding has been obtained from other federal, provincial and local sources with a view to getting at root causes and creating longer term solutions while in other cases, shelters have been able to develop partnerships and protocols with existing services within the community such as with family services. To respond adequately to the needs of each category of client mentioned requires specific staff training and program dollars to offer a viable service. While NACAV has made plans to alleviate training needs with training the trainer workshops, resources needed to deliver such specialized services will also contribute to the strain placed on shelters.

Staff Burnout and the Need for Self-Care

Such concern was expressed by the participants in regards to the high attrition rate due to staff burnout. This, they attribute to a combination of factors including the relatively low wages that they can offer their employees coupled with the stress and challenges of dealing with many complex issues and cases. Shelter staff continue to demonstrate their strong commitment over the years in the face of a growing demand for services. The recent increase in operating funding to INAC-funded shelters in 2007 has allowed for adjustments to staff salaries and benefits, some additional outreach capacity, improvements in transportation situations and some increased training opportunities but more often than not, shelter directors have been faced with the unenviable task of choosing between the well-being of their staff and responding to the urgent community needs. Despite the increased funding from INAC, staff in Native women's shelters still do not have parity with most provincial program salaries and in some cases, the gap is widening. In the absence of regular salary increases, it becomes more difficult to retain the services of skilled staff and the effect is high staff turnover and a loss of resources that have not only been trained but who have invaluable experience and knowledge.

Transportation Issues

Access is limited by lack of transportation. Many urban shelters report that they serve other distant communities, mostly isolated northern communities. This also presents special challenges when dealing with such clients since many may be unfamiliar with life in a major urban centre. A consequence of the geographic location of many First Nations is that transportation is a necessary cost, especially by plane from northern communities. Shelters have been forced to patch together monies to transport women and children from distant locations and isolated reserves. In less isolated rural areas, shelters have required local transport in order to deliver their clients to other community agencies to obtain health and other services. In many rural communities, public transport is often non-existent and services can be hard to reach. The situation is particularly challenging for Shelters located in rural, remote and isolated communities where the possibility of partnerships and referrals are more limited. Lack of transportation further exacerbates the situation particularly when transportation costs are prohibitive or when administrative procedures require women to get such costs approved by the Band Councils or Indian and Northern Affairs officials. In 2007 CMHC in conjunction with INAC made additional funding available which allowed for five additional shelters to be constructed mostly in more northern and remote communities.

Transitional Housing and Outreach Services

Shelter directors also spoke about the need for transitional and second stage housing. Few shelters are able to provide such second stage housing given the lack of funding and resources. Most have started to implement outreach services which include counselling, advocacy and help with women who have left an abusive relationship but who must learn new skills to face new challenges that come with striking out on one's own. This includes such new skills as financial literacy, budgeting, employment skills training and job search techniques. Most acknowledged the importance of providing support to such women. NACAV has plans to offer training the trainer workshops in mid-February 2011 for shelters and other organizations who have and who are interested in providing such services to their clientele.

Shared Practices for Shelters and for Prevention Programs

While all shelters have faced similar problems, they have adapted to these problems in different ways to fit their own individual needs. Common features include the use of a traditional and holistic approach to healing in addition to Western therapeutic techniques; the need to network and be rooted in the community; the value of partnerships particularly with other Native shelter organisations; as well as the need for sharing and learning from one and another. In the wake of the work undertaken by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, many First Nation communities believe that one way back to wellness is a return to traditional healing methods combined with the use of more mainstream approaches. Many shelters have introduced the concept of healing into their counselling services through the use of Elders, ceremonies, healing circles, reconnection with the land, story-telling, and rituals. Elders have been brought on staff to develop programs focussed on traditional healing. The aim has been to help Aboriginal women understand that violence is not inherent to an Aboriginal way of life; that it is linked to social and historical roots and that one way of healing is through talking about their feelings and experiences, of celebrating one's Aboriginal identity and through traditional activities and values. In some cases, shelters will seek to offer counselling in a local language when appropriate.

Such an approach is consistent with the growing recognition that family violence is not an individual problem, but is a problem that affects an entire community. Prevention and awareness programs are therefore rooted in a holistic approach which strives to look at the bigger problems within the community including men. Links with other community services therefore are strengthened therefore they have worked to keep the community involved. A holistic approach also requires a staff to listen to clients and adopt a multi-disciplinary approach to case management which is proving to be effective.

Shelters in Urban Areas

While INAC funds and supports Native Women shelters located on reserve, there are several shelters which are located in urban centres. These shelters have access to provincial support and provincial funds and generally have higher per capita funding. Since many

belong to their respective provincial and regional shelter networks, their knowledge and experience have been invaluable to other shelters. They have also played key roles in linking on-reserve shelters with tools, workshops, and learning from other provincial organizations. This is taking place in several provinces. During the Forum, many shelter directors indicated that several provinces have introduced initiatives and plans to address Aboriginal family violence within their province. These involve multi-year action plans to find long-term solutions to domestic violence with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention. Plans call for not only strengthening partnerships with Aboriginal communities but also improving judicial and legislative responses to family abuse, putting a greater emphasis on healthy relationships with young people in schools, targeting programming specific to Aboriginal women and their children, and increasing training of front-line service providers with regards to cultural appropriateness when dealing with Aboriginal clients.

Other urban Aboriginal organizations are also contributing to ending violence against Aboriginal women. One such initiative is the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres' (OFIFC) *Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women* which involves a partnership with the Ontario Native Women's Association with the support of the Métis Nation of Ontario and other First Nations. Funded by Ontario's Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, two major initiatives include the *Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin* (I am a Kind Man Initiative) and *Kanawayhitowin* (Taking Care of Each Other's Spirit Initiative) programs currently operated by OFIFC. The first initiative provides a culturally appropriate holistic model for community healing for Aboriginal men and youth aimed at teaching them how they can contribute to ending violence against Aboriginal women and girls. The second initiative is a complementary program which reflects a traditional and cultural approach to raising awareness of the warning signs and risk factors of woman abuse, so that people close to at-risk women or abusive men can provide support (OFIFC website).

Inuit Women

Inuit communities have an urgent need for crisis and long-term counselling, safe shelters and training of Inuit front-line workers in order to address family violence within their communities. The rates of spousal violence are much higher in the territories

than in the rest of Canada and the severity and impacts of spousal violence are also greater in the north. According to Pauktuutit, 28 % women in Nunavut are victims of spousal violence compared to 7 % in the provinces. Police also report higher rates of violent crimes in the territories, including sexual assaults and spousal homicides. Per capita rates of shelter use are much higher in the territories than in the provinces, with Nunavut having the highest shelter usage per capita: shelter use in Nunavut on a single day was a staggering 10 times higher than any of the provinces.

Issues related to violence and abuse are also linked to mental health issues and unresolved trauma. As part of its *National Strategy for Abuse Prevention in Inuit Communities*, Pauktuutit has developed and delivered several projects aimed at breaking the cycle of violence in Inuit communities. The *Nuluaq* Project, which raised awareness about the issue led to five communities adopting a zero tolerance to abuse and violence against women and children. The Kivalliq Inuit Association developed the *Somebody's Daughter* program which uses various counselling models and approaches. It is an on-the-land program for Inuit women, single mothers, survivors of residential schools and those impacted by the residential school legacy. Participants learn how to sew traditional clothing and animal skin tanning techniques. Creative writing is included as part of the healing process, as well as developing life and coping skills. Pauktuutit has adapted the *Somebody's Daughter* project model and launched a current two-year *Women Taking the Lead in Family Violence Prevention* project, in partnership with Status of Women Canada, which includes a component on Elder abuse awareness. Work is also being done to bring Elders and youth together to discuss violence prevention in their communities and develop community responses.

Their *Making Our Shelters Strong* project developed a training workshop for front-line workers in Inuit communities, as a means of addressing the need for ongoing training and support for those working with women and children fleeing abuse in isolated communities. It is planning to deliver this workshop in the Western Arctic, and Pauktuutit is currently working with the Government of Nunavut to create a web portal to respond to the professional support and development needs identified by shelter workers. Pauktuutit is presently working with the Canadian Red Cross to bring a comprehensive violence

prevention program to the north and to the urban centres with large Inuit populations. In Nunavik (Northern Quebec), five Inuit shelters have been established under the Nunavik Regional Health Board.

Conclusion

A number of key issues emerge as part of this environmental scan. Most shelter directors felt that in order to adequately address prevention, shelters will need to become more strategic with regards to the nature of their services. Prevention project funding offered by various government departments and agencies should be better linked to the idea of supporting the development of a continuum of care, which would enable abused women to move step by step out of situations of abuse into more secure and self-reliant lifestyles. The strategy should also address the family as a whole – specifically men, as well as helping children who have witnessed abuse – in order to try to break the cycle of violence. There is a consensus that the best practices for Aboriginal women generally build upon culturally-relevant practices and are usually found in a holistic approach that is blended with proven mainstream therapeutic practices.

APPENDIX A - Aboriginal Healing Fund Grants (2010) Targeted To Aboriginal Women

LIARD ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S SOCIETY

Project Title: Guni's Tsi Nedzedundeli' - Let's Go Back To The Land

Project Description: The project provides a combination of Western psychotherapy and traditional therapy to participants that emphasizes empowerment rather than victimization. It features workshops and careful one-on-one dialogue as well as traditional healing support from an Elder, sweats and healing ceremonies.

AHF Contribution: \$876,323.00

End Date: March 31, 2010

At^lohsa Native Family Healing Services

Project Title: I da wa da di Project

Project Description: The project offers two 8-Week Circle of Healing Programs, four 3-Day Fasting Retreats, three 4-Day Healing Retreats and one 1-Day Training workshop, women in the program learn about the link between violence and sexual abuse, family and community dysfunctions and the link to the history of the residential schools. The goal is to encourage women to begin their healing journey and learn to develop healthier relationships and change their behaviours to foster healthier families and communities.

AHF Contribution: \$647,600

End Date: March 31, 2010

Minwaashin Lodge: Aboriginal Women's Support Centre

Project Title: Strengthening Our Circle

Project Description: The project provides a full range of prevention/intervention programs and services aimed at stopping the cycle of violence and neglect within Aboriginal families. Services are offered on an individual basis or group context and help to promote recovery from psychological and social problems, addictions and other suffering rooted in the trauma of the residential school system.

The goals of the projects are:

1. Provide individual and group programming that stops the cycle of violence and neglect and restores the quality of Aboriginal family life.
2. Provide individual and group programs and services that promote recovery from psychological and social problems, addictions and other forms of self harm that are rooted in the trauma of sexual, physical and emotional abuse suffered by direct and intergenerational Survivors of Residential schools.
3. Enhance Aboriginal capacity to meet Aboriginal needs by bridging clients to traditional Inuit, Metis and

First Nations Elders and Traditional Healers.

4. Restore and strengthen the pivotal healing and leadership role of Aboriginal women in the context of restoring cultural identity and pride.

5. Strengthen the capacity of the service system in the region to support Aboriginal people, especially youth, by sustaining and building on formal inter agency linkages.

End Date: March 31, 2010

AHF Contribution: \$1,002,390.00

Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health

Project Title: Healing the Children, Restoring the Family: The Child and Family Art Therapy

Project Description: With the guidance of Elders and Survivors, the Child and Family Art Therapy Project has been designed to help Aboriginal children and families heal from the Inter generational impacts of the Legacy. Created as a structured, cumulative series of traditional teachings, topical art experiences and parenting information, project activities support children's healthy development in the context of strengthening relationships within extended family and community life. This combination of individual and group art-making experiences with culturally based education and healing empowers families to create more supportive and trusting relationships as an integral part of reclaiming positive Aboriginal identity and pride.

The goal of the Child and Family Art Therapy Project is to end the Inter generational cycle of abuse and neglect in Aboriginal families with young children by improving parenting skills and strengthening family relationships. A range of sequential, cumulative programming activities has been created to achieve this goal as follows:

- 1) Providing a structured, culturally based Art Therapy program for Aboriginal children and their families that addressed the Inter generational impacts of Legacy.
- 2) Providing Parent Support Circles to parents / caregivers registered in the program.
- 3) Providing opportunities to apply the parenting skills and concepts learned in the program through nutritious communal meals and other group parent / children activities including a artwork in parent / child dyads, homework club, and ongoing group cultural celebrations.
- 4) Recruiting and training a Circle of Inuit, Metis and First Nations Youth / Grandparents as ongoing resources for children and parents / caregivers in the program.
- 5) Developing and sustaining formal, inter agency referral and case coordination mechanisms to ensure the full range of family needs are met using a multi disciplinary approach.
- 6) Providing opportunities for community members as well as Wabano and partner agency staff members to learn about the direct and Inter generational impacts of residential school abuse and forced relocation and the role of art-making as a tool in healing.
- 7) Carrying out evaluation activities in collaboration with Elder / Survivors to ensure the viability and usefulness of the project in family and community healing.

End Date: March 31, 2010

AHF Contribution: \$438,115.00

Native Women's Shelter of Montreal

Project Title: Moving Towards the Seventh Generation

Project Description: Our clients will continue to be supported by advocacy, referrals, and accompaniment services. The Native Women Shelter of Montreal promotes Aboriginal women's independence, social, and cultural adjustment to society within a safe, and supportive environment. These issues are addressed with the emotional support and compassion of our Professional Aboriginal staff. The Shelter offers services to Aboriginal Women and their children with their distinct cultural identity and heritage in mind. The NWSM is seeking continued funding from the AHF to implement its third year of programming in order to pursue its activities which address the negative impacts of Residential Schools on Women and children.

End Date: March 31, 2010

AHF Contribution: \$551,522.22

Tamara's House - Services for Sexual Abuse Survivors, Inc.

Project Title: Harmony Song

Project Description:

- 1) To support the complete healing of Residential School Survivors and Later Generations of Aboriginal female Survivors of childhood sexual abuse 18 years and older 24-hours a day;
- 2) To develop culturally appropriate programs to address the collective experiences of residential school for the approximately 50% existing client base who are of Aboriginal ancestry, and to strengthen links with existing organizations;
- 3) To develop and extend links with isolated and rural communities so that a 24-hour safe house becomes a province-wide resource for residential school female survivors of childhood sexual abuse and later generations.

ACTIVITIES: One on One Support, Courage to Heal Groups, Support Groups, cultural Ceremonies, Healing/Sharing/Talking/Grieving Circles, Tipi Teaching, Medicine Wheel Teachings, 4-day Healing Retreats, Training and Educational Programs, Record Stories of Survivors, Complementary Therapies - Aroma-Massage and Reiki, Cultural Awareness, Culturally Appropriate Programs and Practices for the Drop-in Healing Centre (i.e. Traditional Arts and Crafts), Leisure Activities, Feasts to Celebrate Healing, Informational Resources and Lending Library on Sexual Abuse Issues, a Reading Program, Creating Links with outside Agencies and Service Providers, Quarterly Newsletters.

End Date: March 31, 2010

AHF Contribution: \$499,306.00

APPENDIX B - Status of Women Canada Funding Grants

Recipient Name: Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network

Location: Stephenville, Newfoundland

Date: 2010-03-15

Value: \$262,386.00

This 24-month project will promote violence prevention by facilitating leadership skills development in 84 community workshops with 500 Aboriginal women. Extensive partnerships will be fostered to reach new communities in Labrador and northern communities. Workshop content will be molded into a universal framework to be implemented at the request of outside parties and stakeholders. A cultural sensitivity component will be developed and the project will also reach out to Aboriginal men. Five Aboriginal men will be trained as facilitators, which will give them an opportunity to impact their communities and participate actively in the fight to end violence.

Recipient Name: Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc.

Location: Winnipeg, Manitoba

Date: 2010-03-15

Value: \$174,000.00

This 24-month project will assist 150 Aboriginal women and young girls (aged 12 to 17 years) in Winnipeg's inner city to develop their skills and knowledge as well as a deeper understanding of the barriers that impact their participation in their families, schools, community and neighbourhoods. The project will provide: culturally appropriate violence prevention workshops; life skills training; leadership development workshops; a series of monthly open dialogue forums with social service agencies; and monthly talking circles. The skills they develop will assist them in identifying alternatives and increasing their resilience in order to live violence-free.

Recipient Name: La Ronge Native Women's Council Inc.

Location: La Ronge, Saskatchewan

Date: 2010-03-15

Value: \$86,022.00

This 36-month project will focus on sexual assault awareness and finding ways to end violence against women and girls. The organization will pilot sexual assault services to an under-served population of about 33,000 residents in northern Saskatchewan. Activities will include: individual crisis and longer-term support to women who have been sexually assaulted, workshops, awareness days and access to resources and information. It will also assist women in preparing for court and will support them on the day.

Recipient Name: Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

Location: Ottawa, Ontario

Date: 2009-03-19

Value: \$441,118.00

The project seeks to reduce all forms of violence against Inuit women and their children by making abuse a priority issue in Inuit communities, providing culturally relevant resources to women and front-line workers, promoting healing for abused women and children, and empowering Inuit women to take charge of their social and economic well-being. The project will consist of two components: pilot testing a wellness tool within Iqaluit, Kuujuaq and Nunatasiavut communities that combines cultural and practical skills building on abuse awareness and prevention; and knowledge exchange between elders and youth to promote leadership roles in reducing all forms of abuse and family violence.

Recipient Name: The Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN)

Location: Stephenville, Newfoundland

Date: 2009-03-31

Value: \$40,000.00

This 14-month multi-phase project will apply a cultural foundation and design a framework that supports women as leaders in their Aboriginal communities. It is through comprehensive training that an overall community action plan will be developed, functioning as a guide to Aboriginal women through the various stages of leadership development and empowerment. As the project unfolds, participants will be led through a journey of cultural rediscovery and enhancement resulting in a rebirth of connection and leadership authority. The end result: powerful, educated women ready to make positive change in 26 communities through crime prevention and leadership initiatives. SUPPLEMENT: The supplement will allow the group to continue working on a framework for leadership, as well as start delivering the workshops in communities involved with NAWN. They will also be able to explore partnership opportunities with Aboriginal communities in Labrador.

Recipient Name: Mik'mac Native Friendship Society

Location: Halifax, Nova Scotia

Date: 2009-01-13

Value: \$208,000.00

This 24-month project will support a collaborative outreach approach for off-reserve Aboriginal women in Nova Scotia. A series of 24 Learning Circles (workshops) will be designed to inform and empower urban and off-reserve Aboriginal women around issues pertaining to family violence, relationship violence, pre-employability support, entrepreneurship, addictions, family health, self concept and self reliance. The holistic workshop materials, project template and resource documentation and online reference materials will be developed with participants then shared with four other Native Friendship

Centers in the Atlantic region. A “train the trainer” component and two retreats will foster the development of a regional approach on economic security and safety issues in each of the five targeted Centers located across the region. The building of this new and innovative collaborative outreach approach will reach out to other key service organizations that support Aboriginal women to help themselves to gain economic security.

Recipient Name: Niagara Chapter – Native Women Inc.

Location: Fort Erie, Ontario

Date: 2009-01-13

Value: \$56,968.00

“Moving Ourselves Forward” is a project which will enable 60 Aboriginal women throughout the Fort Erie region to achieve economic security by assisting them in exploring the options for small business start up. Starting with basic math skills, women will gain knowledge of budgeting, loan/debt management, insurance and taxes. Participants will explore the fundamentals of small business start up and management including performing market research, understanding customer behaviours, and long term financial planning. Participants will develop a business plan and be matched with female mentors within a local business network. This project will also work with successful Aboriginal business owners to create a regional Aboriginal Women’s Business Network. The network will allow these women to act as leaders and mentors for future Aboriginal business women in the area.

Recipient Name: Waabinong Head Start Family Resource Centre

Location: Sault Ste Marie, Ontario

Date: 2009-03-19

Value: \$75,482.00

This pilot project aims to improve urban, off-reserve Aboriginal women's economic, social and cultural standing in their families and community by addressing the issue of family violence and the negative impact it has on women and children. Children from the ages of birth to 16 years and their primary caregivers will engage in interactive parenting sessions and workshops to facilitate increased trust, respect and attachment. The families will be provided with cultural teachings related to healthy relationships, respect and traditional gender roles. Educators and community members will participate in workshops related to domestic violence, learn the effects of violence and the social/emotional costs to the community and culture of Aboriginal people.

Recipient Name: Mahkoos Society of Alberta

Location: Edmonton, Alberta

Date: 2009-01-13

Value: \$50,168.00

This project provides three support groups for Aboriginal women in need. Each support group will meet once a week for 12 weeks, accommodating 12 to 18 women and will follow a traditional Aboriginal Talking or Sharing Circle format. The focus will be on empowering Aboriginal women who have experienced difficulties with adjustment, employment, and personal issues. The women will increase their skills, and develop additional strategies for addressing personal as well as community issues through activities such as mentoring, life skills training, and anger management and, in doing so, move towards improving their personal situations, potentially leading to employment, and indirectly the lives of their children and communities.

Recipient Name: Helping Spirit Lodge

Location: Vancouver, British Columbia

Date: 2009-01-13

Value: \$52,378.00

This 4-month project will directly impact 32 Aboriginal women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver who have experienced abuse by providing culturally relevant programming and healing practices to build life skills that will provide a healthy foundation to make positive choices to live violence-free, address and reduce barriers while strengthening personal confidence and leadership skills necessary to successfully pursue further education and/or employment training.

Recipient Name:

The Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network (NAWN)

Location: Stephenville, Newfoundland

Date: 2008-03-03

Value: \$156,507.00

This 14-month multi-phase project will apply a cultural foundation and design a framework that supports women as leaders in their Aboriginal communities. It is through comprehensive training that an overall community action plan will be developed, functioning as a guide to Aboriginal women through the various stages of leadership development and empowerment. As the project unfolds, participants will be led through a journey of cultural rediscovery and enhancement resulting in a rebirth of connection and leadership authority. The end result: powerful, educated women ready to make positive change in 26 communities through crime prevention and leadership initiatives.

Recipient Name: Quebec Native Women Inc.

Location: Kahnawake, Quebec

Date: 2008-03-03

Value: \$127,650.00

Quebec Native Women is proposing a two year unifying project to consolidate community development and serve as a single voice to reduce the outrageously high level of violence in

Aboriginal communities in Quebec. The organization seeks to strengthen the capacity of the 10 Aboriginal nations and its 40 local organizations so that they are able to intervene with women who experience numerous forms of abuse and violence. Properly equipped, 141 women will become agents of change in their respective communities. The impact of the project will reverberate through all Aboriginal communities, which will be better able to act against violence.

Recipient Name: NEEGONI WABUN GI GAY WIN LODGE INC.

Location: Cutler, Ontario

Date: 2007-10-12

Value: \$185,652.00

This community-based 18 month-project aims to break the cycle of violence in the lives of 288 Aboriginal women and girls in four northern Ontario First Nations communities. Women and girls will revitalize Aboriginal cultural connections, practices and identities as a means of ending violence. They will participate in traditional ceremonial gatherings led by Grandmother Elders. Through the ceremonies, women and girls will foster new awareness and understanding of themselves and begin healing journeys, access valuable local resources, create strong support networks, and develop an empowered voice and self-confidence to make positive changes in their lives. This project will also be a training ground for apprentice healers who will carry out these cultural practices over the long term.

Recipient Name: Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Location: Thunder Bay, Ontario

Date: 2008-03-20

Value: \$420,900.00

Type:

Contribution

Purpose:

The goal of the project is to develop and empower the women of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) as agents of positive social change, using four main components: integrated participatory research, leadership development training, capacity building workshops and the establishment of NAN women's circles. The women's increased knowledge, leadership, decision-making and communication skills will work towards building healthier and stronger communities in which all members will derive benefits. It is the intent of the NAN Women's Council to ensure that women in every community throughout NAN will have access to the major women's development project; communities range from remote Northern fly-in/winter road locations to Eastern communities including the James Bay Coast.

Recipient Name: Minwaashin Lodge – Aboriginal Women's Support Centre

Location: Ottawa, Ontario

Date: 2008-03-03

Value: \$25,000.00

This 12 month project will provide Aboriginal Women with the information necessary to increase their safety and eliminate violence in their lives. Two eight week workshops will be offered to 50 women. Themes will include the intergenerational impacts of residential school, the impact of patriarchy, types/cycles of violence and signs of abuse, learned helplessness vs. empowerment, personal boundaries and creating safety. All topics will be explored through a combination of traditional Aboriginal frameworks and contemporary theories on violence. Women will also participate in cultural workshops such as sweat lodges, healing circles and drumming groups. 15 women will become traditional drummers. Ultimately, the women participating in this project will be able to overcome internalized feelings of guilt and cultural shame allowing them to make positive life changes and escape the cycle of abuse.

Recipient Name: Temiskaming Native Women Support Group

Location: Kirkland Lake, Ontario

Date: 2008-03-03

Value: \$175,300.00

This 24 month project will provide Aboriginal women who have experienced/are at risk of experiencing violence with information, tools and supports to break free from the cycle of domestic abuse. This project will involve three distinct components. First, a pilot project entitled Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency (BOSS) will be developed. This pilot will consist of a series of workshops focusing on the empowerment of Aboriginal women through culturally-specific life skills training. Topics will include the effects of colonization on traditional family structures, family violence and the law, decision making, affordable/safe housing, accessing resources and creating peer support networks. 50 women will participate in these workshops. Secondly, the project will create a set of interactive tools based on the Medicine Wheel. This will include an Indigenous Women's Personal Empowerment Manual, Facilitator's Guide and participant work book. Finally this project will gather input from workshop participants to develop a cultural competency training program. This training program will be delivered to local and regional non-Aboriginal organizations who serve Aboriginal women and their families.

Recipient Name: ALBERTA NATIVE FRIENDSHIP CENTRES ASSOCIATION

Location: Edmonton, Alberta

Date: 2007-10-12

Value: \$67,280.00

Up to 400 young Aboriginal mothers across Alberta will be matched with Elders (Guiding Stars) who will use traditional art and crafts teaching to centre and artistically express Aboriginal cultural values, beliefs and customs. The young mothers will reclaim and promote the traditional roles of women, receive mentorship and guidance, and celebrate their artistic heritage. This pilot project will provide a sense of cultural community and social support to young mothers to encourage cultural transmission, intergenerational communication, individual and collective creativity, independence and skill. The Elders and artists will receive training, tools and techniques to deliver this arts-based parenting programming.

Recipient Name: Haida Gwaii Society for Community Peace (HGSCP)

Location: Masset, British Columbia

Date: 2008-03-03

Value: \$29,410.00

This 7 month project will improve service delivery by the Transition House to women who are fleeing situations of domestic violence and provide increased employability and skills to 20 women. The project will implement a series of 5 training modules for 20 transition house workers from an isolated British Columbia area that experiences three times more domestic assault calls than surrounding communities. The participants will include elder women, Aboriginal women, and women with limited education who currently hold lower paid positions and/or are volunteers. The training will offer the participant's skills and experience that will increase their employability, strengthen their potential for career advancement, and transfer their training to further professionalize and positively impact the direct services women and children receive when entering the transition homes.

Recipient Name: Mother of Red Nations Women's Council of Manitoba Incorporated

Location: Winnipeg, Manitoba

Date: 2008-03-03

Value: \$159,252.00

This two year pilot project will build on the success of the national "Sisters in Spirit" initiative through implementing coordinated regional activities. It is an educational project that will provide support to Aboriginal women in Manitoba who are affected by racialized and sexualized violence. It will build on the skills of Aboriginal women to facilitate their participation in addressing the present crisis of violence against Aboriginal women in the province of Manitoba and in the greater Canadian context. As the project will also produce increased access to education and information, community members, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, will have access to increased awareness about key issues affecting Aboriginal women. Provincial information will be shared with the national "Sisters in Spirit" project further complementing the work they are doing.

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