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Chair

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc

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• (1100)

[Translation]

The Chair (Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP)): Good morning and welcome to the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Today we are continuing our study on promising practices to prevent violence against women.

I would like to point out that, as indicated in the notice of meeting and the agenda, this part of the meeting will end 15 minutes early, at 12:45 p.m., to allow the members to discuss committee business.

We have with us today Marie-Christine Plante, who is representing Carrefour pour Elle.

[English]

From KW Counselling Services, we welcome Ms. Leslie Josling. From the St. John's Status of Women Council and Women's Centre, we welcome Ms. Jenny Wright and Ms. Sheila Ryan.

[Translation]

Nathalie Duhamel, from the Regroupement québécois des Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel, will join us later by videoconference.

Each representative will have 10 minutes for their presentation, after which there will be a period for questions.

Go ahead, Ms. Plante. You have 10 minutes.

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante (Executive Assistant, Carrefour pour Elle): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the committee members for inviting Carrefour pour Elle to take part in this study you have begun.

First, I should tell you that Carrefour pour Elle is the first shelter for women and children victims of spousal violence to open its doors in Quebec. We opened our doors 40 years ago this year. So we are starting to have solid expertise in prevention and in helping women and children.

Of course, like most shelters, we provide a lot of internal services. We have a telephone support service available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We can also provide lodging for 10 women and 10 to 15 children at a time. We do follow-up, intervention and accompaniment. In the last 15 years, we have greatly increased our external and public awareness services.

PACIFIX is one of our external family and conjugal violence prevention services programs, and it is currently funded through a federal grant under the Community Action Program for Children.

The PACIFIX program has won numerous awards for its original approach to prevention and the assistance provided to children victims of family violence. It also aims to improve parenting skills and help parents overcome the various relationship difficulties they have with their children. The unique thing about this intervention is that it can be done by men and women. Close follow-up is also done with families, which means that support workers visit the homes and lodgings to work with children and parents.

Our organization developed an awareness program in 2012 called "when we love, we love equally". We provide this program in partnership with another shelter, the Pavillon Marguerite de Champlain in Saint-Hubert, and with the Greater Longueuil police force.

This program is offered mainly in French classes taken by newcomers to Quebec. These people are generally men and women who have been in Longueuil for less than a year. The goal of the program is prevention and to tell these people about services and resources, but also to build a relationship of trust with them.

The police who work with our support workers can talk about the services they provide and explain the legal process. We talk about the services we provide. Our goal is to defend the rights of the women we meet, and it works. We meet 700 people every year. Many of the women we meet ask for help, which we see as a success.

When it comes to prevention, we count a lot on young people. We have a big presence in the high schools, and we provide various programs to youths. We have created a workshop for younger kids in secondary 2 and 3 called "What relationship do you want?" We talk to them about healthy and equal romantic relationships. Before talking about violence, they need to be shown that there are other healthy, respectful, communication-based models.

As they get older, we provide young people with a new tool called “24 heures texto” that addresses cyberbullying and sexting. We teach them about harassment with a video, followed by an in-class workshop. This helps the young people understand how control, harassment and jealousy work with Facebook, smart phones and so on.

We are organizing an innovative activity that will take place in Quebec in fall 2015 called “les couloirs de la violence amoureuse”. Imagine a huge labyrinth measuring 20 feet by 30 feet. Small groups of three or four students will follow a path and experience a relationship and dynamic of dating violence. The goal is to have them understand the various forms of violence, and the consequences that attacks can have on the victims and the people who commit them.

• (1105)

These are good prevention models that work.

Of course, given Carrefour pour Elle's financial means and human resources, we can't cover our entire area because it is huge. So I would like to recommend that the committee think about increasing funding so that we can provide more projects and connect with more people.

We also realize that there are plenty of small, subtle ways to raise awareness. I have given each of you small pens. They are in the folders. We give training to hair dressers and estheticians to talk to them about violence so that they can give out a small pen when they think they've met a woman who has been a victim. Telephone numbers for shelters in various areas are printed on them.

Furthermore, we will hand out reusable bags to raise awareness with the general population as part of the 12-day campaign to end violence against women, which we carry out with the Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes. We can give them out in grocery stores, pharmacies and so on.

Of course, we have also had white ribbon and white rose campaigns, and they work very well. Obviously, we work with our available resources.

To conclude, I would like to say that some things relating to our social and family policies need to be improved in order to truly help prevent violence and break that circle. In Longueuil, our organizations are seeing more and more female immigrants and newcomers arrive at our door. They are being oppressed in various ways and aren't just victims of spousal violence. Sometimes they are victims of discrimination because they are visible minorities. They are often in vulnerable or poverty-stricken situations. So we need a global approach to help them so that they can report these actions and escape from violence. It is important to consider the socio-economic conditions of women and the multiple oppressions they may experience on a day-to-day basis. Beyond the existing resources, it is important to help them financially so that they can improve their socio-economic living conditions.

There are some very good connections to be made with your other study on the economic prosperity of women. I think the two overlap.

With respect to immigration, we have also noted that it is very difficult for women who are being sponsored—meaning women who

have conditional permanent resident status—to report the fact that they are victims of violence because the burden of proof is on them. They must show that they are victims. A lot of mixed messages are being given. People say they have to wait one year or two before reporting the situation, otherwise they risk being deported from Canada. This keeps them in vulnerable situations.

I think that the current government needs to send a message of protection to these women so that they can get out of a dynamic of spousal violence and turn to the right resources. We are sending messages to that effect. We also note that there are very few lawyers in Montreal and Longueuil who specialize in immigration and can help these victims.

If I had a little more time, I would mention other good initiatives.

In Quebec, there is the Association québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes. This association has created a very good outreach guide to explain the process for victims through the justice system. It's available on their website in French and English. It's worth taking a look at. These are some very good tools that we can use when we intervene to help, explain, reach out and provide all this information to victims.

I'll stop there. I imagine I've used almost my entire 10 minutes.

• (1110)

The Chair: Just about.

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: I will answer questions later if the committee members have any specific questions about our services or our prevention activities.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Plante.

We would like to have the link to the document you just mentioned, especially since it's in French.

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Both tools are from the same association. We will be happy to send them to you.

The Chair: Could you please send them to the clerk? It would be most appreciated. Thank you very much.

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Josling, you have the floor for 10 minutes.

[English]

Ms. Leslie Josling (Executive Director, Co-Chair VAW Forum, KW Counselling Services): Good day.

Thank you for your commitment to addressing violence against women in Canada and including me in this conversation.

Sometimes I get discouraged with the lack of progress that we make in the area of violence against women and then I consider the fact that really we've only been formally addressing this issue since 1960 in Canada and suddenly it doesn't surprise me. We're only in the second generation of attempting to address intimate partner violence in relationships. I applaud you for continuing in this conversation and recognizing that we need to continue the iterative process of improving our services.

It's an honour to be here today and to have the opportunity to share some of my thoughts and insights into the best and promising practices in this area. Coming here today I'm going to be wearing two hats. My first hat is as the co-chair of the Violence Against Women Forum for central Ontario, and the second is as the executive director of KW Counselling. We're a family counselling agency in Kitchener-Waterloo.

The first best practice I want to highlight is a process that our Violence Against Women Forum in central Ontario has engaged in that resulted in greater collective impact. The forum is a group comprising nearly 30 violence against women shelters and counselling agencies. We were established in 2007 in partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services in Ontario. The work of the forum was strengthened with the added support of universities, and that demonstrated the power of trisector collaboration. We believe this type of collaboration could be generalized to the federal government's activities and efforts and might result in the types of successes that we've witnessed in central Ontario

The forum was established in 2007 and our intent was to exchange knowledge, increase collaboration, and improve service system design. In 2009, the same forum completed a strategic plan. It reflected the voices of women, staff, and key stakeholders, as well policy direction at the time. The plan identified critical issues, priorities, gaps, trends, and it also identified three strategic objectives. Work plans were developed in relation to those strategic objectives and as committees began identifying activities that would support the work plans, we realized that we'd benefit from the input of universities, that we needed research, academic, and educational input as well.

We were really fortunate to be able to engage the efforts of the social innovation research group out of Wilfrid Laurier University; they're with the department of social work. They proceeded to conduct numerous literature reviews, research studies, training sessions, and we together held an annual symposium. I have brought along a bibliography. It's about 24 different articles that we've developed together with the university. You may find those references helpful.

Overall, the partnership has added value for everyone involved. More has been achieved than could have been achieved by one sector alone. The agencies provided their much-needed expertise into services with violence against women; the government has provided much-needed funding, coordination, facilitation of leadership; and the university provided their academic expertise, which we wouldn't have had available and wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise.

The collaboration has mobilized each agency and partner to work together towards common objectives and it represents a unique, exciting way of doing business. We believe that the model is worth examining and emulating, and it may hold clues for how to better engage stakeholders to maximize their potential to effect change in violence against women.

I've brought along a brief, which I believe you have, that describes it in a little more detail than what I've been able to share today.

●(1115)

The second best practice I want to highlight comes from our experience at Kitchener-Waterloo Counselling Services.

In 2007 KW Counselling Services launched a walk-in counselling clinic. It was one of the first of its kind in Canada. Since opening, the clinic has served over 10,000 individuals, couples, and families who were both absolutely surprised and relieved to see a therapist for an hour-and-a-half- to a two-hour counselling session on the same day.

Individuals and couples who are seen at the clinic are screened individually for intimate partner violence. We've found, through the screening, that approximately a quarter of our visitors to the walk-in clinic present with intimate partner violence. They're women who have been abused.

The Ministry of Community and Social Services recently expanded funding to this service in response to the five years of research we conducted in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier and the University of Waterloo that looked into both the cost and the clinical effectiveness of our walk-in.

The research shows that clients who visit the walk-in for the first time present with incredibly high levels of psychological distress. At follow-up, their distress is greatly relieved. Further, those who do best are the clients who have complex trauma, and that includes woman abuse. We also found that clients who present with depression and anxiety, which of course is a common presentation with women experiencing abuse, also fare better at walk-in than in traditional counselling.

Quoting one woman who visited the clinic and saw a counsellor named Stephanie:

Stephanie listened to everything I said. The comments she made gave me awareness and confidence. This experience proves that not only did I have to run from an abusive relationship, I had to get counselling. I will try hard to make it back next week as the relationship left me facing financial ruin... Once again, Stephanie is just amazing.

We believe walk-in counselling presents an effective alternative service to women and should be considered, among others, in service system design. I have also brought a short brief about that for your information.

I couldn't conclude a conversation about best practices in violence against women without speaking about trauma and its effects on healthy relationships. We need to ensure this informs all our services.

Increasingly, we have come to appreciate that many women and men, women who have experienced abuse and men who use abuse in intimate relationships, have a history of trauma, often stemming from abuse in their family of origin. We know that this trauma affected them as children. It affected their brain development, including their emotion regulation. Trauma also affected their parents' ability to form healthy connections and attachment with them.

Children who experience trauma and attachment disruptions often develop what the literature calls “negative working models” of the world. They grow into adults who struggle both with intimate relationships and with caregiving. Caregivers who have a history of trauma themselves often traumatize their own children in turn, because they simply have no experience of healthy connections and relationships to draw on.

We believe violence against women services must include therapeutically potent interventions for a range of traumatic events. At KW Counselling Services, our group, individual, family, and play therapies target and treat intergenerational trauma. Our treatment for men and women must include this if we ever hope to make inroads in the area.

• (1120)

Additionally, our services to children who witness woman abuse must treat the children's trauma simultaneously with the caregiver's unresolved trauma. This provides a powerful, corrective healing experience for both the caregiver and the child. The caregiver must be present throughout the duration of treatment with the child, and in effect become the co-therapist to the child. Trauma and attachment services treat two generations and future generations by increasing mental health, and the social and emotional functioning of both child and parent—

The Chair: Ms. Josling, could you conclude briefly. Thank you.

Ms. Leslie Josling: Okay.

This results in improved, positive, healthy relationships.

Thank you for your time. I hope these insights were helpful and provide some additional food for thought in your recommendations.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Josling.

Now we'll hear from Ms. Wright, for 10 minutes. Ms. Ryan will be available for questions.

Ms. Jenny Wright (Executive Director, St. John's Status of Women's Council Women's Centre): Good afternoon, Madam Chair, and members of this committee. We thank you, and we are grateful for the invitation to address the committee.

In the development of any best practice, policy, legislation, or charter, we must never forget that violence against women is preventable. That fact must be the very foundation that any real change is built upon. Violence against women is yet to be considered preventable; instead, it is simply considered one of the many social ills that we must endure and manage. We need not look very far back in our own history to find a time when it was indeed acceptable.

Through the hard work of feminism in our country we are moving towards a culture in which these forms of interpersonal violence are now widely considered unacceptable. Great women doing great work have spoken before this committee. Best practices, new and emerging programs, research, and critical analysis have been brought forward with intelligence and with experience.

We suggest that women's organizations are all well versed in best practice and that we have been creating it and utilizing it for many decades. Evidence of this body of work can be found in the submissions to this committee, in scholarly research, in the endless

reports we write, in university gender and social work classes, and around women's kitchen tables, yet women continue to die.

We have made great advancements in education and awareness both nationally and internationally. Policies and programs are implemented at all levels of government and within our communities and within our schools, yet the statistics that we are all intimately aware of are staggering.

Violence against women has been called the global epidemic of our times. It can lead one to think that there is nothing left to add to this discourse, but if we hold steadfast to the truth that violence against women is preventable, then there is much for us to discuss.

Best practice, education, and all of our combined work in the field will not be enough if we do not directly eliminate the root causes: gender inequality, long-standing neglect in upholding women's human rights, and decades of closures and funding cuts to front-line and advocacy women-led organizations.

Imagine if the programs and policies we created together were aimed at these root causes, at breaking down the systems that create gender inequality. Imagine if they were built on our existing human rights framework, and imagine if they were resourced sustainably so that women-led organizations could do what they have done well for many decades regardless of fluctuations in the economy, politics, and our laws.

If we re-envision how we conceive and develop best practice so that it eradicates gender inequality, then a national child care strategy, a national housing strategy, pay equity, access to women-centred health care, education, and a fair justice system is best practice. Further, the lack of these strategies in Canada is not only a causal factor, they are simultaneously the very barriers that prevent women leaving violence and living to their full potential.

This work, we cannot do alone. Women are protected in principle by the charter of human rights as individuals of this nation. These rights must apply to all women equally, including trans women, seniors, indigenous women, sex workers, disabled women, young women, and women new to our country. Women's organizations struggle daily to keep women safe in communities where there are no lawyers, no social workers, no courthouses or doctors, where women are left dangerously vulnerable and without access to basic supports. This must be viewed as a denial of their basic human rights.

Still, Canada has signed on to numerous conventions protecting and advancing the rights of women, including CEDAW, where article 3 states that the convention gives positive affirmation to the principle of equality by requiring state parties to take “all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.”

Yet women continue to die. Why? We have not applied these basic human rights to our work in ending violence against women. If anti-violence work were built on our existing human rights frameworks, then access to this that fosters safety and quality of life should not and could not be denied women, no matter their geographical or social location.

● (1125)

Years of funding cuts and closures, and silencing of women's organizations are in themselves a pervasive form of violence against women. Federal policy must act to strengthen women's organizations and to secure sustainable funding, so they do not continue to be casualties of the fluctuations in our economy, political agendas, and our laws.

Our Province of Newfoundland and Labrador is a great example of this double bind. Dropping oil prices leads to dramatic job loss, job losses lead to a dramatic rise in domestic violence. Already overburdened we scramble to cope with the increased need for services, while simultaneously being told that because of falling oil prices there will be no increase in funding, and there are silent whispers of impending cuts that will affect our work.

The economic boom that arrived at our doorstep 10 years ago created a dramatic rise in women who are exploited by the sex trade, and the new prostitution bill, Bill C-36, has left us scrambling to provide supports and safety for a population left vulnerable and moving deeper and deeper underground.

This scenario plays out time and time again in our work, leaving us with band-aid solutions, patchwork support, and never the time nor the resources to tackle the fundamental issues of gender inequality and justice, human rights, and advocacy. It is time that we recognize and redress the fact that diminished or no access to basic services because of chronic underfunding places women's lives at risk and by extension their children and by extension our communities.

This is a very real cause of continued violence against women, and it is preventable. We need the indelible human rights of all women to be upheld in law and in policy in their entirety. We need long-promised and undelivered national strategies to target and eradicate structures and social norms that perpetuate gender inequality. We need sustainable resources to do what we do well—advocate and provide services, supports and resources to women, freely and without threat.

There must be a shift in how we view gender inequality and how we eradicate it together as a nation. Gender inequality is simultaneously inherent to and produced by our institutions. We must shift our focus to improving our nation's ability to respond to the needs of all Canadian women. Until our Canadian institutions

and our social systems prioritize and nurture the unimaginable and untapped potential of women in this country, we fear we will be living in a state of never-ending, managed violence.

In closing, we need to recognize that the situation is dire, but that the future need not be bleak. The real solutions to the issues already exist. Symbolically, it is there in the human rights framework that we uphold in this country. Practically, it is in the work of those on the ground, our women's centres, our female-serving organizations. The missing ingredients are the social and political will and sustainable resources necessary to create a coordinated national strategy. If we as a country can commit to these things, then we have not only created best practice, we have built the very foundation to prevent violence against women.

Thank you.

● (1130)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Wright.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Duhamel, I just want to let you know that we sometimes lose the video feed, but the sound should work. Don't worry; we're listening.

You have the floor for 10 minutes.

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel (Coordinator, Regroupement québécois des Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, everyone. I would like to thank the committee for this invitation.

I will make a brief presentation about the Regroupement québécois des Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel—or RQCALACS—and then focus on best practices. I would like to mention that I can answer your questions in French and English.

The Regroupement québécois des CALACS was established in 1979 and has 27 members in 16 different regions of Quebec.

We are involved in providing assistance and prevention among young people and the public through outreach activities. We provide information to the media, do research and are involved as representatives with governments. Our main concerns are the cross-sectional approach of discrimination, hypersexualization of the public space, the trivialization of sexual violence, prostitution and sexual violence on the Internet.

I will now address the issue of best practices. I would like to underscore the fact that the 27 CALACS members in our organization are themselves preventative measures for sexual violence and are examples of best practices. We provide an alternative to the legal system because we know that 75% of women do not file complaints. So it is essential to provide them with services that are rooted in their community that can provide them and their families with assistance.

The CALACS provide individual and group assistance services. They also provide accompanying services and can even accompany a woman through the legal system, if that is what she decides.

These centres came out of the women's movement in the 1970s. They developed a feminist approach to intervention that aims to give the power back to women. These centres view sexual violence as an act rooted in the inequality between men and women. They helped to broaden the definition of sexual violence. Now, this definition doesn't include just rape, but also sexual harassment, incest, online luring, sexual exploitation for the purpose of prostitution, pornography and sex trafficking.

However, I must point out to the committee that the CALACS are still in dire need of funding and that a few additional human resources would help us better respond to the demand, to prevent long wait times before women can get assistance and to eventually develop services in northern Quebec.

I would like to mention our second best practice. The CALACS work with young people in schools through sexual assault prevention programs. We talk about sexuality, power relationships, consent and hypersexualization.

We also work with the general public in local communities through lectures and public activities. We organize a day of action against sexual violence against women that is held every year on the third Friday in September.

In terms of other best practices, we have also developed training on preventing sexual violence against seniors. We have also created a guide for responding to hypersexualization. At the moment, we are working on developing best practices for cybercrime.

In addition to direct services and prevention activities, the CALACS have developed what we call a cross-sectional approach to better include aboriginal women, disabled women, immigrant women and women refugees to better take into account their unique circumstances and their vulnerability to sexual assaults. This project includes providing training to our members, but it is also open to other people. We can tell you today that four CALACS have developed expertise for working with aboriginal women.

This year, a contribution from Status of Women Canada has enabled us to create a francophone community of practice dealing with sexual violence that brings together organizations working in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick.

● (1135)

The purpose of the project is to create a virtual library of programs, projects and activities to ensure better sharing. The project also aims to provide a forum for discussing various concerns. We think this community of practices will have an impact on the ability of participant resources to intervene better.

In terms of promising practices for prevention, I would like to mention that Regroupement québécois des CALACS has made it possible to create the Concertation des luttes contre l'exploitation sexuelle, or CLES, which has done a significant amount of work on making legislative progress on prostitution in Canada.

The Regroupement québécois des CALACS is also involved in various research projects at the university level. We mention this as a best practice because it is essential. We are currently working with academics to focus on trafficking and sexual exploitation, which

enables us to train 45 trainers who, in turn, provide this training to others.

We also have a research project that deals with the cross-sectional approach. We are also doing research that aims to document sexual violence in universities. We have seen this issue of sexual violence in universities on the rise recently in Canada. We are looking at the need to adjust institutional approaches to this problem.

We are also doing research on equipping the CALACS with a shared program on working with youth. Lastly, we are doing research on improving our data collection system to create a better profile of the women who use our services.

In recent months, during the "been raped, never reported" campaign, we have seen that many women need to talk about what has happened to them. It's an important step forward, but the current media treatment of sexual assaults must be better so that the effort the women are making to talk about what has happened to them does not fall on deaf ears.

We would like the government to invest in a sexual assault awareness campaign. We find that there is a gap in this respect. The government raises awareness about smoking and drunk driving, but there isn't enough discussion about violence against women. The government could explain what exactly sexual assault is and what constitutes consent. Our goal is to fight against the myths and bias to change people's thinking in the long term.

NGOs alone cannot invest in campaigns like this, which are very expensive. We would like to have men speak out during these campaigns, which should be rolled out on television, radio and on social media, as well as in print.

We can't just rely on social media or traditional media to boost awareness about sexual violence against women. We have to be able to reach out to a large audience. We absolutely must respond to the needs of women who spoke out during the "been raped, never reported" campaign. We must do so in a way that makes it possible to reach women in the regions who are not necessarily on Twitter. We must increase our support of prevention and public awareness activities.

Thank you.

● (1140)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Duhamel. We heard your audio message clearly, even though the video wasn't the best.

We will start the first round of questions with you, Mrs. Truppe. You have seven minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to welcome and thank everyone for being here and sharing your practices and everything that your organizations are doing. It sounds like there are a lot of great things going on out there to help women and girls.

I have questions for everyone, and seven minutes goes quick. I'm going to start with Nathalie.

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: Yes?

Mrs. Susan Truppe: You said that Status of Women had funded, I think it was, a francophone program. When was that funded and how much did you receive?

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: It's funded for three years and it started in July 2014. It's really about establishing a practice community. I don't know how you say that in English really, *communauté de pratiques*, but it's between resources that are in Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick and who cater to the needs of French-speaking women.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

What's the total amount, then, over your three-year period? I know it's divided over three years, but what—

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: I can't remember, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: That's okay. I'm sure you deal with a lot of funding.

It sounds like you were doing a lot of great things about violence prevention programs in schools. I was just curious, how do you get the word out that you're there to help the young girls? Do you contact the schools and then you would maybe set up some type of a forum there at the school, or do they actually ask you to go? How do you get into the schools?

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: It's a bit of both. In some areas we do have to solicit schools and offer our program. We do the program with secondary 2, 3, and 4 students. But we need to understand also that what's developing now is all the preoccupation about sexual violence against women in universities and in colleges. In Quebec we have what we call CEGEP. It's kind of a pre-university. These two institutions also need to be addressed in terms of preventing sexual violence against women.

But we do solicit the schools. We do knock on their doors, yes.

• (1145)

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Right, okay, just like anything else. Thank you very much.

The next question is for Jenny.

Jenny, your initial funding was obtained from the Bronfman Family Foundation, and then I think you received funding from Status of Women Canada and Health Canada. Do you remember when that was, and the amount that you received as well?

Ms. Jenny Wright: The St. John's Status of Women Council has been open for 42 years. It opened in 1972. It was opened by 10 very strong women in our province who organized that. They opened it with very little funding, and then in that fall they opened the women's centre.

Currently, the St. John's Status of Women, which runs the women's centre, and the women's centre are actually two different

organizational entities. The St. John's Status of Women receives from the Women's Policy Office \$127,000 a year. The women's centre is totally funded on fundraising and donations.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: What about the funding you receive from Health Canada, or is that not correct? Did you ever receive any funding from Health Canada?

Ms. Jenny Wright: Not really. We don't have Health Canada funding. We get small grants from our local health initiatives. We also run a housing program, which gets provincial funding. That comes from what we call the supportive housing program, which comes out of housing dollars. We have AIDS-supportive housing.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you very much.

Marie-Christine, you have a lot of good programs. You were talking about, was it, Pacifix?

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Yes, Pacifix.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: You also mentioned something about the federal plan. What did you mean by that?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: The PACIFIX program is funded by the Community Action Program for Children. We receive about \$60,000 a year for the project. It's part of our external services, and it enables us to work with mothers and children and, sometimes with fathers who are violent. Unfortunately, we don't meet too many of them each year, but there have been years where we've worked with six fathers. Thirty to 40 mothers take part in the program.

We have individual follow-up and support groups for mothers, and we work with children. Each of these approaches is always co-facilitated by a male and female worker. The goal is to use a positive model.

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

You said you won many awards, so congratulations on your initiatives on doing that for violence against children, increased parenting, etc. Out of all these great things you are doing and these awards you won, do you have a best practice? What is your favourite program or your favourite initiative that helps women and girls?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: That's a very good question.

It's hard to choose one good initiative. In fact, I think we have to use all the projects and be creative when we raise awareness. I listened to my colleagues and Ms. Duhamel and, in my opinion, it's a matter of funding and human resources on the ground.

Carrefour pour Elle, for example, covers a huge area, that of the Centre de santé et de services sociaux Pierre-Boucher, which goes from Longueuil to Contrecoeur. I am the only person at Carrefour pour elle who does awareness outside that area. Alone, I meet with about 2,000 people a year, but if I had a colleague, we could connect with twice that number. Actually, there are several...

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe: I'm so sorry but I know I'm going to be running out of time.

Specifically with violence against children is there a program you could share with us? Of all the witnesses we have it's about violence against women and girls but not specifically children and you mentioned children. I was curious to see what you have done for children.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: We have the PACIFIX program. Otherwise, it's really high school students that we work with.

Currently, our project—"les couloirs de la violence amoureuse"—is really very interesting. The idea is to get youths involved through a multimedia labyrinth that shows them what dating violence is. We get them interested through questions, videos and applications. It allows us to connect more easily with youths in high school.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Plante.

Ms. Freeman, you have the floor for seven minutes.

Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

First, thank you all so much for the work you do, all of you, and thank you so much for being here.

Ms. Wright and Ms. Ryan, the legal group Pivot has found that Bill C-36 is going to have the effect of dramatically increasing violence against sex workers and their vulnerability to violence. Do you agree? Could you describe your view on this?

Ms. Jenny Wright: St. John's Status of Women runs the only front-line service to sex workers in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, it's called Safe Harbour Outreach Project.

We started SHOP as a pilot project in 2013, and it has been very successful. Since the introduction of the bill we have found many women have come forward with a great amount of fear and lack of understanding about the law. They are saying to us that clients are very nervous; they don't want to give screening information; they don't want to follow the normal procedures of screening that would happen for those in the sex trade to keep themselves safe.

So there is a lot of nervousness on both sides. The women are concerned and they have a lot of questions. They are very vulnerable and very much underground within our province. So trying to get to them and build trust with them and be able to hear their voices and provide services is very difficult, but we definitely have seen a greater fear for safety and that would be the predominant one: how do they keep themselves safe with this new bill?

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Anything that drives them further underground directly affects their safety, in other words.

Ms. Jenny Wright: Absolutely.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: You have been very clear that you feel empowerment is a key to gender equality. Do you have specific recommendations around what the federal government could do to empower women, putting a gender lens on the budget and things like that?

Ms. Jenny Wright: Absolutely, a gender lens on the budget would be clear: better representation for women. But my suggestion around federal policy is please can we have a national child care strategy? Please can we have a national housing strategy? Women can't leave no matter how wonderful your program is if there's no affordable housing. They can't go back to work and school if there is no child care. These are the bigger issues that we need to begin to address. All our combined work and best practice at this table is phenomenal and we do very similar work. But we can't move women on and get them out of violence when there is no housing, no child care, that enables them to go back to school and to get away, and when our judicial system is traditionally unkind to them.

So if we flip the way in which we look at the social structures that keep and create federal policy then we can start to change that so women can get out and stay out.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: Could you describe for the committee how you see the correlation between economic inequality, financial burdens at home, and violence?

Ms. Jenny Wright: There are many correlations around the economy at home. If a woman doesn't have a job and child care, and is unable to leave, then she's stuck in that situation for a long time. There's also a very strong correlation between when the male partner loses his job and the rise in domestic violence, and women are very much victims of that. That's something that we need to address. So in communities in Newfoundland and Labrador where mines closed and we had small communities where everybody lost their job simultaneously, we see huge rises in violence against women—interpersonal violence, sexual violence—and zero services in that area to address it. This comes down on the one women's centre that's up there trying to address that, yet they don't have the associated supports like policing, courts, and social workers and such to help women.

The correlation is strong. If you don't have a job, child care, and housing, you can't leave, and the more women are victims of their partner's job losses, the more violence increases in their homes, both to women and to children.

• (1155)

Ms. Mylène Freeman: So economic support systems that we can put in place to support lower-income families and individuals help fight gender-based violence, is what you're saying?

Ms. Jenny Wright: Absolutely.

[Translation]

Ms. Mylène Freeman: I now have a question for Ms. Duhamel.

You provide direct assistance, but you also work with prevention and respecting fundamental rights. What are the advantages of a prevention strategy and do you support the idea of a federal national prevention strategy on violence against women?

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: I would support any government initiative that would fit into the work we are doing to prevent sexual violence. As a group or a community resource, we don't have a government's capacity to help prevent sexual assaults. I think this is crucial, and there is a great need for public awareness. We also need to fight against myths and stigma, make people understand the notion of consent and raise awareness among the general population.

Of course, the federal government could ensure that all information is provided in both official languages.

Ms. Mylène Freeman: I have a quick question.

Ms. Wright talked about how child care centres can work on prevention by empowering women to help avert violence in the long term. In Quebec, we have a child care system. Do you see that as a way to help achieve gender equality?

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: Absolutely, as that helps women gain independence by going to work and escaping abusive situations. We know that the majority of sexual violence is committed by someone close to the individual, often in a family context. Essentially, yes, women who experience that type of violence must be able to flee their abusive environment and have access to a child care service.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I now yield the floor to Mrs. O'Neill Gordon, who has seven minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair, and I want to thank all of you for being with us today. You certainly have shown that a lot of great work is being done by all of you and you deserve my sincere thanks for all the work you do.

Marie-Christine, to clarify something, you mentioned \$60,000 of funding, where did you say that comes from or how is that received?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: That comes from the Community Action Program for Children, which is a federal initiative.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: It's a federal program?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Carrefour pour Elle is mainly funded by Quebec's health and social services department, but we also receive a \$60,000 federal subsidy. Be that as it may, we deliver most of our outreach services and awareness-raising programs thanks to the Carrefour pour Elle foundation. That's what enables us to provide more services on the ground. We have a private foundation.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Yes, it's certainly put to good use in all the work you're doing, that's for sure.

I also want to take time to congratulate you on winning all these awards. You've certainly proven that, with all this information you've given us right here, you certainly have it all put together and you have a lot to offer.

When you go into the schools, are you going to visit students who you already know need your help, or are you speaking to a whole group of students and providing the information to everybody? How do you get in there?

• (1200)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: We try to establish a relationship with schools we go to. We provide age-specific activities for students. We deliver workshops for students in secondary II, III and IV. We speak to all students, but we then invite those who need assistance to contact us by telephone. We have a youth worker who can talk to them over the phone or sometimes even by email.

That aside, this is first and foremost a general presentation intended for all students.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: That is for both boys and girls?

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Yes.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: It is open to all of them, so that's great.

Then you can provide it after they hear what—

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Yes, exactly.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Does that become a subject they are taking? Is that considered a part of their course?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: The schools themselves decide in what classes our presentations will be made—for instance, it may be during a French course or a religious ethics course. It depends on the school. Our presentations are intended for mixed groups. We think it is important to reach both the boys and the girls.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Yes, and that's where we need to start with youth today, let them see the importance of how to act with women and men alike.

Can you describe the training you give to new Canadians, and how do they find out? You say hairdressers and estheticians; how do they learn about it and what training do they get?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Those are two different things. The first training, which is intended for newcomers, is called “Quand on s'aime, on s'aime égal”. We co-facilitate these sessions with community police. We provide those 2.5-hour presentations in francisation classes and talk about what constitutes domestic violence, forms it may take, services provided by shelters and the role police play, both in terms of prevention and enforcement, if applicable.

Of course, we stress the importance of taking action when someone is a victim of domestic violence, but also when someone witnesses such violence. We talk a bit about the fact that reporting can be a legal obligation when someone witnesses abusive behaviour. I think this is highly relevant because many foreign women and men don't trust police officers. Police services in their country are not necessarily like ours. As we say, this is a matter of building trust.

As for hairdressers and estheticians, we provided about 100 of them in our region with training on domestic violence. We discussed myths and realities, like Ms. Duhamel was saying. We gave them our organization's pamphlets and small pencils, and told them that, should they meet a woman who is a victim of domestic violence, they could give her our telephone number or call us. We are a resource that is available 24/7. This is really a person-to-person approach, and we have set ourselves a challenge to meet with as many hairdressers and estheticians in our region as possible.

The next step will be to meet with pharmacists. We want to do that this summer. So we continue to do our work.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Yes, as you say, hairdressers hear everything, so it's a good place to reach out and offer that.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Exactly.

That's exactly why we have done this, and the initiative is called “Couper court à la violence”.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: That's good. I like that idea.

Leslie, KW Counselling Services, in my understanding, has two types of outreach programs: the community outreach program and the multicultural outreach program. Can you please identify in detail how these two types of programs differ in practice?

The Chair: Ms. Josling, you're going to have to be very brief, but please take the time just to—

• (1205)

Ms. Leslie Josling: Our community outreach program exists in community centres across Waterloo region. It's a partnership with our regional government. They fund that program. Our multicultural outreach is provided with cobbled-together funding from various sources. It does some of what Marie-Christine has talked about, but

we also have leadership development courses in the multicultural community. Our thinking is that if we strengthen leadership in those communities they can effectively become our champions, and because they have so much credibility in their own communities, by teaching them about domestic violence and child abuse and mental health issues, they then can act as a bridge to the existing resources in the community.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam Josling.

Ms. Fry, it's your turn, and you have seven minutes.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Ms. Josling, you're looking after a multicultural community, and we know multicultural communities sometimes have very different leadership where things are looked at differently. You have a culturally sensitive outreach, have you?

Ms. Leslie Josling: That's right.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Okay, well then I wanted to ask what you think. Are you familiar with the government's new legislation, the zero tolerance for barbaric cultural practices act? What do you feel about that particular piece of legislation?

Do you think it would harm your relationship with multicultural communities? Do you think they would find it to be discriminatory? If so, what do you think about it, and what would you like to see changed in it?

Ms. Leslie Josling: I don't know if I have a specific opinion on that. I can talk about the process we use to engage our multicultural community.

We have several components. We have a committee of 30 leaders from various multicultural communities that meet with each other and with us and with other community resources on a monthly basis.

We also make our space available to various fledgling, emergent multicultural groups. We offer them space and reception and a voice mailbox and an address and so on, so they can emerge to maturity as local communities. We also have this very fixed, set, leadership curriculum that we engage leaders from the multicultural community in.

I don't have a specific answer to that question. We have a continuous conversation, and we try to be curious so we can better understand the perspectives and the understanding, the values, the challenges of the multicultural community.

Hon. Hedy Fry: We know that many of these so-called barbaric practices are already in the Criminal Code.

In my part of the world, British Columbia, there has been push-back from the ethnocultural communities about this. They feel that the term “barbaric” is quite insulting to them, given that most of them, when they come to Canada, recognize they have to obey the rule of law. While there will always be an exception to rule of law in any community on anything by people who want to break the law, the point is that they have a real problem with the fact that they are being shown as newcomers and they believe this could cause discrimination by the rest of society against them.

I didn't know whether you had been hearing that from your community because we have been hearing it in this community.

Ms. Wright, can you talk more about the CEDAW plan with regard to violence against women? Are you implying that Canada is not complying with CEDAW?

Ms. Jenny Wright: Yes, we were one of the first countries to sign on to and to have done CEDAW, and I don't think that we are doing everything we can—certainly all reasonable measures, including legislation—to ensure the full potential of women in this country.

I think things could change if we could refocus the way in which we look at anti-violence work to a human rights perspective. I know I'm not the first person in the world to say that women's rights are human rights, but they are, and we're not using a human rights lens in our anti-violence work. I think if we did, that would refocus and reshift in a really important way.

I see that as one of the key elements we need to do moving forward in order to get at root causes. Best practice is everywhere. We have so much best practice. Organizations are doing fantastic work, including our own, but we need to get at root causes in order for that best practice to flow. If not, we're just managing it.

● (1210)

Hon. Hedy Fry: As you know, Canada used to lead the best practices when we first signed on to CEDAW way back. I was the minister at the time.

I think one of the things we are hearing now from the Organization of American States human rights group and from the United Nations is that they're asking us to look at the specific issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women, who form only 4% of the community but who have 11 times that amount of violence levelled at them in different ways. Do you have anything to say about that particular issue with regard to violence?

Ms. Jenny Wright: I think we definitely need an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, and I think that inquiry needs to be led by indigenous women leaders. I think it's very important that another inquiry is not created and downloaded on them. I think it needs to be developed by and led by the wonderful and strong indigenous women in this country, because they have the knowledge.

If that happens, then we'll start to see some change. I think it's definitely a human rights issue that we have not had an inquiry into those horrific deaths, well over 1,200 of them, and that's just what's documented.

Hon. Hedy Fry: I just wanted to say that the long-form census used to give us an ability to track violence against women, and that was how we came up with the idea way back in the 1990s. I must

admit that it was under Mr. Mulroney's government at the time that everyone began to say we didn't realize that the violence against women was so endemic. That began the work—which we picked up when we formed government—to look at the issue of violence against women.

But for me the issue of violence against indigenous women is specific. There are specific root causes that are not to be buried within the whole scenario of violence against women. Do you agree with that?

Ms. Jenny Wright: I agree.

Hon. Hedy Fry: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Fry.

Mr. Barlow, please, you have five minutes.

Mr. John Barlow (MacLeod, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, I have a really quick comment for Ms. Wright. I was doing some research. Your website did say that you were funded by Status of Women and Health Canada, so could you check that out, get back to us, and let us know if that's right or wrong? I just want to make sure that we're right as well.

Ms. Jenny Wright: We're funded by the provincial status of women office, the Women's Policy Office, with \$120,000 a year. We don't have federal health care money. In fact, when we first opened and expanded into Marguerite's Place with our housing, at that point there might have been some federal health care dollars, but it's not ongoing.

Mr. John Barlow: Thanks. If you just wouldn't mind checking to confirm that....

Ms. Jenny Wright: I will absolutely do that.

Mr. John Barlow: Thank you. I appreciate that.

For Ms. Plante, first, yesterday or the other day we heard from Dr. Katz about really changing how we look at violence against women. Being, as you can see, the only man on the committee is.... Changing it from violence against women, men inflicting violence against women, changing that narrative.... You talked about your Pacific program and how you deal with men. I have two questions on that. Can you tell me how you identify the families who are going to be part of that program? What do you do specifically in terms of involving the men as part of that program?

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: That's a very good question.

Generally speaking, families are not recruited as such. Women first participate in a support group. Afterwards, we ask them whether they want to participate in the PACIFIX program. It's important to point out that, in most cases, the women are separated. So their spouse is no longer in the picture.

If they are still with their spouse, we give the men an opportunity to participate in the PACIFIX program. However, they must fulfill one condition to be able to enrol in the PACIFIX program; they must agree to receive counselling at the Montreal organization *Entraide pour Hommes*. This is a 25-week counselling program on violent behaviours. After that, if they want—they must do so voluntarily—they can participate in the PACIFIX program. That explains the imbalance.

More women participate in the support group and in the PACIFIX program than men do in the PACIFIX program alone. However, it's worth the while when they do agree to participate. For instance, six men took part in the program last year. Four of them completed it, and the family is still together. That's a nice success story.

Unfortunately, that changes from year to year. Only one man has agreed to participate in the current program. I would say there is room for improvement in that area.

When it comes to domestic violence, I would say that most women who use the services of *Carrefour pour Elle* end up going through a separation or divorce process. This is still a very good program for those who stay with their spouse and want to try the PACIFIX program. That's a very innovative program in Quebec.

●(1215)

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: Thank you.

I think it's important to break this cycle. The children learn that mentality and those activities. If you can get the husband and the family stays together, hopefully the child can learn the positives of that as well. I'd really like to learn more about *Pacifix* as we move forward.

In regard to my next question, Ms. Josling, you mentioned this and glossed over it a bit, and I'd like to talk a little more about it. You talked about the 10,000 individuals and families who have gone through your walk-in clinic program, and you touched on the fact that the walk-in program has been much more successful, maybe, than traditional counselling. Can you explain that a little more? What is it about walk-in clinics that seems to be more effective?

Ms. Leslie Josling: Yes, absolutely.

When we launched the walk-in counselling clinic, we had about 981 people on a waiting list for service. We were really in quite a crisis. We were no longer even able to return calls, we were so overwhelmed.

The walk-in was chosen for a number of reasons. We were seeing a lot of no-shows in appointments, and of course you can't be a no-show at a walk-in clinic. We also knew clinically that if you see people in their moment of need, you capitalize on what the literature calls "readiness to change", and that improves clinical outcomes.

We also had the hunch that it was simply culturally relevant. We're in a community now where everything is drive-through and immediate. You know, for me, it has to be a crisis before I book my hair appointment.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Leslie Josling: We were taking all of that bump and that difficulty out of service. That was why we chose the walk-in. We didn't expect that a quarter of our visitors would be women who experience abuse, but that is what emerged. We were delighted to see these very positive clinical outcomes. We also looked at cost-effectiveness in looking at things like emergency department visits, lost days of work, and resource utilization. We've now conducted two studies. I don't know if that answers your question.

Mr. John Barlow: Is it—

The Chair: We're over time, two minutes over time.

Madam Sellah, please.

[*Translation*]

You have five minutes.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank our guests for taking the time to share their experiences with us. Their testimony is very valuable to us. I would like to begin by congratulating Ms. Plante, of course. I am using this opportunity because she works in my region.

Ms. Plante, you are not only doing a great job, but you are doing it across a large region like *Montréal*. As you pointed out, you could do more with some help.

In 2014, you housed over 100 women and 90 children. Statistics Canada indicates that, in 2013, 7 out of 10 victims of violence were women. The figures remain as alarming from year to year.

Can you explain to us why these figures have remained stable? Are violence prevention programs effective? What types of difficulties is *Carrefour pour Elle* facing as a non-profit organization? In addition to the PACIFIX program, what else can the federal government do to help you?

●(1220)

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Thank you for your questions, Mrs. Sellah. You said many things.

Funding is the most important issue for a community organization like ours. We need to have more workers on the ground. I think our internal services work well. We have been providing housing for 40 years, but I think it would be extremely helpful if we had more workers who could raise awareness in various communities across the region.

That said, media campaigns aimed at the general public should continue to be conducted. We can work with young people. Other community organizations are involved in elementary schools, and that is also a wonderful initiative. We must start teaching children about equality, respect and anger management from a very young age.

Our efforts are geared towards girls and women, but many of my colleagues do a great job on the ground with children. I would suggest you invite them to appear before you during this study.

That being said, we need funding, collaboration and time to join forces. We are trying to take some time to come together. As I said, at Carrefour pour Elle, half of my time goes to awareness-raising activities and the other half to collaboration. I am the only person from my team who does this work. We definitely need a helping hand.

Much is being done across Quebec to help women. My colleagues from Newfoundland said that social policies should be put forward to support social housing, access to child care, as well as increased social assistance and funding for community organizations.

I think that we, the people who work for community organizations, are very creative, flexible and innovative. So innovation must be encouraged. We also have considerable expertise. We have been involved in feminist intervention for 40 years, and I think we have been doing a good job. Unfortunately, we lack resources. There is a lack of resources for women with mental health problems. There is a lack of supportive housing facilities. The federal government could help us establish these resources.

This is not simply an issue of funding for existing community organizations. We need more to be able to help female victims. I am mainly thinking of women at risk of homelessness, and women with or without children who have mental health issues. It would be a good idea to think about creating resources to help break the cycle of violence. We are looking at those women's life trajectories. They are sometime exposed to violence during their childhood, adolescence, adulthood and even in their old age. We must break this cycle, but we have to provide them with tools to improve their living conditions in order to put an end to violence.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: It was my pleasure.

The Chair: I now yield the floor to Ms. Perkins, who has five minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Pat Perkins (Whitby—Oshawa, CPC): I will relinquish my five minutes to my colleagues.

The Chair: Madam Bateman.

[Translation]

Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: You have the floor for five minutes.

[English]

Ms. Joyce Bateman: First of all, I want to thank all the witnesses.

[Translation]

You have provided us with some great input that I think will be very useful in our study, in our role as parliamentarians and, even more importantly, in our role as mothers.

[English]

I would like to focus some questions on the trisector collaboration benefits, because a *partenariat*, a working partnership, always seems to achieve more results.

Leslie, would you be kind enough to provide a framework on how it works and how effective it is? I think of the young women who go to school and are possibly alone for the first time in their lives. I'm not thinking just of how it works administratively, but about how you are better able to help people. The first time away from home, potentially very vulnerable.... How does it work now and what more can we do in this vein?

• (1225)

Ms. Leslie Josling: The trisector collaborative partnership wasn't a concept we started with.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: No, I get that. It's just—

Ms. Leslie Josling: It started with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and our program supervisor for central Ontario suggesting that all the service providers get together to start talking about what we could do. From that, we emerged with the strategic plan. Then we said, geez, we could benefit from the university, so the universities joined us.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: And the university could benefit from you.

Ms. Leslie Josling: Of course, absolutely.

Now, let me be clear. It wasn't even just the case that we weren't sure where we were headed when we first met. Those 30 organizations were digging their heels in when we first met. I heard the organizations asking, "What's in it for me?" They were saying that this was a lot of time at the table and they were asking how it was going to make a difference. I honestly have to say that eight years later there is buy-in from those 30 shelters and organizations. That buy-in goes far beyond those organizations. Since that time, for example, we've also engaged all the child welfare agencies.

When you ask what has made the difference, all of our 30 agencies—the violence against women shelters and counselling agencies—have signed a collaborative agreement with the five child welfare agencies in our central Ontario region. It is very specific and very service altering. To get 30 agencies and five child welfare agencies to sign on the dotted line that they're going to do business differently when they encounter a child whose mother is experiencing intimate partner violence is huge.

Also, those intersection points in that agreement look at really tough issues like how to engage men, because we know that historically our services to men have been shaming and blaming. They've been punishment services—

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Actually, I encourage you.... I don't want to spend too much time on this, but we have had a whole program about involving men and boys in the prevention of violence against women—

Ms. Leslie Josling: Exactly.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: —so I think we're on to something.

Ms. Leslie Josling: Yes, we're on to something. This also looks at high conflict and at custody and access. Those are very critical child welfare domestic violence issues.

That agreement is resulting in massive training across our region. Thousands and thousands of front-line people will be trained in this agreement.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: It is so wonderful that all of those cross-sector groups, as you say, have come together and put their signatures on the dotted line, but I'm very curious, given that the universities are involved. We read the headlines about various universities and there's room for improvement, so how can you...? You used the words "service altering". How can we alter the service capacity so that the universities also have something in it for them?

Ms. Leslie Josling: In addition to the university providing us all these research studies and lit reviews, they came to the table and suddenly said, "Oh, my word, our Faculty of Social Work doesn't have a violence against women course." They introduced one as a result of our collaboration.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: That's wonderful.

Ms. Leslie Josling: They also have a deep commitment to community-based research, so they're not an ivory tower academic institution. They understand that their contribution and research need to make a difference on the ground.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: I agree with that, and I think that's very good, but how do we—

The Chair: Thank you very much.

What a passionate exchange. I'm very unhappy to break it off, but I have to move on to Mrs. Truppe for five minutes.

Yes, Madam Bateman.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: I'm just curious; one of our colleagues forewent her time, and you gave it to Mrs. Truppe?

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Okay. That's fine.

The Chair: We arranged that while you were exchanging—

Ms. Joyce Bateman: Okay. Well, I would go on happily.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Madam Bateman.

Madam Truppe, you have five minutes.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Marie-Christine, I have another question for you. You mentioned new Canadians living in Quebec, and that there was a program, I think, for new Canadians living in Quebec. I just wanted to know a bit about the program and if you had a best practice for new Canadians that would help women and girls.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: I didn't quite understand your question. Did you want to know what is being done in this regard in Quebec or rather what we are doing at Carrefour pour Elle?

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe: I'm basically looking for a best practice that would help new Canadians. I'm wondering if you think there's something great going on, such as a program that would help women

and girls who are new Canadians so that they know where to go or what to do.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Christine Plante: Those women have to be reached as quickly as possible when they arrive here. That's why we have focused so much on francisation courses. We generally meet with them less than six months after they arrive in Canada. Those courses give us an opportunity to meet with them. We tell them not only about domestic violence, but also about their rights. We remind them that domestic violence is a crime in Canada, that it's unacceptable and intolerable. We explain to them what offences come under the Criminal Code of Canada.

In a way, we provide those women with popular education, so that they can know where to turn if they experience violence. Our message to those women is that they can find a way out, that hope is alive and that they are not alone or abandoned.

I know that some of my colleagues do this kind of work in Montreal, Quebec City or places that receive a lot of immigrants, such as Laval and Longueuil

We really have to meet with them and welcome them as quickly as possible, and those communities are a good place to start. There are also Quebec women centres, which give them a place to live. Groups of women from various countries are sometimes formed, and we meet with them to deliver prevention workshops. This is another good way to reach them.

Agreements with schools or CEGEPs that provide francisation activities established by the immigration department give us a great avenue for reaching those women.

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

Nathalie, I have a question for you. You said you were developing best practices for cybercrime. I'm wondering if you have a best practice you'd like to share on what you're doing with cybercrime or cyberbullying.

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: We're starting off in that field. For the time being, we're principally trying to get a grip on the diverse reality of what cybercrime is and what it comprises, and trying to see and develop ways to reach young people, who are the most exposed.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Thank you.

I think you said your organization started in 1970. Now we're in 2015, and I'm just curious, what is the best thing that has changed since 1970 that maybe could be used as a best practice? There must have been tonnes of changes over all those years.

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: In our organization or in Quebec in general?

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Well, when you said 1970, was that your organization or was that...?

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: We started in 1979, 35 years ago, but the first CALACS emerged during the 1970s.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Is there a best practice that has changed? There must have been lots of changes along the way to bring us to 2015. Do you have a best practice, such as your favourite program, that you'd like to share?

Ms. Nathalie Duhamel: Our main achievement, I guess, is really the offering of an alternative for women in terms of offering individual counselling and also group help. We offer self-help groups. We have accompaniment services for court or for the police station if a woman decides to lodge a complaint. We also are very proud of the work we do in schools with young people in terms of preventing sexual assault.

I would say that our last best practice, or what excites us very much presently, is the new community-sharing platform that we are constructing presently. That started in July 2014.

• (1235)

Mrs. Susan Truppe: That's great. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Duhamel.

We will now move on to Ms. Fry, who has five minutes.

[*English*]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Thank you.

Ms. Josling, I want to ask a question about intergenerational violence. We know there is enough evidence to tell us that obviously children who have lived in a home where there's violence eventually either marry violent people or begin to become violent themselves in their own interpersonal relationships. That's one example of intergenerational violence.

Of course, the other example of intergenerational violence that we hear a lot about is based on the root causes of aboriginal women's societal, domestic, and other forms of violence, because of that intergenerational sense of shame and deculturalization that came down from colonial times.

Have you been doing work on this? If so, how are you dealing with this problem? Are you successful? Do you have indicators? Are you measuring outcomes?

Ms. Leslie Josling: That's a number of questions at once—

Hon. Hedy Fry: Sorry about that.

Ms. Leslie Josling: As I mentioned, we do have trauma and attachment services at KW Counselling. Those are offered in part in collaboration with the child welfare agency. We also use this trauma and attachment lens to inform all of our individual family and group counselling with children who witness woman abuse.

We have a program called “Trusting, Loving Connections” and a program called “Enhancing Attachment”. They're both group programs that help caregivers understand the effects of trauma on their own lives and the effects of trauma on their children. As I mentioned, we engage in this intergenerational trauma treatment approach. At this point, we've had one generation of research by our child welfare agency. We looked at placement stability for biological parents and foster, kinship, and adoptive parents who received these trauma and attachment services. We saw increases in parental confidence and competence and changes in child behaviour as well.

We are now about to engage in a second generation of research into those services. We'll be looking at the social return on investment as well, because we're curious as to whether there are cost savings in delivering trauma and attachment services this way.

Hon. Hedy Fry: The multi-generational effect that we see with aboriginal peoples is very different. I don't know if you've been doing any work on that or if anyone—Ms. Ryan, Ms. Wright, or Ms. Plante—has any comments on this. I would really like to find a very clear, evidence-based set of interventions, etc., that can actually deal with them. Also, I agree with Ms. Wright; you have to do it with aboriginal women and with aboriginal communities, not just women.

Have any of you done any work on this? Do you have anything to offer?

Ms. Jenny Wright: We work very closely with the women at the native friendship centre. We let them do the work and we support them as well as we can and we work with them in a lot of different areas.

We co-created a vigil to commemorate the missing and murdered women in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was a very powerful community exchange.

We also have a trauma-based program that women from my organization do with the friendship centre. It's called Spirit Horse, and it is an equine therapy program. These women are so full of anxiety and pain and trauma and addictions that initially we can't even get them to get on the bus to go, but by the end of working with these horses around trauma and building, and through being able to talk and share stories, all of a sudden they come out with these horses and they're really, really strong.

In terms of what the best practices are, it would be up to the indigenous community to tell us that. As an organization, we support native women's organizations and work with them and collaborate with them in any way we can. We find that's been very positive. Our Spirit Horse program is probably one of the most effective programs. The women there sit together afterwards and talk and find a way to communicate through a lot of pain.

In terms of addressing the multi-generational impact of colonization, an indigenous women's group would be the ones to speak to best practices for that.

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I would like to thank all the witnesses who have provided us with so much insight as part of our study. Thank you for your time. I want to thank you for making yourselves available, sharing your best practices with us and telling us about situations you face as organizations. Thank you for helping families so much.

We will suspend the meeting until 12:45 p.m., so that we can go in camera to continue with committee business. *[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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