IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE GIRL CHILD
PHASE II REPORT

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Dedication

This report is dedicated to all the girls and young women who have so generously and poignantly, through laughter and tears, shared their stories with us. From them we have learned a great deal about hope and fear, about courage and survival. It is our intent that this work contribute, directly and indirectly, to the development of more equitable policies and programs that will ultimately help to make their dreams a reality.

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The Girl Child In An Historical Context

Violence or the threat of violence permeates the lives of all girls and young women. The specific vulnerabilities of girls, however, did not gain prominent attention until the 1980s when UNICEF adopted the phrase, "the girl child". In recognition of the oppression of girls as a gendered concern, international organizations followed suit, proclaiming 1990 "The Year of The Girl Child", and the 1990s as "The Decade of the Girl Child". At the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, the plight of girl children was highlighted as a significant issue of concern. The focus on girls was subsequently incorporated into the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which was ratified by Canada. The Declaration identifies the following objectives that state parties are expected to achieve:

1. Elimination of all forms of discrimination against the girl child;
2. Elimination of negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls;
3. Promotion and protection of the rights of the girl child, and increase of awareness of her needs and potential;
4. Elimination of discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training;
5. Elimination of discrimination against girls in health and nutrition;
6. Elimination of the economic exploitation of child labour and protection of young girls at work;
7. Eradication of violence against the girl child;
8. Promotion of the girl child's awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life; and
9. Strengthening the role of the family in improving the status of the girl child. (Beijing Declaration, 1995)

The impetus for the Declaration came initially from women in developing countries

throughout the world. As a result, many have questioned its relevance to the Canadian context. In part, the reluctance to acknowledge specific vulnerabilities of the Canadian girl child stems from the perception, both domestically and internationally, that Canada is a leader in the arena of progressive human rights and egalitarian gender relations. Further, the dominant discourse in North America has strategically served to obscure gender differences by collapsing these into the more generic rubric of "children" and "youth". This privileging of children and youth as categories deserving of societal attention is highly problematic. Firstly, it results in the negation of the compounding effects of the intersection of various forms of oppression. Thus, racism in combination with sexism and classism; or ableism in conjunction with sexual orientation and racism are rarely treated as interlocking and systemic forms of domination (Razack, 1998). Rather, the tendency historically has been to treat these multiple forms of oppression as being mutually exclusive. Secondly, the focus on children and youth strategically serves to obfuscate the reality of gender-based violence and inequality, thereby positioning women as simply bearers and nurturers of children, and girls as future mothers.

The international human rights discourse surrounding the girl child is underpinned by a universal and stereotypical construction which presents her as a victim of backward, oppressive and highly patriarchal cultures. Typically, the girl child is portrayed as the desperate and reluctant victim of female genital mutilation in Africa; the poverty-stricken child laborer and child-bride in India; the child prostitute in Thailand; the undeserving victim of honour killing in the Middle East; the illiterate, uneducated, exploited, and uncared for child in Latin America; or the unwanted girl child in China. More recently, the girl child has entered the popular western imagination in the form of the fleeing, illegal, refugee who is in need of our protection on the one hand, and who signifies the barbarism of her country of origin on the other hand. All of these images are typically displayed prominently in the fundraising initiatives of international aid organizations and in the mass media. The unstated premise is that atrocities inflicted upon girls occur elsewhere – in backward nations outside the realm of the "civilized" west, and more specifically, Canada.

Existing statistics reveal otherwise. Within Canada, the girl child is subjected to a range of violent behaviours, attitudes and practices. For instance, adolescent wives between the ages of 15 and 19 are three times more likely to be murdered as compared to wives who are older (Rodgers, 1994). Girls are also more likely to be victims of sexual and physical assault by family members than are boys (Statistics Canada, 2000). It has been estimated that up to 75% of Aboriginal women under the age of 18 have experienced sexual abuse, 50% are under 14, and almost 25% are younger than 7 years of age (Correctional Service of Canada, cited in McIvor and Nahanee, 1998). Child poverty is also a significant concern. The Campaign 2000 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada identifies that 23.4% of Canadian children live in poverty. Aboriginal children and children from racial minority communities

constitute the highest populations facing poverty, at 52.1% and 42.7% respectively. Clearly, the situation of girl children in Canada is far from being equitable or in compliance with the obligations set forth in various international instruments.

The research presented here interrogates and challenges the binary construction which positions the west as a superior, altruistic, and progressive entity. By examining the situation of the girl child in Canada, we have sought to deconstruct the universality of the categories of children and youth. Moreover, we have challenged the denial and trivialization of gender-based violence as it affects and influences the lives of Canadian girls and young women. Our investigation has attempted to demonstrate that "the third world" exists in the so-called "first world" (Amos & Parmar, 1984; Mohanty, 1991).

As statistics demonstrate, violence against girls and young women is a pervasive and deeply entrenched feature of Canadian society. Yet, it often goes unnoticed. The masking and erasure of the gendered and racialized nature of violence contributes to a flawed understanding, with enormous ramifications for social policy, programs, and legislation. When violence is normalized, and when its manifestations are not given due consideration until they have escalated and moved into the realm of institutional control, then potential sites of effective intervention and prevention are lost. This tendency is perhaps best demonstrated by the increased focus of the public imagination on the issue of girls as aggressors, and thus actors of violence. In the current research we have consciously decided to focus on the girl child as the recipient of violence rather than emphasizing the differential ways in which violence expresses itself for girls and boys. Instead we have focussed on explicating the pervasiveness and manifestation of gendered violence and examining how the girl child both perceives and negotiates the resulting lived reality.

Gender-Based Analysis and Gender-Neutral Policies

Examining the conditions of girls' lives through a gender lens is critically important for gaining an adequate understanding of the fundamental dynamics of inequality which are at work. Gender analysis requires simultaneous attention to the lives of women and men, girls and boys. Although approaches to gender analysis differ, key features include understanding and documenting differences in gender roles, as well as the activities and opportunities available to girls and women. A critically informed gender analysis does not treat women as a homogenous group or gender attributes as immutable. Rather, it highlights the different societal expectations attached to gender attributes which may themselves vary across race, culture, class, income, and time (Randall & Haskell, 2000).

A critical gender analysis enables us to evaluate the potentially differential and discriminatory impact of government policies and practices on males and females from a variety of backgrounds. This is especially important for critiquing the impact of policies, programs and legislation which treat everyone the same

regardless of gender, race, and/or class. In the context of violence against women and children, gender-neutral descriptions obscure the root causes of violence, and leave the underlying gender-related dynamics unnamed and invisible. Instead, structured and systemic social problems appear as random, unpatterned and individualized.

Differential Gender-Based Socialization

From an early age children learn what is expected of them as girls and boys. In many cultures, though not universally, there is a tendency towards socializing girls to adopt nurturing, care-giving roles, and for boys to adopt protector roles. This notion is conveyed through the family, peers, schools, the community, the media and virtually every social institution. Typically, boys learn from an early age that aggression increases their ability to carry out their will or desires in the world. Despite some resistance or limits on their actions, the overall message is that boys can expect a fair amount of latitude around their aggressive behaviours. Girls, in contrast, are more typically encouraged to conform to social imperatives regarding how they should look and what they should wear to appear more desirable to boys. They are socialized to prioritize personal characteristics that increase their affinity and capacity in the relationship domain. Girls are more apt to internalize contradictory impulses and responses that seem incongruous with 'being nice'. This internalization is implicated in the array of physical and emotional health problems, including eating disorders, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, found with disturbing frequency among girls and young women (Jiwani ,Gorkoff, Berman, Taylor, Vardy-Dell & Normandeau 19998). Beale (1994) suggests that friendship cliques for girls are more likely to serve as a defensive, protective strategy. Through cliques, they are assured a place in the peer group, popularity, and thus power. Their aggressiveness is more likely to manifest itself through verbal aggression with same-sex peers. Boys tend towards more obviously competitive group activities such as team sports.

Girls and boys also learn, from a young age, their racial identity vis-a-vis the communities in which they reside. The early 'raced' nature of identity interlocks with the socializing influences of sexism and classism, or disability and sexuality as the case may be. Power is also established within peer groups, but draws more upon physical prowess. The gender messages revolving around prescribed roles of protector and protected resurface strongly in adolescent dating relationships. Accommodating themselves to sexually-based intimate relationships requires relinquishing some autonomy for both boys and girls, though the balance is not likely to favour the girl child, who is more apt to be socialized towards deference and accommodation to the wants and needs of others.

Toward a Definition of Violence

Violence is explained and understood in diverse ways. Most commonly, violence is

thought of in terms of physical actions that result in tangible harm to another human being. But this narrow conceptualization overlooks an important aspect of violence that has gained acceptance since the 1970s. Psychological harm is a more insidious form of violence (Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1993). Its inclusion in our conceptualization permits a more comprehensive and exacting gender analysis of everyday violence and the girl child. It allows us to understand violence as a mechanism which is used to distribute and maintain power imbalances in our society. These power imbalances are predicated on social relationships that channel oppression, and ultimately serve to sustain a social order based on dominant-submissive roles. Laws, policies, and other formal repositories of entrenched ideas and traditions normatively sanction these relationships.

Control is gained by a process of depersonalizing people who are categorized as different or as having less value. Personal traits and aspects of social identity such as gender, race, or class, become tools for identifying this difference. When this ability to control individuals or social institutions becomes invested in specific groups, members of these groups have greater access to power and privilege. The prestige and status of elite group membership also conveys greater potential to influence marginalized or less powerful groups.

An important element for understanding how the resulting inequality is structurally embedded is to consider ways in which less powerful groups are required to interact with the dominant group. This re-shaping of the social arena occurs in such a way that less powerful groups are not only induced to cooperate with acts which may be harmful to themselves individually and collectively, but they also internalize inferiorized valuations of themselves and their communities. This is the most subtle form of violence in society. It is also seamlessly woven into social and institutional structures, and thus less likely to be penalized save in those situations where it explicitly results in harm.

Everyday violence in the lives of girls and young women takes a myriad of forms, including all manifestations of physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse. In recent decades a new category of abuse has been defined relating to the impact of children witnessing violence (Jaffe, Wolfe & Wilson, 1990), demonstrating that children can be victimized in direct and indirect ways. However the literature also demonstrates that responses to various forms of violence are gender-specific (Jiwani, 1998). What all of these forms of violence have in common is that they serve to undermine the recipient's sense of self. The corrosive effect is enhanced by reinforcing a sense of powerlessness which limits functioning in both the private and public realms. Violence reflects an abuse of a power relationship, which for children often stems from their age and size relative to the perpetrator, and for girls, stems from the combined vulnerabilities of age, gender, and social location.

Our definition of violence begins with the recognition of the hierarchical nature of Canadian society. Further, it is grounded in the findings of the first phase of the national

project on violence prevention and promotion of egalitarian interactions for the girl child (Jiwani et al., 19998). In essence, this definition highlights the power imbalances that lead to violence and is predicated on the conceptualization of violence as spanning a continuum of attitudes, beliefs and actions (see also, Kelly 1988). Thus, violence is:

> … the construction of difference and otherness; it entails inferiorizing or devaluing the "Other." Violence is further understood as the mechanism by which individuals or groups vie for, and/or sustain, a position of power in hierarchical structures defined by patriarchal values. (Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence, Meeting, Winnipeg, 2001)

Situating the Current Research

The current phase of the research was undertaken to examine the prevention of violence as it effects the Canadian girl child. A primary objective was to explicate the diverse ways in which girls and young women are socialized to expect violence in their lives. A second aim of the project was to examine how social policies, legislation and institutions alleviate, or perpetuate, the problems faced by this population. A third objective was to explore the different dimensions and manifestations of the intersections between systemic forms of violence, such as racism and sexism, and violence occurring within intimate/familial relationships. Finally, our fourth objective was to propose constructive and meaningful strategies for implementing policy and programming changes geared towards the prevention of gendered violence and the promotion of egalitarian interactions in the lives of girls.

The theoretical and methodological perspectives which have guided the conceptualization and implementation of this project are derived from the principles of feminist theory and participatory action research. Assumptions upon which this work are based include: that girls and young women are socialized to expect violence in their everyday lives; that, as a result of their socialization, violence becomes "normalized" for girls; that violence occurs in both subtle and explicit ways including psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual; and that girls from all socioeconomic, racial, geographic, and cultural groups are affected by the multiple forms of violence, and experience it differently. Implicit in these assumptions is the assertion that traditional notions of "girls at risk" may not be useful when addressing the topic of violence. Instead, given the pervasive and insidious nature of many forms of violence, all girls must be considered to be vulnerable and "at risk" when addressing the topic of violence.

In Phase I, the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence (AFRCV) undertook to: compile an inventory of existing programs and services available to girls and young women; review the literature on specific issues pertaining to violence; and lastly, conduct focus groups with service providers and girls and young women across the country. Overall findings from the first phase of the study revealed that girls are rarely considered as a separate entity meriting special attention. Rather, girls

as a group are treated monolithically, and by and large, tend to be collapsed within the category of children and youth. Additional findings revealed that: (a) there are few violence prevention initiatives in place; (b) existing initiatives are under-funded, sporadic and intermittent; (c) there is a lack of coordination among programs and integration of programs with existing services; (d) very few programs are gender specific despite the need and demonstrated success of such programs; and, (e) the dichotomy between violence prevention and intervention is illusory. Nevertheless, because the distinction is very real within the minds of those who develop and implement policy, programs and policies often distinguish between prevention and intervention. One consequence of this dualistic mindset is that there is seldom sufficient money for intervention and, at best, sporadic funding for prevention. While this research reveals that effective programs need to be gender specific to address the differential outcomes of violence for girls and boys, the quality and quantity of regional programs designed to address violence in the lives of girls is relatively inconsistent across the country. With the possible exception of Quebec, effective programs are scarce and mostly focus on dealing with violence in a gender neutral manner. The differential gender role socialization of girls and boys needs to be recognized and used as a point of departure for the development of policies, programs and legislation (Jiwani et al, , 1999).1998).

The present report presents the findings of the second phase of the research undertaken by the Alliance (AFRCV). As per our collaborative practice and in recognition of regional specificity, each Centre focused on a particular issue or manifestation of gender-based violence, and/or programmatic aspects of violence prevention, legislation and policies. The Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children in Ontario, focused on sexual harassment of girls and young women. The BC/Yukon FREDA Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children examined issues contributing to the vulnerabilities of immigrant and refugee girls from racialized communities and the various policies that influence their access to services and sense of belonging. The RESOLVE Network (Universities of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Calgary) focused on the sexual exploitation of girls and the policies and programs impacting on them. The Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Research on Family Violence (New Brunswick) and the Centre de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur la Violence Familiale et la Violence Faite aux Femmes (CRI-VIFF) in Quebec each focused on programmatic aspects of violence prevention and the promotion of egalitarian interactions between genders, and in relation to the girl child. CRI-VIFF undertook an evaluation of the factors that contribute to the successful diffusion and implementation of effective anti-violence programs, while the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre focused on an example of a successful intervention which highlighted the relative merits and limitations of gender-specific versus gender-integrated anti-violence programs.

Research Methodology

From a feminist perspective, knowledge is not something which stands alone, or is produced in a vacuum by a sort of 'pure' intellectual process. Instead, all knowledge is value-laden and shaped by historical, social, political, gender and economic conditions (Berman, Ford-Gilboe & Campbell, 1998; Habermas, 1971; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Ideologies, taken-for-granted assumptions and values which usually remain hidden and unquestioned, create a social structure that serves to oppress particular groups by limiting the options available to them.

Principles underlying feminist research (Acker, Barry, & Esseveld, 1991; Fonow & Cook, 1991; Harding, 1987) that have informed this study are as follows: (a) the research process is based on valuing the experiences of girls and women from their own perspective, and challenging taken-for-granted assumptions and stereotypes; (b) the inclusion of a diversity of girls and women's experiences; (c) reflexivity in the research process, allowing both investigators and participants the opportunity to reflect on the content and process of the study and to share these reflections with each other through dialogue; and (d) knowledge produced by the research has the potential to foster change in the participants, in the community or both.

The notion of research as praxis, or the combination of research and action, is a basic tenet embraced by researchers working within any of the critical approaches. A critical/feminist "agenda", then, focuses on creating knowledge that has the potential to produce change through personal or group empowerment, alterations in social systems or a combination of these.

The present research is framed within this paradigm, with particular reference to the tradition of Participatory Action Research (PAR). However, the emphasis on PAR varied among the Centres and was contingent upon the specificity of the topic of investigation and the contextual factors operative in each of the different regions. Hence, some centres concentrated their efforts on the analysis of specific policies and legislation, while others focused on evaluating programs, and still others combined policy and narrative analysis based on the lived realities of girls and young women. Similarly, the levels of analysis differed depending on the nature and subject of the investigation. Thus, some centres framed their investigations with particular reference to international policies and obligations, while others focused on provincial legislation and local policies.

Findings

The results of these investigations demonstrate that violence operates at numerous levels spanning the continuum from individual lived realities to systemic institutional structures. Further, violence is discursively represented in the strategic omissions and gender-neutral perspectives embedded in policies, programs, and legislation. Rather than detail the findings of each Centre's contributions here, we present some of the over-arching theoretical, programmatic and policy considerations below.

Doing Research Ground-Up

Our attempts to employ a PAR approach led to the decision to privilege the voices and experiences of girls and young women. Their experiences have informed our understanding of the ways in which policies and legislation, wittingly and unwittingly, shape their lives. Their stories poignantly communicate the erosion of self that is an outcome of violence, whether that violence is orchestrated in a series of daily acts or instigated in a single horrific incident. Moreover, their stories tell us about the absence of any kind of effective recourse. Thus, for girls who experience everyday sexual harassment or everyday racism, or a combination thereof, there are few places to turn to for assistance and support. This is not to imply that these girls are simply "victims". On the contrary, their experiences reveal a form of agency which is both highly creative and self-sustaining. Nevertheless, institutions need to support these efforts as, for example, by providing 'safe spaces' and being vigilant about the differential impact of policies and programs. Failure to do so results in the normalization and embeddedness of these forms of violence.

The gendered nature of socialization that we alluded to in the preceding section suggests the ways in which social institutions (e.g., schools, family, laws, and media) produce and reproduce the girl child. One of the most common concerns articulated by the girls who participated in our research dealt with the nature of "fitting in". Implicit in this concern was a normatively grounded acceptance of what they were fitting in to. Most commonly, this stock of taken-for-granted knowledge referred to internalized standards of beauty, femininity, and conformity. It is apparent that fitting into something requires prior knowledge of it; such knowledge being communicated, subtly and explicitly, by the dominant institutions in society. This begs the question, whose interests are being served by the perpetuation of these complex and interwoven forms of oppression? Keeping girls in their place ensures the maintenance of the existing hierarchy of power and privilege. It entrenches and perpetuates the patriarchal order which is most overtly recognizable in the dominant structures of power. Gender, as Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992) among others have noted, is used to signify boundaries between groups. Gender also becomes a contested site of multiple discourses regarding sexuality, ethnic group membership and discourses of traditionalism versus modernism/westernization (Handa, 1997).

For effective change to occur, it is imperative that institutional sites for intervention be defined and the appropriate resources be harnessed toward implementation. Factors which influence the identity formation of girls as girls, as racialized and sexualized "others," and as disabled, need to be understood and recognized as critical points of departure for the development of equitable policies and programs. Basic needs such as food, shelter, and protection from violence constitute fundamental rights for all girls. As structural needs,

they are key to identity formation. Similarly, support systems both in terms of peer groups and family support are integral to the development of a positive and healthy identity. These types of support contribute to a sense of belonging which in turn reduces the potential for alienation and marginalization. Yet, as our current research demonstrates, these fundamental human rights and supports are not always available to the Canadian girl child.

Gender-Neutral Policies and Legislation

Canada is a signatory to many international conventions, accords, declarations, and protocols. While all of these differ in some respects, they share a common commitment to the protection of human rights and the enjoyment of civil liberties. Our analysis reveals a significant disparity between these commitments as they are articulated in the international arena and the lived reality of Canadian girls and young women.

The commitment towards gathering gender-specific data remains an area of significant concern despite international obligations. While there have been progressive attempts to gather such data, the reality is that only in rare situations is such data utilized for social policy formation. For example, available statistics clearly demonstrate the heightened risk and vulnerability of Aboriginal girls. The study conducted by the RESOLVE Network further demonstrates the factors that contribute to the marginalization and sexual exploitation of this population. Nevertheless, current legislation and policies have failed to factor this reality into programs and policies. Similarly, while there is a paucity of information relating specifically to immigrant and refugee girls, there is nonetheless widespread recognition at the international levels and within the academic community regarding the heightened vulnerability of this population. Yet again, existing policies and programs do not reflect this recognition, nor do they embrace an intersectional analysis of the multiple forms of oppression that impact on the lives of these girls and young women.

In part, this failure to address the specificities and risk factors shaping the lives of Canadian girls is rooted in the current climate of backlash. Within the latter context, it is "safer" to collapse gender, race, and class differences within the categories of "children" and "youth". Under the guise of "the best interests of the child", federal, provincial, and territorial governments (albeit not uniformly) are more inclined to embrace legislation and policies that seemingly serve to protect <u>all</u> children. While this appears to be in compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the focus on the girl child as outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action is rarely incorporated into current policies and legislation. One exception appears to be Quebec where the political climate surrounding the issues of youth protection laws, sexual aggression, dating violence, and children who witness violence, has resulted in a policy environment which more explicitly recognizes the differential impact of violence on girls and boys. Nevertheless, in essence, the specific needs of the girl child are continually omitted in Canada's federal, provincial and municipal policies and programs. Instead, part

of the discourse of backlash seems to be an emphasis on the supposed gender equality of girls and boys; women and men. This has resulted in an unusual and intense preoccupation with the supposedly increasing aggression of girls. In this respect, girls are seen to have achieved gender parity in the realm of their potential to participate in violence.

However, despite the seemingly benevolent intentions of protecting children, it is interesting to note the sentiments and rationale underpinning some of the existing policies and legislation. As the RESOLVE Network's research indicates, the State seems to be most committed to protecting these rights in those instances where interventions are mandated by the criminal justice system; in other words, where laws have been broken. When interventions would seem to be most preventative or appropriate, but no legal infractions have occurred, then these interventions rest largely on the shoulders of under-funded Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) and advocacy groups. As stated in the Network's report,

> From a policy perspective there is a conundrum, the category of children most in need of services are for the most part children 'on the run' from 'controlling' agencies ... which are the agencies most securely funded to provide the services. Thus the evolution of securely funded programs with a mandate to protect child sexual abuse victims may have the unintended effect of frightening these children/youth away because of their fear or aversion to the 'control' components of these services (p. 135)

This pattern is particularly apparent when one examines the situation of sexual harassment. As the Ontario Centre's research amply demonstrates, sexual harassment is supported and sustained in a multitude of ways,. The loss of self that is an outcome of the constant and insidious forms of sexual harassment, often labeled as teasing and bullying, is profound. While most schools and communities have various "zero-tolerance" policies intended to deal with these subtle forms of violence, these policies tend to embrace a gender-neutral and minimizing perspective. Issues regarding race, class, gender, and sexual orientation are negated and/or trivialized. Nevertheless, in the context of scarce programming, these services provide a limited and needed form of intervention. However, they are under-funded, heavily reliant on volunteer labour, and sporadic.

A similar trend is evident in the research conducted by the BC/Yukon FREDA Centre. The definitions of violence articulated by young women and girls of colour from immigrant and refugee backgrounds, identify racism as the principal form of violence they encounter. For these girls, intimate forms of violence or even such systemic forms of violence as sexism and classism, appear to be background structural issues that are simply taken for granted. By and large, anti-violence school policies do not deal with racism. Rather, racism is simply understood and articulated in the school context as anti-tolerance to multiculturalism (read cultural diversity). The latter is most obviously manifested and celebrated as an appreciation of cultural differences, provided these differ-

ences do not spill over the confines of safe topics such as food, dress and dance.

As per the critique of policies and legislation articulated in the research conducted by the RESOLVE Network and the BC/Yukon FREDA Centre, the gaps between existing policies, legislation and programs and the international obligations ratified by Canada, offer glaring examples of inequities, and highlight the disjunctures between rhetoric and reality (Cameron, 2001). Such disjunctures are most obvious in areas of legislation which potentially violate the Charter rights of the girl child (see the RESOLVE Network's report included in this compilation).

Programmatic Considerations

Disparities between publicly, internationally stated commitments and the actual realities of girls and young women in Canada is highly surprising, in one sense, given the tremendous groundwork conducted by community organizations, advocates, and researchers dealing with gender-based violence over the last few decades. As the Centre de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur la Violence Familiale et la Violence Faite aux Femmes' (CRI-VIFF) research reveals, there are numerous and frequently irreconcilable factors involved in the adoption and implementation of effective anti-violence programs. Critical amongst these are issues of core funding, political commitment and the involvement of all stakeholders.

The linkage model identified by CRI-VIFF is highly congruent with the participatory action research paradigm used by our centres, as well as by organizations worldwide. Further, as the RESOLVE Tri-Provincial Network's research reveals, communities most affected by an issue are more likely to utilize programs and services that are perceived to be less coercive and more flexible. The Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre's contribution also underscores the necessity of involving communities in the planning and implementation of successful programs. More pertinently, the Centre's research demonstrates the imperatives of conducting both gender-specific and gender-integrated programming, provided these are done with the full recognition of the gendered nature of violence and the unique concerns influencing girls and young women. Despite such positive evidence, the PAR paradigm with its emphasis on the involvement and mobilization of community partners, has tended to be accorded little legitimacy within the dominant academic, funding and policy-making spheres. It is refreshing, however, to notice a growing acceptance of this approach, especially within government.

There are many other areas of concordance between the different reports presented here by the research centres. However, as an overarching theme, they conclusively represent the current shortcomings of policies and programs as these pertain to the lives of girls and young women who are differently located. More specifically, these reports reveal the urgent need to rectify the existing situation in so far as providing solidly funded programs and services to ameliorate the condition of girls, and to fulfill the societal obligation of protecting them from violence. An awareness

then of the different faces and compounding effects of interlocking and intersecting forms of violence has to be the point of departure for any further investigation, policy formation and program implementation. We clearly cannot wait until the violence that exists escalates into potentially lethal forms before intervention is made possible or mandated by the State.

Chapter Outline

The following chapters detail the findings of each Centre's research. The chapters are presented in an order beginning with the research that focuses most immediately on the lived realities of girls and young women. Thereafter, chapters that more explicitly address policy and legislation are presented. Following chapters deal specifically with programmatic issues.

The first chapter outlines the subtle, yet pervasive, effects of sexual harassment. The report analyses the inefficacy of current policies in dealing with the continuum of everyday violence and concludes with a critique of gender-neutral programming and policies. The subsequent chapter focuses on gender racialization with particular emphasis on racism as a form of violence. The discussion is framed within the context of international, national, and provincial policies affecting the girl child. The following chapter deals with the issue of prostitution and the sexual exploitation of girls and young women. This research also analyses the impact of the Secure Care Act (British Columbia) and the Protection of Children in Prostitution (PCHIP) (Alberta). The chapter concludes with a set of programmatic considerations and recommendations. The last two chapters of this compilation specifically focus on implementation and evaluation of effective anti-violence programs. Of these, one chapter delineates the findings of an intervention which used both a gender-segregated and a gender-integrated approach, and framed this within the context of community involvement and mobilization. The final chapter outlines various models of diffusion and factors that influence the successful adoption of programs aimed at preventing intimate forms of violence. We conclude this compilation with recommendations derived from each of these reports and suggestions regarding future areas of investigation.

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Sexual Harassment:
The Unacknowledged Face of Violence In the Lives of Girls

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Introduction

Sexual harassment is one of the most prevalent and pervasive forms of gender-based violence routinely encountered by girls in their everyday lives. As first conceptualized, sexual harassment was viewed primarily as a form of violence experienced by women in the workplace. In recent years, however, there has been growing recognition that sexual harassment begins much earlier, and that it is a common feature of girls' lives in their homes, their schools, and their communities (Staton & Larkin, 1993). Lying at one end of the continuum of violent behaviours directed toward girls and young women, sexual harassment may be construed as "the first and most vital entry point into training males to dominate and violate females and females to submit to this domination and violation as an inevitable part of "the way life is" (Rooney, 1998, p. 5). Thus, as a form of sexual violence, sexual harassment is a fundamental way in which gender inequality is entrenched, expressed and reinforced in the lives of women and girls. While there is a considerable body of research related to the sexual harassment of women in the workplace, and a growing literature addressing the harassment of university women, according to Dahinten (1999, relatively little attention has been paid to the sexual harassment of young girls and adolescent females.

June Larkin (1994) has defined sexual harassment as "an expression of sexism which reflects and reinforces the unequal power that exists between men and women in our patriarchal society". It is unwanted and unwelcome sexual behaviour that interferes with one's life and includes put-downs or negative comments made about gender. According to Larkin, sexual harassment may be verbal (demeaning comments, insults, demands, threats, harassing phone calls), physical (grabbing, touching, flashing, fondling), or visual (leering, ogling, pornography, demeaning graffiti) in nature. Sexual harassment can also be expressed in assumptions about one's race. In Ontario, the Human Rights Code includes a definition of sexual harassment that incorporates similar ideas as those put forth by Larkin. However, its focus is primarily on adults in the workplace and this code has not been well-used in the best interests of children. When attempts to do so have been made, the outcome has not been a positive one (Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, 1999).

Because of the amorphous and often insidious nature of sexual harassment, it is difficult to state with certainty the number of girls who encounter this form of violence. However, in one large survey commissioned by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation (AAUW, 1993), it was reported that sexual harassment was experienced by 81% of girls, aged nine to fifteen. In a Canadian survey, Bagley, Bolitho and Bertrand (1997) found that only 23% of their sample of 1,025 adolescent women from western Canada had experienced sexual assault, including harassment. These authors noted, however, that

the questionnaire used in their study asked about "more serious" dimensions of sexual harassment, including sexual assault. Thus, the more subtle forms of harassment were unlikely to be captured, resulting in the relatively lower reports of sexual harassment.

Regardless of definitions used, these surveys support our assertion that sexual harassment is a common part of the everyday lives of girls. However, the manner by which this type of gender-based violence is experienced varies, and is shaped by other systemic forms of violence in their lives, namely the intersectionality of race, class, ability, and sexual orientation. According to a study by American Association of University Women titled "Hostile Hallways: The AAUW Survey on Sexual Harassment in America's Schools", observable differences were evident among Black, White, and Hispanic girls. Peggy Orenstein (1994) conducted an in-depth case study of two racially and economically different middle-schools in California, one of which was comprised primarily of students of colour. Results of her observations similarly demonstrated that the interaction of race, class and gender interact to complicate the dynamics of sexual harassment, with different class and race-based results for young women. As Randall and Haskell (2000) commented, these findings, along with those from Canadian studies, strongly suggest the need for intensive study into the experiences of further marginalized girls and young women, to deepen and enrich our understanding of the phenomenon from the lives of differently situated girls and adolescents.

Behaviours associated with sexual harassment are often dismissed under the mantra of "boys will be boys", or "it's just a joke". This 'unacknowledged face of violence' is, in reality, a major factor in the social construction of male power and control. As such, it is a phenomenon that cripples girls, boys, and their relations with themselves, others, and the world. Despite the deleterious effects on the well-being of girls, and boys, sexual harassment continues to flourish in all spheres of our society. As Rooney (1998) wrote in a critical review of the literature related to sexual harassment, through the refusal to acknowledge the significance of sexual harassment in the lives of girls and women, we are, in effect, condoning more explicit forms of violence. In other words, "permission to sexually harass constitutes permission to go further" (p. 5).

The Current Study: A Focus on Sexual Harassment

Phase II of the Girl Child Project was informed by the principles of feminist-based action research, and was designed to hear first-hand how violence is defined, understood, and responded to by children and youth. The primary objective was to elaborate upon the diverse ways in which girls and young women encounter, negotiate, and begin to accept or expect violence in their lives, and the roles of boys or young men in this process. A second, yet still central, objective was to increase our understanding of the interactive effects of sexual harassment and everyday violence on the health and well-being of the girl child.

The inclusion of boys in the study facili-

tated our examination of the gendered nature of everyday violence, and underscores our view of gender as a social relationship and a feature of all people's lives. It is our belief that an examination of gender requires that we pay simultaneous attention to the lives of girls and boys. It is important to note, however, that our aim is not to draw comparisons between girls and boys, nor do we presume an 'equal playing field'. Rather, understanding the context in which girls are socialized to expect violence and boys are encouraged to perpetrate violence, the reactions and experiences of girls and boys in relation to violence, is part of a larger project that privileges the voices of girls. The resulting life history narratives are both subjectively and objectively rich. They reveal how children and youth daily encounter and assimilate oppressive social behaviour, which is simultaneously censured and sanctioned by significant social groups and institutions, including peers and schools. The normalization of violence is seen in action through the story-narratives. Contrary to a popular perception of violence as a present-absent phenomenon, violent acts present in multiple forms. They are perceived by the participants to occur along a continuum of acceptability, weighted by degrees of violence and the relative social costs of acknowledging or ignoring the unwanted behaviour. While sometimes subtle, everyday violence is nevertheless a salient pervasive force in our children's social and individual development.

In this research, the girls and boys were the authors of the stories, told in their own voices, using their own words. Their reports clearly confirm that gender organizes how everyday violence is defined, interpreted, and acted upon. A diverse array of strategies, some more conscious than others, are used to contest and negotiate everyday violence.

Our analysis supports the feminist thesis that girls' experiences of violence are substantively different from that of boys. This differential experience can be observed in three ways: the manner in which violence manifests; the resources and strategies considered legitimate to manage the intrusiveness of the violations; and how episodes of violence are responded to and affirmed by those in authority. These intersect in each of the thematic areas that we identify using constellations of coping strategies. Whether engaging in violent behaviour, or responding to it, the viability of coping strategies is shaped by perceptions of what is socially appropriate, and thus legitimate, given one's gender. Action is weighed by its potential to moderate, though not necessarily to eliminate, everyday violence. In this study, we see that social structures of inequality are perpetuated through relations of power which reinforce a subordinate social position for the girl child.

Following a brief review of the literature, we will discuss the study, its methodology, findings, and the recommendations arising from the thematic analysis of the narratives. Recommendations will address the contextual effects of everyday violence and suggest programming ideas directed toward the elimination of violence, as well as strategies for encouraging and affirming healthy resistance. Also, strategies for addressing gaps in existing government policies will be suggested for

improving the quality of the girl child's opportunities

Review of Relevant Literature

An important element for understanding how inequality is structurally embedded is to closely consider the ways in which less powerful groups interpret and interact with the dominant group which controls the legitimate interpretations of reality. This re-shaping of the social arena occurs in such a way that less powerful groups are not only induced to cooperate with acts which may in many ways be harmful to themselves individually and collectively, but they also internalize an acceptance of the vehicles conveying the harm. This is the most subtle form of violence in society. It is also more seamlessly woven into social and institutional structures, and thus less likely to be conscious. A review of literature related to children and violence substantiates that gender is one such vehicle through which these dominant-submissive social relations are organized.

Violence in the Lives of Girls

Everyday violence in girls' lives takes many of the same physical and psychological forms found in adult experiences. These include harassment, bullying, aggression, maltreatment, physical and emotional abuse, and, sexual harassment or abuse. In the past few decades a new category has emerged relating to the impact of children witnessing violence (Jaffe, Wolfe, & Wilson, 1990), demonstrating that children can be victimized in direct and indirect ways. What all of these forms of violence have in common is that they serve to undermine the recipient's sense of self. The corrosive effect is enhanced by reinforcing a sense of powerlessness which limits functioning in both the private and public realms. Violence reflects an abuse of a power relationship, which for children often stems from their age and size relative to the perpetrator.

A number of factors have been identified for their potential to influence whether a boy or girl is at greater risk for becoming a victim or aggressor in situations of abuse or violence. Factors include school success or failure, family discipline practices and communication, exposure to family violence or family stress, community organization and cohesiveness, poverty or media exposure (National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Centre, 2001). Cultural, economic, legal, and political factors are all implicated (Unicef, 2000).

Related Concepts: Bullying, Overt Aggression, and Relational Aggression

In the interpersonal realm, peer violence in children's lives is usually defined as bullying or unwarranted aggression. Pepler and Craig (1997) define bullying as the assertion of power through aggression. Patterns of bullying appear to change with age, beginning with playground bullying and increasingly incorporating more blatant forms of sexual harassment (Pepler & Craig, 1997). Regardless of the particular form it takes, "successful" bullying is contingent upon an understanding of the weaknesses of the intended target and presenting oneself as superior in size and strength, often accomplished by recruiting support from

other children (Pepler & Craig, 1997). Pepler and Craig further note that bullying behaviour that is ignored may escalate into gang attacks, physical or sexual assault, dating violence, marital violence, workplace harassment, and child or elder abuse. The ultimate goal of bullying is to use victimization to acquire personal power including peer group status.

Aggression and bullying are terms commonly used to describe physical and verbal altercations among peers. A gender analysis of aggression has contributed to the delineation of two distinct forms of aggression: relational and overt. Several investigators have reported that boys are typically more overtly aggressive, while girls tend to be more relationally aggressive (Crick, 1996; Crick, Casas , & Ku, 1999; Grotpeter & Crick, 1996). Bullying, which is the assertion of power through aggression, is usually considered to be a predominantly overtly aggressive behaviour.

Relational aggression occurs within the peer group, and is characterized by the formation of highly intimate and exclusive friendships, primarily among girls. There is a strong presumption of allegiance; rather than engaging in mutual acts of self-disclosure, common among friends, in the context of relational aggression, there is an expectation that their friends should self-disclose to them in a more one-sided fashion. Such behaviour involves inflicting harm on others by manipulating their peer relationships. This may include giving someone the silent treatment, and maliciously spreading lies or rumours about a person in order to damage their peer group status. Overt aggression, in contrast, is directed toward individuals outside of the "group", and is dependent upon the participation of those within the group. Children who befriend overtly aggressive children may be lured into aggressive encounters even if they have not been aggressive themselves before. The goal is often to gain peer status rather than to develop warm, close relationships (Grotpeter & Crick, 1996; Olweus, 1993).

In recent years, several researchers have begun to attend closely to the nature of schoolyard "play". In one study of observed incidents of teasing and bullying among younger school children, kindergarten to grade three, it was reported that 78% of incidents were initiated by boys, a rate three times higher than that of girls. Boys (52%) and girls (48%) were almost equally likely to be recipients of the bullying or teasing. While girls and boys were equally likely to use physical tactics to initiate the episode, 31% of boys would use a physical response while only 15% of girls would respond physically. Girls more frequently responded verbally (35% girls, 19% boys) and there were similar rates of no response (girls 24%, boys 29%) (Gropper & Froschl, 2000).

A Continuum of Violence in the Lives of Girls

Schools and women's shelters are common sites used to research children's experiences of everyday violence in all age groups. School-based research in particular provides insight into the maintenance of gender-based sexual harassment through peer relations. The school environment, although envisioned as a safe space, in actuality may not be. As an

example, Paludi (1997) demonstrates that peer harassment contributes to the production of an intimidating, offensive, or even hostile environment that interferes with students' abilities to learn. Sexual harassment occurs on a daily basis in high school hallways and classrooms. Systematic gender discrimination disadvantages girls in the area of education via curriculum. Girls experience unequal access to authority and role models since a disproportionate number of teachers and administrators are male. As well, girls have reported experiencing sexual harassment by male teachers and students (Smith, Bourne, & McCoy, 1998). According to Larkin (1994), adolescent girls become increasingly desensitized to pervasive harassment and abuse to the point where they persistently fail to identify verbal forms of abuse. Instead they limit definitions of abuse to rape and other violent forms of interference. The impact is to further minimize and conceal the everyday experiences of violence in the life of the girl child.

Preschool and early school years. As early as preschool a gendered pattern emerges in which relational aggression is more prevalent for girls, and overt physical aggression for boys (Crick, Casas , & Ku, 1999). Gropper and Froschl (2000) found that preschool boys are more likely to initiate violence than preschool girls. These patterns persist as children grow. Whether fulfilling the role of initiator, recipient, or bystander, peers continue to exert a large influence on aggressive behaviour into adulthood. In their study of students in grades one to six, O'Connell, Pepler and Craig (1999) found that older boys are more likely to actively participate in bullying than younger boys, but girls are more likely to intervene to stop the bullying than either younger or older boys.

Pre-adolescent years. An increased prevalence of overt aggressive behaviour in pre-adolescent children occurs at home, in the schoolyard, classroom, neighbourhood, and other public places. This pattern may be attributed to a number of factors. These include parental discipline practices, exposure to emotional or physical abuse, sibling fighting, lack of adult supervision, negative peer influence and questionable neighbourhood safety (Duncan, 1999; Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2000). In contrast to boys who may gain status as a "reward" for aggressive behaviour, pre-adolescent girls who act out their aggression in relationships are at greater risk of rejection in future peer relationships (Crick, 1996). This increased vulnerability for girls is significant. According to several researchers (Boulton, Trueman, Chau, Whitehand & Kishori, 1999; Pellegrini, Bartini & Brooks, 1999), having friends and being liked by one's peers play an important role in protecting girls from bullying behaviour.

Adolescent years. When physical or sexual assaults occur during the ages of 15-17 years, the most likely perpetrators are acquaintances, followed by strangers and then family members. Statistics Canada (2000a) further states that adolescent girls are most likely to be physically assaulted by family members. Also, in contrast to the pre-adolescent pattern, at age 13 a reversal occurs and girls rather than boys have the highest incidence of physical victimization. Recent surveys put the rate of high school students who experience any form

of intimate relationship violence between 36% and 45% (Malik, Sorenson, & Aneshensel, 1997; Molidor & Tolman, 1998; O'Keefe & Treister, 1998).

Physical violence in dating relationships is surprisingly prevalent during adolescence and exhibits a differential gender impact (Foshee, 1996; Molidor & Tolman, 1998). Adolescent girls are more likely to experience physical violence such as being punched or forced into sexual activity. Girls report that they are most apt to respond by crying, followed by fighting back, running away, or by obeying their aggressive partner. In the same study adolescent boys reported they were more likely to be pinched, slapped, scratched, and kicked in dating relationships, although they were also more likely to be dismissive and just laugh it off (Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, O'Leary & Smith Slep, 1999).

Everyday Violence and Health

The way in which sexual harassment affects health is not well understood, particularly among girls, and the results of research to date are inconclusive. Jones and Remland (1992) conducted research with adult women and observed that women may perceive unwanted advances as bothersome, but that the costs are relatively minor. In contrast, Esacove (1998) observed that women in her research experienced a "diminishing sense of self" and were affected, both physically and emotionally, by their encounters with sexual harassment.

In one of the larger studies related to the effects of workplace harassment upon adult women, Dansky and Kilpatrick (1997) observed a broad range of physical and psychological costs. In this survey of 3006 women, ages 18-34, those who had been harassed were at significantly greater risk of post-traumatic stress disorder and/or depression than those who had not experienced harassment. Similar findings were reported by Charney and Russell (1994) who observed that sexual harassment is frequently associated with mental health impairments in adult women.

Research concerning the health effects of sexual harassment on girls and young women remains, for the most part, an unexamined area. Several writers have observed a tendency among girls to drop out of school, to suffer from lowered self-esteem, depression, feeling - and being - unsafe in public places, eating disorders, and suicidal thoughts and attempts (Jiwani et al., 1998; Pipher, 1994). This line of investigation, however, is still relatively new and much remains to be learned. It has only been in the last decade that we have begun to conceptualize violence as an important public health concern. However, based on current understandings about the relationship between sexual harassment and health among adult women, it is reasonable to speculate that subtle and explicit forms of violence, including sexual harassment, would jeopardize the physical and emotional health of girls and young women.

Seeking Help and the Perceived Role of Adults

Gropper and Froschl (2000) suggest that regardless of whether children are identified as the recipients or perpetrators of aggres-

sive incidents, they tend to perceive that adults witness the abuse, and that they fail to respond in a helpful way. Craig, Henderson, and Murphy (2000) found that teachers are more likely to respond to physical aggression, which can be more readily defined as bullying, than to verbal aggression. To children and youth, this suggests an implied silent consent, or condoning, of verbal assaults. In effect, this failure to respond further reduces recognition or acknowledgement of the full range of everyday violence which children are exposed to.

This pattern of downplaying the significance of everyday violence increases as children get older, despite the increasingly verbal and sexualized nature of the events to which they are exposed. Children learn that perceptions of victimization vary with the type and degree of the coercive act, and thus the level of societal support available to them also fluctuates. This is substantiated by Statistics Canada (2000b) which reports that for people over the age of 15 years, 60% of the crime-related incidents reported on the General Social Survey had not been reported to the police because they were deemed not important enough.

Summary of the Literature

While important insights may be gleaned from this body of work, several limitations are noteworthy. Most significant among these is the emphasis on individual behaviours and responses. While understanding human responses to violence is critical, it is impossible to fully grasp these without paying simultaneous attention to the broad social, political, cultural, and historical contexts in which these occur. Without consideration of these broader structures, the tendency to individualize and pathologize, and thus minimize, the problem of violence is heightened. Further, much of this research is fraught with androcentric, ethnocentric, and adultcentric biases. Typically, the investigators tell us little, if anything, about the cultural background of research participants, thus the relevance of findings to diverse groups is unknown. Further, many of the studies about 'children and youth' are based on interviews with parents, thereby privileging adult perspectives that are often quite different from those of their children. Finally, and most significantly, the vast majority of studies pertaining to sexual harassment focus on adult women who are harassed in the workplace. Very few studies directly address sexual harassment as it is experienced by girls.

Methodology

Discussions in Phase I had focussed on feelings and experiences about "being a girl," what participants liked and disliked, what were perceived to be the challenges and joys of girlhood, and how participants had learned the way to be a girl–and what this "being a girl" meant to them. We learned that all girls are vulnerable and "at risk" for experiencing gender-related violence in their everyday lives. In Phase II we sought to deepen our understanding of this phenomenon.

Participants

In keeping with our perspective that

gender is a social relationship influencing everyone's life, and the importance of including boys in a gender-analysis of everyday violence in girls lives, our sample consisted of 252 boys and girls, aged 8 to 18 years. Personal narratives were elicited using focus groups and face-to-face interviews. Of these, 101 individuals (61 females) also elected to complete written or photographic journals. Roughly 60% of participants were girls, whereas in the Phase I focus groups the participants were all female.

To better understand the nature of the girl child's experiences with respect to sexual harassment, and how it is created and acted upon, we selected our participants from a wide array of lifestyle, socio-economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Participants were recruited from schools and community agencies, organizations and neighbourhood settings. We included boys and girls less likely to be captured in current health and social services studies.

Participants self-identified their ethnicity, and represent the diversity of ethnic groups in Ontario. The ethnic composition of the sample is as follows: Canadian 50%, European 20%, Vietnamese 15%, Black 3%, Filipino 3%, Hispanic 2%, Somali 2%, Middle Eastern 2%, and Native/Aboriginal 1%. The boys and girls report that they live in family situations where their parents are married (72%), separated/divorced (25%), or in situations where neither birth parent shares a home with them (3%). Several respondents reported that their mothers had no education because it had been denied to them in their country of origin, and many did not know their parents' education or occupation.

We chose a number of approaches that were specifically designed to elicit thoughtful, candid responses from the girls and boys. The goal was to gain insight and understanding into the gendered nature of everyday violence by hearing their stories. The narrative data were examined and analyzed for common themes and areas of divergence. Consistent with principles of feminist research, we strove to create an informal, safe, and participatory atmosphere, enhancing the likelihood that participants would openly engage in dialogue with the researchers. In this manner, we were able to capture the subtle and explicit forms of sexual harassment, the reactions it evokes in the girl child and those around her, and understandings as to why it occurs with particular attention to the role of gender. Finally, we explored with participants their ideas regarding how to address and eliminate the micro- and macro-manifestations of everyday violence in the lives of girls.

Research Methods

In view of the exploratory nature of this study and the complex nature of its subject, we elected to use several strategies to interact with the girls and boys. These included questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus groups, photographic and written journals. Each of the 252 girls and boys participated in at least one format. Parental consents were obtained before the boys and girls participated in a focus group or in-depth interview. Regardless of how they participated, the process was designed to give

girls and boys the opportunity to convey their personal stories and thoughts about everyday violence to the researcher using their own words. They retained full control over the experiences they shared, and how they did this.

Focus groups. Same-gender focus groups were comprised of 10-14 youth each, involving 104 girls and 63 boys, or 167 in total. Initially the focus groups were developed to learn about how violence and harassment were being defined and experienced. The plan included taking an iterative approach and using the focus group information to develop a new research instrument, the semi-structured journal. This worked out well. However, it also became apparent that while younger children had difficulty defining and using these terms, they were clearly able to articulate experiences of bullying, teasing, being picked on, and the frustrations they encountered when seeking help or trying to cope with aggressors. These were the events that came to mind when they were asked to define violence and harassment. So, our iterative approach extended to re-conceptualizing the focus groups and to begin using them as a forum for girls and boys to talk in greater detail about everyday violence in their lives, to provide their personal perspectives on why harassment occurs, and to discuss where they turn for help.

In-depth interviews. This strategy was developed to engage children and youth in a dyad with a member of the research team trained in feminist-based research, and having a background understanding of issues related to violence and harassment. In total 77 females and 41 males were interviewed. This involved several steps. During the initial interview, the focus was on creating a dialogue about personal experiences of violence and harassment. Participants completed the questionnaire (described below) and then chose between keeping a written or photographic journal for 2 weeks (some chose both). A follow-up interview was then used to discuss the creative dialogues they produced. Both techniques and the follow-up interview were designed so that they would discuss their general understandings, experiences and feelings regarding gender-based behaviour in general, and sexual harassment in particular.

Semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher conducting the initial interview. Using a semi-structured format we collected basic demographic data and probed the respondent's attitudes and experiences of everyday violence and harassment. Questions were asked about personal patterns of daily living and taking care of oneself, health concerns, the nature and quality of peer and family relationships, family organization, ideals about girls and boys, hobbies, interests, self-esteem, and situations in which they feel fear or experience being teased or picked on. Older youth were also asked questions about dating relationships.

Semi-structured journals. The journal is a semi-structured booklet which includes a range of questions and open-ended sentence-completion statements. Participants were instructed to fill it out and answer questions in whatever manner they chose, including narrative prose, poetry, drawings, collages, and

so forth. Several blank pages were provided for the children and youth to share issues, thoughts, or concerns we had not identified. Journals were completed by 44 participants: 24 females and 20 males.

Headings in the journal are: I feel like I am part of the crowd when..., I feel left out when..., I feel good about myself when..., I feel picked on when..., What is respect?..., I feel bullied when..., What things aren't fair?..., I feel harassed when..., I feel scared when..., I feel happy when..., I feel mad when..., I feel sad when..., People tease me about..., Girls are nice/mean to me when..., and, Boys are nice/mean to me when….

Photographic journals. This technique had previously been used by the principal investigator in research with child refugees who had explicitly experienced or been exposed to war-related violence in Bosnia (Berman, Ford-Gilboe, Moutrey & Cekic, 2001). Disposable cameras were given to 57 youth (37 girls and 20 boys), along with instructions to take pictures of events, people, places and things which were personally meaningful to them. After two weeks, the research team developed the pictures. At the follow-up interview, participants received a complimentary set of pictures and were allowed to select-out photos they felt did not belong.

Findings: Listening To the Voices of Girls and Boys

Regardless of the format chosen – focus group, in-depth interview, questionnaire, photographic or written journal – the narratives of the girls and boys produced remarkably consistent and reliable information about the pervasiveness and gendered nature of violence and harassment in the lives of girls. At times we were struck by the simultaneous simplicity and profundity of their ideas. A thematic content analysis of the data definitively reveals that violence is not always explicit. Its subtle nature often makes it difficult for the girl child to recognize or 'name' it as such. Naming violence or sexual harassment, becomes easier though when the girls shift their focus to the fear and intimidation evoked by different behaviours they encounter. Violence, and their responses to it, can be linked to an eroding confidence in themselves and a diminished potential for the girl child to take herself out into the world. Nevertheless, in the midst of recognizing these tendencies, we heard many youth simultaneously tell us stories about courage, strength, hope, and resilience.

Girls and boys provided thoughtful responses, particularly to questions about how they understand the underlying reasons for the endemic nature of violence in their everyday lives. Responsibility was assigned to the media, schools, and families. Notably absent from their understandings, however, was an analysis of the role of gender, including male power and control, within a patriarchal society.

The discussion which follows will focus on the findings of a thematic content analysis of the data collected using all of the strategies mentioned above. The data collected using these techniques focussed on the experience of violence, how girls and boys are affected, where they get messages about how to act,

where they go for help, and who they would tell. The main themes emerging from the analysis are not unlike those identified in studies of adult women and violence, although here they emerged by focussing on the girls themselves, their experiences with family, peers and various social institutions. The themes are 1) Understandings of harassment; 2) Public, private, and unacknowledged faces of harassment; 3) Gender role socialization with the sub-themes of Girls' bodies, girls' selves and Life in the boy kingdom; 4) The everyday struggle to survive; and 5) The power of silence.

Understandings of Harassment

The ability to define and use the term harassment can be linked to levels of cognitive awareness that coincide with age. The youngest participants, boys and girls 8-10 years old, had the greatest difficulty, feeling instead that it was removed from their experience. However, the vicious, potentially lethal, and clearly escalating nature of harassment was evident in the comments from a 10-year-old girl who stated that harassment is:

> When somebody keeps calling you giving you a threatening message and they just won't stop. It's just like a stalker trying to kill you but just going slowly. Like first they send you a letter saying I'm going to get you. Second, they are going to start calling you, and third they are going to get close to your house. And then fourth they start coming into your house, stealing or breaking things, and then fifth, that's when they kill you.

More commonly they spoke of being teased, picked on, or "bothered." The ability to differentiate between physical, emotional, and verbal harassment was much more evident with 11-13 year-olds. They were also able to provide hypothetical examples, which usually involved extreme forms of bullying, harassment, or aggression. It was uncommon for them to perceive regular experiences of name calling, hurtful teasing, or physical aggression as being harassment. However, some explicit examples were given. One 11 year- old girl wrote in her journal, "I feel harassed when boys say that I am their girlfriend and try to kiss me."

Greater familiarity with the term harassment is noted in the 14-16 year age group. Their definitions of harassment include the concepts unwanted, unwelcome, and likely reflects their exposure to high school educational programming about sexual harassment. Girls in this age group provided numerous examples of multiple forms of harassment that they personally experienced, yet simultaneously showed a strong tendency to minimize the experiences.

One 15 year-old girl provided numerous examples of harassment and the confusion around interpretation. They include a boy who persistently phoned her although she didn't want to be around him, and other experiences of being touched and grabbed around the waist in public, and kissed when she did not want to be. In one incident, a boy who attempted to enter her bedroom uninvited also fondled her breasts when she bent over to pick up something. Yet another boy squeezed the areola of her breast until it was bruised.

She referred to this as getting a "purple nurple." Nevertheless she was initially unsure that any of these "counted" since in one instance she was unclear if she had invited the harassment, since she had flirted with a boy. She thought "maybe it was my fault for doing that." But after the process of re-telling the events in the study she came to the realization that she was not to blame, understanding that "he didn't really have the right to touch me when I didn't want to be touched....to violate my personal space."

The Public, Private, and Unacknowledged Faces of Harassment

Violence and harassment were reported as occurring within the family, in school, the playground, and neighbourhoods. Experiences that conveyed the message that others did not respect their personal space emerged in all age groups and all locales. In the family, sibling-related aggression and violence took many forms, were frequently reported, and seemed the most easily accepted. Less frequently mentioned, but similarly accommodated were aggressive acts by step- and biological parents. In one instance a 14-year-old female told us about her step-father who "really cares about me" yet who would randomly get angry and control her by crushing her hand. In contrast, aggression from siblings most often involved hair pulling, slapping, taking or destroying possessions, or being forced to do uncomfortable things, such as watching scary movies on television. The degree to which parents acted as protectors varied among the families.

Outside the home, the boys and girls were more likely to be exposed to vicarious violence. Reports include witnessing gang violence, robberies, and being verbally harassed by neighbourhood adults. More regular exposure to these situations increased reports of fear about neighbourhood safety, despite expressing a greater acceptance that violence and aggression are normal.

All children reported direct and indirect exposure to physical, sexual, and verbal harassment in their school environment. Frequently younger girls expressed concern that playing with boys was too physical and aggressive. They stated that they want to be a part of cross-gender play groups, yet it takes a toll. They struggle to find the balance between participating and walking away from "play" described as "torture" where they would be tripped, slammed to the ground, be "put in jail," or have their heads smacked against a wall by boys. As one girl said,

> Sometimes they'll put you down to the ground and somebody is holding you down at your hands and feet, and you're screaming for them to let you go. But then one boy that is, like, heavy or tall or something like that, will step on your back. And it just squishes everywhere. It's kind of like breaking your spine.

Retaliation such as kicking or punching, was more likely to invite an angry response from the boys, which meant the level of "play" would escalate and become more serious, dangerous, and hurtful.

The interviews with the boys reveal the increased overt harassment inflicted upon girls in early adolescence. The boys use disrespect-

ful language and make negative references. For example, girls are described as "icky" or "dumb" or "dogs." Boys seem to barely tolerate girls at this age, placing high value on appearance, and revealing disrespectful attitudes. Consider comments like, "they're all ugly at our school" or "We don't really make fun of them...we tell them to go away because eventually they're going to get made fun of....If you give them some cheese they'll go away." A number of girls reported sustained verbal and physical harassment lasting a year or more. In-class behaviours included boys passing rude and suggestive notes in the classroom, being kicked under the chair, poking, whispering, being called rude names. All of these actions had to be endured as part of "classroom etiquette".

Reports of loss of self-confidence and sense of self allude to the dis-empowering and demoralizing impact of being harassed by teachers at school. Girls were more likely than boys to report episodes that suggested they are attuned to sexual harassment by teachers. Incidents include unwanted touching and attention such as rubbing a girl's back or shoulder, acting "touchy-feely," flirting, and looking at a girl's chest instead of her face. Girls also report feeling violated when teachers betray their confidences. But other types of harassment by teachers was reported equally by boys and girls. Verbal harassment takes the form of putting a student down privately or in front of the class, stereotyping students because of their peer group or activities they like, or as an outcome of being excessively authoritarian and rigid in the classroom. What these teachers model is the power hierarchy of the school where students must co-operate even in intolerable situations which are hurtful, and provide no opportunities for negotiation or problem-solving. Students frequently cited the enforcement of a uniform-only dress code as an example of school harassment.

School was consistently identified by the girls and boys in this study as a contentious arena in relation to teachers and peers. Yet, the common societal presumption remains that school is considered a safe place because there are authoritative adults patrolling, supervising, and potentially taking action when violence or harassment occurs. And this is where friendship with, and protection from, peers is most accessible.

Gender Role Socialization

Girls and boys report that adults lack consistency in how they reprimand or sanction gender-related behaviours and attitudes that they receive reports of or observe. Girls perceive that boys are granted greater autonomy for deciding their movements, and are permitted to be more overtly aggressive. Examples include a group of girls who were sent to the principal's office for holding a boy's hands behind his back to stop him from hitting them. Boys report seeing their sisters, or female friends, being called sexual names without recrimination from adults.

Girls' bodies, girls' selves. Concern with appearances and relationships were common themes that emerged from the girls' narratives. Words were their most often identified weapons, and friendships their most consist-

ent form of protection. The ways in which the bullying, verbal, and physical threats tended to be rationalized reveals how the sexual nature of the harassment is constructed and normalized.

Spreading rumours and other forms of relational aggression was frequently reported as an important feature of girls' female friendships. Girls also commented that this behaviour is hurtful to individuals and to their groups, and that they feel regret for the negative consequences. Despite this insight it was frequently a topic of discussion and explained as a way to gain power or to maintain important relationships.

Girls frequently described their frustration with what they perceived to be a "double standard" as to what is acceptable for themselves and their male counterparts. As well, they voiced their disturbance regarding pervasive forms of sexism. Pressure to conform and "act like a girl" led to an essentializing and minimizing of the experience of girlhood. One 8-year-old girl said "I don't want to be just a girl. I want to be more than one thing". From this girl's perspective, being a girl encompassed many things and "just being a girl" was not sufficient. Other female participants similarly noted that life for girls was not fair, and that equality for girls and women has yet to be attained.

> What is not fair.. the way people judge you for your appearance and not who you are. People who judge you by your skin colour or how you dress, they shouldn't judge you for what is outside but what is inside. The way boys or men get more attention than the girls is not fair and men get to be the responsible ones and that women be less. I think that men and women should be treated equally.

From these comments, the de-valuing of girls' lives and the endemic nature of violence in their lives becomes clear. In a multitude of ways, both subtle and overt, girls find themselves continually facing and challenging systemic and personal forms of oppression.

As girls shared their stories, it was common for them to describe experiences in which their bodies had been defined as "public property", a phenomenon virtually unheard of during the interviews with boys. Girls report unwarranted gossip about their sexual activities with boys, unwanted touching, being made fun of for having (or not having) well developed breasts, for their skin colour, eye colour, clothing, hair, nose, body weight, for wearing glasses or retainers, being short or tall, and for having a disability. Girls in all age groups reported numerous episodes of being watched in public places and receiving unwanted attention.

Rationales serving to de-personalize and randomize threatening situations are an important coping mechanism. Rationales involve attributing motives for aggression to macho needs, the desire to be cool, and the importance of looking better at another's expense. Seldom were the behaviours described in the

narratives attributed to individual, personal attributes of the aggressor, especially when he was included, however distantly, in the girl's circle of friends. Cultivating a diverse network of friends was a key strategy for gaining and holding power. One 8-year-old female explicitly pointed out her personal bodyguards in her photo journal. More generally, the girls suggested that both male and female friends served as literal and symbolic bodyguards. Minimizing motives and acts of aggression by using the "just joking" rationale is an important tool for sustaining the potential for peers to be both friend and protector.

Girls regularly reported that their physical space and autonomy to move about freely was compromised. It was not unusual for this to manifest in the research process itself as many girls who did the photograph journals reported not knowing who had taken a picture. This was attributed to cameras being taken away from them casually or by force. Most commonly, though, damage to, or "theft" of, their personal property was attributed to siblings. Strategies for protection of property included locking the bedroom door, and turning to parents, teachers, friends, or a trusted adult.

Vicarious and personal exposure to everyday violence was more likely to occur when girls were alone in the midst of groups, regardless of the gender, racial, or ethnic composition of the group. Coping with harassment in these situations required attributing motives and interpreting behaviour. Feeling safe requires finding a way to fit in, and this is frequently portrayed as requiring girls to re-define acceptable and unacceptable intrusions to their personal comfort and safety. Not being alone and hanging around with the right people, especially those least likely to perpetuate any sense of personal violation, is a key coping strategy. However the girls note that learning who to trust is an ongoing discovery process, especially with peers. The boundaries for intimacy are constantly shifting as the definition of who is "safe" expands and contracts in response to whether friends remain respectful and predictable as they navigate their own experiences of everyday violence.

Life in the boy kingdom. Salient contrasts emerged between boys' everyday lives and girls. In the all-male focus groups it became evident that boys were equally willing to sexually harass boys and girls. Towards other boys this took the form of calling someone "fag," "queer," or "gay." Judgements like "He hasn't reached puberty yet" were readily tossed around in focus groups. These types of posturing and assertions of dominance extended to a recognition that peers were an important resource for maximizing the impact of aggression and bullying. "Having one's back" was, in some respects, the male equivalent of an 8-year-old girl's need for a bodyguard. Knowing when to fight, avoid a fight, or simply back down are important social skills which boys must learn. The latter activity, backing down, is rarely done as this is not "cool".

Forming gangs, travelling in "crews" and attending to racial or ethnic membership in groups are not uncommon tools for ensuring personal safety. Physical violence in the form of gang-related fighting and weapon-use were reported by several male participants.

Regardless of gang membership, boys learn to conform to a "code of silence" about peer activities. Verbal tools of protection include name-calling, put-downs and derogatory comments. Although boys seem to take ownership for their hurtful actions, it is less common for them to report feelings of remorse, or to be concerned about the potential harm or negative effect their behaviour might have. Harassment that reflects retaliation, or is about challenges to racial or sexual identity, were often reported as justified.

Protection and defence is extended to "their girls" who are often viewed in derogatory ways. One boy noted "you have to walk them, feed them, buy them things, take care of them, it's like having a dog." Boys revealed discrimination about the types of girls with whom they involved themselves. Girls who are popular, with high peer status, are treated more carefully, privately, and discreetly. Yet if a boy felt his masculinity was threatened, or did not particularly care for the girl then it is acceptable to "kiss and tell," exaggerate the intimacies, or make fun of her publicly and privately.

The Everyday Struggle To Survive

Attributing the motive for almost any form of harassment to "just joking" emerged as the most predominant strategy used by boys and girls to keep the harassment at a distance. Girls were particularly likely to use this rationale when the harassment was explicitly sexual or targeted at a personal attribute that was unchangeable, or for teasing and bullying that was relentless. A number of reactive and protective behaviours emerged through which girls achieve a sense of competence in the midst of hostile experiences. These emerge from an optimistic belief that harassment and bullying can be overcome, that they can be respected and valued for their individuality, and still gain group belonging. Despite this optimism however, coping is energy consuming because most of the coping strategies reported centre around the girl child changing herself, which often results in negating or discounting herself, and perpetuating the violence occurring "out there" on an inner level. The responses reported by the girls to everyday violence can be categorized as emotional, cognitive, or physical.

Emotional responses. Appropriate emotional responses included feeling mad, angry, ticked, and sad. But many participants judged themselves for these responses, and suggested that they were embarrassed or ashamed of these responses. This self-judging results in self-blame producing a self-image of badness for being called names, and reports of feeling low, and depressed.

Cognitive responses. The most common report by the girl children was the sense of mental confusion that arose from the combination of being the target of hurtful actions or words, experiencing "unacceptable" emotional responses such as anger and revenge, and lack of confidence about appropriate responses. Most girls report at least one close relationship with a peer, parent or adult friend with whom they can talk it out and achieve an inner sense of okay-ness and understanding of what is happening "out there." These relationships are

safe places for talking about taking otherwise unacceptable action, such as ganging up on boys or retaliating. Retaliation fantasies often involved spreading rumours or face-to-face challenges with other girls.

In the end however, the girls almost all chose a strategy of ignoring the behaviour (but not always the perpetrator) and figuring out ways to change themselves to adapt to what is perceived as the inevitable reality of daily harassment. Girls talked about buying new wardrobes, losing weight, changing hair colour and styles, becoming more or less competitive in sports, and accessing money as a means to gain power to change the environment. One girl talked about getting "really shy" in a way that suggested it was both an unconscious and conscious strategy. Shyness took the form of losing her voice, having trouble speaking and losing the ability to speak in full sentences.

Physical coping. The most common physical response to being harassed or bullied is smiling or laughing. Girls report that "just smiling" shows that instead of being affected, you are invulnerable, perhaps even do not recognize the behaviour as offensive. Laughing was at the individual or gang, but also at oneself for feeling powerless and for wanting revenge. The trivializing is focussed outward but also turns inward. Some girls just walk away to avoid a fight. Others stay but cover their ears. Some girls report pushing, hitting, or "digging my nails into his skin" depending on the circumstance, the level of threat perceived, and whether faced with an individual or group.

The Power of Silence

In addition to being normalized and trivialized, in the form of "just joking", the existence and reporting of harassment has effectively been silenced in girls' lives. A dichotomy exists for girls regarding how to deal with harassing behaviours. While society in the broadest sense, school counsellors, administrators and so forth, encourage young people to report harassment, there are a number of underlying messages from peers, adults, and elsewhere which encourage girls to maintain silence on this issue.

We asked girls if they would report harassment, and if so, to whom they would report it. The overwhelming response was that they would not bother to report it at all, and if they really did feel a need to talk about it, they would be most inclined to tell a friend, depending on the situation. This was especially true of sexual harassment, considered for the most part to be private and secretive despite the very public way in which it occurs. Reporting harassing behaviour or calling somebody on it could lead to dire consequences.

> "..one girl she gets into a lot of fights with the guys. Like this guy actually kicked her and she fell to the ground and she was crying. They hit her a lot because they consider her as a rat, she tells on people a lot."

Being labeled a rat led to isolation and loneliness in addition to further harassment from others. Fear of isolation, ostracism, and loneliness led girls to maintain their silence.

When asked why they would not report harassment, responses were that the repercussions would be too great or the response would be inadequate. A discussion of the secretive nature of harassment evoked the following commentary:

> "It's not in the media unless charges are pressed. So if nobody presses charges because we're too scared or feel guilty or can't face it, then nobody cares because the thing is not happening because it's not in the media."

While the harassment is often highly public in nature, the response by school administrators was often private in nature and contributed to a sense of futility in reporting because the outcome for the perpetrator was not commonly known. Other responses from parents and teachers included "just ignore it", "boys should play with boys and girls should play with girls", and the ever popular "boys will be boys".

Perceptions of Health

Few studies have examined in depth the relationship between sexual harassment and the health of girls. However it is difficult to imagine that the relentless experience of everyday violence in their lives does not have at least some adverse consequences for their health. Anecdotally, there are many reports of physical and emotional health problems faced by this population. Further, in this research, many girls told of a variety of health problems including eating disorders, sleeping difficulties that were directly attributed to disturbing or frightening movies seen before bedtime, chronic headaches that, according to the girls, were caused by stress, fatigue, and not eating enough. A few participants reported other significant health problems such as epilepsy, speech problems, and cancer. The stigma often associated with these illnesses compounded the challenge. Coping was not limited to the physical domain, but included dealing with the emotional pain and continued harassment by peers for "being different".

In addition to documenting the occurrence of health problems, we asked several questions designed to elicit their ideas regarding their understandings of health and what constitutes good health. An analysis of these descriptions revealed interesting differences in perceptions between boys and girls. Boys typically viewed health in a somewhat limited sense, as the absence of disease or illness, being physically fit, having good eating habits and good physical health. Girls, on the other hand, offered a much more holistic and multi-dimensional view of health as something that includes physical, emotional and mental health. Health, for girls, meant having satisfying and meaningful relationships including the support of friends, being cared for, or caring for others, and being free of abuse. Emotional and mental health also consisted of laughing, having fun, not worrying too much about the way you look, self-esteem and positive thinking.

During the structured interview all participants were asked to respond to two self-per-

ception questions. Using a five-point scale (1 as "A little", 5 as "A lot"), participants were asked how they felt about the way they look and how they felt about themselves. Consistently, girls and boys ranked themselves differently. The girls' median scores for both statements was 3.50, whereas boys' median scores for these statements were 4 and 4.5 respectively. This revealed interesting differences in the ways both girls and boys thought of themselves.

From the narrative data, we are able to provide some context and deeper understanding of these numbers. Speaking about the impact of harassing incidences on her life, one girl stated,

> "Well I hate it when I'm walking by a huge group of guys and they all turn and stare at me. It makes me feel really self-conscious."

The ongoing, persistent, and pervasive nature of unwanted sexual attention is clear. While our data suggest that there is a range of health problems experienced by girls, further research is needed that examines the relationship between violence exposure and health.

Making Sense Of It

The narrative dialogues of the girls and boys reveal how physical and sexual characteristics merge to produce a sexual commentary that permeates the social and private life of the girl child. Girls attempt to de-personalize this sexualized social environment by focussing on how the behaviour stems from roles that boys and girls take on in their pursuit of "being cool" and thus accepted. They also actively attempt to shut out awareness on a situational basis.

Still, the girls' narratives reveal the personal injury that arises from the sense of disrespect and violation they experience as the result of constant exposure to ongoing, pervasive, sex-based harassment. Normalized both formally and informally, the personal nature of the intimidation ensures it will "get in," reinforcing girls' experience of their limited power to change their environment. More frequently they try to change themselves to accommodate an environment of sexual harassment. This increases the inner and outer magnitude of their oppression if we consider the rebound effect of rendering violence less visible. Taking a stance of silence, minimizing, resisting individual blame, and being nice, does allow one to gain a degree of personal power and safety, yet it also reduces the legitimate arena in which girls may censure, denounce, or even define, the gendered nature of the violence. Still, "negotiating acceptable degrees of violence" is a normative response. It emerged in virtually every interview and focus group.

We found little difference between the broad definitions girls and boys provided for concepts such as harassment, bullying, disrespectful behaviour, racial or ethnic prejudice, or rumours. However, gender differences did emerge with respect to the incidence, pervasiveness, and complexity of individual coping strategies. Overall, these were higher for the girls, and it was evident that they combine to

distract the girl child from full participation in the world. Instead her energies are used to negotiate the obstacles inherent in everyday violence and harassment.

Girls reported a wider range of implicit and explicit behaviours that violate their sense of physical, emotional, cognitive, and psychological integrity. For example, girls frequently reported feeling implicitly harassed and intimidated by groups of boys who stared, or taunted them about body size or parts, in casual encounters or as they walked by. This sense of being watched or assessed by the opposite sex was rarely mentioned by boys. The gendered nature of verbal harassment is evident in the form of the name calling (girls being called bitches, whores, sluts), the rumours about sexual behaviour, and the competitiveness among girls that manifests in relational aggression.

Boys did not report parallel experiences of being called names, being damaged by rumours about sexual reputation, or about being judged negatively for effectively competing in sports or school. Girls and boys both reported vicarious exposure to violence by witnessing female siblings and friends being sexually harassed. The girls expressed their sense of humiliation stemming from the harassment itself, and from not knowing how to deal with it effectively beyond suppressing any public reactions and seeming unconcerned. This was the most commonly reported means for reducing any appearance of personal vulnerability or chance of escalation.

Girls were surprisingly pessimistic about the predictability of adults to affirm their experiences of violence and harassment, and thus act as viable protectors or change agents on their behalf. The resulting prescient need for the girl child to moderate between individual and structural forces manifests in a number of ways. Moderating these forces is most likely to be achieved by defining, manipulating and acting on ideals of friendship, personal identity, and agency in ways which are subtly, yet clearly, different from boys. Girls encounter daily experiences of intrusion to self-respect, personal safety, and limited access to legitimate forms of power. Girl power is the ability to exert influence to produce harmony between her inner sense of self and an often hostile external environment, which is more likely to affirm and condone the girl child as a legitimate target for violence and sexual harassment.

We see first-hand in the narratives that, regardless of gender, violence is actualized consistently through social actors and institutions which direct access to, and use of, power in the public domain. Everyday violence is anchored in social structures that provide a combination of constraints and opportunities for power, and thus action. At minimum the persistence of this pattern points to its structured nature. From this second phase of our study, we can better comprehend how, for children, this results in the routinization and normalization of personal and vicarious exposure to sexual harassment and everyday violence, which goes largely unrecognized in policies, legislation and programs that influence their current and future potential. Normalization is assured by the lack of recognition for the multiple forms in which violence manifests and by the lack of meaningful response from those

with legitimate authority. It disturbs the lives of both boys and girls, but is more restrictive in its impact on girls. Structured violence ensures that daily turbulence, although anticipated, creates a conundrum in terms of appropriate response. The conundrum relates to how sexual harassment and violence, with its attendant accommodations, is largely normalized in the lives of girls.

Conclusions

The voices of the girls and boys in the Phase II study demonstrate clearly that it is insufficient on the part of adults to take a "they're just kids, they'll outgrow it" or "boys will be boys" stance in response to sexual harassment and other forms of violence in the everyday lives of girls. Children and youth acquire and learn to use power most directly through relationships with parents, adults, peers, and other representatives of the institutions they encounter. Power is in part about economics, but it is also about being included or excluded, having shared subjective realities, and, bestowing authority in the people and institutions they believe worthy. Acceptance of authority means also accepting one's own subordinate position, and thus the need for ongoing co-operation – even as the struggle to claim one's own legitimate power takes place. Socialization begins in the family but gradually transfers to peers as youth go further out into the world. Girls learn through this extended socialization process that, rather than encountering a world of endless opportunities, their role as women will be to support patriarchal power structures favouring the choices of boys and men.

We have shown through this study that sexual harassment and everyday violence act as vehicles to extend the structures of oppression which support this male dominance. To alter the trajectory that limits the girl child's life chances, we need to pay attention to the role that social values and concerns play in perpetuating unequal structures and social relationships. Gender inequality is an outdated and unacceptable framework to promote Canada's ideals for an equitable and equal society. Yet girls and boys continue to learn through experience that girls have less status, less authority as decision-makers and participators in shaping their public or private lives, and that implicitly or explicitly society approves of "'girls being girls, and boys being boys." In other words, society sanctions the idea that there are "acceptable degrees of violence" as a legitimate means of negotiating personal and social power. The ultimate challenge we must address concerns how we can eliminate the gap between the ideal of gender equality in our society and the reality that the potential for girls to fulfill their economic, social, political, and cultural potential is constrained by the unequal treatment they encounter daily in the form of gendered violence.

Recommendations

In this section, we propose a combination of long- and short-term recommendations directed toward the prevention of, and intervention for, everyday violence in the lives of girls. What follows are recommendations for improving the formal environment where government policies are made and carried out,

and, qualitative concerns about the contents of policies and programs themselves.

1. The most far-reaching recommendation we make regards the need for greater inclusiveness and recognition of the girl child in official policies and legislation. Thus, we recommend amending policies to specifically recognize and name the legitimate status of the girl child in the public realm, and to clearly state the social obligation which arises from her gendered experiences of violence. This signifies a fundamental 'first step' in re-defining the social policy context in which specific initiatives and programs are enacted.

Discussion: Although Canada signed the "UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child" over a decade ago, more recent policies such as the Canadian Constitution, "CIDA's Gender Policy" and the "Ontario Human Rights Code" persist in using the term women to 'refer' to females of all ages. For the girl child, the implication is that her human rights protection is covered by her inclusion in the categories of woman, age, and any applicable minority status. Plus the Human Rights Code only covers her experiences of violence in the school environment if we interpret the term workplace to include elementary and high school, which are never explicitly mentioned.

In its international Gender Policy, the federal government upholds the importance of being more equitable towards women and encouraging their participation in decision-making in order to realize human rights and to maximize their potential in all arenas. Women are, appropriately, entitled to equal status and conditions for realizing their potential. Yet, just as a gender analysis compels us to understand and value the similarities and differences between males and females, this extends to women and girls, boys and men.

2. That the federal government pledge, and commit to sustained funding, towards recognizing and exploring the gendered nature of violence, and to responding to the need for initiatives that address the ways in which violence manifests, impacts, and becomes embodied in girls' lives.

Discussion: More funding resources are needed that reach out to the girl child rather than waiting for her to overcome internal and external obstacles which impede her capability for reaching out to the system. As we have seen in this study, not all harassment and violence lands on the radar screen of the criminal justice system. Nor is it typical for the girl child to reach out to parents, teachers, or even the health system unless encountering more extreme forms of violence. As such it is imperative that funding is clearly set aside, and sustained, to support a variety of means for reaching out to the girl child.

3. That the federal government encourage committed funding from provincial and municipal governments, and that all 3 levels of government work

collaboratively to identify a broader range of public and private partners to activate diverse funding mechanisms. This includes research, policy, and program partners.

Discussion: There is a strong sense from the girls' narratives that sexual harassment is "just the way it is" and can not be changed. Although the girls told stories of innovative, proactive coping, the researchers felt that overall there was a resigned acceptance of the oppressive box that defines and limits their lives. We note the importance of initiating programming that fosters and supports the aspirations of young girls, and legitimizes a more optimistic attitude about their potential place as adults in the world. Incorporating public and private partnerships into the identification and delivery of programs that seek to break the cycle and impact of violence in the girl child's life, also expands their horizon of choices about viable future life chances. It may be advantageous to create opportunities for a more diverse range of relationships within the adult community. These relationships should model and engage the girl child in experiences where social power is played out without reinforcing oppressive structures.

Programming Recommendations

1. That opportunities be provided that enable the girl child to learn and enact strategies of healthy resistance.

Discussion: This process involves re-defining resistance to oppressive circumstances as indicators of physical and emotional well-being, and courage (Berman, McKenna, Arnold, Taylor, & McQuarrie, 2000; Haskell, 1998). Teaching girls and boys strategies to challenge and change harmful behaviour that they encounter or, in some cases inflict, is a critical component of any initiative. Males and females, girls and boys, must be equally responsible for change through advocating for healthy sexual choices, speaking out, negotiating conflict, challenging racism and sexism. This will be achieved by creating educational strategies that enhance girls' self-esteem. Fundamental to this approach is teaching girls to recognize and articulate threatening, sexist, and controlling behaviours by males. The common thread running through any discussion of healthy resistance is that at its core it involves speaking one's truth and having resonant relationships (Berman et al., 2000). Wise resistance recognizes political realities while remaining respectful and keeping oneself safe.

2. That specific programming will incorporate, in a holistic manner, recognition of the multiple realities and positions of privilege, that influence how violence is understood and experienced. In particular, attention to social identities derived from age, race, class, ability, or sexual orientation are essential aspects of any effective programming initiative.

Discussion: Programs must address not only

how to act as individuals, but as groups witnessing or participating in sexual harassment and violence. As the current study amply demonstrates, programming must be tailored to deliver information in ways that recognize the staged capabilities for defining harassment and understanding it conceptually, for differentiating between physical, emotional, and verbal harassment, and, providing personal and hypothetical examples of the various forms sexual harassment takes. In keeping with the concern that understanding and negotiating sexual harassment is an age-related process, educational programming must start with very young children, girls and boys, and continue through elementary and high school.

3. That the policy emphasis on creating safe communities be re-visioned, beginning with the creation of safe zones within communities. Most fundamentally, this will be accomplished by fostering an interactive environment which emphasizes communication with the girl-child and incorporates an understanding that all girls are at-risk for gendered violence.

Discussion: Current provincial policies emphasize the notion of creating safe communities by focussing on formally recognized acts of violence (Policy Framework for Addressing Crime Prevention and Children, Ages 0 to 12). This narrow conceptualization translates into "opportunities reduction activities" that fail to account for the vast array of subtle forms of violence encountered by girls. Thus, girls who are not already identified within the health and social safety net continue to be excluded. To get at the root causes of gendered violence, we must cast the net wider and involve the girl child more fundamentally as partners and clients of prevention and intervention efforts. Consistent with this aim, we need to promote ways to listen to the girls and to communicate back to them the direct ways in which their concerns and needs are being addressed. One effective way to do this is to include girls and boys in the creation of an innovative public awareness campaign that speaks directly to girls and boys, using current technology to create educational, consciousness-raising manuals, videos, CD-ROMs, and other forms of programming and educational material that can be purchased and utilized by teachers, employers, and anyone else interacting with girls and boys.

4. That a new and more effective framework for explaining and implementing anti-violence initiatives be implemented.

Discussion: In a review of the research related to school-based anti-violence programs written for this project, Haskell identified four key elements necessary for an effective framework: (a) the framework explicitly state the normative assumptions informing policies and programs; (b) that it accounts for violence using both individual and social explanations; (c) that it utilizes a gender analysis to situate violence in social relations of inequality, and; (d) that it assist students to address, and end, violence

and sexism in their personal lives (Haskell, 1998).

According to Haskell (1998), prevention strategies may be classified as primary or secondary interventions. Primary approaches address the root causes of violence, are broad in scope and analysis, and may incorporate secondary approaches. They are more sweeping in their application and vary across the province. In contrast, secondary approaches are more directly aimed at increasing individual awareness. They tend to focus on dispelling myths and exposing misinformation to improve the girl child's ability to understand violence, resulting in a predisposition towards assigning responsibility for communicating new boundaries for male behaviour to the girls themselves. This over-emphasis on individual responsibility for controlling or eradicating violence is a drawback of secondary approaches to anti-violence initiatives.

The fundamental problem with secondary approaches to prevention, most typically found in school curricula, is that they tend to ignore unequal power relations and promote the concept of a level playing field. In effect this fosters a 'blame-the-victim' attitude. As we have seen in the current study, this decreases the transparency surrounding how gendered violence is experienced and understood in the school environment. Instead of becoming more visible, the manifestation of violence is camouflaged, and further obscures the potential for the girl child to name and eradicate violence from her daily experience. The following recommendations (Haskell, 1998) are also offered in support of the establishment of an appropriate, effective framework for putting anti-violence program and policy initiatives into place:

5. That gender-neutral teaching strategies which generally ignore the social context in which violence is perpetuated, and which overlook the ways that male power and privilege translate into under-valuing girls and over-valuing boys, be eliminated.

Discussion: Gender neutral strategies promote victim blaming and fail to adequately emphasize the importance of deconstructing traditional notions of femininity. As a result, conflict resolution and empathy-building programs that arise from gender neutral policies fail to recognize that girls are likely to be over-socialized towards an empathic role in relationships and, therefore, serve to reinforce this role. Gender-neutral policies camouflage the reality that perpetrators are most often male. In effect, gender neutral policies deny girls the protective mechanism of naming violence, and thus the ability to resist it, and to negotiate it (Haskell, 1998).

6. That the relevance of content in anti-violence programs be increased and that a gender analysis is the organizing principle for all support programs for children and youth.

Discussion: This will teach girls and boys to think critically about gender, and to understand the effects of gender socialization in

their lives. Elementary school children are not "too young" for such programming. We recommend that a gender-based curriculum be located within a primary prevention framework with committed government funding and attention focussed on the function which sexual aggression serves for males. The goal will be to establish long-term interventions which build male self-esteem without invoking the violence/perpetrator identification. To develop such an anti-violence curriculum, we recommend including a thorough analysis of the sociological, cultural, cognitive, and motivational components of male aggression.

7. That the nuances in how violence is understood and negotiated are addressed through differentiated anti-violence educational curriculum and that programming be structured to account for the impact of the intervention on cognitive processing, and thus the potential for neutralizing the anti-violence curriculum.

Discussion: A significant issue over-looked in current approaches to anti-violence programming is the issue of re-victimization of girls, related to re-experiencing emotional after-effects of assaults through exposure to anti-violence programming materials. This interferes with cognitive processing of new information, and reduces both the relevance and effect of the intervention. For males, cognitive processing is more likely to be compromised by resistance to changing an aggressive orientation which is functional for them. This means that males and females need differential programming which incorporates both social and psychological approaches, and covers a wide range of approaches and situations.

8. That appropriate funds be allocated for research that will examine the full range of health effects of everyday violence on the lives of girls.

Discussion: The findings from this research, as well as from previous studies, reveal that girls experience a multitude of health problems. Further research is needed to examine in depth the relationships between health and violence. Although it is reasonable to presume that the persistent and pervasive nature of violence in the lives of girls jeopardizes their health to some degree, the precise manner by, and extent to, which this occurs is not well-documented or understood.

9. That an in-depth study of existing policies and legislation be undertaken at all levels of government for the purpose of examining what the government says it will do/provide; how policies and legislation address the interlocking and intersecting forms of gendered oppression; and, how policies at multiple levels of government intersect to support or negate their stated intentions.

Discussion: An integral component of such a study will be to examine how the policies actually promote and sustain action to reduce gendered violence, how they fail to do this, and

to identify strategies to ensure greater coordination and compliance.

In sum, we recognize that the challenges and costs of implementing these recommendations may seem enormous. However, they are the essential first steps if we are going to end sexual harassment, the unacknowledged face of everyday violence in the lives of girls.

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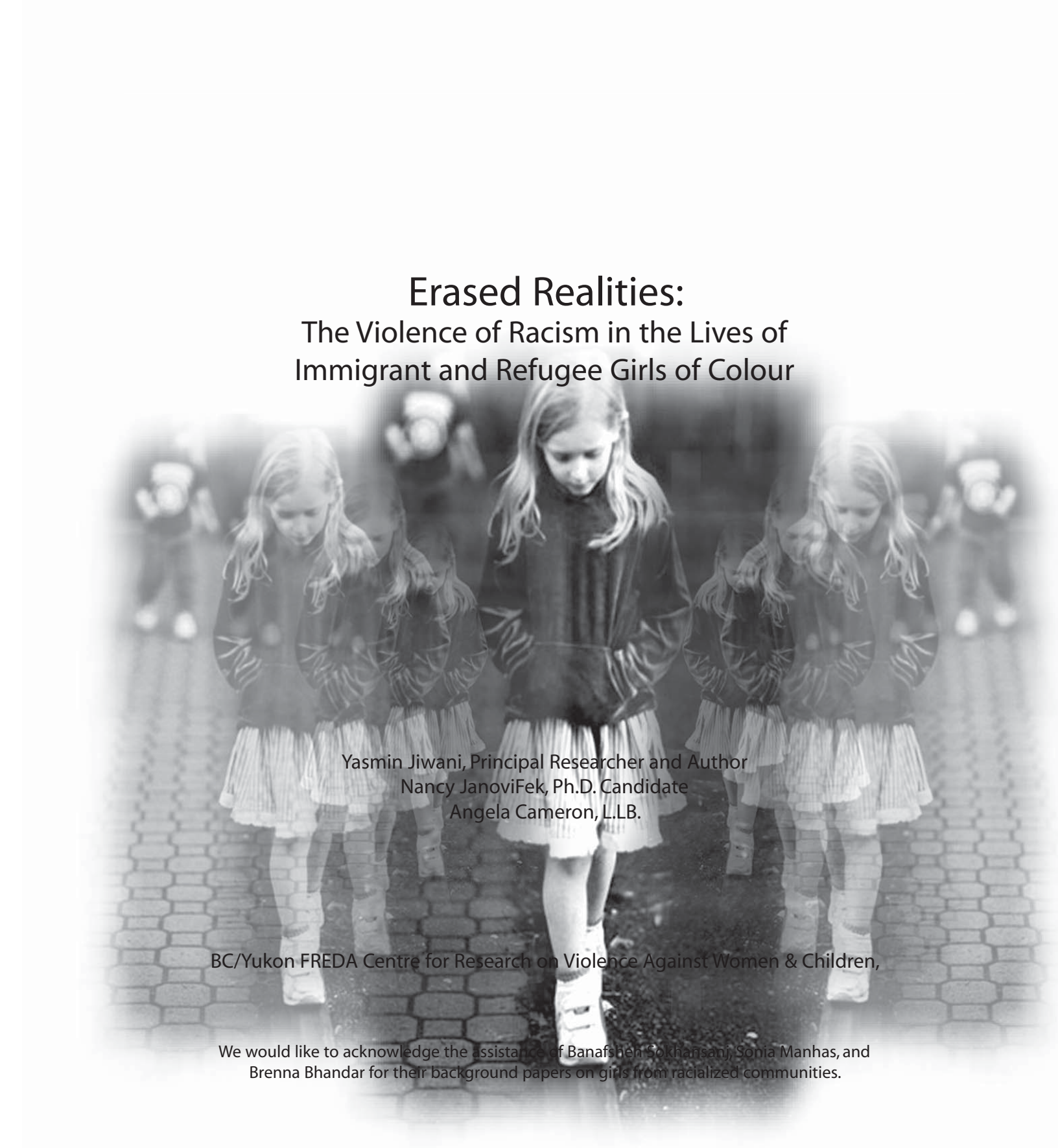
Erased Realities:
The Violence of Racism in the Lives of Immigrant and Refugee Girls of Colour



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'A crime of pure hatred,' Crown says

ST-ANDRE-EST, Que. – Aylin Otano-Garcia was six when she immigrated here with her mother from Cuba, and by the time she reached her teens she had blended in. She had many friends in high school and spoke French with no trace of an accent. "Nobody knew she was Cuban. She was a real Quebecer," recalled Niurka Perez, a close family friend. But somebody noticed Aylin's unusual family name and slightly darker complexion. In what a Crown prosecutor called a crime of "pure hatred," the pretty 15-year-old was targeted as an immigrant, lured to a remote sandpit and bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat last June.
(Graeme Hamilton, National Post; with files from George Kalogerakis, The Gazette. May 12, 2001)

The story of Reena Virk

VICTORIA, BC – On November 14, 1997, fourteen-year-old Reena Virk, a girl of South Asian origin, was brutally murdered in a suburb of Victoria, British Columbia. Reena was first beaten by a group of seven girls and one boy, all aged between 14 and 16. According to journalistic accounts, the attack began when one of the girls attempted to stub out a cigarette on her forehead. As she tried to flee, the group swarmed her, kicked her in the head and body numerous times, attempted to set her hair on fire, and brutalized her to the point where she was severely injured and bruised. Battered, Reena staggered across a bridge trying to flee her abusers, but was followed by two of them – Warren Glowatski and Kelly Ellard. The two then continued to beat her, smashing her head against a tree and kicking her to the point where she became unconscious. They then allegedly dragged her body into the water and forcibly drowned her. Reena's body was subsequently found 8 days later on November 22, 1997, with very little clothing on it. The pathologist who conducted the autopsy noted that Virk had been kicked 18 times in the head and her internal injuries were so severe as to result in tissues being crushed between the abdomen and backbone. The pathologist concluded that Reena would likely have died even if she had not been drowned.[1]

[1] This composite is derived from the accounts presented in various newspapers and magazines over a two-year period (1997-1999). For more information on the media coverage of this crime, see Jiwani, 1999a.

Introduction

The brutal murders of Aylin Otano-Garcia and Reena Virk dramatically portray the specific vulnerabilities of racialized immigrant girls. They demonstrate, above all else, the inability of society to accept racialized girls as 'Canadians' and the struggles these girls encounter in their attempts to 'fit in.' These journalistic accounts highlight the erasure of racism as a daily reality for these girls, making it extremely difficult for the girls themselves to name it as a form of violence and to seek support for the protection of their human rights and dignity.

As a country, Canada is perceived to be a leader in the international human rights arena. It is regarded as an egalitarian nation, motivated by a desire for justice for minorities and the underprivileged. Canada is a signatory to various international accords, conventions and agreements which uphold the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities, including women and children.

This paper juxtaposes the progressive rhetoric of Canada's obligations as defined by these international instruments with the lived realities and impact of domestic policies on the lives of racialized immigrant and refugee girls. The focus of the investigation is on the intersection between systemic forms of violence, such as racism, sexism and classism, with more intimate forms of violence. How are these different forms of violence understood and experienced by girls and young women from racialized immigrant communities? How do international, national and domestic policies impact on their lives and access to services?

Our point of departure in this report is that racism is a form of violence, and the task that we are confronted with is one of mapping the intersections between the different forms of violence bearing in mind that racism can best be understood "as modes of exclusion, inferiorization, subordination and exploitation that present specific and different characters in different social and historical contexts" (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992: 2).

Racialization and the Process of Becoming an 'Other'

Drawing from the literature, we define racialization as a process whereby members of a given group are marked and treated as being different (othered), with that difference being negatively valued (Miles, 1989; Thobani, 1998; van Dijk, 1993). In the present context, we are referring to racialization as "any process or situation wherein the idea of 'race' is introduced to define and give meaning to some particular population its characteristics and actions" (Miles, 1989: 246). It is critical to note that the identification of phenotypic or cultural differences alone does not constitute racism. Rather, it is the arrangement of these differences on a hierarchy of values that defines racism and informs the process of racialization.

The overt and covert nature of racism in Canadian society has been documented extensively by advocates and academics. As Henry & Tator confirm: "In a white dominated society, the colour of your skin is the single most important factor in determining life chances, as

well as your dignity, identity, and self-esteem" (cited in Fleras & Elliot, 1996: 35). In a context of intense and prevalent anti-immigrant sentiments, the reality of immigrants of colour is one of constant negotiation, adjustment, and retreat into the cultural community. And in the Canadian context where racism is more 'polite' and insidious, the processes of negotiation are more nuanced and often confounding.

Gendered Racism[2]

In looking at the intersections of racism and sexism within the context of gendered violence, it is clear that the kinds of violence that racialized immigrant and refugee women and girls encounter is mediated by their particular status as girls, as 'raced' subjects, and their official status in terms of nationality and citizenship. Thus, social location, cultural scripts and accessibility to resources mediate the experience and kinds of abuse that girls and women from different groups experience (Das Gupta, 1996; Dosanjh, 1994; Huisman, 1996; Rhee, 1997). It is apparent that a significant aspect of the lives of immigrant and refugee girls of colour is their own intersectionality – at the junctures of race, gender, class, and age.

Mothers and Daughters – Intersecting Oppressions in Context

The oppressive forces of racism and sexism come together in the lives of immigrant women of colour and their daughters. Ghettoized in particular jobs (Iyer, 1997; Ocran, 1997), many of these women also experience gender role dislocation in the family. The deskilling and unemployment of men combined with the more rapid employment of women in low paying jobs (Ng, 1993) such as domestic work, create additional tensions in the family. In a series of focus groups convened by the MOSAIC immigrant settlement society, women from the Kurdish, Somali, Vietnamese, Polish and Latin American communities in Vancouver discussed the gender shifts in their family and the potential for violence. "They felt that immigration and the resulting changes in the family roles and expectations, appear to increase men's insecurity in the relationship, and that insecurity, in turn, resulted in dysfunctional behaviour" (1996: 4-5).

Immigrant women's marginalization in the social, cultural, political and economic spheres of society also contributes to their sense of 'otherness' and lack of belonging. The retreat into their cultural communities exacts a price for immigrant women of colour who experience violence. When the community becomes the only site for a sense of belonging and self-esteem, jeopardizing one's reputation incurs social costs which could amount to stigmatization and exclusion (Dasgupta, 1996; Health Canada, 1994; Huisman, 1996; MacLeod & Shin, 1990; Rasche, 1988; Rhee, 1997; Wiik, 1995). In this sense, the plight of immigrant women who experience violence parallels that of rural women whose only choice in leaving a violent relationship becomes one of leaving their community (Jiwani et al., 1998).

Further, in a racist milieu where men of colour are increasingly criminalized, reporting violence can in effect be construed as

[2] I am indebted to Jo-Anne Lee for drawing my attention to this particular combination of terms to highlight the intersecting forms of violence confronting women and girls of colour.

'race treason' (Davis, 2000; Flynn & Crawford, 1998; Razack, 1998). Fear of deportation and criminalization leads many immigrant women of colour to avoid authorities and any form of official documentation which could jeopardize their legal status. As well, economic dependency on the male sponsor also forecloses the potential to report violence.

Thus for immigrant and refugee women, legal status vis-à-vis citizenship combined with the processes of racialization as 'others' and gendering, contribute to their heightened risk to violence. Meleis (1991) has argued that immigrant women are in a high risk category. We would argue that that risk extends to their daughters as well.

Situating Immigrant and Refugee Girls

In 1996, 24.3% of the visible minority population was under the age of 15, and the majority of these youth were immigrants (Kobayashi, Moore & Rosenberg, 1998). One out of every ten immigrants is female under the age of 15 years. A review of the literature reveals a paucity of Canadian studies examining the realities and experiences of racialized girls from immigrant and refugee families (Jiwani, 1998b). Rather than focusing on girls' experiences of racism and sexism, or on how girls are racialized, many studies have tended to concentrate on issues of cultural and intergenerational conflict within racialized immigrant communities. The prevalence of these identity-oriented studies suggests a greater degree of comfort in looking at cultural issues of co-existence, conflict, or assimilation and acculturation (Drury, 1991; Jabbra, 1983; Kim, 1980), rather than structural factors influencing the stratification of groups in society. More recently, this trend has begun to shift (e.g., Bourne, McCoy & Smith, 1998; Handa, 1997; Matthews, 1997).

Many of the existing studies reveal that girls from racialized immigrant cultures experience a greater degree of dissatisfaction with and strain from the normative values imposed by their own cultures (Hutnik, 1986; Miller, 1995; Onder, 1996; Rosenthal, Ranieri & Klimidis 1996). The contextual factors influencing and shaping this dissatisfaction tend not to be examined in structural terms, i.e., as emanating from the subordinate position of the cultural group in relation to the dominant society, and/or the construction of racialized communities as deviant others (Handa, 1997; Razack, 1998; Thobani, 1998). Exceptions to this trend can be found in American studies which focus on the differential rates of violence against Afro-American girls and women (Kenny et al., 1997; Wyatt & Riederle, 1994), and studies examining girls at risk and who come from a variety of different cultural backgrounds (e.g., Joe & Chesney-Lind, 1995; Musick & Barker, 1994; Razack, 1998).

The marginalization of racialized girls and women from racialized ethno-cultural communities has been linked to their silence about the violence they may have experienced within their families and communities (Burns, 1986; Lucashenko, 1996; Razack, 1994). For many, to disclose abuse would lead to increased stigmatization and discrimination against their own as well as other racialized communities.

In a context of prevailing racism, the protection of the community and its reputation often become paramount considerations both for the families affected and the entire community (Yousif, 1993). Thus, a code of silence prevails. The mainstream media's preoccupation with negative news and with construction of different racialized and immigrant communities as deviant, fuels this concern (Jiwani, 1992; 1993). On the other hand, the silencing of girls in terms of their ability to articulate their abuse appears to be reinforced by social forces inherent in the dominant society.

In her study of South Asian girls in Canada, Handa (1997) demonstrates how the girls' lives are shaped by competing discourses. On the one hand, they have to deal with the pressures of assimilation in the context of school, employment and acceptance in the wider society. On the other hand, as signifiers of culture by their families and communities, there is an emphasis on protecting them from the westernizing influence of the dominant society and ensuring their conformity and maintenance of cultural traditions. Western traditions are perceived as weakening the moral fabric of community life. Yet, in order to belong and gain a sense of acceptance, the girls have to engage with the dominant western norms and mores in the public domain of their lives. This is the site of the 'cultural' conflict. However, Handa problematizes the notion of culture that is couched within the conflict paradigm. Culture is perceived to be static and 'frozen' rather than dynamic and relational. The discourse of cultural racism and cultural violence marks the lives of immigrant girls and young women. But cultural racism and cultural violence are predicated on the gendered and racialized context of immigrant and refugee girls and young women. Racism becomes culturalized by virtue of its use of culture as the signifier of inferiorized difference. Cultural norms and traditions that are perceived to be 'different' and negatively valued become the vehicles through which the hierarchy of preference and privilege are communicated and sustained. Violence is similarly culturalized because it is understood as stemming from a cultural conflict rather than a structural inequality (Razack, 1998). In other words, violence is perceived to be an inherent feature of the culture or its failing in adapting/assimilating to the dominant, western context.

Methodology

The methodology for this study consisted of multiple strategies for gathering the necessary data. First, background research into the applicability of various international instruments as well as national and regional/provincial policies pertaining specifically to immigrant and refugee girls in British Columbia was undertaken. Several background papers were completed and made available through the FREDA Website (www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda) and through our community partners.[3] These papers include a literature review of the factors

[3] These include: Sokhansanj, B. (2000) A Survey of International Human Rights Documents of Relevance to the Refugee and Immigrant Girl Child in Canada; Manhas, S. (2000) Intersecting Influences: Bicultural Identity Development among Girls of Colour: A Preliminary Analysis; Bhandar, B. (2000) A Guilty Verdict against the Odds: Privileging White Middle-Class Femininity in the Trial of Kelly Ellard for the Murder of Reena Virk; and JanoviFek, N. (2001) Reducing Crime and Victimization: A Service Providers' Report. The latter study was co-funded by the National Crime Prevention Centre, Community Mobilization Program.

influencing racialized girls' identity formation (Manhas, 2000).

The literature reviews and background research provided the overall portrait of the situation of immigrant and refugee girls of colour including those born in Canada, and outlined the main emergent themes that could be explored within the context of focus groups and individual interviews. Focus group and individual interview questions were developed in consultation with several immigrant girls of colour who were contacted through community connections. The finalized focus group and individual interview questions were then distributed to participating community organizations and advocates who were hired as interviewers and focus group facilitators. The second phase of the research focused on analyzing information derived from the focus groups and individual interviews in terms of the specific policies that influenced the young women's daily lived realities. In addition, an extensive review of the relevance of international instruments and agreements in light of the international policies that impact and shape the lives of immigrant and refugee girls of colour was conducted and is presented here.

Focus Groups & Individual Interviews

In total, 5 focus groups were convened with a Persian (Iranian) girls group; an African-Canadian group of girls; a Latina group of girls, and two mixed groups of girls of colour. In addition, individual interviews were conducted with a total of 14 girls located in rural and urban areas. The main requirement was that the girls and young women participants were between the ages of 14 and 19 years.

Through partnerships with community organizations and community researchers, a total of 52 girls/young women participated in the project. The youngest was 13 years of age and the oldest participant was 22; the majority of the girls were between 15 and 16 years old. Their countries of origin, or their parents' cultures of origin, included Antigua, Barbados, China, Congo, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ganzhou, India, Iran, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, St. Kitts, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad, and Zaire. Seven girls participated in the focus group with Persian girls. Five girls from the Caribbean participated in a focus group conducted by the Congress of Black Women. Ten girls participated in the focus group with Latina girls. A two-day focus group workshop was convened with 16 girls of colour from from a variety of countries such as China, Mexico, Pakistan, India and West Africa. This focus group utilized Augusto Baol's Theatre of the Oppressed and was facilitated by Angelo Lam and Catherine Ho of Jumpstart Consulting who were initially involved in the project through our community partnership with SUCCESS, a Chinese-Canadian settlement service agency. The Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of British Columbia (AMSSA) conducted a girls' focus group with 6 participants, 4 from Eastern European backgrounds and 2 from African backgrounds. In addition, 10 service providers were interviewed.

Barriers To Accessing Data

We encountered several barriers to accessing immigrant and refugee girls of colour who were able to participate in the study. First, our contact with these girls was limited by structural issues such as a strike by employees of the City of Vancouver. This effectively curtailed contact with relevant staff at community centres and youth outreach workers. As well, we were reluctant to access girls through the school system. In the wake of several high profile incidents such as the murder of 14-year-old Reena Virk, the suicide of other teens, and cases involving bullying, it seemed to us that schools would be not be willing to participate in a study focusing on violence against immigrant and refugee girls of colour. As well, we were concerned about working around the gate-keeping function of school principals and hence decided not to pursue this avenue of potential access. Liability issues were also a significant factor deterring us from accessing girls through the normal 'systems' of education, settlement services, and other similar services. However, we did request copies of policies and procedures concerning racism and violence from all BC school districts, and received a response from 30 of the 59 districts contacted (see Appendix I).

Ethical Dilemmas

One of the most obvious dilemmas that faced us as researchers was the issue of obtaining parental consent. We were aware that girls who are under legal age (i.e., 19 years) would have to obtain such consent before participating in the research project, as this is a requirement of the various ethics committees in universities. In cases of violence occurring in the home, we knew that girls would not want to disclose (unless they were ready to leave), nor would their parents be willing to have them participate in a project conducted by a violence research centre. Our research had already indicated that a code of silence is extant in situations of domestic violence, as it is in situations of peer-group violence. This would make it difficult to access girls who may have otherwise participated but who were too afraid to be in a situation of potential disclosure. We did, however, obtain through the ethics committee, permission to conduct the interviews and focus groups without requiring the participants to produce letters of consent from their parents. Our justification for such a waiver is presented in detail in Appendix II.[4]

We were also aware that should the girls or young women reveal ongoing experiences of violence at home, we would be obligated to report their situation to the authorities. The fear of being reported is enough to

[4] The justification that I provided for the purpose of gaining ethics clearance was based on prior consultations with the BC Civil Liberties Association, various sexual assault centres and government-based victim assistance services.

[5] In this section, I draw extensively from work completed by Angela Cameron and Banafsheh Sokhansanj with respect to their background papers on the applicability of international instruments. These papers are available on the FREDA website: www.harbour.sfu.ca/freda/

[6] Hereinafter 'immigrant and refugee girl child' refers to that population specifically. Other references to the 'girl child' refer to all female children, unless otherwise specified. Often statistics or studies do not break down findings along the lines of immigration status.

deter young women and girls from revealing these experiences, unless they are ready to seek assistance from external sources. In fact, in some situations, reporting of experiences of violence has resulted in further endangerment of the safety of young women (Handa, 1997).

The following sections outline in some detail our findings with regard to the analysis of international and domestic instruments, and the analysis of the focus group and individual interviews. We conclude by drawing attention to the specific policies that impact on the lives of young racialized immigrant women and girls and proposing recommendations accordingly.

Relevance and Applicability of International Instruments[5]

The immigrant or refugee girl child,[6] has a significant presence within Canada and British Columbia. The immigrant and refugee girl child also takes a special place on the world stage, at least rhetorically, in a number of international instruments to which Canada is either signatory or is, arguably, otherwise bound to uphold. However, Canadian rhetoric at the international level does not match the lived experiences of racism and poverty of immigrant and refugee girl children living within Canada. Canadian legislation, policies, provision of services and common law do little to mediate their experiences. The immigrant and refugee girl child lives at the intersection of multiple forms of oppression.

Both internationally and domestically, the immigrant and refugee girl child faces unique barriers to social, economic, spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual fulfillment. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) explicitly notes in Paragraph 32, the role of intersecting oppressions in creating multiple barriers to the girl child:

> We are determined to:
> Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people.

The following sections provide an overview of Canada's obligations to the girl child under international law with respect to treaties and non-treaties. This will be followed by an exploration of specific areas where gaps exist between these international obligations and the lived realities of immigrant and refugee racialized girls and young women. Comments illustrative of these disjunctures as articulated by the participants in our study are included in italicized form.

[7] This paper deals only with human rights instruments under the auspices of the United Nations. It does not cover the International Criminal Court, or the Organization of American States except where examples of litigation from Inter-American bodies speak to the potential to address human rights violations.

[8] The term 'treaty' is seldom used. More often the words 'convention' (Canada's preference), or 'declaration' are used. 'Declaration' has been used both for formal (binding) and less formal (non-binding) agreements (Kindred, 1993: 82 & 87).

Canada's Obligations Under International Law

At the international level Canada is bound by international 'law.' There are several forms of international 'law' including treaties and customary law, both of which are discussed below.[7]

Treaties

Not every document generated by an international conference or United Nations body can be considered 'law.' Treaties,[8] however, are binding on the parties which become signatory to them (Malanczuk, 1997). Treaties are agreements entered into by states (often multilateral) which, in the human rights realm, articulate the rights of those individuals specified within the treaty. There are a number of treaties, to which Canada is signatory, which speak to the legal rights of the immigrant and refugee girl child. Canada is bound by the provisions of The Convention on the Status of Refugees (1951); The Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of The Refugee Convention (1967); The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1981); and The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989),[9] all of which impact upon the rights of the immigrant and refugee girl child. None of these treaties specifically refers to the immigrant and refugee girl child, however they do articulate the rights of certain groups of people which include her,[10] and also protect against rights violations to which she is particularly vulnerable such as sexual exploitation and gender inequality in education and health care.[11]

Beyond these three treaties, Canada is also bound by other treaties which may be cited as articulating some right of, or state obligation to, the immigrant and refugee girl child. The application of these conventions to rights of the immigrant and refugee girl child in Canada is more oblique than the three conventions noted above. These include the: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (1965); Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery (1956) (Slavery Convention);[12] International Covenant on Economic, Social and

[9] The CRC is the United Nations' most ratified treaty. Only the United States and Somalia have not ratified it at this point. However, feminist commentator Frances Olsen (1992) has noted areas where the CRC could be used against the interests of women (namely the mothers of the children in question, or older children).

[10] The Refugee Convention, although not age or gender specific, protects everyone who is a refugee as defined by Article 1 of the Convention, including a refugee girl child. CEDAW contains no age restriction and protects 'women' against numerous human rights violations. CEDAW applies equally to all females regardless of age (Bernard, 1996:8). In practice, girl children are often conveniently treated as women regardless of their age, with some child-brides as young as 12 years old, and other girl children engaged in employment and the care of male children to support their families. CRC covers everyone who is under the age of 18 (Article 1), including the immigrant and refugee girl child.

[11] The role of the CRC and CEDAW in protecting the human rights of the girl child was confirmed and emphasized by the United Nation Commission on the Status of Women (1998).

[12] Entered into force April 30, 1957.

[13] Resolution, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, GA Res. 217(111), UN GAOR, 3d Sess., Supp. No. 13, UN Doc. A/810, (1948) 71. This was originally drafted as a non-binding resolution, but it is now widely claimed that it has acquired the status of customary law (see Szabo, 1982:-11).

Cultural Rights (ECOSOC) (1966); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCP) (1966); Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948);[13] and Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) (1987).

While the rights protected in these conventions may appear to be gender-neutral, it has been asserted that measures which create substantive rather than formal equality are necessary to see their true implementation (Charlesworth, 1994; Sokhansanj, 2000). Even if treaty rights may appear to be implemented, in actuality it may take extra, special steps to truly implement them for those who are more vulnerable to rights violations because of factors such as race, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has emphasized that "enjoyment of rights and freedoms on an equal footing … does not mean identical treatment in every instance" (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1998).

Non-Treaty Instruments

Beyond the treaty there are numerous international instruments which speak to the human rights of the immigrant and refugee girl child. Documents such as resolutions, guidelines, declarations, plans of action and results of an international conference or statements from United Nations bodies, while not prima facie 'law' have an important role to play in defining the rights of the immigrant and refugee girl child in Canada. These instruments may become accepted as customary international law,[14] or due to their persuasive power over states that participate in their drafting, become 'soft law.'[15] 'Soft law' may affect the way states interact with one another, or, in laying out emerging international norms, form the basis for future international law (Kindred, 1993).

Regardless of their formal legal status these instruments provide parameters and norms which, at a minimum, give us interpretive standards by which to measure Canada's protection of the girl child. Three examples of such documents which may inform the rights of the immigrant and refugee girl child in Canada are The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995),[16] The 1993 Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (1993) and The Declaration and Agenda for Action Formulated at the World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (1996).

Enforcement Of Treaty Rights

Globally, a lack of effective enforcement mechanisms often leaves the international community unable to oversee the domestic implementation of treaty rights (Kindred, 1993; Malanczuk, 1997). Instruments such as the

[14] Canada is bound by customary international law. The mechanisms by which such documents become customary is beyond the scope of this paper (see Kindred, 1993: 81 & 147; and Malanczuk, 1997: 53).
[15] 'Soft law' is said to operate in the area between law and politics, allowing states to 'try out' concepts and obligations before actually signing on to them in treaty form (see Kindred, 1993: 78; and Malanczuk, 1997: 54-55).
[16] The Platform especially focuses on the plight of the girl child, and should be quoted extensively in conjunction with other instruments when advocating for the girl child.
[17] Lovelace, Communication No. R.6/24, 36 UN GOAR Supp. (No. 40) at 166, UN Doc. A/36/40.

proposed Optional Protocol to the Women's Convention (CEDAW) may improve the ability of individuals to enforce their rights, should Canada choose to ratify it. Such an instrument, under another international human rights convention, was successfully used by Sandra Lovelace, a Maliseet woman in Canada, to argue her rights as an Aboriginal woman.[17] Enforcement mechanisms as they currently exist, however, are weak (Charlesworth, 1994).

Domestically, there are serious legal barriers to a full implementation of international treaties at the level of the individual Canadian. Constitutional divisions of power and adoption mechanism for treaties cast serious doubts on whether the average Canadian can truly claim the progressive rights articulated in many treaties (Bayefsky, 1994; Malanczuk, 1997). Provincial legislation and policy does not need to measure up to treaties signed by the federal government (Kindred, 1993). This severed line of responsibility violates the spirit of these treaties, effectively allowing Canada to maintain an excellent appearance internationally, while simultaneously refracting responsibility for many treaty rights to the provinces, who are not bound by the treaties. The effect is that treaty rights are not being enforced where they are needed, at the level of the individual Canadian.

This problem is mitigated to an extent by two factors. First, Canada has imported many of the rights contained in international human rights law into the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It should be stated, however, that this is an under-utilized mechanism for rights enforcement. Due to such barriers as cost, time and power imbalances in school and at home, the rights of immigrant and refugee girls are rarely, if ever, litigated using the Charter. We also know that there is a wide gap between rights articulated in the Charter and the lived reality of the immigrant and refugee girl child (Bazilli, 2000).

A second mitigating factor is that Canadian courts have, on occasion, imported international legal norms or principles in cases involving equity in law or policy. The cases of Baker v. Canada and Canada Trust Co. v. Ontario Human Rights Commission,saw two of Canada's highest courts drawing on human rights as articulated in international instruments to influence a domestic court decision. This practice, however, is rare, and resisted by most of the judiciary who see the Constitutional barriers described above as prescriptive of such adoption on a consistent basis.

Enforcement mechanisms aside,Canada is bound by both international treaty and customary law. It is also significant to note that Canada's international reputation as a nation which respects and enforces human rights makes all levels of government particularly sensitive to criticisms of human rights violations, as demonstrated by the Lovelace case. The international mobilization of shame may have a much greater impact than any other enforcement mechanism which may or may not be at work (Cameron, 2001).

Generally, many instruments articulate rights such as the right to be free from discrimination on a number of grounds including gender and race,[18] and the CRC (Article 42) requires that the provisions of that convention

[18] For instance the ICCP requires that the Convention itself be applied equally to men and women (Article 3), and provides a general prohibition against discrimination (Article 26).

be made known to Canadians. More specifically several instruments emphasize the role of parents and families in the lives of children. For instance, parents are given the primary economic responsibility for their children (CRC, 1989: Article 27), primary responsibility (and rights) around the religious education of their children (CRC, 1989: Article 14, ICCP, 1966: Article 18[3]), the right to choose schools which provide a particular religious or moral education (ECOSOC, 1966: 13[3]), and the economic support of both parents is mandated (CRC, 1989: Article 18). The family is recognized as the primary unit of care for the child, and protection for this unit is demanded (ICCP, 1966: Article 23, Vienna Declaration, 1993: Paragraph 21[3]).

The Refugee Convention, although having direct bearing on the rights of the refugee girl child, outlines only very general rights, such as the right to (under certain circumstances) remain in a country of refuge,[19] practice religion, be employed, receive subsistence housing and food, etc. Except in extremely rare instances Canada meets its minimum obligations to refugee girl children under this convention once they are permitted to remain in Canada.

However, state definitions as to who constitutes a legitimate 'refugee' has severe and limiting effects on the safety of the girl child. For example, the recent Chinese migrants who arrived in British Columbia via a hazardous journey by sea were subjected to mandatory confinement. In the majority of cases, their refugee status was not recognized by the Canadian state. Rather, they were perceived to be 'economic migrants' and hence not accorded the refugee rights as defined in the various conventions. The young women in the group were forcibly removed from their families and placed in group and foster homes by the Ministry for Children and Families (Direct Action Against Refugee Exploitation, 2001).

Areas of Disjuncture Between Policies and Realities

The following areas constitute the dominant thematic categories under which there are marked disjunctures between international obligations and the realities of refugee and immigrant girls in Canada. Obviously, these areas are not exhaustive but rather highlight some of the most glaring shortcomings between domestic policies and practices, and international instruments ratified by Canada. They include: lack of gender and age-specific data; the issue of increasing child poverty; the proliferation of trafficking and sexual exploitation; violence against girls; racism; adequacy and availability of services including education; and media influence and literacy. Quotes from focus group participants and individuals interviewed for this project are inserted to juxtapose the discrepancies between the protections afforded by various international instruments and the lived experiences of racialized girls. Also included are other key issues and themes raised by focus group participants and individual interviewees.[20]

[19] The differential impact of Canada's immigration laws on immigrant and refugee girl children attempting to gain entry to Canada is beyond the scope of this paper.

[20] Based on a thematic analysis of the interview and focus group transcripts completed by Nancy JanoviFek.

Our interviews and focus groups highlighted a number of themes including racism, understandings of violence, and definitions of racism as a form of violence. Moreover, the girls and young women noted how they were criminalized on the basis of their racial appearance, and how this served to 'other' them in ways that differentiated them from white Canadians. These practices underscored their lack of belonging and 'fit' within the dominant culture. As this Latina girl commented:

> I have a Caucasian friend, she is very intelligent, the best one at school. She always tells me that white people are the best and when I say that I would like to do this or what I am going to do, she goes, "oh no." She says that GAP is for white people. Because I had something from GAP and she asked me "where did you buy it?" "In GAP." [She said]: "Don't you know that that place is for white people?"

In responding to questions about violence, girls who participated in the focus groups and interviews immediately brought up the issues of racism and inter-cultural violence. They identified their schools as key sites of race-based violence, and discussed the inadequacy of existing counselling services. Many explained that racist violence in the schools is fostered by an inaccurate portrayal of their cultures in school curricula and mass media. Few girls talked about the lack of services for immigrant families outside of the schools. They underlined the stresses caused by the clash between their parents' expectations and those of the dominant white culture. Settlement workers agreed that this was a common experience of immigrant families and argued that settlement policies need to balance the transition of girls and their families.

Lack Of Gender and Age-Specific Data

Despite instruments specifically calling for the collection and dissemination of gender and age-specific data, there is a notable lack of such data on the refugee and immigrant girl child in Canada (Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, 2000; Tipper, 1997). Existing data also reflect a lack of sophisticated gender and/or race analysis and may indicate survey questions or methodology that were not designed to highlight the effects of these forms of oppression (Canada, Health Canada, 1999). This lack of research limits our knowledge of the true situation of the immigrant and girl child in Canada, and inhibits our ability to tailor policies and programs to meet her unique and pressing needs.

Poverty

Recent reports indicate that child poverty in Canada has increased to 49% since 1989, and that Aboriginal and visible minority children are faring the worst (Campaign 2000). Many visible minority children are immigrants or the children of immigrants, and suffer disproportionately from the effects of poverty (Beiser, Hou, Hyman & Tousignant, 1998; Canadian Council on Social Development,

2000). Immigrant and refugee children are more likely than other Canadian children to live in lower income families, despite a higher overall level of education and employment among immigrants compared to the rest of Canadians (Kobayashi et al, 1998).

The devastating effects of poverty have a disproportionate effect on lone-parent families headed by women (Campaign 2000). There are strong links between systematic discrimination against women, and poverty (Working Groups on Girls, 1995). Immigrant and refugee women in Canada face economic discrimination, and due to the effects of systematically enforced poverty, the children of lone-parent families led by immigrant and refugee women may suffer a decline in health (Kobayashi et al, 1998). The impacts of poverty on the girl child are varied and generally negative. They include physical and mental health risks, an inability to fully participate in school activities, and social isolation (Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, 2000; Tipper, 1997).

Many of the girls who participated in our workshops and interviews stated that their parents decided to immigrate to improve their children's opportunities. Some argued that their parents could not secure meaningful employment in Canada because their credentials were not accepted here. Consequently, many girls feel that it is their responsibility to study hard in order to secure a good job. Others were concerned that they will not be able to find jobs that will bring them out of poverty because of discriminatory hiring practices and assumptions that immigrant youth do not have the skills to work in a professional career. These thoughts are representative of the aspirations and the anxieties of young immigrant girls as reflected in the following quotes from our focus group participants:

> Like my dad for example, when he came here, I guess he thought he'd be able to get a job [being a firefighter] that he was in Jamaica, he'd come and get the same job. But he can't do it because, I don't know, because of colour or what. Because normally say a Black person against a white person, the Black person has to work ten times harder just to get the same job. (Afro-Caribbean-Canadian focus group participant)

> Most of the time ... they'll be like, "You know what? Forget it. I'm not even going to bother. I just know they're going to judge me for what I look like. They know that I can't speak English well, so I'm just going to sit back and work at McDonald's" or whatever. Do you know what I mean? It kind of hurts me to see that. (Jumpstart workshop with girls of colour)

Trafficking And Sexual Exploitation Of Children

Despite the efforts of the United Nations and Canadian governments the girl child continues to be the victim of trafficking and sexual exploitation both internationally and domestically. In Canada the girl child continues to be the victim of sexual exploitation in many forms

(Philippine Women Centre of British Columbia, 2000; Russell, 1996; Shortt, 1998). Due to factors such as previous exposure to violence, poverty, low self-esteem and the adversity of a racist and sexist Canadian society, immigrant and refugee girl children are particularly vulnerable to this type of exploitation (Attorney General, British Columbia 2000; Davis & Shaffer, 1994; Holmes & Silverman, 1992; Jackson, 1998; Jiwani, 1998b; Save the Children, 2000). The Internet continues to provide a venue for those who victimize children, due to the difficulties in legislating and policing its activities (Joseph, 1995; Pierce, 1984).

Immigrant and refugee girls face a unique sexualization by the dominant culture. Although none of the girls in our focus groups discussed trafficking and sexual exploitation explicitly, many spoke about the simultaneous construction of their culture as exotic, and its devaluation. In this construction, the 'exotic Other' is sexually available to the dominant culture. One Black girl described being mistaken for a prostitute:

> I was on the street. My cousins were here. And we were waiting for the bus and a police car walked by and we started showing off. And they stopped and they walked around the block and they looked at us. And they walked around the block and they came back and they walked around again. And I'm like,"We're not prostitutes. We're waiting for the bus." (Afro-Caribbean-Canadian focus group participant)

The vulnerability to trafficking and sexual exploitation can be traced to a number of factors. Foremost among these is the pressure to 'fit in.' Such pressure may take the form of luring young girls and women into the sex trade with the reward of access to instant cash, shelter and food. Alternatively, the pressure to fit in may manifest itself in being a member of an 'in' group engaged in the sex trade, or of being with a boyfriend who requires such participation as a price for his affection. These factors are also applicable to girls who are not of immigrant and refugee backgrounds. However, in the latter situation, the issue of increased poverty, devaluation, and pressures of assimilation combine to exert a significant influence (Jiwani, 1999b). As well, in the case of immigrant and refugee girls, the fear of having their intimate relationships disclosed to parents or other caregivers who do not condone such relationships, can be a driving force pushing them into the sex trade. Such fear is often used by their 'boyfriends' as a coercive measure to sexually exploit them.

Violence

The immigrant and refugee girl child continues to experience violence in her home, at school, and on Canadian streets. The marginalizing effects of her social location make her an exceptionally vulnerable target for many types of violence.

Legislation designed to protect the girl child from violence in her home is riddled with faults, and recent failures of the child protection system point to serious inadequacies in

Canada's ability to protect our children from violence in the home (Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, 2000). The immigrant and refugee girl child is further at risk due to poverty and, significantly, cultural and social isolation (Friedman, 1995). Often both mainstream culture and the culture of their home country devalue women and girls. Canada provides insufficient and insensitive services, leaving the immigrant and refugee girl child with inadequate protection mechanisms in a situation of abuse (National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, 1993).

Immigrant and refugee girls may also encounter barriers to adequate protection in situations of dating violence. Due to the strains of acculturation, the girl child may find herself torn between the anger of a family which views dating and sex as parental choices, and mainstream society which validates individual autonomy and sexuality (Handa, 1997; Mogg, 1991; National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, 1993; Tyagi, 1999). A recent study on violence and bicultural girls found that those who were in abusive dating relationships were being manipulated by partners to stay in the relationship on threat of disclosure to the girl's parents of prohibited dating (Handa, 1997).

Other forms of violence such as sexual harassment, have compounding effects on the immigrant and refugee girl child. Because of her social location, racism, sexism and ageism of the wider society, as well as the strategic silence around issues of sexuality within her own cultural community, the immigrant and refugee girl child is marginalized to a greater extent.

None of the girls who participated or were interviewed disclosed personal violence. This may have been because interviewers explained to the girls that they would be obligated to report abuse if it had been disclosed in the interviews. Although the girls did not disclose violence, they did discuss tensions with their parents that arose from clashes between their parents' values and those of Canadian youth culture.

> When I speak to my dad, I don't talk too loud because I respect my dad, I'm almost scared of him because I respect him. But he wants me to be innocent and not act like boys or whatever. Say if I'm hugging a guy friend, he'd like, "Maybe you shouldn't do that." And I tell my dad, "This is Canada. It's not Iran any more. I'm a grown woman. I know what I'm doing. It's just a hug." (Individual interview, Persian girl)

Despite the conflicts over values, most girls identified their families as sites of support. Many girls stated that their parents would rather return to their country of origin but are making sacrifices by remaining in Canada so as to improve opportunities for their children.

Racism

For a large number of immigrant and refugee girl children, racism is a key factor in

their experiences of marginalization (Wright, 1998). Although there is a paucity of research and statistical data on the effects of race and racism on children (and the girl child specifically) in Canada (Kobayashi et al, 1998; Jiwani 1998a) several areas of concern have emerged in the research thus far.

At the level of the individual experience of the girl child, the interaction of racism and sexism create an environment in which "… racialized girls are inferiorized and … (where) they internalize dominant values which embody a rejection of the self and their cultural communities" (Jiwani, 1998b: 7). Research has shown that the experiences of young women of colour are deeply informed by their experiences of racism and their understanding of race. It has been asserted that this, in itself, creates a profoundly different set of experiences for young, visible minority women and those of young woman situated in the dominant culture (Wright, 1998). A visible minority girl child is often confronted with the task of forming an identity within the context of two cultures which both devalue or sexualize women and girls, while attempting to navigate the racism of mainstream society and media. In some recent focus groups with immigrant and refugee girls they identified the result as an inability to name, and therefore resist, all but the most blatant forms of racism or sexism, such as name-calling.

In our focus group with Latina young women, the girls discussed the link between power, racism, and violence. It was interesting to note that their definitions collapsed the different forms of oppressions they experienced within an overall rubric of racism. As these girls stated:

> Racism is also the fight over power because someone is higher up than others and then they step on them, do not want to grow.

> There is also lots of racism against homosexuals, the lesbians …

> Racism also happens between a man and a woman. We call it machismo or feminism.

> There is a lot of racism within the same race.

The participants also stated that racism, like other forms of violence, is based on unequal relations of power, and a hierarchy of preference and privilege.

In a recent series of focus groups with visible minority youth conducted by the Canadian Council on Social Development (2000), "(m)ost of the focus group participants reported experiencing racism and bigotry." At the same time, however, the participants noted that racial discrimination in Canada is "generally disguised." Younger participants in the focus groups spoke of poor treatment at school by both teachers and other students, while older participants addressed difficulties in obtaining employment,[21] and harassment by the police

[21] An alarming observation in light of the previous discussion of immigrant and refugee families living in poverty.

because of their physical appearance.

The impact of racism is particularly painful for girls whose parents immigrate to protect them from ethnic and racial conflict. One girl responded to an account of a Ku Klux Klan (KKK) hate act in the following way:

> My parents ... they're constantly [saying] like I'm giving my kid a better [life]. But what is better? That's not to say it doesn't happen in our countries. We hear it constantly, ethnic warfare and political strife but they think that it's so much better here and then you hear things like that and it totally breaks down your faith in human-kind and Canadian nationalism and pride. I don't want to have pride in that. If that's Canadian, I don't want to be Canadian. (Jumpstart workshop with girls of colour)

School-Based Violence

As with most children, school is the focal point of many immigrant and refugee girls' existence. School, especially high school, can be a daunting experience for the most prepared and advantaged child. The immigrant and refugee girl child faces the added effects of a new country, new friends, a new language, and the loss of old, established networks in the home country. This lack of familiarity, coupled with racism and sexism in the school environment, can be overwhelming. As this participant reported:

> [My parents] always ask me to make Canadian friends, but you know, it's hard. The culture is different so it's hard to make friends with them sometimes when they speak different. They talk slang. … I don't understand what they're talking about. So I just remain silent. (Jumpstart workshop with girls of colour)

Three factors have been consistently identified as contributing to the girl child's sense of isolation within the school environment. First, everyday racism exhibited in subtle forms of othering and inferiorization combined with overt expressions of racism and sexism create a sense of difference and marginalization (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000; Mogg, 1991). Second, these actions and attitudes may be mirrored by the staff and administrators of the school (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000). Finally, the school curriculum itself has been criticized on a number of fronts. First, it does not contain sufficient race, gender and culturally-specific material (Capuzzi, 1996; Kelly, 1998). Second, it does not contain sufficient anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic material and, finally, education on human rights and fundamental freedoms is lacking (Lonsway, 1996; Randall and Haskell, 2000). One of the focus group participants in our research commented that:

> In school they don't teach you anything about Black people really. They don't teach you anything about your culture or anything. And if they teach you anything they teach you about Africa. That's not the only place where Black people are from.

> I think they should teach you about other places, not just one area. (Afro-Caribbean-Canadian focus group participant)

These findings have been echoed in recent studies undertaken by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2000).

In our focus groups and interviews, the issue of school-based violence was mentioned by many of the participants and interviewees. Many explicitly mentioned racism as a form of violence and referred to internalized racism as a complicating issue. One girl defined violence in the following manner:

> It doesn't have to be physical ... if someone calls someone a Black bitch or something, that's still violence because obviously that pissed you off because you went and busted the girl in the head. So obviously anything that breaks someone down, that doesn't make them feel good. (Afro-Caribbean-Canadian focus group participant)

Another participant in the mixed theatre workshop group noted:

> A lot of violence stems from racism. Sometimes you'll hit someone first and then when you stop and think about why did I do that, it's like it can be a backwards path. I hear what she's saying, about how racism can trigger violence. But violence can just be an action and then the mind process behind it would be, "I feel racist towards a certain race." (Jumpstart workshop with girls of colour)

How schools communicate inequalities ranges from a seemingly 'harmless' lack of comprehension of other cultures to violent confrontations between youth from different cultural groups. Girls who participated in this study attributed their peers' racism to a lack of understanding of the impact of their remarks, which are often based on misconceptions about racialized cultures. Like gender-based violence, racism operates on a continuum of violence. Ignorance of another person's culture, and fear of diversity may not be as explicitly threatening as name-calling and bullying. However, common sense racism is just as damaging because it reinforces the position of the dominant culture and creates an environment which allows violent racist acts (Kelly, 1998). The following comments describe the common sense racism girls encounter at school:

> You'll hear things down the hall. I guess there are racist things but there's not a sense of racism behind it. It's just a remark that nobody really understands. (Individual interview with South Asian girl)

> Someone asked me if we have TV in Iran. If you see someone, and you see they're not closed-minded but because of the limitation that they have, that they don't really have a good idea of what it's like so I have to explain to them in order to get the idea. (Persian girl focus group partici-

pant)

The quotations repeatedly revealed that these girls were willing to excuse their peers' lack of knowledge about the history and customs of racialized minorities. However, girls were not tolerant of misconceptions held by their teachers. Girls indicated that teachers have the power to change misinformed ideas about their cultures. Instead, their ignorance is perpetuating the ideas that feed racism. One girl explained how her teacher's dismissal of Canadian slavery affected her:

> In school we were learning about slavery and she goes, "Oh we all know that there was never slavery in Canada," and then it kind of made me feel bad because I know there was slavery in Canada ... I went up to the teacher and I told [her] she said there was never slavery in Canada. And the teacher said, "Yeah, there was slavery in Canada but it wasn't as big a deal as the States." ...They should check their research on it before they teach it instead of reading the school books and then teaching what it says. Because a lot of the school books about African history is not true. (Individual interview, Afro-Caribbean-Canadian girl)

The girls who confronted their teachers explained that their concerns are often dismissed. Yet they understood that the misrepresentation of their cultures and histories fostered the racism they experienced on a daily basis. In essence, they realized that their histories and cultures were often erased in the context of the classroom and in the services they encountered or attempted to access.

Racism in the schools is also fostered by teachers and administrators who refuse to speak out about violence. One girl in our focus group explained:

> The teachers, they keep it to themselves, the principal. They always try to keep it in secret. They don't go out and say we need to deal with this issue. (Afro-Caribbean-Canadian focus group participant)

Inter-Cultural Violence / Maintaining the Hierarchy

The struggle for power among young people from different cultural groups was the most prominent theme in the interviews with the girls. Power struggles between groups are often violent. There is a perception that schools are becoming more violent, but the systemic reasons for the violence are rarely acknowledged. Instead, generic bullying policies mask the racism and sexism that girls face. The murder of Reena Virk, and the erasure of racism as a factor in her bullying, demonstrate the consequences of failing to analyze the systemic causes of schoolyard violence (Jiwani, 1998a).

While media and school policies ignore the racist nature of school violence, the girls who were interviewed pointed to racism as a key reason for violence in the schools. Girls

recognized inter-cultural tensions as a feature of school life, but many did not have a framework to help them understand why young people from immigrant and racialized communities are perpetuating the hierarchies of power established by the dominant culture. In the following quotations, the girls name racism and the high school culture as the problem, but do not explicitly link it to the inequitable social relations of Canadian society:

> You know in high school, people are like that. They talk behind each other's backs. I don't know why. They hate them because of their culture, where they're from. Because people in this school hang out with each other, Korean hang out with each other, Indian hang out with each other … they just like hanging out with their own country people. (Individual interview, Persian girl)

Read outside of a postcolonial framework, one could conclude that young people are perpetuating racist attitudes that are endemic to their own cultures. This interpretation overlooks how the hierarchical power structures operate in white settler societies. Canadian culture is based on the myth of 'two founding nations' – French and English. In this narrative, the inherent rights of First Nations people to the land is denied, and immigrants and refugees from racialized communities are portrayed as a threat to Canadian values of liberal democracy, capitalism and Christianity (Bannerji 1998; Stasiulis & Jhappan, 1995). The girls' understanding of inter-cultural violence must be read within this context.

Sherene Razack argues that communicating across social hierarchies and eliminating concomitant inequities requires an understanding of how the dominant culture manages responses to subordinate groups. She argues that dominant culture maintains its control over marginalized groups by denying the privileges accorded to white culture. White privilege is maintained by promoting a rights-based agenda based on formal liberalism which denies the historical relations of power that underpin current social and economic inequities. In this analysis, inequities are linked to cultural differences, which are constructed as inferior to democratic, liberal ideals. Cultural differences are discursively constructed in a decontextualized manner. The most damaging consequence of the liberal framework is that it homogenizes cultural differences and masks relations of power that perpetuate social inequalities (Razack 1998). To develop effective strategies for change, we must uncover the insidious processes that reify white privilege. When we listen to what girls say, we must also consider how girls are internalizing the dominant culture's representation of their countries of origin and of their place in Canadian society.

Fitting in and Belonging

Many girls spoke poignantly about the difficulty of fitting in to the dominant culture. Girls who are differently located because of race, sexual orientation, disability or class are vulnerable to taunts and violent acts because this society does not value those who do not

conform to white, middle-class ideals (Jiwani, 1998b). The most vulnerable immigrant and refugee girls are those who have just arrived in Canada. In schools, recent immigrants are called "FOBs," an acronym for "fresh off the boat." One girl defined FOB as:

> FOB is like "fresh off the boat." It means that you're really ... geeky and you don't know how to speak and stuff. You dress stupidly or whatever, right? (Individual interview, Persian girl)

Her definition encapsulates the racism and classism that are rarely named and spoken about in Canadian society. Given the derision that new immigrants face in schools, the most effective strategy for immigrant and refugee girls is to learn how to 'fit in.' Distancing oneself and one's peer group from those who have just immigrated is one way to fit in. One Iranian girl explained her reaction to the heightened scrutiny that marks this form of racism and the internalization of dominant norms and perceptions:

> Persians are loud people. … People would be looking and staring at us, white people. And I'd be like, "Shut up. Don't speak so loud. Everybody's looking at us." Because I don't like that kind of stuff. Like we should balance out. We don't like everybody to stare at us. We don't want everybody to say, "Oh, those people are so loud." (Individual interview, Persian girl)

However, fitting in is a contradictory process for many girls who are trying to find a balance between their family's cultural values and those of the dominant culture. One girl described her frustration with her peers' unwillingness to learn about her culture:

> I want my name to be what it is. I don't have to shorten it for people to make it easier for them. I mean I have to learn their way to fit in but they can't say my name properly, spell my name properly, or pronounce it properly. Like if I don't say it right, they would make fun of me. They'd like, "Oh, you're an FOB." (Individual interview, Persian girl)

Assimilation is one way in which girls try to fit in. This often entails a loss of identity with the parent culture or negotiating a balance between two, often competing traditions and discourses (Handa, 1997). As these participants noted:

> Sometimes I feel like I have to lose my true identity to fit in. (Afro-Caribbean-Canadian focus group participant)

> I don't think being a Canadian means that you're not something else. Like if someone was to ask me where I was from, I'm still from Pakistan. I'm always going to be from Pakistan and ultimately, somewhere deep down inside, that's my baseline foundation. But I have a Canadian flag on my backpack and if I were to backpack for a year ... I'd be Canadian. (Jumpstart workshop with girls of colour)

The latter quote highlights the relational and contextual nature of Canadian identity as it is experienced and expressed by these girls. In part, their sense of belonging is influenced by their hybridity emerging from their diasporic location on the one hand, and the rejection from the dominant society on the other.

Media Influence And Literacy

The use of racial and cultural stereotypes in television and film media has been noted as having a negative effect on the self-image and peer acceptance of immigrant and refugee youth (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000). These types of racist media images coupled with sexist media content can deeply influence the identity formation of the refugee and immigrant girl child (Manhas, 2000). Social messages about who is and who is not desirable and what characteristics constitute 'beauty' converge to affect the self-esteem and self-image of racialized girls. The results include self-consciousness about body image, low self-esteem and eating disorders (Basow, 1999; Sarigiana, 1993).

The girls we interviewed were keenly aware of media stereotypes about their racial groups. As these participants from the Afro-Caribbean-Canadian focus group noted:

> And on TV and stuff, if they're showing you about a Black place, there'll be like nice places in the country but they show you the poorest areas. I hate that because they're showing you the worst place of the country to make it look really bad.

> [TV] portrays all the bad things like it's known for marijuana or ganja or whatever drugs. They always come up to me [at school] and go, "So do you know where the drugs are?" "No I don't. I don't even know what the tree looks like." So I always tell them saying, "Yes, I have some in the backyard of my house and if they want some, they can come over later." Because I'm sick of it. That's about all you hear.

A South Asian girl pointed to the discrepancies between the exoticized and depressed representations of their cultures and homelands.

> It shows it being very exotic, with Madonna and her mendhi [henna] and saris being turned into drapes and the masala and everything being exotic. When I went to India it was not like that, it seems very exotic. But on the other hand it's shown as a welfare culture. It's the kids on the UNICEF ad. So on one hand it's like this big rich silk industry which does henna on the side and on the other hand it's the nude baby with the over-swelled tummy on the UNICEF ad.

Services

Accessibility to and availability of services are important issues for all Canadians. The immigrant and refugee girl child faces numer-

ous and unique challenges in her development and, therefore, the provision of adequate services is a vital link to her survival. The following factors have been identified as seriously impeding the girl child's access to services: a lack of funding, culturally insensitive programs and/or service providers, laws requiring mandatory reporting of violence and the attendant lack of confidentiality, and a lack of gender- and age-specific programs.

Immigrant and refugee girls feel unable to access school counselling services, due to experiences of racism portrayed as cultural insensitivity, language barriers, and a feeling that their disclosures may not be held in confidence – that they will be shared with parents or school authorities (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000; Handa, 1997). This unwillingness to use certain services is also mirrored in the reluctance of parents of immigrant and refugee children to access services (JanoviFek, 2000; National Association of Women and the Law, 1999).

Across the board, from basic counselling to shelters for street-involved youth, there is a need for girl-specific services. The backlash against gender-specific programming is having a serious and deleterious effect on the funding and availability of such programs (Jiwani et al., 1998). Gender-specific services that are based on a critical, anti-racist and anti-sexist perspective are essential to meet the unique needs of the immigrant and refugee girl.

School Support

The lack of support for immigrant and refugee girls restricts their choices. Services for immigrant girls in the schools are limited to English as Second Language (ESL) courses. These services are concentrated in urban centres. One Thai girl who lives in a small town reported that she attended school for two weeks before her father informed the school that she did not understand English. Since there were no ESL courses available in the schools, she was placed in remedial classes. Moreover, immigrant and refugee girls in rural communities are more isolated because they do not have peers who share their cultural background. A service provider from the same town described the experience of two sisters she worked with:

> At home, they were loved by their parents and the parents wanted them to learn and go to work and do everything like anybody else does. But at school, these two young girls felt very isolated. People would look at them, stare at them, and call them names. ... People won't sit beside them because they felt East Indian girls were smelly. So their experience at school was very, very difficult. All they wanted to do was learn but they didn't look forward to going to school. (Service Provider from small town in rural BC)

Given that isolation is a key risk factor for violence (Jiwani, 2001), the situation of immigrant and refugee girls in rural areas is in one sense, worse than their urban counterparts. The sheer lack of alternatives often forces these

girls and young women into either internalizing the violence and rejection they experience or fitting into peer groups that are not always accepting of their difference.

Although less isolated than their rural counterparts, girls in urban communities still face a hostile school environment. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that many principals and teachers refuse to acknowledge racism in the schools. Many girls described their frustration with teachers who discriminate against immigrant girls, and principals who dismiss them when they describe racist acts:

> I wouldn't go to a principal because they would go against me, too. It has happened a couple of times that they would say, "Oh, this is not about race." ... Somebody in our school got suspended because she said she felt one of her teachers was really racist. She got suspended even though she didn't say who it was. (Individual interview, Persian girl)

This quote highlights the denial and dismissal of racism by white school authorities. More than that, it demonstrates the fear that girls experience in calling attention to such racism, and the potential retaliation they might experience as a result. Another interviewee outlined the severe consequences for girls who maintain silence about racist acts and incidents:

> From what I've seen, the kids fear it so they won't go and tell people about it. They'll just keep it inside. And I think that sooner or later, it's just going to make them explode. So if I could give them advice, I'd tell them, number one, go to a person who you know you can trust. I wouldn't say first to go to somebody at school. (Individual interview, South Asian girl)

These experiences suggest that schools are perceived as sites of external control rather than in their role as loco-parentis – with a duty to care (Shariff, 2001), i.e., as places of trust and development. It is apparent that language training is not the only program that immigrant and refugee girls need. To help girls deal with the impact of dislocation and racism, schools must actively promote a more conducive milieu of acceptance. Cultures that do not conform to white, middle-class ideas are often treated as being inferior in Canadian society. Respect for diversity in such a context cannot be achieved without commitment to an anti-racist agenda.

The girls identified different solutions to the tensions in the schools. When researchers asked girls how to reduce violence they recommended programs that would bring together students from various backgrounds to unpack the social hierarchies and racism that shape day-to-day relations among peer groups:

> They could have this program, if they could bring people from different groups together and take them somewhere so they had to all bind in together and understand each other and work their

> problems out together, come up with ideas together. That would help. You don't judge people the way they look, the way they dress, the way they are, what their personality is. (Individual interview, Persian girl)

Other Services

One girl offered the experience of her friend when she was asked about family violence:

> I know a person, she gets beaten up by her parents ... I've told her, "Hey, why don't you go call the police or call organizations that help people – would help you with this problem." But she's like, "They might take away my dad." So she's kind of scared of telling anybody except me and a bunch of her other friends. (Individual interview, Persian girl)

The girl's apprehensions about social services reflect an absence of sensitive services and programs for immigrant and refugee communities. Her concern for her father's safety demonstrates that immigrant and refugee communities do not trust government services. Settlement workers agree that Ministry for Children and Families workers are not cognizant or sensitive to the hierarchical nature of Canadian society and the subordinate position of immigrants and refugees. This attitude assumes that immigrant and refugee families are bringing new problems to Canada, and neglects the fact that family violence is a widespread feature of Canadian society.

Most settlement services in British Columbia are concentrated in Vancouver. Thus, a significant portion of the immigrant and refugee community has restricted access to services. For example, although ethnic minorities comprise 15% of the population in the South Okanagan, the only program that serves immigrant and refugee families is the Settlement and Adaptation Program offered by the Penticton & District Multicultural Society, funded by the Ministry of Multiculturalism. All staff are newly hired part-time workers, so that they have limited connections with workers in government-run services. Their marginalization is augmented by the fact that few agencies acknowledge the value of cultural liaison workers. Nor do they appreciate the diversity of values and experiences of migration within immigrant and refugee communities. One settlement worker described her experience working with the Punjabi community in the Okanagan:

> It is my experience and understanding that many Punjabi parents of these young children are first generation Canadian and somehow they do not understand what a counsellor or a psychologist can do to help their child. Because there is a lack of understanding and they have never used these services before, they do not go anywhere and they do not know how it would benefit the children or themselves. ... So there is no referral system because there's a lack of understanding.

[22] Refugee Convention (1951), Article 1(2).

Cultural liaison workers are necessary to enable immigrant and refugee families to have knowledge of and access to the services that are available. Moreover, these workers can act as advocates for immigrant families who want to access services. Cultural liaison workers are also necessary because teachers and caregivers are obligated to report cases of suspected abuse to the Ministry for Children and Families. Immigrant and refugee girls and their families who are involuntarily involved with social services need advocates who understand their culture and the systems to help them negotiate through the bureaucracy.

Health service provision to the immigrant and refugee girl child is impeded by similar difficulties. The lack of sensitive service providers surfaces again and again as a concern of both youth and adult immigrants and refugees (Masi, 1993; Matsuoka & Sorenson, 1991). Funding, consistency and duration are concerns for settlement services provided to immigrant and refugee families (Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, 2000).

Fear of disclosure to parents and other caregivers remains a serious concern impeding these girls from accessing relevant and needed services. Guarantees of confidentiality and autonomy are therefore necessary to facilitate such access. Similarly, mandatory reporting guidelines need to be either waived or reconsidered in situations where girls and young women are extremely vulnerable to retaliation and to the potential loss of their group membership in a cultural community resulting from disclosure and the attendant loss of reputation.

The Refugee Girl

In order to be accepted into Canada as a refugee, the refugee girl child must have a "well founded fear of persecution."[22] Simply by meeting this legal test, the refugee girl is much more likely than the immigrant girl to have experienced or witnessed violence, war, or government policies which foster violence against women. Her needs as a survivor of various forms of persecution will likely be different from the immigrant girl child.

Refugee children face increased health risks compared to immigrant children (Beiser et al, 1998). Studies have indicated a need for refugee-specific health care and awareness, as well as specialized treatment for war and gender-related injuries (Guidelines, 1996; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1991). HIV education and treatment has also been targeted as a special health need of many refugees. Funding, duration and types of settlement services for refugee families is also inadequate (Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, 2000).

In addition, there is a lack of monitoring with regard to the implementation of the immigrant and refugee girls' rights as defined by the Charter and in various international instruments. Clearly, this poses a systemic barrier to the full and equitable recognition and implementation of these rights. Effective intervention can only occur when systemic barriers are dismantled.

Summary

The girls who were interviewed identified inter-cultural tensions and racism as the most significant forms of violence they face. Some girls did not make connections between the tensions between cultural groups and the social inequalities that define Canadian society. Those who did understand the links between racism and the factions in their schools were willing to forgive their peers. They believed that peer racism was due to their lack of knowledge, and blamed teachers who misinformed students about different cultures.

The girls identified their families as supportive, and were proud of their cultural identity. However, they explained that it was often difficult to fit in at school and follow their parents' values. They admitted that this created tensions at home, but none of the girls disclosed violence. Settlement workers explained that immigrant and refugee communities are reluctant to access services because social workers are intolerant of their values and customs. Because there is no commitment to accommodating difference within social services, immigrant and refugee girls need advocates to help them through the systems. They also explained that girls need more than language training when they immigrate.

Settlement services for immigrant and refugees are provided by non-profit agencies which operate on sporadic government funding. Due to lack of funding, they are staffed by part-time workers and volunteers. They are mandated to provide services for specific ethno-cultural groups. However, these groups are artificial constructions which conform to Canadian categorization of immigrant groups rather than self-identified cultural affiliation. These organizations operate on the margins of the social welfare system. It is acceptable for settlement workers to provide language training and to promote cultural programs, however they are excluded from the mainstream of social work and are thus unable to promote a critical anti-racist reframing of policies and protocols that impact negatively on immigrant and refugee communities. As Uzma Shakir noted at a recent conference, rather than promoting social and political change, settlement services have become a tool for managing diversity (Shakir, 2001).

Recommendations

In his review of the situation of immigrant students in Canadian schools, Lam (1994) makes the following recommendations, which were also reiterated by focus group participants and interviewees:

- "Integrating a culturally diverse perspective in texts and curriculum
- Hiring teachers and counsellors who culturally represent the student community and who can act as role models to both immigrant and Canadian-born students
- Developing testing methods that are free of cultural bias
- Encouraging involvement from students' communities in work co-op programs, mentoring and curricu-

lum development

- Educating teachers about racism, and the effects that discrimination may have on student performance
- [implementing] Peer mentor programs for recent immigrant students."

In addition to these, focus group participants and interviewees mentioned the following:

- That racism be recognized and treated as a form of violence.
- That policies of multiculturalism be scrutinized and reframed within an anti-racist framework rather than as they currently operate.
- That intersectionality of different forms of oppression be recognized and treated as a point of departure for policy development and implementation at all levels.
- That mechanisms be instituted at all levels and within all related institutional domains to provide support and protection for the immigrant and refugee girl child.
- That the constitutional divide between federal ratification and provincial implementation of treaties be eliminated. The first step is to emphasize that this division is a violation of the spirit of the treaties, and include this information in all research which deals with international human rights instruments.
- That the federal, provincial and territorial governments implement a working group and mandate it to work toward a harmonization of policies and legislation so that the latter fulfil Canada's international obligations to various accords, conventions, declarations and treaties. This working group should operate in partnership with non-profit organizations who have expertise in the different areas.
- That policies which work against the interests of the immigrant and refugee girl child, e.g., policies requiring parental consent for access to services, be changed in order to accommodate the special vulnerabilities of these racialized girls and young women.
- That the federal, provincial and territorial governments make a special attempt to gather gender and age specific data which is also segregated on the basis of ethnicity or race so that future policy decisions are predicated on a more accurate foundation of knowledge.
- That consultations with girls be based on the principles of participatory action research.
- That popular education tools about

women's equality rights and international human rights instruments for women's and girl's equality-seeking groups be developed and disseminated.

- That training tools for lawyers and judicial education tools around international legal obligations be developed and disseminated.

- That Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) be supported to develop and disseminate evaluation tools (such as shadow reports and report cards) to be submitted to government and the UN during Canada's reporting periods.

- That international human rights law and norms be used to interpret the Charter and other domestic laws in domestic equality litigation. This should include the Conventions themselves, General Recommendations of relevant Committees, Concluding Remarks of relevant Committees on Canada's reports under Conventions and any documented discussion on Canada's reports between Canada and the relevant Committee.

- That there be improved methods of consultation with governments about Canada's international positions.

- That Canadians are educated on the extreme poverty levels of immigrant and refugee families and visible minority groups generally. That such education emphasize that this is the product of international and domestic institutionalized racism.

- That culturally appropriate, consistent and sufficient services are provided to female-headed lone-parent households. This includes employment training, childcare and financial assistance.

- That immigrant and refugee and visible minority youth are educated on their rights under the various provincial and federal Human Rights Acts. It is imperative that these youth be equipped to recognize when racism is a factor is hiring, and use their legislated recourse to address the wrongdoing.

- That all levels of government provide consistent and sufficient funding for programs that are aimed at immigrant and visible minority girls and youth in general.

- That school personnel including principals, teachers and support workers be trained to acknowledge and respond to racism. In other words, anti-racism training needs to be implemented with commitment. Anti-racist pedagogy needs to be incorporated into teacher training

programs. Offering one course on anti-racism is not enough.

- That schools develop comprehensive strategies to increase awareness of human rights, especially children's rights, and particularly the rights of girl children.

- That zero tolerance policies on violence be scrutinized to ensure that they are not simply leveling the field and erasing differences between groups, but rather working towards embracing principles of substantive equality.

- That students who are from racial minority backgrounds or marginalized not be treated in a punitive fashion but rather offered counselling and education programs that can equip them to deal with the everyday racism inherent in their lives.

- That immigrant settlement services be provided with increased funding to hire cultural liaison workers and provide additional services for settlement in order to reduce the isolation of girls and their families.

- That counsellors and others who are

familiar with different cultural traditions be hired within schools and service organizations. It is critical to note that such counsellors need to be trained within an anti-racism paradigm so that their services are not mere cultural prescriptions but are framed within a knowledge basis that clearly recognizes the power relations underpinning the hierarchies of cultural preferences.

- That a serious attempt be made to reflect a more representative portrayal of racialized communities and perspectives in Canadian mass media as per Canada's international obligations and its domestic policies and legislation.

- That curricula which build children's ability to decipher, question and resist the sexist, racist and homophobic messages of the media (especially the Internet) are developed and implemented in schools and other settings.

- That media literacy courses be made a mandatory part of school curricula and that initiatives toward this end be encouraged and funded within the non-profit sector, especially with regard to equipping young women from racialized communities to tell their own stories.

- That governments at all levels are encouraged to meet our obligations under international law regarding children's exposure to harmful media content.

- That qualitative research be encouraged to examine the impact of specific legislation and programs on the immigrant and refugee girl child. Such research should also focus on the avenues through which girls and young women who are marginalized because of racism, sexism, classism, sexuality and ability, can acquire strategies of resistance and resilience to violence.

- That a separate monitoring mechanism be implemented to ensure that immigration and refugee policies are being adhered to and applied in cases involving girls and young women from immigrant and refugee backgrounds.

- That every attempt be made to provide services and programs to reduce the risk of isolation of girls and young women from immigrant and refugee communities.

- That in the area of health care, culturally sensitive service provisions be developed in partnership with the cultural and ethnic communities being served.

- That efforts be made to increase the sense of belonging of these girls, and that such efforts be implemented in

schools, the mass media, and other key institutions in society.

Appendix I

School policies

FREDA requested copies of policies and procedures concerning racism and violence from all school districts; 30 of the 59 BC school board districts responded. The policies FREDA received included codes of conduct that prohibited violence as a source of conflict resolution, weapons policies, disciplinary procedures, safe workplace policies, harassment polices, multicultural policies, and equity policies.

These policies showed a lack of coordination between multiculturalism policies and anti-violence policies. Some policies included well-worded statements about the need to foster appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity, the desire to promote harmony and understanding, and a commitment to resisting racial biases. They do not make connections between violence and racism or sexism. To address the problems that the girls identified, school policies must adopt anti-racist agendas. Generic 'anti-bullying' policies are ineffective because they fail to recognize that sexism and racism are key factors in school violence.

Multiculturalism and anti-racism

Most of the school districts that responded to FREDA's request for policies included multiculturalism policies, anti-discrimination policies, anti-harassment policies, and/or race relations policies. These policies are couched in the rhetoric of multiculturalism. They recognize that diversity has a positive influence in their communities, and strive to promote racial and ethnic harmony and improved cross-cultural understanding. Only one policy recommended professional development to equip teachers to work with people from different racial and ethnic origins.

In their study of multiculturalism policies in BC schools, Marvin Wideen and Kathleen Barnard argue that the weak link between the Ministry of Education, the district, and the schools means that policies are rarely implemented. The key shift in policy is that diversity is no longer treated as a problem. Nevertheless, multiculturalism policies are insufficient because they do not acknowledge that racism is a systemic problem that requires radical social change. Rather than taking a proactive role in promoting equity, multiculturalism policies rely on the myth that Canada is not a racist society. Moreover, multiculturalism policies are not supported in the same way that other policies have been. For example, when the government developed a new science curriculum in 1997, it sponsored workshops to improve pedagogy. It has not taken a leading role in promoting anti-racist pedagogy. The emphasis on celebrating difference does not address the problems that arise from the lack of respect for diversity. Further, the policies themselves contribute to the Othering of cultures that do not conform to the dominant White culture, which is simply assumed as the 'true' Canadian culture (Wideen & Barnard, 1999).

Wideen and Barnard argue that multiculturalism policies may be more harmful than having no policy because they give the illusion that something is being done to address

racism. Rather than effectively addressing the actual problems in the schools, 'zero-tolerance' policies and anti-harassment policies deny the forces that cause violence. Nor do they include curricula to teach students and teachers how subtler forms of racism affect racialized minorities.

School curricula and teachers who are not adequately trained to teach history about different cultures further exacerbate the tensions in schools by disseminating stereotypes of racialized 'Others.' The myth of terra nullius and the commitment to a strong National narrative continues to shape the way history is taught. In the Canadian meta-narrative, 'minority groups' are fit into a history which presents Canada as a tolerant society. The resistance to recognize racism as a powerful force in Canadian nation-building means that the unjust events in Canadian history such as slavery and unfair immigration policies, are rarely taught. Subsequently, white students are not taught to critically analyze how White privilege is historically rooted in the governance and institutions of Canadian society. For immigrant and refugee girls, the erasure of the histories of their cultures cuts them off from their roots and strips them of their identity. Promoting the history and culture of the dominant culture forces oppressed groups to measure themselves against White culture. Immigrant and refugee girls from racialized communities will never measure up, though, because White culture reifies its dominance by constructing their cultures as innately inferior (Bannerji, 1998; Kelly, 1998; Noel, 1994). These discussions are not merely academic.

Participants identified improved education for teachers as necessary for improving tensions between cultural groups in the schools

> Educate the teachers about our culture, and how we are not from a third world country ... [we] don't have camels.

> Especially the teachers because they have the power ... if a social studies teacher does not know about Iran enough, that's just bad. (Persian girl focus group participants, Vancouver)

Anti-bullying policies

The provincial government in British Columbia appears unwilling to acknowledge that the increasing violence in schools is linked to unequal race and gender relations. Existing policies addressing racism, violence and multiculturalism are often contradictory. Many school board policies include racial slurs and sexual harassment as forms of violence that occur in the school.

The school district policies on violence and anti-bullying that FREDA reviewed focused on disciplining students who repeatedly intimidate and assault their peers. The anti-violence policies range from benign zero-tolerance statements to policies which include carefully thought out definitions, regulations, reporting mechanisms and protocols for dealing with discrimination and harassment. Protocols target individual perpetrators, and disciplinary measures include suspension of the student, transferring the instigator of violence, or expul-

sion in severe cases. Some policies require students to seek counselling, and to design a corrective plan for their behaviour prior to re-admittance in the school. There is no reference to anti-racism or anti-sexism education as part of their counselling.

Appendix II

Request Submitted to the Ethics Approval Committee, Simon Fraser University

Request for a Waiver for Parental Consent Forms

As all girl participants will be 14-years-of-age and older, it is considered they will be competent to understand the project and will be able to decide on their own if they wish to participate or not. Those who are not competent to provide their own consent will not be included in this project. All participants in the focus groups and interviews will be asked to sign a consent form (Appendix G). Children under the age of 14 will not be involved in the project. We will ensure that all participants are aware of the voluntary nature of their participation. While it is not the specific goal of this project to identify sexual abuse, girls will be advised that if they reveal personal experiences of sexual abuse which are not yet known to the authorities, or threaten to harm themselves or others, it will be necessary for us to report such incidents. In all other cases, confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained.

The principal investigator requests a waiver of the requirement to have parents/-guardians sign a consent form which would permit the girls to participate in an interview or focus group. The rationale for the request is as follows:

These girls are old enough to provide informed consent themselves. At age 14, they have the legal right to consent to sexual relations and to request health services (Section 16, Infants Act). Further, by age 16, the province now recognizes their right to make decisions regarding their living arrangements. Note that the independent living program instituted by the Ministry for Children and Families is applicable to youth who are 16 and older. The right for these girls to be able to participate in a focus group or interview, without having parental consent, is also predicated on the rights of the child as articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Canada is a signatory nation. Specific articles of the Convention which are applicable in this regard are identified below. The critical aspects however, relate to the best interests of the child, and the ability of the child to be able to express her own views and ideas. According to the Convention:

Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being

given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice. (Source: Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.)

Regarding the issue of the best interests of the child, it can be surmised that if a girl has experienced violence at home, her parents may be less likely to sign a consent form for her to participate in this research project. Thus, her own best interests may not be served. Additionally, her parents/guardians may not want her to reveal those experiences for reasons that it might cause shame to the family, reflect badly on the particular community, and tarnish her reputation in the community (see Razack, 1998 for an empirical study regarding the factors inhibiting disclosure). Once again, suppression of these experiences may not serve the child's best interests.

Existing literature also documents the fear and suspicion with which recent immigrant and refugees view government officials and professionals (i.e., social workers, academics) (see Health Canada's consultation with ethnocultural groups, 1994). To have these parents sign a consent form which they may not be able to read and which appears official (in terms of asking for their signature, address, and a witness to sign), may make them fearful and thus compliant, or may result in them rejecting any kind of participation in the study for fear that their results will be scrutinized. Guarantees of confidentiality do not assuage this fear.

Our past experience with a focus group that was cancelled at the last minute in Kelowna last year, also indicates that if parental/guardian consent forms are required, the girls who are interested in participating will not provide these and consequently, cannot participate in a focus group. In the Kelowna situation, girls showed up for the focus group and expressed considerable interest in participating. However, the facilitator had to inform them that she could not hold the group because they did not have their parental consent forms signed and returned. These girls were effectively silenced by ethics requirements.

Should parental consent forms be required, the impact on the findings will be quite significant. For one, only those parents who are either not aware of abuse or whose children have not been abused will sign these consent forms. On the other hand, the requirement for signed consent forms will likely lead

the researcher to choose a population that is more compliant in this regard – namely those children who are under the care of the state (social workers are willing to sign consent forms on behalf of their clients). The end result will be interviews with a high-risk population and a low risk population (those who are supposedly in well-adjusted, non-abusive families). We will not be able to access those girls who are in the middle range, and who in fact are our target population.

In the situation of street-involved girls, requiring them, or us, to obtain parental consent may put them in positions of danger. Many girls enter into prostitution at an early age because they flee the parental home due to abuse. And because of chronological age requirements, these girls "fall through the cracks" in terms of their ability to officially access services. Many of our service providers allow these girls to become part of their girls groups in order that they can receive some kind of assistance. Yet they are not officially part of a guardianship situation. We cannot, in good conscience, request parental consent for these girls. Again, their voices will be silenced.

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Examination of Innovative Programming for Children and Youth Involved in Prostitution

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Introduction

The first phase of the national study on the girl child and the prevention of violence undertook a review of a wide range of Canadian programs for female youth. We were concerned about the number and type of programs available to prevent violence against girls. We were also interested in identifying programs which would assist girls caught in a web of violence and abuse.

For the second phase of this study the prairie research team focussed on the most vulnerable of girls, those exploited through prostitution. Our study was designed to identify important issues and concerns about policy and programs dealing with this particular form of sexual exploitation. Researchers have identified some key characteristics of girls and young adolescents who become exploited through prostitution. However, we know little of these young people's perceptions of their needs and their view of programs designed to assist them or the barriers they encounter in returning to a mainstream lifestyle. We wished to examine the services developed to assist these girls and the "fit" between the girls articulated needs and the perceptions of the service providers. Through this study we hope to contribute to a critical discussion about the status and circumstances of girls exploited through prostitution and assess different strategies for intervention.

Background

Historically, prostitution has been deemed a moral crime. The "world's oldest profession" occupies a precarious position in our society. While never fully accepted in Canada, prostitution has not been fully rejected. There is a tendency to view prostitution as a 'necessary evil'. This ambiguity is reflected in our legislation. The practice of prostitution is legal in Canada, however, solicitation and other activities that lead to the act of prostitution are illegal.

While there is no consensus on the place of prostitution in society we do know that it exists on a continuum ranging from sexual slavery (the gorilla pimp), to survival sex (an exchange for basic necessities), through to the more bourgeois sex trade. In the latter case, both adults are consenting, albeit in a way that is shaped by their gender, occupation, ethnicity, socio-economic status and cultural values (Lowman, in press). In between is a host of different locations of experience and exploitation, from casual to full time prostitution and women who are self-employed or working in pairs or groups. Prostitution occurs on the street, in trick pads, in escort agencies, bawdyhouses and massage parlours.

These experiences are not limited to adults. However, youth prostitution has a very different meaning in our society and provokes a very different response. The buying of sexual services from youth is perceived as a form of child abuse and the law clearly separates youth from adult prostitution. It is increasingly argued that we must protect children from becoming involved in prostitution because it is an issue of preventing child abuse rather than controlling prostitution. Partially due to the differing defi-

nitions of youth prostitution and partially due to the underground nature of prostitution and street life generally, there are no concrete reliable statistics that reflect the number of youth exploited through prostitution. Depending on the city, reports indicate that there are between forty and eighty youth exploited on the street on any given night.

The issue of youth exploited through prostitution is anything but simple. Although there is no monolithic experience of youth and children exploited through prostitution, some commonalities are consistently reported in research. Childhood abuse, the over-representation of girls on the street, substance use, issues of race, and exposure to poverty all play a role in individual experiences and levels of vulnerability to sexual exploitation through prostitution.

Most authors concur that prostitutes generally have a higher than average experience of childhood sexual abuse, although some suggest that this should not be regarded as a causal relationship (Mathews, 1989; Brannigan & Gibbs Van Brunschot, 1997). Rather, it appears that the intersection of abusive experiences within the family, running away, a lack of viable alternatives and a failure of the child welfare system cumulatively create a situation that sets the stage for children to become involved in prostitution (Chesney-Lind & Sheldon, 1992; Schissel & Fedec, 1999). With respect to gender, researchers consistently report that more girls than boys are sexually exploited through prostitution (Badgley, 1984; Lowman, 1987; Roeters, 1987; Shaver, 1996). Most studies indicate a high incidence of substance use and addiction among youth street prostitutes (Badgley, 1984; Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group on Prostitution, 1998). While researchers argue about whether substance use is a precursor to the engagement in prostitution (Brannigan & Fleischman, 1989) or a consequence of the work (Fraser, 1985; Lowman 1987), it is generally agreed that the relationship between substance use and prostitution is co-determinate (Schissel & Fedec, 1999).

It is clear that some segments of the population are more vulnerable to being exploited than others. Aboriginal youth are over-represented among youth exploited through prostitution (First Call, 1996; McEvoy & Daniluk, 1995, Kingsley, 2000). Most researchers indicate that youth end up on the street for two reasons: an unstable home life and a failure of the child welfare system to assist them (Mathews, 1989). Although economics is an important factor in the "choice" to engage in prostitution, wider issues must also be taken into account. The context of sexuality and attitudes about male and female roles generally, and the societal conception and sexualization of youth are all factors that contribute to the problem. This wider social construction of youth and sexuality also plays a role in the demand for youth prostitutes. Expanding the issue even more, we must ask how the issues intersect with power and control and the economic inequities that exist between males and females and adults and children.

Methodology

This research uses a case study or qualitative research approach. We interviewed two populations utilizing semi-structured interview schedules: adult women who had become involved in prostitution before age 18 and staff from agencies that offer services to adolescents sexually exploited through prostitution. The semi-structured interview format has the advantage of including specific questions building on the little we know about the use of services by young girls and adolescents sexually exploited through prostitution, yet also allowing for unanticipated topics to emerge. The interviews for both the young women and the service providers included questions about the entry into prostitution, patterns of involvement, services needs and impact of involvement.

Notably though, in-depth interview respondents often tell their stories in their own way and a rigidly structured format may interfere. The interviewers used the schedules flexibly and as guides rather than being conducted verbatim, such as would be the case with a structured survey. As such, not every respondent was asked all of the questions. Further, each of the three RESOLVE research teams had a somewhat different emphasis. For example, Saskatchewan was interested in health issues, and asked more in-depth questions on this aspect and Alberta was interested in the impact of the new provincial legislation, thus contacted many more service providers than the other offices.

The women respondents were contacted through their past or current involvement with specialized services for either prostitution or substance abuse. The service providers worked at agencies that offered services for youth and adults involved in prostitution and could comment on the needs of that population. Most of the women's interviews were conducted individually, with the exception of four focus groups ranging from two to four participants. The interviews with both the women and service providers varied in length, but typically lasted about an hour to an hour and a half. The majority of the interviews were audiotaped and verbatim transcripts were prepared for the interviews with the women and many of the service providers. The analysis of the interview transcripts employed established qualitative methods (Coleman & Unrau, 1996). The research team examined the interview schedules conjointly for several days, independently coding for major themes and discussing these to arrive at a consensus of what emerged as the most central issues.

The in-depth qualitative data analyses are utilized throughout the report with the exception of the section on protective confinement. The intent here, was to outline critical debates about implementing provincial legislation that allow the confinement of children and youth involved in prostitution. As such, the quotations raise important issues, however, do not necessarily reflect the consensus or range of opinions expressed by all of the research respondents.

Several limitations are worth noting with respect to this research. As mentioned previously, some questions were asked differently in the three provinces, allowing for tailoring to

the special interests of the research teams. This means that, for example, not all of the respondents were asked whether they had experienced abuse in their family of origins. Secondly, the women respondents were contacted because of their involvement with agencies; therefore, we spoke only with those who had perceived a need to be involved with formal services. This group may be different from others working in prostitution who have chosen not to seek help, or it may be more reflective of street prostitution than other forms, such as working in escort services. Further, the demographics of those interviewed varied across the three provinces. Alberta's respondents were mostly Caucasian and were younger, in contrast to a high proportion of interviewees of First Nation's backgrounds from Saskatchewan and Manitoba which also included more older informants. We cannot ascertain whether this reflects actual differences in who becomes involved in prostitution in the three provinces, or is an artefact of the way that we solicited respondents.

Nevertheless, given the paucity of research on girls and adolescents who become sexually exploited through prostitution in the prairie provinces; and a lack of research that invites individuals to relate their own perceptions of their needs, this study provides a much-needed perspective that will hopefully have an impact on services and policy for this vulnerable population.

Demographics and Background

We interviewed 45 women from across the three prairie provinces who had been involved in prostitution before age 18 (one individual is transgendered [male to female], however worked the streets as a woman). A higher percentage was of Aboriginal descent (26 or 57.7%) than Caucasian (19 or 42.2%). This proportion was different across the three provinces, with the Saskatchewan interviews exclusively Aboriginal, Manitoba 70%, and Alberta only 22.2% Aboriginal.

At the time of the interviews, the women ranged in age from 18 to 36 years: 10 (22.2%) were 20 or below, 14 (31.1%) were aged between 21 and 25, 11 (24.4%) were between 26 and 30, and 9 (20%) were 30 or older (one respondent did not specify age). With respect to the age at which they became involved with prostitution, 17 women (37.8%) were between 11 and 13; 16 (35.6%) became involved between 14 and 15, and 12 (26.7%) were aged 16 to 17. Thus, almost three- quarters of the women began their involvement when they were 15 years old or less.

Almost 40% of the women had been involved for 5 years or less, another third (34.7%) for over 11 years, and 22.2% had six to ten years of involvement. The participants were almost equally divided between those who had left the streets (51%) and those who were still involved (49%). As children, 60% of the respondents had been involved with the child welfare system. Of these, most (77.8%) had been taken into care and resided in foster and group homes, often for many years. A high proportion (32 or 71%) of the respondents reported an abuse history as children. Of those who reported abuse, 21 (65.6%) had been sexually abused, most by family members. Only five individuals noted that they had not been

abused in their families. Thirteen respondents did not mention that they had been abused as children, although a number of these had been taken into care by child welfare authorities, indicating significant problems in their families of origin.

Fifteen women became pregnant while under the age of 18 while they were on the streets and bore one or more children. Of these, nine no longer have custody, although some visit their children who live with relatives. One woman who kept her child, described the irony of being a "mother by day, hooker by night".

Patterns of Involvement

As noted previously, almost three-quarters of the respondents were very young (under the age of fifteen) when introduced to prostitution. For most of the women, the first incident of prostitution occurred primarily because they had little or no money and no other means to meet their basic needs of shelter, clothing, and food. Twenty-one of the girls had run away from home or group homes or institutions. A small number were attracted to prostitution because of the "easy money" or they believed it to be a "glamorous" lifestyle. Almost half of the respondents reported that prostitution was a means of survival and money was a major factor in their involvement (i.e. buy groceries, feed and clothe their children, pay the rent).

> "I don't think people see the reasons why we go out on the street. A lot of time it's because we have to. We have no other way of getting money and that's a fact. It's degrading for myself, but I would rather make sure that my daughter has food than worry about myself." (Alberta)

Women reported that as youth, opportunities to meet basic financial needs were often unavailable or insufficient. Age requirements prevented some youth from being eligible to receive social assistance, and therefore, they resorted to working on the street. Youth also indicated that they resorted to prostitution because job opportunities were not available (i.e. youth too young to work) or insufficient (i.e. minimum wage).

> "I tried everything I could to get the money my legal means, but being 14 years old, you don't have a whole lot of options." (Alberta)

Contrary to the media focus on male pimps as coercing young girls into prostitution, a large number of the respondents (19) were introduced to prostitution by female friends, other group home or institutional room-mates, or by family members who were already involved.

> "I had a 16-year-old girlfriend who asked me if I wanted to run away… she said, it's $40 for a hand job, it's $60 for a blow job, and $80 for the entire thing." (Alberta)

> "…my sisters were doing it and I was living with my mom and I learned from them. And then, I started seeing some of their regulars. I was used to being around

> them and just started. It was good money." (Saskatchewan)

Many of the girls began by "spotting" (i.e. taking down dates' license plates) which gradually led to their own involvement in prostitution. A small group of women started on their own with no advice from others. They attributed their initial involvement in prostitution to simply being around that environment.

> "We lived on the drag…and I was just watching the girls out – kind of watched for a while and I met a girl who was out on the drag and she kind of told me what to do…How much to ask for, what to do, where to go, what to look for." (Alberta)

A small number traced their initial involvement to boyfriends who were already pimping and asked or encouraged them to start working. Notably, though, several women were forced into prostitution by boyfriends. Almost all of the respondents had worked for a pimp at some point. Interestingly though, numerous women also worked independently for some time periods. Although numerous respondents believed that they had made their own decision to prostitute, a small number were forced, coerced or manipulated into prostitution by pimps. "I had a gun held to my head." (Manitoba)

While many women worked continuously, others worked only sporadically – whenever they needed money. Several women spoke of working until they met their "quota"; others only until they had enough money to either eat, pay rent, pay for drugs, or to collect spending money. A number of women had prostituted in many different cities across Canada. Some indicated that travelling was their own choice, whereas others were pimped from city to city. With respect to the type of prostitution, many of our respondents worked only on the street or stroll, but others worked in trick pads, massage parlours, and escort agencies.

Drug use was a major factor in the respondent's involvement in prostitution. Although most had used some drugs prior to their entry into prostitution, almost all women reported a significant increase in drug use as they continued. While their early drug use typically involved "softer" drugs such as pot and some casual drinking, this escalated to harder drugs such as cocaine, speed, heroin, and crack. Not surprisingly, the women's involvement in prostitution became more entrenched as their addiction to drugs and alcohol intensified.

As youth, almost all of the respondents had attempted to leave prostitution at least once during their involvement. Most of these attempts to exit prostitution occurred after a significant event. Several women attempted to leave after they became pregnant; others quit after a violent experience with a customer (i.e. bad date) or they were arrested.

> "I got pregnant with my daughter and that was it. I was done." (Alberta)

> "After that [bad date] we didn't want to take any chances, because I have a kid and the thought of losing your kid, going

> out one night and not coming back and your kid wondering where Mommy is – it makes you want to get off." (Alberta)

> "I never want to be in that little jail cell. I never want to be handcuffed again; it was a very intimidating process for me … But that lock up experience was what did it for me. I was sort of scared straight." (Manitoba)

Women also attributed their exit attempts to being burnt out or too tired. Several women described "hitting rock bottom" and therefore, making the decision to leave.

> "I was just tired. … Just sick and tired." (Saskatchewan)

> "I got honest with myself and where my life was at and what I wanted and how far away that actually was…I finally took a good look in the mirror…I weighed 120 lbs. and that just does not look good on me. I had huge bags under my eyes. Nobody ever wanted to come near me." (Alberta)

Others attempted to leave prostitution because they did not want child protection service to take their children into care or they realized that prostituting themselves and being involved in the lifestyle was detrimental to their children. A relatively small number made the decision to leave after a positive experience, such as having an intimate partner who cared about them and did not want them to continue.

Although almost all attempted to leave prostitution, a high proportion of the respondents returned to working, mostly for the money. Some women were simply unable to meet their basic needs (i.e. rent, food, and clothing) through other means. Others admitted returning to prostitution because they needed money for their drug addiction. Numerous women returned because of what they termed their "addiction" to money and because they knew how fast and "easy" it was to get. Interestingly, several respondents returned to prostitution because it was part of their identity – that was simply who they were. Similarly, a relatively small number of women had made no attempt to leave prostitution. They described several barriers that prevented them from leaving or even thinking about leaving. One woman stated that she had not left because it was so ingrained in her. "I started when I was so young. It's just been a part of my life. It's not something that's like out of the ordinary" (Saskatchewan).

Social Identity

The ways in which social identities are constructed in collective and individualized contexts have long figured prominently and explicitly in critical theories of cultural and psychological processes (see McDowell, 1996). It is now widely accepted that identities crafted by individuals and groups correspond to the immediate and local social environments (Scheper-Hughes & Sargent, 1998). The interviews we conducted with former child prostitutes reveal quite a bit about how street involved youth see themselves and others.

Indeed, eight interrelated factors were identified as being significant to the prevailing social identities of girls exploited through systems of prostitution: (1) the social networks on which the young women rely; (2) cultural heritage; (3) drug use; (4) motherhood; (5) perceptions of prostitution; (6) age; (7) gender; and (8) self-esteem. Although all eight factors are significant, the first four appear to be of greatest consequence and will be briefly discussed here.

The social networks that provide the immediate and framing context for youth working the streets are comprised primarily of agencies, families of origin, and extended street "families" (that include pimps, friends and drug dealers). While many respondents spoke of having no one to whom they could turn for support, an equal number also spoke of the "unbreakable" bond of their street families. Relying primarily on friends as an occasional source of income, drugs, emotional support, physical protection, and sociability, many of the girls described an affinity for others who had similar past experiences. "I hung out with people like me," one respondent succinctly said, while another noted that the difficult decision to "get off" the street was tantamount to "ditching" her friends, indicating that she readily equated the two. Occasionally respondents would speak about the superficiality of street friendships: "I was 14 when I started [in prostitution] and I had run into some people who I thought were friends, [but] I ended up being put on the street … I was put out by them." However, such comments about the precariousness of street-based security are outnumbered by the respondents' accounts of the ready peer support provided by the street communities.

Although not a source of consistent support per se, pimps figured prominently in the lives and social networks of many girls. There exists a range of pimps: those who control every financial aspect of the girls' lives (paying for housing, clothing, and food) to pimps who were more frequently described as "boyfriends" and who might request money from the girls but who have less decision making power. The distinction between pimp and boyfriend, then, is not definitive and several of the women interviewed indicated that it was only after they stopped working as a prostitute that they could appreciate the extent to which their boyfriend was indeed their pimp. Looking back on her personal relationship with one man, for example, a Manitoba woman noted, "I was cash, I was a cash cow for him, you know? He was becoming more possessive and seeing me more [as] … his drug money." Such references to similar kinds of possessiveness were common and it appears that these girls' social networks were more restricted than were those of girls who worked independently, or with successive pimps to whom they were not attached romantically.

Programs and helping agencies played both positive and negative roles (depending on their mandate) within the social networks forged by the women participating in this research. Generally, respondents spoke negatively of child welfare agencies which evoked a fairly consistent sense of indignation and distrust. Although a few respondents indicated that secure treatment facilities assisted in (as

one woman put it) "scaring them straight," agencies that were perceived to be less coercive, more flexible and that allowed youth to have greater input into programming were regarded more positively.

Families of origin figured less prominently in the lives of street involved youth. Generally, the women interviewed came from non-supportive and dysfunctional homes where they experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse. While many were taken away from their homes and placed in state care, they reconnected at some point with their families. Most often, they turned to their families of origin for occasional economic support or for temporary shelter but had little emotional connection with them. In some cases, the women were embarrassed to admit their involvement in prostitution to their families. This appears to be particularly so for some Aboriginal women for whom shame has significant cultural implications.

Issues of cultural heritage, specifically Aboriginality, were not explicitly discussed by many of the women interviewed, but it clearly underlies many of the experiences they had as youth and the social identities that resulted. One Saskatchewan woman, for example, recognized that she did not "fit in" with the "White kids" at her school and she attributes her intensifying involvement in prostitution to this sense of alienation: "Like, I look White but I knew I was Indian … I just didn't fit in with the White people. … But I feel like I fit in with the Indians on the street." Conversely, some Euro-Canadian girls became well aware of their racial privilege. One Manitoba woman, for example, recalls the street advantage that her Whiteness ensured: "The tricks that I had sex with, they adored me. Some of them had come back specifically to look for me. I was White in a highly Native population on the street … I was blond. I was White. I was 16. I was … Prime." Whereas the street community gave the Saskatchewan girl a sense of belonging because it allowed her to "fit in" with other Aboriginal people, the parallel community in Manitoba allowed this Euro-Canadian girl to overcome feelings of inadequacy and to feel esteemed by those around her (including pimps, drug users and other prostitutes). However, in both cases – as in most others – using drugs and being part of a drug-using community also influenced the girls' sense of belonging.

The rate of previous and/or current drug use among the women interviewed was very high. Virtually all of the respondents had used alcohol and other drugs while involved in prostitution. For some, being a "drug user" (or "junkie") was very much integral to their identities in that the women said it was who they were, not what they did: "I was just addicted, born addicted. It's who I am." For others, using drugs was a way to cope with the recurring sexual exploitation they faced: "I [took pills while working] so I wouldn't feel nothing. It was awful, like, I needed something." And still others explicitly equated prostitution with drugs: "My drug is my pimp. I work for it, I can't live without it." The definition of drug user, however, appears to have little consistency among respondents; some recalled only becoming a "user" when they began to inject drugs while others identified their first drink or drug as

the genesis of their "user" identity. Regardless of this diversity, it is clear that (ab)using drugs greatly informs how youth on the street see and value themselves.

Pregnancy and motherhood were the most common life occurrences that led the women to question their commitment to the "junkie life." With several notable exceptions, most women indicated that becoming a mother allowed them to embrace an alternative identity and to commit to redressing the addiction and sexual exploitation that marked their lives: "I threw myself into mothering. And I was a good single mother." Those same respondents noted that the agencies and programs that assist with child care and that do not threaten to remove the children from the woman's care are more likely to have a positive impact than are those that deny the importance of motherhood.

Health Issues

Since the mid-1980s, public health officials world-wide have claimed that the health and well-being of youth exploited through systems of prostitution are of paramount concern (Brock, 1998; Brussa, 1998; Farmer, 1999). However, little is known about how these youth actually experience, assess, prioritize and respond to health threatening conditions. Nor is much known about how service providers facilitate health-seeking behaviours among clients affected by prostitution. Throughout this research, reference to health related conditions were repeatedly raised by the experiential women and, to a much lesser extent, the service providers interviewed. Therefore, while we cannot assess the actual health status of girls on the street, we have the information to redress the gap in knowledge about how these girls perceive and attend to health related matters.

HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, addiction, and violent injuries were the specific conditions commonly mentioned by respondents and service providers. However, descriptions of vague ill-health and generalized fatigue were more commonly offered by respondents. This suggests that, in their youth, these women had an understanding of specific medical conditions but were more likely to assess their overall well-being in general rather than particular terms. Indeed, even the references to specific conditions were frequently couched within broader complexes of diseases. Sometimes conditions,

[23] For example, in K.B. and M.J v. Alberta [2000] AJ No. 876 (Prov. Ct.), reversed [2000] AJ No.1570 (Q.B.), one of the apprehended girls had never been involved in prostitution and the other had been out soliciting on the street earlier in the evening when an officer had approached her and suggested that she go home. About an hour later he showed up at their apartment, one girl was sleeping, the other watching tv. According to the Director of Child Welfare, the apartment was a trick pad, the police went there to look for stolen goods. No one alleged that either girl was under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Apprehension in these circumstances suggests that the threshold for serious and imminent danger assessments used by the police is very low.

[24] K.L.W. v. Winnipeg Child and Family Services (2000) SCC 48.

[25] Portions of the PCHIP legislation were struck down in the K.B. case (ibid.) by the Alberta Provincial Judges Court but this decision was overturned by the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench and PCHIP was held to be constitutional. As little evidence was presented at these hearings on the efficacy of the PCHIP and it was subsequently amended, the result could easily be different in another case. In any event, since the decision comes from the lowest superior court jurisdiction, it does not have significant precedent setting effects and even another Queen's Bench judge is free to come to a different conclusion on the constitutionality of the legislation.

such as herpes, were folded into biomedically recognized categories (e.g. "STDs"), but informal compilations of like-diseases were more commonly put together by the respondents: "HIV, Hep C are part of … the other fifty odd things that are out there."

As noted in the relevant literature (Downe, 1997), infectious diseases were often linked with violence (most commonly with rape) and with addiction. One Saskatchewan woman explained, "Definitely like AIDS, STD's, Hepatitis C [go with] sharing needles. It's all part of the life. It's like … I was so careful with condoms and stuff, um, until the first time I was raped." Wrapping these conditions together as "part of life" speaks again to the ways in which the specific health conditions – around which there is often a great deal of narrowly focused health education – are superseded by the girls' continual recourse to more generalized well-being or ill-health and to broader and determinant social context. Correspondingly, there is greater receptivity to those programs or treatment regimes that could address those general feelings of ill-health rather than those that had a specific preventive focus.

While very few health-related practices or practitioners were mentioned by respondents, quite a few service providers indicated the need and support for condom distribution and needle exchange programs. When questioned about these resources, respondents indicated that they were indeed a good idea even if they themselves did not use them:

> "I didn't use clean needles, and most of the time I used a condom, but sometimes I didn't … [The threat of AIDS] was so remote, it didn't phase me … But those services, I think they're good. They're not enabling, but they definitely help out."

However, the provision of basic hygiene was occasionally mentioned as being equally important. One Saskatchewan woman, for example, felt that providing a safe place where prostituted girls could sleep, shower and wash their clothes would give them "some dignity."

Some respondents and service providers indicated that offering food to help counter the malnourishment that accompanies chronic drug and alcohol use should be a priority. However, it was clear that given the women's experiences in secure treatment centres where routines are highly regimented, they came to equate food with coercion and force:

> "They'd make me eat or send me to my room … Because I wasn't used to eating, I was in my room a lot. I just could not bring myself to eat … I was used to eating maybe one meal a day, and a small one at that."

Programs that offered more flexibility in this regard would undoubtedly have greater success in meeting the girls' nutritional needs.

Violence

> "It's just too bad that life involves so much abuse and violence. Everywhere you get it, the police, everywhere. You get bat-

> tered around, even if it's just with words. It gets to you. It gets to your spirit and you start feeling like you don't want to be around anymore." (Saskatchewan)

The women respondents described high rates of violence perpetrated against them, both when they were children and as youth working on the street. As prostitutes, they were victimized by pimps, johns, other prostitutes, intimate partners, representatives from mainstream society and members of the police. A number also reported incidents in which they behaved violently to others and themselves.

As mentioned previously, almost three-quarters of the respondents who commented about abuse as children had been sexually abused, most often by a family member. The perpetrators included parents, stepparents, siblings, and relatives such as uncles, cousins, and grandparents. Sixteen of these children were victimized by numerous offenders. Some respondents had been sexually abused by family friends or neighbour; others reported significant physical abuse by parents. Several reported being either physically or sexually abused by caretakers while living in foster care or group homes. After they began working as prostitutes, the women continued to experience violence so commonplace that it almost seemed almost "normal". A number spoke of being either desensitized to the violence or having to become numb to deal with it. Many had friends or acquaintances who had been murdered while they had been working on the streets.

Almost half of the women had experienced violence or threats of violence from pimps. Many of the women had been forced into prostitution by pimps and were severely beaten if they refused to work. Several respondents described being frightened to leave prostitution because their pimps might retaliate. Other women were afraid to access services because they would be punished if their pimps found out. These pimps were very controlling and constantly watching the women. Only one respondent had never been threatened or assaulted by her pimp.

Women were also abused by johns or dates. Thirty-one of the thirty-three respondents who mentioned bad dates reported experiencing at least one "bad date"; most had numerous incidences of violent acts perpetrated against them. Such acts included being stabbed or cut, raped, gang-raped, raped at gun point, forced to engage in degrading sexual acts, choked/strangled, beaten, kidnapped, stalked, gun held to head, tied up, tortured, beaten with objects (i.e. baseball bat, crowbar), and run over. These violent incidences often resulted in hospitalization or serious injuries such as miscarriages, stitches, paralysis, broken bones, and fractures. The respondents also considered being robbed (i.e. refused to pay after sex or stole respondent's money) or stranded (i.e. taken and left outside and the city) as "bad dates". Only three respondents had never had a "bad date".

Several women commented that they were quite fearful of "bad dates", worrying about not knowing the men they accompanied or whether they would come back alive.

Numerous respondents commented that they needed to be intoxicated or high while prostituting because their fear was so overwhelming. Perhaps surprisingly, an equal number of women preferred to work sober because they needed to stay alert so that they might escape if a dangerous situation arose.

The women described abuse not only from pimps and johns, but also from other women working on the street, including physical assault, being threatened, robbed, and forced "off stroll". Several women acknowledged that their pimps protected them against the violence from other women and their pimps. A large proportion of the women respondents described physical, sexual, verbal, and financial abuse by their intimate partners. A number of these had been forced into working by their boyfriend or partner and/or handing over some or all of their money to them. Although these men exhibited the characteristics of a pimp (i.e. forcing the women to work, taking their earnings), the women rarely referred to them as such.

The research participants commonly reported fearing the police based either on their own negative experiences with police or having listened to others. While working, several women had been abused or harassed by police. They described being beaten up; handled aggressively, and verbally assaulted by police. In addition, two women reported being raped or sexually assaulted by police officers.

The women also experienced violence from the mainstream or "straight" culture when they were working. Some were demeaned by having eggs or pennies thrown at them by passers-by, being called derogatory names, or being groped. In addition to the violence experienced while working, several women experienced harassment by other students when they returned to mainstream schools after they had left the streets.

Seventeen respondents admitted being physically violent towards others. They directed their violence at intimate partners, other women working on the street, johns, group home staff, and police. Many of the women had criminal records for assaults or weapons offences. Some attributed their violence to drug use or because they had become hardened in response to their time on the street. However, although some were violent towards others, they more often directed the violence internally. Numerous respondents reported incidences of self-harm, self-mutilation (i.e. cutting), and suicidal ideation. Seven respondents had attempted suicide; three reported multiple attempts.

In contrast to the women's descriptions of fear and response to the commonplace violence in their lives, the service providers spoke mainly of the childhood abuse that preceded their path to the streets. Although the majority of service providers conceptualized prostitution as a form of sexual abuse and exploitation, only a few providers spoke of the day-to-day violence that the young women experienced from pimps, johns, and others.

Protective Confinement

Most provincial child welfare or Child and Family Services Act(s) (CFSA) and, in British

Columbia the Secure Care Act ("SCA") (which is not yet in force), and the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act ("PCHIP") of Alberta provide for various intervention strategies, including non-consensual holding of minors involved in prostitution. This section of the paper will briefly review the traditional CFSA model, contrast it with newer models adopted in Alberta and British Columbia and then set out the potential Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ("Charter") violations that could arise with protective confinement models. It will conclude with an analysis of whether the Charter violations can be justified as a reasonable limit in a free and democratic society.

The traditional CFSA models vary slightly from province to province, but most permit the apprehension of a "child in need of protection" which is defined as a child whose "life, health or emotional well-being is endangered." The definition would include children involved in prostitution and non-therapeutic drug use. Although both Alberta and British Columbia have traditional CFSAs, they have adopted more specific legislation. PCHIP is solely concerned with children engaging or attempting to engage in prostitution whereas the SCA covers children who severely misuse drugs or who are sexually exploited. Thus girls involved in prostitution across Canada can be apprehended under provincial legislation. Sixty percent of the women interviewed in this study were or had been in the care of child welfare agencies before they became involved in prostitution and therefore were already within the definition of a "child in need of protection."

Emergency apprehensions are permitted under traditional CFSAs where there are "reasonable and probable grounds [to believe that]...a child is in need of protection." In Manitoba, this power is used to apprehend girls involved in prostitution when a very serious problem arises, like a life-threatening drug overdose. All but four of the Manitoba women interviewed had been apprehended after becoming involved in prostitution on an emergency basis because of prostitution or drug-related activities. PCHIP permits apprehensions when there are "reasonable and probable grounds to believe ... the child's life and safety is seriously and imminently endangered because the child has been engaged in prostitution." While the serious and imminent requirement seems to suggest a higher threshold for intervention than the Manitoba CFSA, the police in Alberta have interpreted this section as meaning that the life or safety of any child engaged in prostitution is seriously and imminently endangered.[23] The SCA permits emergency apprehensions only if there is an "immediate risk of serious harm or injury to the child, less intrusive measures are not available ... and detainment is necessary to ensure the child's safety." As SCA is not yet in force, it cannot be said whether it will be interpreted to apply to life threatening situations, like the Manitoba CFSA, or as a general statute permitting apprehension of any child involved in prostitution like PCHIP. The Supreme Court of Canada held the apprehension of children does not violate the right to liberty and security provisions of the Charter, even in non-emergency situations, if there is a serious risk of harm.[24] Thus a statute which establishes a relatively low threshold

for apprehension will probably survive a constitutional challenge.

All three legislative models permit warrantless searches if there is reason to believe a child is on the premises who is in immediate danger but none of the statutes provide for a post-warrant judicial review of the necessity of the search. However, most acts require the agency to make an application to a judge or independent tribunal within a short period (usually less than a week) to justify or "show cause" for the emergency apprehension and to justify continued detention. No "show cause" hearings are required if the initial apprehension is permitted by court order even though these orders are made without notice to the affected child. In the first year that PCHIP was in place, the director did not apply to the court to justify continued detention, rather most children usually apprehended under PCHIP were released after the initial three day (now five day) detention. Many girls were apprehended more than once. Some, but not all, provinces require that mature children be specifically advised of the right to counsel for the post-apprehension hearing and a few even permit the court to appoint counsel. Legislative regimes that fail to provide for post-apprehension reviews of searches and apprehensions or which fail to require that apprehended mature minors be advised of the right to council and be provided with council may violate Charter rights.[25]

Under CFSA models apprehended children usually are to be taken to a "place of safety" although in Manitoba, the legislation specifically provides that they cannot be taken to a "detention centre." Under PCHIP, apprehended children are "confined at a protective safe house" and under the SCA they can be "detained at a secure care facility". Neither PCHIP nor SCA specifically set out the standards for these facilities. However the use of "confined" and "detained" indicates that non-consensual detention in locked facilities is contemplated by the legislation. Locked confinement, especially in the absence of clear legislated standards for the facilities (i.e., how detention is to be enforced against a non-compliant minor) and other safeguards around the apprehension may violate the child's Charter rights to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention.

While the traditional CFSAs vary significantly regarding third party consent to health assessment and treatment of apprehended children, the Manitoba CFSA provides that minors over 16 cannot be subjected to a medical examination or treatment without their consent or court order. Such orders can only be granted if the child "does not understand relevant information or cannot appreciate the consequences of the decision being made." In contrast, PCHIP provides that the "director has exclusive custody of the child and is responsible for the child's care, maintenance and well being while the child is being confined." This provision therefore gives the director the power to consent on the child's behalf to a medical assessment and treatment. The SCA clearly states that the director may "authorize" health examinations, "consent to health care if the health care is directly related to the risk that lead to the detainment" and share this information with others including service providers and parents.

Since the primary areas of health risk identified by service providers for girls involved in prostitution are HIV/AIDS, hepatitis C, drug addiction and violence including sexual violence, the medical assessments would likely include highly intensive procedures like gynecological examinations and blood tests. In the absence of clear standards and external review mechanisms for third party consent to the medical examination and assessment of mature minors, these legislative provisions may violate, amongst other constitutional rights, the liberty and security of the person and the equality guarantees contained in the Charter.

The potential Charter violations described above can be justified (and therefore are not unconstitutional) if the government can establish two things: (1) that it is attempting to address a pressing and substantial problem and, (2) the legislation has a rational connection to the objective it seeks to achieve; it minimally impairs the affected rights; and strikes a balance between the deleterious and salutary effects of the legislation. Four young Albertan women who participated in a focus group for this study were asked what they thought about the secure provisions in PCHIP. They said,

> "The doors are locked." "They are going right out on the street again." "That's going to piss them off." "Or even better you're going to piss the pimps off." "That's true." "They are going to resent people trying to help them." "You're not helping them. … It's not going to solve anything."

Governments could easily establish that exploitation of children through prostitution is a serious and pressing problem. However, this interchange raises some of the reasons why a government may not be able to establish the second set of criteria. The next few paragraphs will focus on some of the problems governments may have in justifying PCHIP statutes.

Apprehensions may not be an effective tool to help get girls out of prostitution, especially since many of the girls apprehended under PCHIP are angry about the apprehension and simply sleep out their time before being released back to the street. Moreover, there is a very serious concern that the possibility of being subjected to secure confinement will drive girls away from accessing voluntary services. Girls are already distrustful of these services. As one respondent stated, "I don't want to go to [a particular service] because they take your picture and give it to the vice squad." Lost contact with voluntary services means lost opportunities to identify and foster other motivations to leave the street such as pregnancy, burnout or violence. Successful programs need to focus on taking advantage of the window of opportunity that opens when these situations arise.

Many of the young women interviewed stated that they preferred to be on the streets rather than hidden in trick pads, massage parlours, and hotels. Why? Because that is where their friends are, they are less isolated, they can learn the ropes from each other; they can look out for each other and they know that street services are keeping their eyes open too. They

can share information about bad dates and, they can find out about available services. One young woman said about PCHIP,

> "You're going to push the prostitutes so far into an isolated area that bad stuff is going to end up happening again … they're going to go out there and the cops won't see them, and then they're going to get screwed up just because of that."

An Alberta service provider echoed this problem stating,

> "The girls I have talked/ worked with since PCHIP has been in place, all of them talk about being driven underground, they are doing more work than ever before." As well, she said, "I've had a couple of girls who were picked up and taken to safe houses, and those girls got absolutely terrible beatings when they were back on the street because they had been out of circulation, hadn't been making the money they need to make … "

Thus according to some interviewees it seems that an effect of PCHIP may be that it pushes young women underground and back to abusive pimps, isolates them and makes it harder for them to escape from sexual exploitation. Given the serious, albeit unintended, consequences secure confinement regimes may have, this outline shows that .a good case could be made that the constitutional violations in the legislation cannot be justified. However, more research is required on these issues.

Program and Policy

We reviewed programs across the country using two different interview strategies (a) detailed, in-person interviews with service providers; (b) telephone interviews with agency staff to obtain program descriptions in specific communities. The in-person interviews collected program information and provided a forum to discuss key policy and funding issues from a service provider's perspective. The majority of the detailed interviews were conducted in the three prairie provinces to complement our interviews with individuals who had been involved in prostitution as minors. There were 8 interviews in Manitoba, 11 in Saskatchewan and 24 in Alberta. In addition, we undertook site visits in 3 other provinces resulting in 3 interviews in Toronto, 4 in Vancouver and 4 in Quebec. In total we drew on the experience and wisdom of 54 service providers working in 10 cities across the country. The telephone interviews were done in the 10 provinces and 27 cities. Working from east to west, we conducted 18 interviews in the Atlantic provinces, 17 in Quebec, 69 in Ontario, 8 in Manitoba, 11 in Saskatchewan, 24 in Alberta and 26 in British Columbia, for a total of 170 agencies canvassed. A very small percentage of the agencies canvassed were specialized in service delivery for children/youth exploited through prostitution. Most of the experiential youth received assistance from generic street youth programs or from programs for prostitutes not specific to youth. As a result although we identified a

large number of agencies that have provided services to experiential youth, very few were specialized in such programming.

Based on the 54 in depth interviews and the 170 program descriptions a number of patterns emerge. To begin from an administrative perspective there appear to be three major sources of program delivery to children exploited by prostitution:

1. Mandated child welfare agencies, for example Child and Family Services or Children's Aid Societies who are mandated under their provincial child welfare legislation to provide child protection services;

2. Recent special legislative initiatives, like the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution Act (PCHIP) in Alberta which has been tied to program and funding initiatives;

3. A variety of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which provide a range of services from generic street youth programs to prostitution and gender specific programs.

These administrative distinctions, however, are loaded with program and policy decisions and implications which shape the terrain of service delivery across the country and have a profound impact on the children and youth in need of service. The order in which we have presented the service delivery (1-3 above) reflect policy and funding patterns of great significance. The first two types of programs, child welfare and PCHIP programs have the most secure funding because they are built into the base line budget of provincial family services departments. The third category of programs, the NGOs have the most precarious source of funding with most agencies dependent on short term, often pilot project, funding and fund raising initiatives. Clearly provincial gov-

ernments take greater 'ownership' of programs with a legislative foundation and provide more secure funding to permit the agencies to fulfil their mandate.

At the administrative level the distinction between mandated and non-mandated services is very clear, however, at the program level these distinctions often become blurred. For example, in Alberta, funding through PCHIP is directed to a number of NGOs that provide a range of voluntary services. In other provinces, child welfare agencies may support or fund NGOs providing specific services for children exploited through prostitution. Despite the fact that the boundaries between mandated and non-mandated services may be blurred at the program delivery level, the funding priorities are clearly distinct.

The policy implications of this funding 'divide' are significant. The programs with a legislative foundation, (child welfare and PCHIP) are also tied to an 'apprehension' or protective confinement function regardless of the wishes of the child/youth. From numerous studies and our own interviews we know that the majority of children on the street have been involved with the child welfare system. Many of these youths report bad experiences with child welfare. From a policy perspective there is a conundrum. The category of children most in need of services are often children suspicious of 'controlling' agencies, those agencies that are most securely funded to provide the services. Thus the evolution of securely funded programs with a mandate to protect child sexual abuse victims may have the unintended effect of frightening these children/youth away because of their fear or aversion to the 'control' components of these services.

When we consider Non Governmental Organizations, they have greater degrees of freedom in the provision of services, however, for the most part the cost of that freedom is insecure funding. NGOs that are not tied to a legislative mandate encompass a wide range of services and diverse service philosophies. It appears that insecure funding is their only common denominator.

Among the NGO service agencies there are two major categories. The first category are generic services designed for street youth in general and the second category are programs designed specifically for children and youth exploited through prostitution. Across the country there are many more generic agencies than specialist agencies, which appears to be a more recent development. One strength of the generic approach lies in the ability of youth to access the services without the 'stigma' of prostitution attached to the program. A second strength is the range of issues street youth programs are designed to deal with. The services speak to the broad range of needs from the basics of food, showers, housing, to employment, health and education concerns. Their greatest limitation is that few specifically address issues of sexual exploitation or previous abuse at home and few of the street youth projects have gender specific programs. Given that studies indicate that girls are the most frequent victims of exploitation through prostitution, the lack of gender specific programming

is of serious concern.

The specialist programs for children/youth exploited through prostitution tend to be gender specific. In addition to addressing basic needs they focus on the specific needs and concerns of children involved in prostitution, including a therapeutic component. These specialized programs are divided among the legislatively based services, such as PCHIP and child welfare and the non-legislatively based programs. As a result they reflect a diversity of service philosophies. Considering both the generic services and the specialist services (including legislatively based and non-mandated programs) we can identify a continuum of service philosophy and delivery ranging from protective confinement to harms reduction to advocacy. Within this range there are also many subtleties of interpretation, some agencies provide services from a variety of approaches with considerable flexibility in gearing their services to the specific need of the client. Many agencies, with a very clear service philosophy will co-operate with other agencies utilizing a different service philosophy when it is in the best interests of the client. Despite the variety and overlap, it is helpful to distinguish the continuum of service philosophy that speaks to the differing levels of control a child/youth might encounter in using the service. The three different approaches were reflected in the interviews with service providers.

From the protective confinement perspective, the emphasis is upon the imminent danger to the child and the approach is informed by an urgency to remove children from danger, (off the street and out of prostitution). This sense of urgency and emphasis on protection results in decisions being made 'for the child rather than by the child'. This perspective is congruent with traditional child welfare models of "protection" and with the concern for protection articulated in the Alberta legislation.

> "These are victims of child abuse and sexual predators. … It's a violent, drug addicted, poverty ridden choice where prostitutes are both victims and offenders. … Yeah, we have to protect people. And no, I don't believe a 14 or 16 year old has the mind to say 'I want to go out there and have sex … for money'. There is an onus on police and governments to protect these people until they are able to make choices. Are we punishing kids for locking them up or are they being punished on the street? It's a tough choice!" (Manitoba)

The harm reduction approach attempts to balance a view of the children as victims and survivors. They undertake a complex balance of recognizing the dangers and respecting the child/youths autonomy, resisting 'for the child' decisions and facilitating 'decisions by the child'. Their emphasis is upon reducing the harms associated with prostitution without necessarily taking steps to stop the child/youth's involvement immediately. Services often include provision of condoms, needle exchanges, bleach kits, street-wise workshops and "bad date" sheets. In our review of pro-

grams we did encounter a number of agencies that defined their role as harm reduction, however, they took a strong stand on refusing services they deemed enabling, for example needle exchanges, condoms and "bad date" sheets.

> "… my experience is, you can't make a kid do what they don't want to do, but certainly if you give people opportunities then they can make better choices and quite often (they) do. … With a 16 or 17 year old (if) you say you are prostituting and you can't do that and I won't allow you to do that … it can be a shaming message … that is not a helpful message for kids that are being exploited out there. It is really important to provide them with opportunities for safety, for a roof over their head, for food, for those kind of things and to reel them in, rather than think we can just snatch them and lock them up or tell them what to do" (Manitoba)

At the other end of the continuum is the "advocacy" approach. This perspective is critical of programs designed to get clients out of prostitution. They advocate for street workers rights. They are strong opponents of mandated services and strong advocates of decriminalization. They provide a range of harm reduction services and, actively educate community and professionals about the realities and complexities of street prostitution. Their emphasis is on the agency and rights of their client, not protection when protection is imposed.

> "I find programs that target people to get out of the field offensive. Most programs don't try to help prostitutes, they are services for people or (the) public at large who don't want to have this dirty problem of prostitution. How much of this is a political response to a morality issue of the right and does not reflect the needs of children? There is a mentality the people have to "Save the Children!" Our mission statement is to enable people and provide support and legitimize the work and decriminalize it. We want to assist sex workers in their effort to live and work safely and with dignity. Sex for money is not an inherently dis-empowering situation to be in." (Ontario)

Our interviews encompassed service providers at all points on the continuum. We were impressed with the compassion and commitment of people who work in this field regardless of where they fit on the continuum. They have articulated the extraordinary challenge of their work and children's struggle to survive on the street. The risks are the highest they could ever be in the social services. Therefore we must ask the hard questions. If we are driven by the urgency of protection do we run the risk of losing the most wounded children on the street? Will they be afraid to seek help because of their fear of apprehension? Conversely, if we are driven by "rights principles" do we run the risk of failing to intervene when young lives are at stake? The appalling statistics on homicides among youth exploited through prostitution is a reality we cannot ignore. It is a terrible indictment on our society.

Our interviews with the women who had been involved in prostitution as children revealed that very few such "experiential" youth actually used programs. When asked about this there were two frequent responses. The first: their previous negative experiences with child welfare agencies left them angry and suspicious of any "helping" agency. The second, was their lack of knowledge about services, in large part because of a real lack of services. For those who did use services their views echoed the views of service providers. Voluntary services were the ones most likely to be approached.

The majority of women who had been apprehended under child welfare legislation were very supportive of voluntary services and suspicious of mandated services. For those who had never been apprehended there was greater acceptance of a range of services, including involuntary confinement. "[It] will keep them safe physically, mentally and maybe the girls will wake up and say, hey, these guys are trying to help" (Alberta). Despite this general divide there were some women who had been apprehended who were supportive of a protective confinement approach.

A number of participants spoke in favour of programs run by women for women and the overwhelming majority supported programs with staff who had previous experience on the street. "Having one on one with someone who's been there. … And let them talk with each other because they'll understand more than from someone who reads a book" (Manitoba).

Policy Issues

The fundamental challenge for policy makers is to determine how to strike the right balance between respecting the rights and autonomy of the children/youth exploited through prostitution and how to provide safety and alternatives. Our research has suggested several critical questions to ask our policy makers. First, it is disturbing to find that the most secure funding tends to be limited to programs with an apprehension or secure confinement mandate. In contrast, the one unified message we received from survivors and service providers alike is that one model does not serve all! Policy makers need to insure that program variety exists and this can best be achieved now by providing more secure funding to the NGOs that provide a range of voluntary services along the 'harms reduction' and 'advocacy' continuum. These are the programs that children/youth find most accessible and most acceptable. Yet they are the most insecurely funded.

Secondly, a dominant theme in our survivor's stories was the issue of violence. Canadian service providers have developed an impressive expertise in developing programs for battered women through shelter, second stage housing and counselling services. They have also learned to respond to the challenge of women choosing to go back to their abusive partners. These patterns are very similar to the process of children and youth moving in and out of prostitution as they search for solutions for themselves. It raises the question of why services to women and children involved in prostitution cannot be understood

as similar to services for battered women. The programs would need to be specialized but the goal is the same, the prevention of violence and abuse against women and children. The culture of services for battered women has much to teach us about respecting the rights and autonomy of survivors while promoting protection and safety. The history of services for battered women has also taught us how critical secure funding is to support the (often) lengthy process of disengaging from abusive relationships. Finally, both programs could benefit from an exchange of ideas and program models between shelter workers and street workers.

Third, what role can the federal government play in addressing these complex issues given the jurisdictional divide between federal and provincial responsibility for social services? There are a number of areas which lend themselves to an active role for federal departments:

1. The federal government can play a more directive role in promoting secure funding for NGO's by utilizing their 3 year pilot project funds to lever a greater commitment on the part of provincial governments to maintenance of services demonstrated to be effective.

2. The federal government can fund the very studies required to demonstrate the effectiveness of these programs.

3. The federal government can sponsor national and regional workshops and conferences to assist service providers to share and develop best practices in the field.

4. The federal government can allocate a percentage of their "housing for the homeless" funds specifically to street youth and children and youth at risk of involvement in prostitution. Shelter services and safe homes are desperately needed in many communities. The previous program for battered women "Safe Haven" could be an operational model for a street youth initiative.

5. The federal government can allocate enriched funding for employment readiness and employment training courses for children and youth exploited through prostitution.

The problem is complex and the challenge is great. However, the first step towards solutions is creating the political will to take action. We hope that this study will contribute to that process and provide some suggestions of where to begin.

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Program Developers and Program Consumers:
Some Important Features of the Diffusion of School-based Violence Prevention Programs

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Introduction and Theoretical Perspective

Violence is a topic of growing concern and no one doubts the importance of acting to prevent violence against children. Health and social services, schools and daycares, all play important roles in the effort to achieve social justice by reducing violence against children in general and girls in particular. Our goal is to extend the efforts aimed at preventing violence against girls by identifying factors that help or hinder the dissemination of violence-prevention programs. This study focuses on strategies for disseminating programs supported by empirical data to service providers and for fostering the widespread adoption of these programs.

Once evaluated and proved to reach their expected goals, intervention and prevention programs start a new life. Numerous researchers have observed, however, that these empirically supported programs are not necessarily adopted by service providers. There are a number of obstacles to their adoption, chief among them : required certification, cost, program quality, and accessibility (Webster-Stratton & Taylor, 1998). Unfortunately, most of the time, dissemination methods fail to maximize the impact of the programs (Elias, 1997). Innovation-diffusion models have been largely developed with regard to health-promotion programs and far less with regard to school-based violence-prevention programs. Moreover, studies have mainly documented factors that contribute positively or negatively to the diffusion of innovations from the perspective of either program developers or program users.

We have identified four models that describe the dissemination process: the diffusion model (Rogers, 1983, 1995), the social system perspective (Scheirer, 1981), the social marketing model (Martin, Herie, Turner, & Cunningham, 1998), and the linkage model (Orlandi, Landers, Weston, & Haley,1990). All of the models are concerned with the communication of an innovation through certain channels among the members of a social system over time. Each of them will be briefly presented to facilitate understanding of the integrated conceptual model that we propose.

Rogers's model (1983, 1995) describes a five-stage process from the perspective of those who adopt and implement a program. According to this model, potential users move through five stages in their decision to adopt an innovation or not. They become aware of an innovation and develop knowledge of it (Stage 1, Knowledge). They gather more information and develop a personal opinion of the program (Stage 2, Persuasion). They eventually make a decision to adopt the program or not (Stage 3, Adoption) and take action to implement it (Stage 4, Implementation). Then their post-hoc analysis either confirms their previous decision to adopt the program, so they institutionalize it, or leads to its final rejection (Stage 5, Confirmation). Potential adopters of an innovation make a decision on the basis of their perception of (1) the relative advantages

of the innovation over existing programs, (2) its compatibility with the existing values, experiences and expressed needs of the organization, (3) the complexity of implementation, (4) its trialability, i.e., the possibility of testing the innovation on a limited basis, and (5) its observability, i.e., the degree to which the results of the innovation are visible to others.

The social system perspective (Scheirer, 1981) also describes a five-step process from the adopters' perspective, but emphasizes the organizational changes that result from the implementation of an innovation and the capacity of the organization to withstand these changes. Once individuals in an organization have reached the decision to adopt a program (Stage 1, Adoption), they put together the necessary time, and the financial and human resources accordingly (Stage 2, Assembling Resources). During the implementation of the innovation, they introduce changes in roles and functions that are required by the innovation (Stage 3, Role Changes). Implementing an innovation requires continuous adjustment among those directly involved with the innovation and regular feedback and monitoring through problem-solving processes (Stage 4, Problem Solving). Successful implementation may lead to the institutionalization of the innovation (Stage 5, Institutionalization). This perspective emphasizes the role of the organizational context (macrofactors, intermediate factors and microfactors) as a major determinant in the decision to adopt an innovation. The complexity of the organization, the structure of the decision-making processes (decentralized or centralized), the characteristics of the control processes in the organization, and the available human and economic resources are among the most important macrofactors. Contextual factors that have an impact on the daily activities of the organization, such as the expectations of supervisors, the standards of practice, and the technical training of employees, are important intermediate factors. Finally, microfactors include the individual characteristics of adopters, their job satisfaction, and the coherence between their beliefs and attitudes and the goals of the innovation.

The social marketing model (Martin et al., 1998) takes the perspective of promoters who want to disseminate the program and implement it in different contexts. It is a consumer-oriented perspective. Promoters assess market opportunities and the needs of target groups (Stage 1, Assessment of Market Opportunities) by consulting with social agents involved with similar problems to identify more precisely the needs of potential adopters of the innovation. They identify the target groups most likely to be receptive to their innovation (Stage 2, Target System Identification) and adapt strategies to engage the target groups in deciding to adopt their innovation (Stage 3, Target System Engagement). Before diffusing their innovation widely, promoters work with people in the organization to field test the program, offering support and monitoring throughout the implementation process (Stage 4, Dissemination Trials). Successful trials pave the way to dissemination to the target group (Stage 5, Target System Support). Promoters also offer Training (Stage 6), Feedback, and Consulting services to support the organization, not only in imple-

menting the innovation, but also in assessing its success, thus creating opportunities for the organization to determine whether it is worthwhile to institutionalize the innovation (Stage 7, Implementation Support and Monitoring; Stage 8, System Feedback and Consultation).

The first three models describe innovation diffusion as a process that involves either the program developers or the potential adopters of an innovation. The linkage model (Orlandi et al., 1990) brings a third element into the process: the close collaboration between program developers and adopters. According to this model, the development of an innovation and its implementation should not be viewed as the result of actions undertaken by either promoters or adopters. The model emphasizes the importance of creating a true linkage system between individuals from the two groups. The model predicts that the decision to accept and implement an innovation depends in part on the quality of the collaborative work done by developers and adopters and on the presence of change agents or program advocates to facilitate this collaboration.

Over the last 20 years, the study of the diffusion of innovations has been expanding, but most research has been conducted with regard to health-promotion programs. Very little research has been concerned with the dissemination of violence prevention programs, and even fewer with the dissemination of programs in the schools. Our review of empirical findings is therefore mainly based on school health programs for children and adolescents, of which there are a limited number. Although the studies reviewed have identified factors potentially contributing to the dissemination of programs, the generalizability of the results of most studies is limited because of the limited scope of the variables considered, small sample size, absence of appropriate controls, nature of the instruments or research design.

The conceptual model that we developed for this study (see Figure 1, in appendix) combines all four theoretical models. It presents

program dissemination as involving many players. On the one hand are those who develop, support and promote a program. In some cases, the same people play all three roles. On the other

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context	■				■	
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation	■					
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.	■					
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives	■					
Visibility and popularity				■		
Related to originator						
Reputation				■		
Functioning	■	■		■	■	
Characteristics of individuals	■					
Concern with problem	■			■		
Concern with dissemination	■			■		
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]	■	■				
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material		■				
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption		■		■		
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]				■		
Support of groups of individuals for program	■	■		■	■	
Interactions among originators				■		
Interactions between originators and support groups					■	

hand are those who decide whether or not to adopt the program. The successful dissemination of a program depends on how these two groups of individuals interact and on the quality of the linkage system that is created. Several parallel stages define the dissemination process from the dual perspective of program developers, disseminators and promoters on one side and of adopters on the other. Many factors throughout the process can help or hinder the diffusion of an innovation. Based on these theoretical models and available data, we have identified factors potentially contributing to the dissemination of the programs in the schools, namely the characteristics of the program (i.e., scientific quality, length, cost, complexity), the way the information is conveyed (i.e., information strategy, content, messenger), the support offered to the organization, the characteristics of the individuals and of the organization contemplating the possibility of adopting and

26 Examples: Basing it on an existing program and going for training; setting up a decision-making committee; seeking funding.

27 Examples: Seeking funding; forming a visibility committee; setting up a structure to foster communication among trainers; designating a training co-ordinator; taking part in roundtables; computerizing monitoring of promotion to schools.

implementing a program (i.e., attitudes, type of decision-making process), and the characteristics of the sociopolitical environment.

	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context	■				■	
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation	■					
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.	■					
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives	■					
Visibility and popularity				■		
Related to originator						
Reputation				■		
Functioning	■	■		■	■	
Characteristics of individuals	■					
Concern with problem	■			■		
Concern with dissemination	■			■		
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]	■	■				
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material		■				
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption		■		■		
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]				■		
Support of groups of individuals for program	■	■		■	■	
Interactions among originators				■		
Interactions between originators and support groups					■	

chools that adopted the program

he schools that adopted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visibility an opularity of the program, aided the implementation process, whereas its costs, of minor importance at the time of decision making, emed to work against its institutionalization. The attitudes of individuals towards prevention and their degree of involvement are also nportant factors. A decentralized decision-making process and the support of the administration seemed to favour adoption. rrangements were always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators, as well as the ıality of the support during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

28 The numbers (1 to 4) in Tables 2,4,6,8,9, and 10 indicate the number of programs for which respondents identified each factor as having a positive (+), negative (-), or neutral (no) contribution to the dissemination process of school-based violence prevention programs.

29 Example: Contacting originator.

30 Examples: Seeking funding; finding a way to inform parents so they will want children to take part; putting two classes together.

Goal and Method

The goal of this study is to document, from the dual perspective of the program developers, disseminators and promoters (collectively the originators), and adopters or non-adopters of a program, the factors contributing to the dissemination of four violence-prevention programs for children and adolescents in schools and the processes involved in the dissemination of these programs.

Because of the complexity of the phenomenon under study, we decided that case studies would be our chief research strategy (Yin, 1984, 1993). This method is especially well suited to situations where researchers have little or no control over events. Case studies are used here (for explanatory purposes) in order to establish associations between complex events and dissemination patterns that are difficult to separate from their contexts. To do so, we had to concentrate on the conditions and circumstances of dissemination and conduct an analysis sensitive to the process and contexts. Our research looks at four programs in an effort to describe the dissemination model. From this point of view, it is meant to identify the conditions that help or hinder the program dissemination process and aid in understanding how these factors affect its implementation and success. The four cases are analyzed separately (intracase analysis) in relation to the conceptual model being investigated, with an intercase analysis following. The two analyses will be discussed in greater depth in a later report.

Criteria were established for selecting the programs to be studied: (1) their direct or indirect objective is the prevention of violence; (2) evaluative studies of their effectiveness have been conducted; (3) they are gender specific; and (4) their degree of dissemination is variable. The third criteria could not be followed because only one of our programs is gender specific.

We conducted semistructured interviews with 28 participants in the dissemination of these programs: with 4 program developers, 8 promoters and disseminators, 12 adopters and 4 non-adopters of the programs in different schools in Montreal and Quebec City.

Interview checklists were adapted to the different categories of interviewees (e.g., program developers vs. promoters, or schools that adopted programs vs. schools that did not) and to the different programs, as each program had its own particular characteristics. The interviews with program developers, disseminators or promoters lasted between an hour and two and a half hours, about an hour for schools that had adopted programs and about 10 to 20 minutes for those that had not.

The collected information was subjected to a qualitative analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Huberman & Miles, 1991). All the interviews were transcribed and then coded according to a mixed model (L'Écuyer, 1990) using predetermined categories based on the conceptual model or inferred from the data. Each interview was first analyzed individually. Then an intracase analysis was done: the interviews on each program were analyzed comparatively in order to find points

of agreement and disagreement between the various players involved in dissemination of the program.

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
Visibility and popularity						
Related to originator						
Reputation						
Functioning						
Characteristics of individuals						
Concern with problem						
Concern with dissemination						
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]						
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material						
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption						
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]						
Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						
Interactions between originators and support groups						

ɛd the program

ɔpted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits ɔgram, aided the implementation process, whereas its costs, of minor importance at the time of dec inst its institutionalization. The attitudes of individuals towards prevention and their degree of invo decentralized decision-making process and the support of the administration seemed to favour ac always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators rt during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

31 Example: Annual reports on activities.

32 Examples: Putting out promotional material describing the program; getting training in seeking funding; aiming to open other service points.

Description of Programs Studied

As mentioned earlier, the four programs studied – Espace, Les Scientifines, Vers le Pacifique and Viraj – all had the prevention of violence as their direct or indirect goal. None of the direct violence-prevention programs is gender specific. Les Scientifines, although it does not directly aim to prevent violence, is the only one for girls only. The four programs were disseminated to different degrees. All have been studied for effectiveness (Chamberland, Théoret, Garon, & Roy, 1995; Hébert, Lavoie, Piche, & Poitras (1999a); Hebert, Piche, Poitras, Parent, & Goulet (1999b); Lavoie, Dufort, Hébert, & Vézina, 1997; Rondeau, Bowen, & Bélanger, 1999).

The goal of Espace, which is based on an American program called CAP, is to prevent physical, sexual and psychological abuse of children. It has a feminist and structural analysis that considers children to be particularly vulnerable to abuse because of their lack of knowledge, their dependence on adults and their potential social isolation. This program, designed for preschool and elementary school-age children, aims to make them less vulnerable by teaching them to identify abuse, defend themselves verbally and physically, and report abuse and attempted abuse. Only people from an Espace organization can run the program, which consists in three 20-minute sessions for preschoolers and one 90-minute workshop for elementary school children. Three facilitators take turns running the sessions, which are held in class time. The means used are role playing, discussions and teaching self-defence techniques. For elementary school children, a follow-up meeting with the facilitators is planned for children who want it. The program has two other components – one for parents and one for school staff – to sensitize them to the problem of child abuse, teach them to recognize the signs and help them in their intervention. The first year a school runs Espace, all three components must be given and all children of all ages must take part. In subsequent years, the school is not obliged to give the program to all grades, but it is advisable to keep offering the program to parents and new teachers. After all the activities, the facilitators prepare a report and deliver it to the principal. Schools pay for the workshops, but there may be subsidies available so that some workshops are free. The facilitator's guide is not available and schools without an Espace organization in their area cannot run the program.

Les Scientifines indirectly prevents violence by empowering underprivileged girls. The objective of the program is to develop some of the skills that girls have not learned because of the way they have been socialized and to get them interested in studying physical sciences. Les Scientifines is based on a feminist analysis of women's personal, social and economic oppression and on a behavioural notion of behaviour modification. The program takes the form of girls-only scientific recreational activities, in which the girls apply and develop their curiosity, perseverance, judgement, and problem-solving skills. These free after-school activities are offered to 9-to-12-year-old girls, in a place near their school. They are run Monday to Thursday for two-hour periods. In the summer, eight weeks of activities are offered Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Vers le Pacifique aims to prevent violence among young people by training elementary

and high-school students in peaceful conflict-solution techniques and getting them to use mediation as a way of solving their interpersonal conflicts. This program is based on the premise that the

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context	■				■	
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation	■					
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.	■					
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives	■					
Visibility and popularity				■		
Related to originator						
Reputation				■		
Functioning	■	■		■	■	
Characteristics of individuals	■					
Concern with problem	■			■		
Concern with dissemination	■			■		
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]	■	■				
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material		■				
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption		■		■		
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]				■		
Support of groups of individuals for program	■	■		■	■	
Interactions among originators				■		
Interactions between originators and support groups					■	

hat adopted the program

ls that adopted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visil of the program, aided the implementation process, whereas its costs, of minor importance at the time of decision mak work against its institutionalization. The attitudes of individuals towards prevention and their degree of involvement a factors. A decentralized decision-making process and the support of the administration seemed to favour adoption. ents were always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators, as well a the support during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

33 Examples: Contacting the originator for information; providing workshop facilitators with an office at school; taking students to visit Les Scientifines premises; replacing girls' directed studies with Les Scientifines program by allocating a part of their budget.

34 Definition: Person from school promoting the program and encouraging implementation.

35 Examples: Monitoring activities, supervising attendance and helping with continuing participation; creating a link between classroom activities and Les Scientifines activities; not scheduling other activities at the same time as Les Scientifines; replacing directed studies with Les Scientifines and allocating a part of their budget; taking students to visit Les Scientifines premises; asking teachers to attend Les Scientifines activities.

development of cognitive and social skills allows and fosters the use of prosocial behaviours. Vers
le Pacifique has two components: conflict resolution and peer mediation. The first component is

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
Visibility and popularity						
Related to originator						
Reputation						
Functioning						
Characteristics of individuals						
Concern with problem						
Concern with dissemination						
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]						
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material						
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption						
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]						
Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						
Interactions between originators and support groups						

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re always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators, as v
ɔort during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

compulsory and is a prerequisite to the second, which is optional. The conflict-resolution compo-
nent consists of classroom workshops given over several weeks and it promotes the acquisition

36 Examples: Seeking funding; testing and improving the program in schools; setting up a decision-making committee; basing the program on American theories.

37 Examples: Seeking funding; producing a manual so that the program can be run independently; forming an association with a publisher/distributor; disseminating the program in other regions.

of understanding, communication, judgement and negotiation skills in case of conflict. The peer-mediation component sets up a team of peer mediators who help resolve conflicts at the request of fellow students. Training for mediators takes about nine hours spread over a week or two. Vers le Pacifique is a program given by school staff, who have received prior training at the school's expense from the organization that promotes the program (Centre international de résolution de conflits et de médiation) or from the program guide (available to buy). The first step is to set up a coordinating committee made up of administration representatives, parents, and teachers, for example, to supervise activities and train mediators. The school is also profiled to facilitate implementation of the program and to be able to measure its impact. The program developers suggest that schools officially launch the program and periodically take stock of how activities are progressing and how people are reacting.

Viraj aims to prevent violence in dating relationships and is intended for Grade 9 and 10 students. It is grounded in a feminist analysis of violence and attributes the causes of violence in dating relationships to sexism, different socialization of girls and boys, and social tolerance of violence. Viraj consists in two classroom workshops of 60 to 75 minutes run by two facilitators, preferably a man and a woman. The aim of the workshops, involving essentially role -playing and discussions, is to heighten awareness of violence in young couples and promote non-violent attitudes and behaviour. Optional activities have also been developed. Two other independent components of the program are designed for teachers and hot-line volunteers to help them in their work. The program can be delivered by school staff, in which case, the school must apply to the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec for free staff training, or by outside consultants. In that case, people from community organizations usually go into the schools to run the program, but the schools must pay for the service. In both situations, it is advisable that someone from the school be designated to plan and supervise activities. The facilitator's guide is available free of charge from the Ministère de l'Éducation to any school that requests it.

Results: Factors Influencing Program Dissemination

The goal of our research was to document the factors identified by our respondents as having had an influence on the dissemination of the programs. The factors were mentioned in semi-structured interviews, either spontaneously or in answer to specific questions. We distinguished between the point of view of the originators (program developers, promoters and disseminators) and that of the schools. The originators described for us the process of development and dissemination of programs, and identified factors that had influence on it. From the schools' point of view, the dissemination process is divided into three stages: coming to know the program (knowledge), making a decision, implementation and institutionalization. The following tables show, for each of the four programs, the factors identified by our respondents as having worked for (+), worked

against (-) or not having influenced (no) the various stages of dissemination. The interviews with the school respondents were more structured, so we have indicated how many people mentioned

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
Visibility and popularity						
Related to originator						
Reputation						
Functioning						
Characteristics of individuals						
Concern with problem						
Concern with dissemination						
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]						
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material						
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption						
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]						
Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						
Interactions between originators and support groups						

Schools that adopted the program

The schools that adopted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visibility and popularity of the program, aided the implementation process, whereas its costs, of minor importance at the time of decision making, seemed to work against its institutionalization. The attitudes of individuals towards prevention and their degree of involvement are also important factors. A decentralized decision-making process and the support of the administration seemed to favour adoption. Arrangements were always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators, as well as the quality of the support during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

each factor, which we were unable to do for the originators because interviews varied accordingly to the role of the respondent. In this latter case, we simply mentioned the factors identified at

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context	■				■	
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation	■					
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.	■					
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives	■					
Visibility and popularity				■		
Related to originator						
Reputation				■		
Functioning	■	■		■	■	
Characteristics of individuals	■					
Concern with problem	■			■		
Concern with dissemination	■			■		
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]	■	■				
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material		■				
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption		■		■		
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]				■		
Support of groups of individuals for program	■	■		■	■	
Interactions among originators				■		
Interactions between originators and support groups					■	

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38 Examples: Contacting the originator for information; going for training; setting up a committee against violence; getting information from a school that has already used program.

39 Definition: Person from school promoting the program and encouraging implementation.

40 Examples: Incorporating the program into educational plan; hiring a resource person from the originator; setting up a committee dedicated to the program; taking stock of the teachers and students' experience; informing parents at a general meeting, through a newsletter and at a stand set up at parent-teacher meetings; offering training workshops to parents; doing study to assess the program's impact; organizing schoolwork (essays, drawings, homework) on program's themes; running a student competition for a program logo; launching program officially.

41 Examples: Basing it on existing programs; seeking funding; choosing the right partners.

42 Examples: Providing training to workshop facilitators from outside school; promoting the program in formal discussions of the problem; finding a partner to give training in another city.

43 Definition: Person from school promoting the program and encouraging implementation.

least once.

Espace

Originators (developers, promoters, disseminators)

The Espace program is based on an American program called CAP, the content of which was modified and adapted to meet Quebec reality and needs. The originators (see Table 1) therefore mentioned a number of positive factors in the development phase, especially the characteristics of the program and the internal functioning of the originator, that is, the setting up of Espace organizations in various regions throughout the province, all of them members of an umbrella group known as the ROEQ (Regroupement des Organismes Espace du Québec), and the total control of the program by the ROEQ. The negative factors in this phase mainly concern the means used to publicize and promote adoption of the program, which, in the view of the originators, had to do with their uncertain financial situation at the beginning. In the dissemination phase, the factors related to the originator were once again mainly reported as being positive, in addition to the fact that the program, which got its start in the 1980s, has become more popular and the organizations enjoy a good reputation. The importance of support groups is worth pointing out, as they were mentioned as both positive and negative factors in both stages.

Table-1 : Factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Espace from the perspective of program developers, promoters and disseminators

Schools that adopted the program

The schools that adopted the Espace program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visibility and popularity of the program, aided the implementation process, whereas its costs, of minor importance at the time of decision making, seemed to work against its institutionalization. The attitudes of individuals towards prevention and their degree of involvement are also important factors. A decentralized decision-making process and the support of the administration seemed to favour adoption. Arrangements were always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators, as well as the quality of the support during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

Table-2 : Factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Espace from the perspective of adopters (3-respondents)[28]

Schools that did not adopt the program

We talked to three persons from different schools that decided not to adopt the Espace program after finding out about it. Their refusal to adopt the program appeared to be related to the context (e.g., teachers boycotting extracurricular activities), the cost of the program, the attitudes of individuals toward the problem and the fact that the schools were already offering other similar activities.

Les Scientifines

Originators (developers, promoters, disseminators)

One of the main characteristics of Les Scientifines is that it is both a promotion program and a resource, and this has a great influence on its dissemination, which is much more limited than that of the other programs. None of the factors listed in the table (see Table 3) was mentioned as playing a role during program development, whether positive or negative, because the originators mainly described the program's development process. On the other hand, several positive elements can be seen in the dissemination phase, almost as many concerning the characteristics of the program as of the originator (including personal qualities and actions taken). Les Scientifines is the only gender-specific program analyzed, and this factor worked both for and against it. As the program is not widespread, the negative factors related to this phase, although few, are still significant. According to the originators, the main obstacles have to do with contextual considerations

	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context	■				■	
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation	■					
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.	■					
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives	■					
Visibility and popularity				■		
Related to originator						
Reputation				■		
Functioning	■	■		■	■	
Characteristics of individuals	■					
Concern with problem	■			■		
Concern with dissemination	■			■		
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]	■	■				
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material		■				
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption		■		■		
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]				■		
Support of groups of individuals for program	■	■		■	■	
Interactions among originators				■		
Interactions between originators and support groups					■	

hat adopted the program

ols that adopted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visit
of the program, aided the implementation process, whereas its costs, of minor importance at the time of decision mak
work against its institutionalization. The attitudes of individuals towards prevention and their degree of involvement a
factors. A decentralized decision-making process and the support of the administration seemed to favour adoption.
ents were always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators, as well as
the support during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

44 Examples: Contacting the originator for information; seeking funding.
45 Definition: Person from school promoting the program and encouraging implementation.
46 Examples: Testing the program with one group; presenting the program to the school each year; assigning tasks to someone at school; organizing a week on the theme of violence; changing the target population (updating).

(e.g., the topic of program goes against current trends), the fact that Les Scientifines is a resource and has difficulty finding means of disseminating the program, and its lack of steady funding.

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
Visibility and popularity						
Related to originator						
Reputation						
Functioning						
Characteristics of individuals						
Concern with problem						
Concern with dissemination						
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]						
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material						
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption						
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]						
Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						
Interactions between originators and support groups						

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s. A decentralized decision-making process and the support of the administration seemed to favour adop
'ere always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators, as
pport during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

*See preceding tables

	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
Visibility and popularity						
Related to originator						
Reputation						
Functioning						
Characteristics of individuals						
Concern with problem						
Concern with dissemination						
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]						
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material						
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption						
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]						
Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						
Interactions between originators and support groups						

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t factors. A decentralized decision-making process and the support of the administration seemed to favour adoption.
nents were always made with the school head, in any case. The personal qualities and skills of the facilitators, as well as the
f the support during the implementation of the program were also positive factors.

Table-3-: Factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Les Scientifines from the perspective of program developers, promoters and disseminators

Schools that adopted the program

For schools that agreed to refer students to Les Scientifines (see Table 4), the program's content, quality, perceived benefits and compatibility with the needs of the school are factors that favoured the decision to make use of this resource and the desire to continue to do so. The schools liked the girls-only aspect, which contributed to increase the girls' participation. However, parents were wary because activities were not held on the school premises, so that factor worked against participation. The attitudes of individuals in the school (e.g., view of women's role), and their lack of involvement in the program are factors that worked against implementation. On the other hand, the fact that the schools used a variety of means to encourage girls to take part is considered to be a major positive factor.

Vers Le Pacifique

Originators (developers, promoters, disseminators)

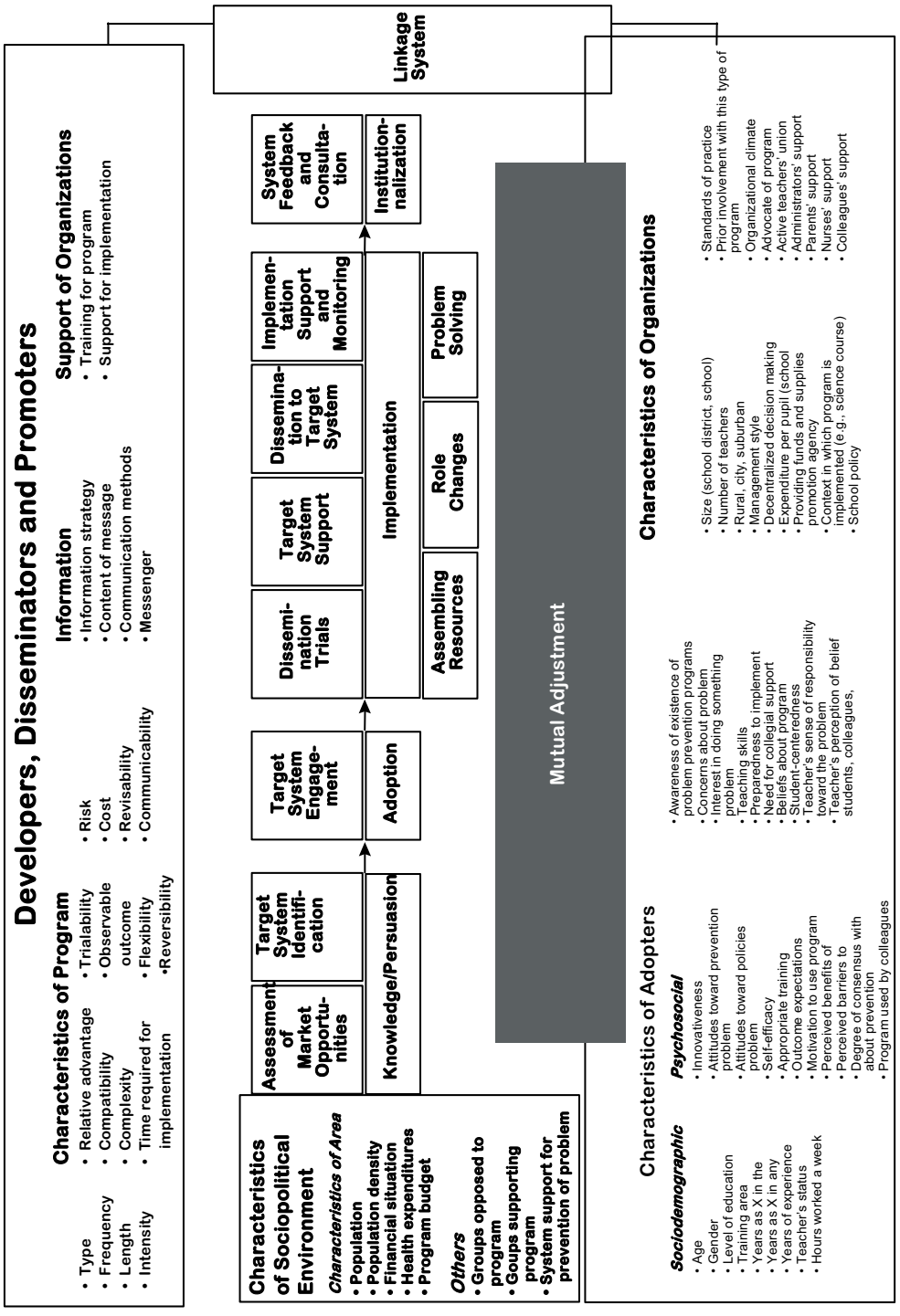
Vers le Pacifique, the youngest of the 4 programs, has not been disseminated for very long, despite the fact that it has been used in other countries for some time. Generally speaking, the originators reported positive factors (see Table 5). Most factors identified in the development phase are related to the originator due to the originator's diligence and attention to details for seeking funding and setting up a committee. A number of the factors identified for the dissemination phase are also related to the originator, given that considerable efforts were made to market and promote the program, and positive aspects of the program itself were also mentioned. As far as the factors related to the schools are concerned, the originators mainly spoke of people's attitudes as having had a positive influence during the development and dissemination of the program, as well as a negative influence during dissemination.

Table-4 : Factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Les Scientifines from the perspective of adopters (4 respondents)

Table-5-: Factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Vers le Pacifique from the perspective of program developers, promoters and disseminators

Schools that adopted the program

Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Program Dissemination



In schools that adopted Vers le Pacifique (see Table 6), we noticed that the various characteristics of the program itself seemed to have a greater influence on the decision to adopt it or not than those related to the originator. The program's content and simplicity, as well as its perceived benefits and compatibility with the school's needs, were very important to those schools. The support provided by the originator and various school initiatives worked in favour of implementation. The attitudes of individuals in the schools and their degree of involvement greatly influence the entire process, both positively and negatively. We were unable to contact any schools that had not adopted the program after becoming aware of it.

Viraj

Originators (developers, promoters, disseminators)

Viraj is the only program offered in high schools that we investigated. The positive factors (see Table 7) in the development phase are attributed in part to characteristics of the program's content and to the fact that it meets the school's needs. Various points associated with the characteristics of the originators also received positive mention. On the other hand, one problem at this stage was the community organization's lack of resources. For the dissemination phase, the originators felt that their efforts to raise awareness of the program and encourage its dissemination were major positive factors. Program characteristics, including popularity and compatibility with the school's needs, were also mentioned as positive aspects. Having a program champion was mentioned as a helpful factor only by the originators of this program. A number of negative factors concerned the schools, including school reorganization, budget cuts and people's attitudes. Support of groups was an important element in the development and dissemination phases and the interactions between the originators in those two phases were reported as being both helpful and harmful.

Table-6 : Factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Vers le Pacifique from the perspective of program adopters (4 respondents)

Table-7. Factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Viraj from the perspective of program developers, promoters and disseminators

Schools that adopted the program

Schools that adopted Viraj liked the program's high-quality content, methods and compatibility with their needs (see Table 8). The program's visibility and popularity seem to have confirmed their decision and encouraged them to continue using it. However, the cost of the program discouraged institutionalization.

School that did not adopt the program

We interviewed the head of a school that decided not to adopt Viraj after learning about it. The school's refusal stemmed chiefly from the attitudes of individuals toward the problem and government prevention programs. In this private school, dating violence is not openly discussed with students and the school prefers to use its own means of dealing with it.

Synthesis of Factors

In order to draw a general picture of the factors influencing the dissemination process of violence-prevention programs, we compiled the results concerning the four programs. A more complete report of the results is available upon request. Tables 9 and 10 show the factors identified by program developers, promoters and disseminators or by adopters and non-adopters of these programs in the schools.

With regard to the characteristics of the program: Both categories of actors emphasize that the scientific quality of the program (theoretical basis, evaluative studies) and the compatibility between the goals of the program and the school's needs are factors that facilitate its dissemination. However, from the point of view of adopters it is more the visible positive impacts in the schools where the program was implemented that matters than the availability of evaluative studies. For program developers, the social relevance of the problem of violence addressed by the program, its flexibility, and its popularity and visibility are favorable factors for its dissemination. For program users the specific characteristics of the program namely the goals, the quality of the material (attractiveness), the pedagogy of the program, the length (number of sessions), the ease of use of the material (requiring a long training or not) are important features in their decision to adopt a program. The cost of the programs has a negative influence on this decision.

With regard to the characteristics of program developers: Both categories of respondents agree that the reputation of individuals that have developed or that promoted the program, the quality of the material used for the publicity, and more importantly the quality, of the interactions initiated by program promoters are positive factors for the diffusion and adoption of a program. Program developers are more likely to identify the importance to express a genuine concern with the problem of violence prevention. They also mention the importance of getting support from groups of individuals (community groups, funding agencies, key supporters) for the promotion of

the program. This underscores the central role of financial support at all stages of a program's life and not only during the development of a program. Program adopters mention that the technical support, supervision and consultation available during the implementation phase are aspects that contribute favorably to the adoption of a program. To meet this criteria of dissemination program developers and promoters need sufficient funding.

With regard to the characteristics of the schools: Though program developers were not systematic in identifying school characteristics that influence the successful dissemination of their programs, a number of program adopters or non-adopters identified such factors. They mentioned that the attitudes of individuals toward the prevention of violence, and their interest in being personally involved in the program are determinants in the decision to adopt a program. Likewise, the support from the administrative staff, and the actual means used by the school to facilitate the implementation of a program are determinants in the decision to adopt it. The lack of involvement often due to a lack of time could be remedied by designating someone in the school to be in charge of the program.

Table 8. Factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Viraj from the perspective of adopters (3 respondents)

47 Linda Perrin, District 8; Wendy Fraser, District 17; Nic Plimmer and Mike Dollimore, District 18; Jim Dysart, NBTA; Harry Palmer, District 13; Alan Jones, District 2; Karen Love and Juanita Mureika of the NB Department of Education, and Ann Cameron, Kerri Ritchie and Stacey McKay from UNB comprise the membership of the Team. Jane Fiander, Heather Brown, and Ruth and Tom George enabled interventions in their communities. All are gratefully acknowledged. A Status of Women Canada Research Grant made this work possible.

Table-9 : Number of programs for which factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination process have been identified by program developers, promoters and disseminators

Table-10 : Number of programs for which factors that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination process have been identified by adopters and non adopters
*See preceding tables

Conclusion and Recommedations

As our study was exploratory, we must take into account all the factors identified and consider them as potentially influent on the dissemination process of preventive programs. They might all be represented in greater numbers in a larger sample of programs, but we have nonetheless been able to identify major factors. Our findings confirm some aspects of our theoretical model by demonstrating the importance of the following factors: program quality; means used to publicize, implementation and disseminatation of the program; support provided to schools at the time of implementation; attitudes of individuals in the schools; and financial resources available to originators and schools.

Looking at the originators (developers, promoters, disseminators), the most important factors are context, internal functioning, various means used to foster design, development and dissemination, and the support of government, community or private agencies. Ensuring the adequate functioning of an organization and taking initiatives require human and financial resources. The importance of the support of groups, which provide mainly financial support, also underscores the central role of financial support in developing and disseminating programs. It is therefore necessary to plan for adequate funding at all stages of a program's life.

From the point of view of the schools (whether they adopted a program or not), the characteristics of the programs are very important: scientific quality (theory, rigour); simplicity; and, topics, objectives and methods that meet their needs. Even if schools do not seem to feel that it is essential for programs to have been evaluated, they mention the importance of their visible positive impacts in a school where the program is already running (while they are making their decision) or in their own school (during implementation). Evaluation reports further emphasizing the impacts should therefore be prepared by the originators, who should consider writing the reports in accessible language and distributing them well. Furthermore, schools consider that support provided by the originator helps implementation. If originators are to develop programs that meet these criteria, they need sufficient funding. The cost of programs not only has a negative influence on decision making, it is tied to virtually all the other factors. The decision as to whether to adopt or drop a program is taken in the context of a limited budget, in which priorities must be set. Steady funding, reserved solely for violence-prevention programs, could therefore be granted to all schools. Last, the attitudes of individuals, their degree of involvement and their initiatives to facilitate the process seem to be determinant factors. The lack of staff involvement, often due to lack of time, could be remedied by designating someone in the school to be in charge of the program; program champions are considered effective by the schools using them. Yet the various attitudes behind the lack of involvement or the decision not to adopt a program require complex methods of heightening awareness. Changes in how people view schooling may be necessary if

violence-prevention programs are to become successfully institutionalized, an integral part of the educational plans of schools, and not only considered as extracurricular activities. Learning to respect others would then become as important as learning math.

Results confirm that the diffusion of violence-prevention programs is a tale of multiple actors. Though program developers and users share some points of view they also differ in their perception. These results confirm the relevance of a theoretical model that distinguishes the point of view of program developers and program users.

The above observations lead us to make the following recommendations:

To decision makers:

- Provide adequate funding for violence-prevention programs (including the development, assessment and dissemination stages).
- Award steady funding, earmarked exclusively for violence-prevention programs, to all schools likely to adopt them. Make sure that the amount includes the salary of someone in the school to be in charge of the program.
- Encourage and support the promotion of prevention programs in schools.
- In the longer term, make sure that violence-prevention programs are fully institutionalized in schools by incorporating them into Ministère de l'Éducation requirements for compulsory schooling; or develop a standard program, subject to revision, that is part of compulsory schooling.

To originators:

- When designing a program, in addition to scientific soundness, seek the following qualities: ease of understanding and implementation; and topics, objectives and methods compatible with school needs.
- In promoting programs to schools, use a concise, attractive summary of the evaluation report written in everyday language, highlighting the concrete, positive impacts of the program and its successful implementation in other schools.
- Provide support to schools during the implementation and evaluation phases.
- Encourage schools to appoint someone in charge of the program.

To the schools:

- Promote prevention to school staff, students and parents.

- Appoint someone to be in charge of the program.

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Appendix I:

A Conceptual Model of Program Dissemination

WORLDS APART … COMING TOGETHER

Gender Segregated & Integrated Primary Prevention Implementations for Adolescents in Atlantic Rural Communities

Catherine Ann Cameron, and the
Creating Peaceful Learning Environments
Schools' Team

Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family
Violence Research
Fredericton, New Brunswick

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
Visibility and popularity						
Related to originator						
Reputation						
Functioning						
Characteristics of individuals						
Concern with problem						
Concern with dissemination						
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]						
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material						
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption						
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]						
Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						

Executive Summary

Three iterations of a community-initiated violence-prevention forum were evaluated. An all-girls' school participated as the pilot group, with the same sample of girls and young women demonstrating the strength of annual implementations whereby girls might be afforded safe places to gain authority in voicing their needs, wishes, and goals for reducing violence in their lives. A second cohort of females and males in two rural communities tested the efficacy of gender-segregated versus gender-integrated forum formats. While both genders agreed that integrated sessions were more interesting, girls believed that some time was needed for single-sex discussions. The third round of interventions was conducted in six Atlantic communities. The first three, provided information on the value of repetition of delivery for community development, and the second three, important replication data that confirmed the findings of the first two rounds, and again, indicating the need for gender-differentiated approaches to violence prevention. Some challenges remain in developing appropriate fora to address effectively male resistance to violence-prevention work. It is clear that involvement of appropriate male role models and activity-centred, as opposed to discussion-group formats partially address this problem, but moving consciousness raising into action is not a rapid process many boys in this culture. Community buy-in and a common language for addressing the causes

and consequences of youth violence were significant outcomes of the research. Next steps involve the development of a motivational and training video and handbook which highlight the benefits of gender appropriate community projects such as these, as well as delivering community-directed facilitator training to enhance prevention work that will benefit both boys and girls.

Prologue:

Words From the Girls

Feb 29, 2000 If you love me!

If you love me why do you hurt me
you don't have to hit me
to hurt me, Your words are
just as hard
If you love me why do you hurt me
You try to make me feel better by
Saying 'I'm sorry' or 'I love you'
but deep down inside I know you
don't mean it.
If you love me why do you
hurt me!

bye Tara Reid

V is for vicious, in crime and intent
I is for innocence, shamefully spent
O is for open, your heart is in pain
L is for love that you long to regain.
E is for everything you cannot see
N is for never being able to break free
C is for climbing the ladder of hope
E is for an eternity of learning to cope.

Violence eats at your soul, and you waste away
You feel so alone as you live every day
Wanting, not trying to change for the best
Not realizing, but fearing that life is a test.
Of courage and honor, strength, hope, and love.

We can beat violence with peace and some help from above.

- Kelly Johnston

Context

The "Creating Peaceful Learning Environments" Schools' Team of the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (FVRC) comprises educators from all sectors of the New Brunswick educational community. It includes classroom teachers, parents, district and provincial education department personnel, teachers' association representation, and university faculty and students.[47] The school climate action research of this team over the past decade has included assisting schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade in developing their own needs assessments. These assessments have led to such evaluated implementations as teacher training in conflict resolution, students' peer helping and mediation, social skills training, adolescent anger management programs, and explorations of factors in preschoolers' readiness for school. Most of the research of the team involves the assessment of primary prevention initiatives in which entire communities adapt and implement existing programs to local needs. The present community-based adolescent-violence-prevention project fits well the team's mandate to explore and support grassroots community-based initiatives.

Most violence prevention studies of youth reported to date have ignored gender effects in their implementations (i.e., Hilton, Harris, Rice, Krans, & Lavigne, 1998; Krajewski, Rybarik, Dosch, & Gilmore, 1996; and Larson, 1994). In this project, we assisted in implementing, and in evaluating gender-sensitive (Artz, 1998; Lytton, & Romney, 1991), community-based violence-prevention interventions in six Atlantic rural communities. We examined outcomes of gender-segregated versus gender-integrated formats. Further, we tested the nature of gender-appropriate topics for exploration at these one -day fora (Knight, Fabes, & Higgins, 1996). In this report, we will describe what participants told us about themselves, their experiences with violence, their relationships and their emotions, and their motivation to alter their experience of violence in their own lives and in their communities. We will then report what they told us of their knowledge gains and skills that they perceived that they had acquired as a result of their participation in the interventions, and how they evaluated the fora, making suggestions for improved program delivery.

While each community initiated and developed its own one-day forum, the leaders of the initiatives congregated once a year at the Family Violence Research Centre for a day of facilitator training. Participants included one dozen self-selected student volunteers from each community, and an equal number of volunteer adults who were known for their teen-friendly participation in health provision, community policing, legal practices, or their leadership in Boys' and Girls' and other youth and religious organizations. During facilitator training, such experts as Dr. Sibylle Artz, of the University of Victoria, and author of Sex, Power, and the Violent School Girl (1998), discussed teen violence, gender and social inequality, and provided motivational examples from her own violence-prevention work. Community and youth participants gained experience con-

sidering the issues addressed, and practiced group facilitation skills, gaining confidence in their efficacy as change agents. As well, as in consultation with the young people themselves, implementation plans were informed by the work of such research as that of the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence (1999) which indicated that factors in the socialization of girls and young women often result in victimization, violence tolerance, and even violence promotion. The Alliance suggested developing community-based interventions for both boys and girls that ameliorate such social factors. The report of the Alliance, as well as the work of our own team (Cameron & Team, 1998), called for safe spaces for girls to discuss relevant issues, and for gender-appropriate opportunities for violence-prevention work. This work was to be conducted with both males and females, and for a special effort to be made to explore primary violence-prevention avenues for, and with, rural youth.

Artz (1998) addressed the systemic roots of violence in girls' lives and recommended gender-sensitive solutions. Gilligan (1982; Brown & Gilligan, 1992) was an early researcher to attend to the voices of young females as they expressed their particular experiences and needs. Following Gilligan's lead, Pipher (1994), called for girl-friendly community action. Likewise, Garbarino, (1999) Pollack, (1998), and Salisbury & Jackson (1996), all working with troubled boys, also indicated the need for gender- appropriate interventions when working

with young males.

Recently, in contrast to the more traditional focus on physical aggression (for example, Deffenbacher, Lynch, Getting & Kemper, 1996) a relatively new literature has emerged that explores the parameters of relational or indirect aggression, by which girls are particularly affected, both as victims and as perpetrators. This research is represented by Crick and Bjorkqvist and their colleagues and many others (Bjorkqvist, 1994; Carlo, Rafaelli, Laible, & Meyer, 1999; Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, & Silva, 1993; Crick, 1995; Crick, & Grotpeter, 1995; Osterman, Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, Charpentier, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1999). Such perspectives on female violence, its experience, and its prevention, inform this program of research in addressing the full spectrum of aggression girls and women experience in their daily lives. The well-documented evidence of more overt forms of anger, aggression and violence in boys' experiences also informs this work.

The development of the violence prevention days in each community, then, was an iterative, interactive, program development process. This process was based on the research literature, on our pilot implementations, which yielded student-requested formats and topics, and it placed a high priority on sponsoring student-focused discussion sessions. Facilitation teams of one community adult and one student leader animated each small-group session, some were gender-segregated, and others, gender-integrated. The researchers on the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Family Violence Research Centre team, assisted by university research students, implemented the evaluation of the implementation.

Objectives of This Work

The objectives of this project were: 1) to support the creation and delivery of a one day rural community violence prevention initiative; 2) to evaluate the differential impacts of this intervention on adolescents located in: single-sex versus gender-segregated versus gender-integrated rural community settings; and 3) to make policy recommendations based on the results of all fora with the theme of: Girls and Boys: Apart ... and Together.

Processes and Methods

This community-based primary prevention evaluation research was conducted in three phases:

Phase 1 (Spring 1999). First, an all-female community engaged in this study as a three-year longitudinal project commencing during 1999. The girls participated from their ninth and tenth grades through until eleventh and twelfth grades. Participants lived in both rural and urban settings, but attended a Saint John, New Brunswick school in an inner-city community. Guidance teachers and the principal were the initiators of this project.

Phase 2 (Autumn 1999). Hearing about the first community, two additional rural communities volunteered to conduct gender-segregated and gender-integrated fora to determine the benefits of segregation and integration in program delivery. These communities had associations with the Centre Peaceful Learning Environments Research Team. In the second round of interventions, then, there were two rural communities involving both genders, as well as the original rural/urban female community.

Phase 3 (Autumn 2000). In the third and final phase of the research, three additional rural Atlantic communities joined in (one a rural island community and two isolated communities in Newfoundland), hosting one day events for more than 700 adolescents in each of the six communities, sponsoring both gender-segregated and gender-integrated sessions. These additional communities were enlisted based on Regional Workshops sponsored by the MMFR Centre and Status of Women Canada to inform communities of the activities of the first two iterations of the Girl Child Project.

Phase 1

This stream of female-only participants served to pilot the other phases of the research. The primary prevention one day forum for the approximately 150 girls in their community focused on providing safe spaces for girls to discuss issues of gender inequality and the challenges of seeking to lead violence-free lives. Emphasis was also placed on community involvement through the active facilitation of female, youth-friendly community leaders.

This pilot process consisted of three cycles, the first in the spring of 1999 when the girls were in ninth and tenth grades. In the autumn of 1999/winter of 2000, the same participants were in grades 10 and 11. In the autumn of 2000, during the third iteration, the same participating girls were now in grades 11 and 12.

Evaluation component: We administered an extensive set of questionnaires both prior to, and following the forum:

Violence experiences: Physical and verbal victimization and aggression. Before each forum, we asked participants about their experiences of physical and verbal violence using our Violence Experiences Questionnaire (Dodsworth and Cameron, 1996). Gender differences in experience of violence were expected (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Paquette & Underwood, 1999; Vernberg, Jacobs, & Hershberger, 1999; Walker, 2000).

Attachment relationships with peers, mother/mother-figures, and father/father-figures: We asked participants in questionnaire format about their relationships with their mother (or mother figure), father (or a father figure) and peers via the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). This questionnaire probes adolescents' communication with, trust in,

and alienation from, parents and peers.

Anger expression/experiences. Deffen-bacher et al (1996) have consistently reported

program developers, promoters and disseminators

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
Visibility and popularity						
Related to originator						
Reputation						
Functioning						
Characteristics of individuals						
Concern with problem						
Concern with dissemination						
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]						
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material						
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption						
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]						
Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						
Interactions between originators and support groups						

d the program

pted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visibility and

strong relationships between anger and aggression. We administered the Multidimensional Anger Inventory (Siegel, 1986): The MAI has nine subscales

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addressing magnitude, frequency, duration, hostility, guilt, brooding, and eliciting anger, as well as anger-in and anger-out to examine the relationship between anger, attachment, and violence expe-

…rs that facilitate (+), hinder (-) or do not influence (no) the dissemination of Espace from the perspective of program developers, promoters and disseminators

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
Visibility and popularity						
Related to originator						
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Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						
Interactions between originators and support groups						

…opted the program

…adopted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visibility and

rience.

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Change motivation regarding violence experiences. Readiness for

change with regard to violence was measured by the Artz, Reicken, MacIntyre, Lam, & Maczewski's, 1999 adaptation of Prochaska's (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1992) Readiness for Change scale.

program developers, promoters and disseminators

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context						
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation						
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.						
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives						
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Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]						
Support of groups of individuals for program						
Interactions among originators						
Interactions between originators and support groups						

ools that adopted the program

schools that adopted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visib ularity of the program, aided the implementation process, whereas its costs, of minor importance at the time of decision maki

Knowledge gains as a result of using locally developed questionnaires, PERCENTAGE forum participation were evaluated depending on forum content delivery.

Evaluation of sessions was also developed locally, again, in line with the changing formats of the fora each year.

program developers, promoters and disseminators

Factor	Development			Dissemination		
	+	-	No	+	-	No
Related to context	■				■	
Related to program						
Scientific quality: evaluation	■					
Scientific quality: theory, rigour, etc.	■					
Compatibility with school's needs or objectives	■					
Visibility and popularity				■		
Related to originator						
Reputation				■		
Functioning	■			■	■	
Characteristics of individuals	■					
Concern with problem	■			■		
Concern with dissemination	■			■		
Means used to foster design and development of program[26]	■	■				
Means used to publicize program and encourage adoption: material		■				
Strategy used to publicize program and encourage adoption		■		■		
Means used to promote dissemination in general[27]				■		
Support of groups of individuals for program	■	■		■	■	
Interactions among originators				■		
Interactions between originators and support groups					■	

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ed the program

opted the *Espace* program (see Table 2) liked its quality (content), methods and perceived benefits. The visibility and ogram, aided the implementation process, whereas its costs, of minor importance at the time of decision making.

Outcomes of the first all-girls' pilot forum: The invited keynote speaker was Dr. Sibylle Artz, a respected Canadian authority on girls and violence.

Participants were grateful for enthusiastic female community involvement. They learned to name problems, acquired names and numbers of resource people, and gained confidence in addressing issues. The girls appreciated having safe, respectful spaces to discuss challenges to violence-free lives, but requested additional time for personal expression. Although adult facilitators were teen-friendly, most presentations were didactic. Thus, youth requested assistance in gaining their own voices, and they also requested facilitator training for gaining those stronger voices (Cameron and Team, 1999).

Generic violence prevention forum framework. While each community developed its own forum, training sessions on the UNB campus at the Family Violence Centre served to standardize plans enough that each subsequent year, there emerged common themes for evaluation, but different deliveries for comparison purposes. All forum participants engaged in pre- and post-intervention evaluation sessions. All fora presented both a whole-community plenary session with guest speaker, panel, or film as well as divided discussion sessions, topics determined by the teen and community leaders themselves. Community leaders were recruited from Boys' and Girls' Clubs, community policing, health and social services, and churches. Foci were on such issues as problems arising from media images, sex-stereotyping, and expectations for intimate relationships. The intervention days culminated in a session on generating community-based solutions. Pizza was provided for facilitators and participants at lunchtime. Afternoon sessions were often divided, but were gender-integrated, when finally focussing on community/school solutions.

Phase 2

Based on findings from Phase One, it was agreed that community and teen facilitators would benefit from Research Centre support in gaining experience in facilitating participants' finding their own voices. Facilitator training at the FVRC engaged two dozen teens and adult facilitators from each community, bringing together over eighty community leaders. The three communities joined together for one day to plan their violence-prevention initiatives. Dr. Sibylle Artz and the 'Creating Peaceful Learning Environ-ments' Research Team trained the facilitators. The all-girls' community progressed significantly in taking responsibility for their own forum, so we observed indices of community development in action. In addition to their morning divided sessions which they facilitated themselves, they invited community to conduct an information session for a resources scavenger hunt. Also, they developed an afternoon session where the girls could express their responses to the day via a range of media options (the Prologue and Epilogues of this report provide examples of poetry written by some participants during that session). The evaluation of the facilitator training resulted in requests for more skill development, and greater involvement of external community facilitators .

Rural sex-integrated and sex-segregated implementations, following facilitator

training: One rural community delivered sex-segregated, and the other, sex-integrated sessions. All fora engaged community/teen partnerships for the facilitation of sessions. One community delivered age-integrated and the other, age-segregated sessions. Youth took significantly more responsibility from the start than they had done in the pilot stream.

Research Findings

Sepcific findings from Phase 2 of the research as presented here were illustrative of the overall findings of the project.

Violence experiences. Close to half of the participants reported little or no physical violence in their lives at the time of questioning. But of those who were physically victimized regularly, boys and girls had different frequencies of such violence in their lives. Whereas not quite 10% of girls reported experiencing physical violence victimization on a daily basis, boys report double that percentage (20%). Likewise, 6% of girls report being physically violent perpetrators on a daily basis, more than double that percentage of boys (14%) report themselves to be daily violence perpetrators. The relationship between a participant's reporting being victim and a perpetrator of physical violence was significant (probability less that .01), with a correlation coefficient of .6. Verbal violence experiences were even more pervasive with approximately 25% of participants of both genders experiencing daily victimization, and 14% reporting perpetration. Boys are typically more vulnerable both to experience physical and verbal aggression than are girls. Figures 1 to 4 are illustrative of these reports.

Attachment experiences: Participants' reports of their attachment relations with parents and peers correlated to their anger and their violence experiences, but again, with gender-differentiated patterns. Girls' maternal and paternal attachment relations were highly interrelated. Peer alienation related to paternal attachment, whereas maternal attachment related to many more peer relationship indices. Boys' relationships with parents are much less interrelated, but their reports of attachments to peers related to reports of relations with each parental figure.

Attachment and anger: Gender differences in the patterns of associations between attachment and anger are as follows: Girls' relations with parents were especially determinative of their anger and violence experiences. Parental attachment relations were associated with anger experiences, especially for girls. Boys' associations between peers and anger experiences were stronger than their parental attachment reports.

Girls were more strongly motivated for violence prevention and change in this area of their lives. They wanted safe times and places to talk and share their experiences with one another:

"It was good to get a chance to talk about these things. I wish we'd had days like

> this when we were younger. If I'd known, I'd have gotten out of a relationship sooner."

Boys were less convinced. They seemed to lack leadership and credible role models for resisting violence in their every day experience:

> "You must be very tired spending a whole day trying to get us to talk about what we don't want to talk about. It's just the way it is."

Not surprisingly, females and males responded differentially to the sessions. Girls were happy to have the opportunity to explore their thoughts and experiences. Boys, being not so ready to contemplate change in their lives on these dimensions, were less grateful for the opportunity to discuss violence and its prevention.

In addition to the psychometric questionnaires that they completed, students also answered questions assessing their knowledge gains and their general evaluations of the conference. The content of the knowledge questionnaire, completed both before and after the forum, was developed from suggestions made by community facilitators. Each facilitator provided the concepts that they planned to highlight in their sessions. Questions addressing personal, school, parental, and community strategies for dealing with violence were also a focus. Students were asked to list and rank the five most important traits they would look for in a boy/girlfriend. Girls and boys tended to indicate the same characteristics for their ideal mate, but placed different emphases on different traits. For example, more girls ranked honesty as the number one trait, while proportionately more boys indicated that appearance was most important. Appearance was quite high on the list for girls as well, however. One female participant had this to say:

> "I think that no matter what anybody says that looks don't matter, they really do. You can have friends that aren't really attractive but if you are in a relationship, then they do need to be."

Students ranked certain characteristics as being more important following the conference than before. Again, some of these changes were different for boys and girls. Trust and respect were items that increased in importance from pre- to post-forum for both genders.

> "You don't need money, a nice house, etc. – to be perfect. But you do need trust and you should be comfortable with your partner."

Communication and understanding were traits which increased in importance for girls while boys ranked honesty, respect, kindness, and appearance as more important after the conference than before.

In response to the sessions titled Love is/Love is NOT, students were asked what love is not. Their most frequent answers both before and after the conference mentioned physical violence and emotional abuse and

control or jealousy with more students identifying control and jealousy as negative aspects of relationships after the conference. From pre- to post-questioning, there was also a large increase in the mention of "sex-only" as something that love is NOT. This was mainly for girls, but there were smaller increases in the same category for boys.

Students were asked to identify factors, which may lead to violence in society. Popular responses for boys were drug/alcohol abuse and power inequalities between men and women, and these were identified even more frequently after the conference. Girls' most frequently identified responses were the same as the boys' except that more girls also identified generational causes of violence. There were also more gains in absolute frequency of responding from pre- to post-forum for girls than for boys.

The knowledge-gains assessment also queried the different levels of strategies for dealing with violence. This is an area where boys and girls agreed a great deal. Few gender differences were found in the participants' responses. On a personal level, the most popular suggestions given by students before the conference were to speak up against violence, to be nice or kind to others, not to be violent oneself, and to talk about it. These were the top four most popular responses for both boys and girls. However, more focus was placed on "not being violent" by boys and "talking about it" by girls. After the conference, the same strategies were popular but frequencies of responses increased. More students, both boys and girls, listed positive strategies after the conference than before.

> "In order to stop the violence, I think you first have to stop and look at yourself and see if you're doing something wrong, and if there's anything that needs to be changed, get some help. Everyone always things of changing others. No one ever thinks of changing themselves."

At the school level, students suggested stricter rules, more participation in programs, more security measures, and more communication before the conference. After the conference, more participants, both male and female, suggested increased student involvement or peer counselors. This could be linked to the fact that there was a good deal of student involvement in the forum sessions with respect to organization and facilitation, enabling confidence in the potentials of peer contributions for solving problems.

> "Nine out of ten times in the hall you talk to the same person, maybe we should try to talk to a few more people. That should help, I don't know."

Before the conference, students felt that parents should talk to their children and educate them about violence, be good role models, and be aware of what their children are doing in an effort to prevent violence. After the conference, communication with children was an even more popular response among girls,

and there was a substantial increase among boys in recommending that care be taken in how children are treated. At the community level, before the forum, the most popular suggestions rendered by students included instituting better laws, more programs and educational opportunities, curbing the media, and increasing victim support in their communities. After the conference, there were more requests for increased victim support by girls and for more youth activities by boys. Both genders suggested restricting violent media more frequently after the conference than before.

The students completed the evaluation questionnaire a short time after the forum. When asked to evaluate their forum, students indicated that the most valuable sessions were those in which they felt that their voices were heard and respected. One female participant commented,

> "I should talk more often. I feel so much better when I do."

And from a male participant:

> "It could be painful for some people though like digging down in their heart, you know like talking about stuff like this can really bother some people but for me it's useful, yeah."

Participants who responded to the questionnaires indicated that they found the topics interesting, and felt that sessions afforded enough time for useful discussion and provided new information. Many girls indicated that they came away from sessions with new feelings of confidence while few boys reported that they experienced any new feelings. However, few students of either gender reported that they believed that they had learned new skills that they could practise.

Lessons Learned

We asked students what they felt were the most important things they learned during their fora and what they wished could have been better addressed. This feedback is valuable for evaluating the effectiveness of the sessions as well as for making substantive improvements to future conferences. What were the most important lessons students felt they learned?

- Abuse/violence can take many forms. In response to what new information was learned with respect to having healthy relationships: "Ignoring someone is emotional abuse."
- Both men and women can be abusive. As one participant articulated: "You gotta look at how many men are gonna admit their girlfriends

are abusing them because no man is gonna do it. If your girlfriend's smacking you around you're not gonna go 'hey man - guess what she did to me last night.'"

- The signs of an unhealthy relationship. More than one female student indicated that they had seen some of these signs in their relationships and were going to leave the relationship. Several also indicated that they had learned that their relationships were healthy.
- What a healthy relationship is: "I learned a lot about what I want in a relationship and this – if you don't feel 100% comfortable in a relationship then you shouldn't be in one."
- The media degrades women and has a great effect on the public. "The media uses half-naked women and men to sell their products, it might work but it is wrong" and "The media could use some vast improvement. Even in seemingly harmless ads, it can promote violence against women."
- Ways to reduce violence. Cited as new information gained: "That there are people you can talk to if you want to change the school" and "That we can change the school if we work together."
- Discovered violence issues in their school/community. "There must be a pile of abuse going on that I don't see happening."
- Not to accept violence in their lives. "I learned a lot about myself and what my standards are."
- Places to get help. "If you know someone who's violent, you know a way to maybe help that person" and "I learned about all the places I can go in my community if I ever am in trouble."

Which topics did participants wish they could have discussed more fully? Students reported wanting more opportunities for discussing the complexities of engaging in healthy relationships. Regarding sexual violence, there were some especially interesting comments. Cited as new information: "that even if you don't scream, or kick and make a big scene if you say no, it's considered rape." However, participants indicated that they knew more what they were not to do in intimate situations than what was appropriate to do. The young people also wanted more exploration into the causes and consequences of violence. Although fora were not designed to elicit personal disclosures of experiences with violence, some did occur in connection with youth willingness to share knowledge regarding familial roots of violence. Youth requested more information on how to protect themselves from violence and a greater examination of the social impact of the media and other cultural forces on violence.

- The students indicated that although the fora had increased knowledge and awareness, there were a number of new questions for which they were still seeking answers, particularly in the area of skill development, including:
- 'What do you do if you report violence and are not believed?'
- 'How can we handle violent situations without causing more violence?'
- 'How can we help abusers?'
- 'How do you deal with family violence?'
- 'Why are people violent?'
- 'Why is violence still a problem?'
- 'How can we end media stereotyping?'
- 'Why are men stereotyped as abusers?'
- 'How do we have healthy relationships?'

"What's sauce for the goose may not be sauce for the gander." One question in this research study focussed on whether programs developed for girls and boys together would be as useful as or better than programs developed for girls and boys separately. The majority of participants in single-sex sessions (over 75%), when asked whether gender-integrated sessions would be more fun, informative, or interesting, agreed. However, when asked whether they felt it would be easier to share experiences in the presence of both genders, only a minority (not quite half the boys and just a quarter of the girls) agreed (Table 1). Participants in gender- integrated sessions complemented these responses (Table 2). When asked whether single-sex sessions would be more fun, informative, or interesting, a very small proportion (about one third) agreed. However, a significant proportion of boys (37%) and an even higher proportion of girls (50%) believed that single-sex groupings would provide an easier setting in which to discuss sensitive issues.

What was most clear with respect to this issue was that all participants were very much interested in what the other gender had to offer in the way of opinions, experiences, and perceptions. While they may not be as comfortable in sharing their own feelings and opinions with the opposite sex present, they certainly wanted to know the feelings and opinions of their opposite-sex peers. Finding a way to motivate useful experiences for the males and females together and apart was the challenge of the next phase of this research (Cameron and Team, 2000).

At the end of the second iteration we found that girls in both contexts, while gaining a voice were also interested in obtaining skills development in future sessions. Girls displayed changes in values and elevation in confidence. Boys endorsed pizza and macho values. They evidenced a critical need for credible male role-models. Community participants were enthusiastic to return. We found though that community participants, so accustomed to advocating for youth need ongoing training in listening, and in offering perceptions and suggestions only when invited. School personnel were exhausted from the efforts of orchestrating the forum, whilst youth were ready for much more follow-through, such as: middle-school implementations, school and community action, desire for skills training, and peer counselling training.

Phase 3

Six rural Atlantic communities participated in the third phase of this project. None of the original schools withdrew from this longitudinal study. All implementations provided both sex-segregated and sex-integrated sessions. Our research team included more male assistance during this third iteration. Nevertheless, generally, the girls continued to be much more enthusiastic, possess more awareness and be more likely to volunteer to participate. Younger versus older teens' developmental differences were also seen as a potential issue for further exploration. The need for facilitator training, especially active listening skills, open-ended questioning, interesting active sessions was emphasized in all locations. Community buy-in emerged, but three levels of community experience became evident:

1. Cohort One Consisted of girls only. Self-directed, skills development was appreciated, but more community involvement was once again requested.

2. Cohort Two: Girls and boys appreciated sharing perceptions. The girls especially enjoyed having the spaces to share perceptions with members of their own gender.

3. Cohort Three: Interesting start-ups were observed in some locations. New themes emerged in these cohorts. Youth focussed on a need to discuss family roots of violence. As well, they expressed frustration with adults' inability to listen to teens and their problems. Experienced participants generated unique, popular new sessions (e.g., "He said/She said," wherein females and males first separately generated questions for the opposite sex on 'What I have always wanted, but never dared to ask,'). Males and females were then gender- integrated for a discussion session on the questions and their answers. Although progress toward a systemic analysis was a natural development, patience is required for expecting this level of progress in this type of community development work.

Attachment, anger and aggression

Results of the analysis of measures of attachment, anger and aggression revealed that past affective experiences of participants affect how both females and males interpret and respond to issues of personal and community violence. This plays a role in how they t receive and benefit from primary prevention interventions.

In general, those with positive affiliation experiences, reported having less difficulty dealing with emotionally challenging situations, and those with less experience with violence responded most positively to the primary intervention, and were keen to find ways to address societal violence. Those students with more negative personal backgrounds were less open to engage in such work. A need expressed clearly by many girls was for the time and a safe place for them to share their experiences and perceptions about violence in their lives. They emphasized that talking together was beneficial. Exchanges between the genders were also highly valued. Both sexes wanted to hear of the other's experiences and perceptions. Boys, for their part, were less committed to single sex discussions. They were more action-oriented, less inclined to introspect or even to inspect underlying societal sources contributing to interpersonal aggression, and were most responsive to activities facilitated by credible male role models.

Successful aspects of the violence prevention programs

A number of sessions in these for a were considered to be quite successful and included, " Examining school and community practices: What's working, what's not?" and "Media images that get us." Many teens, while critical of society in general, are notably uncritical of the sources of their own sensitivities and gender-stereotypical responses to social expectations. Guidance in critical social analysis as a part of a violence prevention strategy would be beneficial to many adolescents. A community-resource scavenger-hunt provided valuable information on available community support services in an action format which youth appreciated. Focussing on basic values in relationships was both of interest and educationally powerful for many participants. Sharing perceptions on such topics as, "What is love NOT?" provided single-sex discussion opportunities that allowed teens to learn of other's experiences and opinions. Focussing on relational aggression in a session called "How not to be mean" was especially powerful for girls. Given the opportunity to express what was learned during a forum by choosing a medium for reflection, be it in poetry, video, or song, and called "Finding your own voice" opened channels for communication other sessions may not have. Finally, our longitudinal observations showed that with multiple experiences with violence prevention days, youth, especially girls began to clamber for skills in assertion, conflict resolution, and communication.

"It takes a whole community" to make an impact on the culture of violence. A one- day forum is a potential lightning rod for community-teen collaboration. One benefit of such collaboration is in the development of a common language among teens, school personnel and community members. Common community developments occurred during the second and third phases of the project when teens insisted on taking their newly found knowledge to their middle schools. They believed that the message was even more critical for primary prevention. Some communities have spontaneously pressed and succeeded in taking their messages to younger students in middle (and

some have even gone to elementary) schools, so concerned were they that constructive solutions are both desirable and feasible. This educational outreach work was conducted in partnership with their schools and other community resources. This type of initiative also triggered requests for more facilitator training. Teens and adults returned for more experiential learning in how to enhance the experience of forum participants, increasing both their leadership skills as well as improving the potentials for high quality program delivery. Ongoing teen/community facilitator training, especially in active listening is needed, and many youth are in the process of having these needs met. It also became apparent that there is a wide range of choices of media for the diffusion of violence prevention messages. Multiple media methods can be used to extend outreach. We believe that a facilitator training video and handbook would be beneficial.

Community costs and benefits. Most costs for such implementations require in-kind contributions of time and energy of credible teen and community leaders. Teen peer leadership is critical. This means that a good deal of teen time and commitment is a high priority. In addition commitment of community volunteers is required. Each community needs a well-developed network of support/buy-in from social service agencies, local hospital, youth clubs, transition houses, even the local grocery store. Without the dedication of a sensitive, respected guidance teacher and the commitment from school administration a violence prevention initiative could not be orchestrated. Students appreciate the consideration of facilitators in arranging for their favourite pizza, pop, and ultimate chocolate chip cookies. Small token gifts to facilitators are appreciated. Forum materials, conference folders, name badges, and so forth can usually be acquired via community donations. The evaluation of the forum calls for partnership with grassroots researchers who will volunteer their services in aid of sustainability. Community and/or academic research volunteers are required in partnership. A community member with public relations connections can help arrange for media coverage & other outreach for dissemination.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Community-based adolescent violence prevention initiatives are most successful when they are gender appropriate and sensitive to the needs of teens in gaining their own authentic voices in achieving change. Collaborative action requires training support that enables community and teen leaders to initiate, plan, and implement interventions in partnership, being aware of local needs and circumstances. Ongoing initiatives that keep the issues alive are critical to the community development component that capitalizes on the potential for changed and enhanced levels of awareness and reduced tolerance for violence in the lives of girls and young women, boys and young men. Safe spaces for girls to address the social, economic, cultural, political and personal issues in their lives that place them in positions of vulnerability to violence are required. For boys, consciousness raising and exploration through active engagement in causes and consequences of aggression

and violence in their lives are needed. Then together, males and females need to join to create violence-free communities.

Recommendations

A. Our findings deserve widespread dissemination. The communities involved deserve recognition for their contributions, but broader-based community involvement is a priority:

Recommendation 1. That the research team and its partners make every effort to find a means for disseminating the results in a community-friendly fashion that both distributes the information gained and simultaneously inspires community action.

B. Traditional dissemination methods are limited by time and human resources:

Recommendation 2. That the team and its sponsors therefore undertake to engage other stakeholders in the production and distribution of the report of findings using a training package for community-based gender-appropriate interventions.

C. Given that the findings of this research yield information that could sensitize community facilitators and teens regarding facilitating productive involvement of a wide range of both male and female participants:

Recommendation 3. That participating communities contribute to the development of a training video and handbook on gender appropriate programming in violence prevention for teens.

D. The types of agencies who are most likely to wish involvement are not-for-profit organizations:

Recommendation 4. That the sponsors seek ways to distribute the video training package free of charge to all community groups working with teens.

E. Given that there are many agencies with a mandate in support of violence prevention within their jurisdictions:

Recommendation 5. That the developers and implementers of the video and handbook communicate the findings of this work to appropriate governmental agencies, including Departments of Education, Health and Wellness, agencies responsible for the status of women, social services, and Justice to ensure sustainability.

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