

EVALUATION OF THE WOMEN'S PROGRAM
AGENDA FOR GENDER EQUALITY (AGE)
REPORT ON CASE STUDIES AND
ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction and methodology	1
1.1	Methodology	1
1.2	Outline of the report.....	2
2.0	AGE administrative data.....	2
3.0	Case study: Equay-wuk Women’s Group.....	5
3.1	Background.....	5
3.2	Nishnawbe Women and Self Government Program.....	5
3.3	Objectives and expected results	6
3.4	Impact	7
3.5	Future plans and lessons learned.....	8
4.0	Case study: Canadian Women’s Community Economic Development Council.....	10
4.1	Background.....	10
4.2	Building Women’s CED Capacity in Canada.....	10
4.3	Objectives and expected results	10
4.4	Impact	11
4.5	Future plans and lessons learned.....	12
5.0	Summary	13

1.0 Introduction and methodology

This report is part of an evaluation of the Women's Program (WP). The WP is a grants and contributions program within Status of Women Canada (SWC) with an annual budget of approximately \$10 million per year. Its mandate is to support action by women's organizations and other partners seeking to advance equality for women, thus contributing to SWC's overall goal to promote gender equality and the full participation of women in the economic, social, cultural, and political life of Canada. Since 2000, the WP has used funds from the federal government's Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE) to support community-based initiatives at the local, regional, and national levels. The WP uses AGE funds for two primary purposes: to support new and emerging issues; and to support new groups. The WP has received approximately \$2 million annually in AGE funding since 2000-2001.

This report is part of PRA Inc.'s evaluation of the Women's Program for SWC. In addition, findings from this report will be integrated into a separate evaluation of other AGE-related activities being undertaken by another consultant.

1.1 Methodology

Two main data collection methods were used to complete this assignment: a review of AGE administrative data provided by WP staff; and two case studies of women's organizations supported by AGE funds.

The administrative data included in this report are for a five-year period ending December 31, 2004. The numbers may vary in the Women's Program end-of-year final report.

To select the case studies, PRA asked WP staff to nominate four AGE-funded groups – two priority groups and two alternates – that in their view exemplified what could be achieved with AGE funding. The two priority groups represented, respectively, a new and emerging issue and a new group, as did the two alternate groups. WP staff were responsible for contacting the two priority groups and inviting them to participate in the case study process. Both of the priority groups agreed to participate, and so the alternate groups were not contacted. PRA contacted the selected organizations only after their agreement to participate had been secured.

Each case study consisted of a file review and a telephone interview with two key informants, as summarized in Table 1.

Name of group	AGE category	Methods
Equay-wuk	New and emerging issue	Interview with two key informants File review
Canadian Women's Community Economic Development Council	New group	Interview with two key informants File review

1.2 Outline of the report

This report is divided into several sections. Section 2.0 provides a tabular summary of AGE administrative data as context for the remainder of the report. Sections 3.0 and 4.0 contain the case studies, and Section 5.0 provides a brief summary.

2.0 AGE administrative data

Table 2 shows the number of AGE files approved since AGE funding was introduced, by region and fiscal year. In total, 228 files were approved by December 31, 2004. Note that a group may have received AGE funding more than once during this period and that supplements to previously approved files are counted as separate files.

Region	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Total
Atlantic	1	3	2	1		7
BC/Yukon	8	10	9	16	6	49
National	12	10	10	6		38
Ontario	16	8	17	8	1	50
Prairie	1	4	4	4	1	14
Quebec	17	12	19	14	8	70
Total	55	47	61	49	16	228

Notes: A group may have had approved funding more than once during the 2000-2005 period. In total, 26 supplements were approved and are counted as 26 separate approved files.
Data for 2004-2005 are up to December 31, 2004.

Since 2000-2001, the WP has provided more than \$10 million in AGE funding to women's groups and other equality-seeking organizations. As Table 3 shows, overall, AGE-funded initiatives most frequently focus on *achieving social justice*. Of the WP's three areas of focus, *achieving social justice* accounts for 42% of all AGE files. Files focusing on *elimination of systemic violence against women and the girl-child* account for just over one-third of all AGE files (34%), while one-quarter focus on *improving women's economic status*.

Area of focus	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Total
Improving women's economic status	13	10	19	11	3	56
Elimination of systemic violence	19	17	20	16	5	77
Achieving social justice	23	20	22	22	8	95
Total	55	47	61	49	16	228

Note: Data for 2004-2005 are up to December 31, 2004.

Table 4 shows the number of AGE files approved by WP objective and fiscal year. The most common objective, accounting for one-third of all AGE files, is *promoting institutional change*, followed by *influencing public policy* (29%), *promoting public understanding* (25%), and *enhancing group capacity* (12%).

Objective	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Total
Promoting institutional change	15	11	25	19	5	75
Influencing public policy	19	17	12	13	6	67
Promoting public understanding	17	10	17	9	5	58
Enhancing group capacity	4	9	7	8	--	28
Total	55	47	61	49	16	228

Note: Data for 2004-2005 are up to December 31, 2004.

Within the WP, AGE funding is intended primarily to broaden the scope of groups receiving financial support and to increase the program's ability to support action on new and emerging issues. As Table 5 shows, of the 228 AGE files funded since 2000-2001, 39% (n=88) involved groups that had received funding prior to AGE. The remaining 61% (n=140) of files involved new clients. However, because some groups received supplements and were funded more than once during the 2000-2005 period, the total number of groups funded by AGE in this period is 187. Of these, 35% (n=65) were previously funded through the WP, while 65% (n=122) are new clients of the WP.

Files approved	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Total
Clients with funding prior to AGE	25	20	22	14	7	88
New clients since 2000	30	27	39	35	9	140
Total	55	47	61	49	16	228

Notes: 65 groups received WP funding prior to AGE. 122 groups are new clients since 2000. Some groups received supplements and funding more than once during the 2000-2005 time frame.
Note: Data for 2004-2005 are up to December 31, 2004.

As Table 6 shows, in total, 123 files involved new and emerging issues, falling into nine broad categories. Of the total number of files, more than one-third fell under the broad category of violence, while a further 29% involved economic issues. Note that within the nine broad categories, 53 subcategories have been identified, including such diverse issues as women in the fisheries industry, trade and globalization, sexual exploitation and sex tourism-trafficking, date rape/dating violence, reproductive rights, AIDS and infectious diseases, Aboriginal self-government, and women in technology and e-economy.

Table 6: Number of files involving new and emerging issues since 2000						
Issue	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	Total initiatives
Economic	8	9	11	7	1	36
Violence	12	7	8	10	5	42
Legal	3	2	1	4		10
Education and training			2			2
Health	1	1	3		1	6
Image and culture		2		1		3
Internal to women's organizations			1			1
Multiple subjects	4	2	1		1	8
Miscellaneous	4	2	4	4	1	15
Total	32	25	31	26	9	123

Note: Data for 2004-2005 are up to December 31, 2004.

Based on these administrative data, it is clear that AGE funding has been used both to support community-based work on new and emerging issues (a total of 123 files since 2000-2001) and to support new groups (a total of 122 since 2000-2001). The next two sections illustrate how two women's groups have used AGE funding to undertake their initiatives.

3.0 Case study: Equay-wuk Women's Group

This case study illustrates how Equay-wuk Women's Group has used AGE funding over several years to pursue a series of related initiatives in a new and emerging issue area, namely, Aboriginal self-government.

3.1 Background

Equay-wuk Women's Group is an Aboriginal women's organization based in Sioux Lookout, Ontario. Equay-wuk has a membership of 300 women and serves women, youth, and families residing in 30 remote First Nation communities in Northwestern Ontario. Equay-wuk was first established in 1987 as an organization to assist women and children experiencing family violence and was formally incorporated in 1989. Equay-wuk currently operates six programs: the Employment Ready Skills Training Program; the Early Childhood Education Diploma Program; the Community Wellness Program; the Parent Support (Native Parenting) Program; the Nishnawbe Women's Economic Development Program; and the Nishnawbe Women and Self Government Program. The latter is an AGE-funded initiative.

3.2 Nishnawbe Women and Self Government Program

Equay-wuk has received funding annually from the WP since 1999-2000; since 2000-2001, it has been funded through AGE. AGE funds have supported a series of related initiatives undertaken by Equay-wuk as part of its Nishnawbe Women and Self Government Program, which began in 1999. In addition to AGE funding, Equay-wuk has received funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage's Aboriginal Women's Initiative and from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, as well as in-kind contributions from Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN).

Key informants explained that the Nishnawbe Women and Self Government Program was established in order to address the relative lack of knowledge among Nishnawbe women of First Nations political organizations and structures, and their low rate of involvement in First Nations governance structures. According to research cited in Equay-wuk's funding proposals, for example, in 1999, only 12% of Chiefs or Band Councillors in a sample of 28 communities within NAN were women. Beginning in 1999, Equay-wuk has actively worked to increase women's participation on First Nations governance structures and self-government initiatives through the Women and Self Government Program.

Table 7 summarizes the initiatives that Equay-wuk has undertaken with AGE funding.

Table 7: Equay-wuk AGE-funded initiatives

FY	Project title	AGE funding	Description of activities
2000-2001	Training Manual for Educating and Empowering Nishnawbe Women on Self Government Initiatives	\$30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a plain language training manual on all aspects of self-governance including an Oji-Cree section on governance terminology ▶ Gather women from the Nishnawbe Aski communities to test the training manual and provide feedback on its content and process ▶ Revise, produce, promote, and distribute the finalized manual
2000-2001	Training Manual for Educating and Empowering Nishnawbe Women on Self Government Initiatives (Supplement)	\$11,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Plan, organize, deliver, document, and follow-up three workshops for Aboriginal youth using the training manual
2001-2002	Nishnawbe Women and Self Government	\$35,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hold two-day Women and Self Governance Workshops in five isolated NAN communities using training manual ▶ Revise training manual based on feedback from workshops ▶ Develop a working group of women from participating communities ▶ Present workshop findings at all-Chiefs meeting of NAN (to be accomplished by working group) ▶ Make representation for permanent seat for women at Chiefs' meetings
2001-2002	Nishnawbe Women and Self Government (Supplement)	\$14,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Two-day evaluation/planning retreat to develop new strategies for Aboriginal women's participation in NAN's self-governance process
2002-2003	Nishnawbe Women's Leadership Forum	\$58,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organize, implement, and follow-up a three-day Nishnawbe Women's Leadership Forum with participation from 30 former and current women Chiefs and Councillors from First Nations Band Councils ▶ Broadcast forum on Wataway radio, on television and in print
2003-2004	Nishnawbe Women in Leadership	\$58,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Research, develop, publish, and distribute a First Nations women's election manual for women seeking local office as Chief or Council ▶ Develop and implement a public education campaign through radio, print, and Internet promoting women's participation in all aspects of the electoral process
2004-2005	Nishnawbe Women in Leadership (Supplement)	\$38,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a workshop curriculum for the First Nations women's election manual ▶ Present workshop to women from 49 NAN communities at first major NAN gathering in November 2004 (200 participants) to build nationwide constituency of NAN women ▶ Broadcast workshop on Wataway radio to isolated communities

3.3 Objectives and expected results

The Women and Self Government Program focuses on *achieving social justice*, one of the WP's stated areas of focus. The applications for funding submitted by Equay-wuk since 2000-2001 describe its proposed initiatives as addressing, at one time or another, each of the four objectives of the WP.

While each of Equay-wuk's AGE-funded initiatives has numerous specific objectives and expected results, the Women and Self Government Program as a whole seeks to increase women's understanding of and participation in Aboriginal governance structures, and to ensure women's participation in First Nations self-government. Based on a review of Equay-wuk funding proposals and reports as well as interviews with key informants, the main long-term expected results of the Women and Self Government Program can be summarized as:

- ▶ increased understanding by Aboriginal women of the jurisdictional, legal, and funding arrangements that affect their lives at the community and national levels
- ▶ a more informed and active constituency of Aboriginal women throughout NAN actively working on political participation and self governance issues
- ▶ increased awareness among Aboriginal leaders of the importance of women's participation in Aboriginal governance structures and self-government initiatives
- ▶ increased participation of women in Aboriginal governance structures at the local (Band) and regional (NAN) levels
- ▶ increased participation of Aboriginal women in self-government initiatives.

3.4 Impact

Equay-wuk has made considerable progress toward achieving its expected results. Its workshops, radio broadcasts, and community gatherings have provided information to Aboriginal women throughout the NAN region, creating a constituency of Aboriginal women who have been educated and mobilized around governance issues.

Equay-wuk's work has also increased awareness among NAN leadership of the importance of women's participation in Aboriginal governance, as evidenced by the passing of several NAN resolutions, summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: NAN resolutions	
Resolution	Purpose
Resolution 02/04	Directs NAN's Executive Council and Equay-wuk to set up a Women's Working Group mandated to provide recommendations to NAN Chiefs on how women could be included in the Chiefs' meetings
Resolution 03/61	Directs the NAN Executive Council to develop options for a proposed NAN Elders Congress with equal representation of male and female Elders
Resolution 03/75	Directs the NAN Executive Council to work with Equay-wuk to develop the NAN Equay-wuk Women's Working Group, to organize women from the eastern NAN region, and to promote their participation in the Working Group
Resolution 03/82	Directs the Executive Council to prepare amendments to the by-laws so as to allow for the involvement of women's representatives in the decision-making process of NAN (i.e., women to have voting power at the NAN all-Chiefs meetings)

Equay-wuk's work has also contributed to the growing involvement of women in Aboriginal governance in the NAN region. Following on Resolution 03/75, Equay-wuk, which is based in the western NAN region, successfully established a Women's Working Group and organized women from the eastern NAN region, and following on Resolution 03/82, in November 2004, a Women's Council was elected to represent women at the NAN Chiefs' meetings. Moreover, between 1999 and 2003, women doubled their representation among those elected to NAN Band Councils in both Chief and Councillor positions. Table 9 provides the details.

Year	Percentage	Number of communities in survey sample
1999	12%	28
2000	15%	37
2002	21%	47
2003	24%	43

Equay-wuk key informants attributed the success of its Women and Self Government Program to several factors, including its strategy of maintaining high visibility for itself, both through travel to remote northern communities to meet with women in person and through maintaining a constant presence in the local media; as well as unqualified support from NAN political leadership. They observed that their practice of following established protocols for approaching a community leadership before entering that community helped to ensure support and buy-in.

Key informants identified two unexpected positive results of the Women and Self Government Program. They reported that because of Equay-wuk's presence and work, the NAN Youth Council developed its Terms of Reference so that it would include an equal number of male and female representatives, a decision that was also made with respect to the NAN Elders' Council. They also reported that obtaining support for women's representatives at the Chiefs' meetings was, to some extent, unexpected.

3.5 Future plans and lessons learned

Key informants reported that Equay-wuk plans to continue working on women and Aboriginal governance issues, noting that attitudes have not fully changed and that some people in their communities, particularly men, see their organization as a threat. In the immediate term, Equay-wuk plans to focus its efforts on encouraging more women to run for leadership positions on Band Councils and regional committees. It hopes to use the leadership manual to hold community workshops for women on running in First Nations elections.

Key informants considered themselves "*really fortunate*" in having the WP to support their work and reported that WP funding has been essential to their success: "*If we didn't have Women's Program funding, we wouldn't have been able to do any of this. We know people are noticing us in other parts of the country because of the work we've done.*" They reported that the WP staff person with whom they deal is easily accessible, always willing and able to provide

assistance when they need it, and extremely knowledgeable about the issues confronting Aboriginal communities in Northwestern Ontario.

Key informants identified several lessons learned from their experience with the Women and Self Government Program, including:

- ▶ Achieving results requires time, work, and commitment.
- ▶ Forecast budgets carefully, particularly when initiatives involve extensive travel to remote northern communities.
- ▶ For Aboriginal organizations, follow the appropriate protocols for approaching the political leadership to ensure their support and buy-in.
- ▶ Maintain respect for culture; take steps such as translation of materials wherever feasible.
- ▶ Maintain respect for individual communities; each community is different, and care should be taken to meet their needs.

4.0 Case study: Canadian Women's Community Economic Development Council

This case study illustrates how AGE funding has supported the Canadian Women's Community Economic Development Council (CWCEDC), a new group not previously funded by the WP.

4.1 Background

CWCEDC is an association that was created in February 2002 by a group of practitioners who had been working in the areas of women's issues and community economic development for many years. The group developed the purpose, mandate, goals, and temporary structure of this organization with a view to addressing the lack of opportunities for community economic development for women. CWCEDC is currently in the process of incorporating as a not-for-profit organization. It is an association of volunteers that serves women-centred programs and CED organizations and practitioners in terms of research, awareness-raising with stakeholders and mainstream organizations, advocacy, networking, and partnership development.

PARO: A Northwestern Ontario Women's Community Loan Fund is the administrative partner. PARO's Executive Director is also a founding member of CWCEDC. CWCEDC has only one staff member at this time, the Project Coordinator for its first program, Building Women's CED Capacity in Canada, which has received AGE funding.

4.2 Building Women's CED Capacity in Canada

CWCEDC received funding from the WP in 2004 for the design and development phase of Building Women's CED Capacity, beginning March 30 and ending November 19, 2004. The organization has since requested an extension until February 2005 to complete some activities. The CWCEDC initially requested \$118,375 in support from the WP, which approved a \$71,321 grant.

4.3 Objectives and expected results

The WP-approved objectives and expected results for Building Women's CED Capacity are presented in Table 10, along with progress to date, as indicated in the CWCEDC's Interim Report to SWC and explained by key informants.

Table 10: Objectives, outcomes, and activities		
Objectives	Expected outcomes	Activities (Progress to date)
To research and establish a national agenda for policy issues that supports women's CED.	Women's CED organizations across Canada have contributed to a national strategic action plan aimed at increasing the capacities of their members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Members participated in events such as the National Skills Institutes of the CWF, the Canadian Community Economic Network, and the Queen's International Institute on Social Policy seminar through which they met researchers and developed a list of research priorities. ▶ Presentations were made to approximately 100 women working in women-centred CED programs across Canada and at a national CED conference. ▶ Members collaborated on a CWF report on women's policy issues.
To involve women's organizations with expertise in CED, including those that work with low-income women, in the design of a multi-year national strategic action plan to further women's CED in Canada.	Women's organizations and other equality-seeking stakeholders have taken ownership of a multi-year plan to support and expand women's CED in Canada.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contracted out a research summary report. ▶ Development of the plan in discussion with various groups. ▶ Three meetings with women practitioners from across Canada to discuss key policies and identify challenges and approaches to building CED capacity. ▶ Recruited and extended the membership of the council to represent visible minorities, young women, Aboriginal women, and French-speaking women from Quebec.
To develop partnerships with governments, foundations, mainstream CED organizations and other private and non-governmental organizations to support the Building Women's Capacity in Canada Strategic Action Plan.	Women and partners are committed to implementing the national strategic action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Met with Parliamentary Secretary Eleni Bakapanos and Minister John Godfrey, and senior officials at HRSDC and Industry Canada, to discuss women's issues related to CED policies. ▶ Participated in National Round Table on Social Economy and managed to get three Council members on regional round tables (still working on Maritimes and Quebec). ▶ Presented to the Standing Committee on SWC on women's issues. ▶ Began discussions with voluntary sector organizations, working on formalizing. Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> B production of a special edition of the magazine <i>Making Waves</i> on women and CED in Canada (scheduled for release in August 2005) B invited to deliver a workshop at the national CED conference (May 2005).

4.4 Impact

Key informants indicated that, via the important new political direction of the federal government in support of the social economy – of which CED is a significant component – CWCEDC took advantage of the opportunity to be heard on women's CED issues by participating in the Government of Canada sponsored national round tables and ensuring that their members would participate in the subsequent regional round tables.

The collaboration on the special edition of *Making Waves* is, according to key informants, a huge accomplishment. It will be an especially large issue and will be circulated to all MPs, a large number of women's organizations, and mainstream CED organizations and funders. It will be completely targeted toward issues and concerns, best practices, and success stories relevant to women's CED.

4.5 Future plans and lessons learned

Key informants agreed that the design and development phase of Building Women's CED Capacity has been immensely successful, although to a certain extent, the members changed direction midstream. First, the involvement in the round tables on the development of the social economy appeared on the government agenda after CWCEDC had set its priorities, yet the members were able to take advantage of this opportunity to further their objective of bringing women's CED policy issues forward on the agenda.

Second, the founding members initially thought that their proposed strategy to match more experienced and lesser experienced organizations in pairs in order to develop the CED capacity in the latter was a sound one, based on their experience. However, through the facilitated process used to determine how to best use the association's financial and human resources to fulfil its objectives, the membership opted not to pursue that strategy. This meant that one of the initiative's objectives would not be achieved. CWCEDC received approval from the WP for the revisions to their initial objectives and strategies.

In addition, key informants indicated that the CWCEDC members were aware of the lack of national voices for women in terms of economic development, yet through this initiative, learned of a greater need than they had suspected in terms of support for women's organizations in order to be more effective at lobbying, promoting gender equality, research and partnerships.

At the time of this case study, key informants indicated that the three-year national strategic action plan for Building Women's CED Capacity in Canada was complete and being formatted for distribution, while the data collection plan was being developed in conjunction with the evaluation plan. The next phase will focus on developing materials and resources to strengthen the information base and the tools for organizations to use in enhancing their participation in research and policy development, raising awareness of women's CED issues in mainstream organizations, and supporting women in successfully participating in CED programming.

Key informants insisted that the financial support from the WP made the difference between the Building Women's CED Capacity initiative's *"being a go or no-go."* All members of the association are volunteers and *"their organizations are not able to support travel, meetings and other things that need to happen to convene an association such as CWCEDC, or support the work with government officials and other influencers."* They stressed that it is difficult to obtain funding for initiatives related to women's issues and even more difficult when the focus is advocacy and policy development. They now see potential to diversify their sources of funding for the next phase of the initiative.

They also stressed that the WP provided ample support in other forms. WP staff proved helpful and flexible, especially when it took longer than expected for CWCEDC to complete some activities. CWCEDC, as a new organization, was shepherded by staff of the WP who helped it flesh out its objectives, articulate targeted outcomes in terms of the change it wanted to effect, and position the initiative clearly relative to other work in the area of women's CED.

5.0 Summary

Administrative data indicate that AGE funds have, as intended, enabled the WP to support a total of 122 new groups and 123 files involving new and emerging issues since the introduction of AGE funding in 2000-2001. The two AGE-funded initiatives examined in this research have clearly had considerable success in achieving their objectives, and key informants reported plans to continue working on their respective issues and, more generally, to continue working to advance women's equality. Finally, key informants who participated in the case studies emphasized the helpfulness, support, and accessibility of WP staff throughout the life of their initiative, from proposal preparation to reporting.