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## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, February 29, 2012**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Irene Mathysen**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Wednesday, February 29, 2012

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP)):** Thank you very much for being here.

In particular, I want to thank Madame Robichaud, Madame Savoie, and Madame Martino for coming and providing your time and expertise.

Thank you, too, for this document, this summary overview of the women's program.

I'm advised that you have 20 minutes for your presentation, and then we'll proceed into our first and second rounds of questioning. So I'm in your hands. Please proceed as you had prepared.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Linda Savoie (Director General, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, Status of Women Canada):** Madam Chair, members of the committee, thank you.

My name is Linda Savoie, and I am the Director General of the Women's Program and Regional Operations. I am joined by Pascale Robichaud, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Operations, and Victoria Martino, Senior Program and Policy Analyst.

[English]

As you just mentioned, we have provided a handout. It will help keep me on track and hopefully stick to the timing appropriately.

The first chart, on page 2, illustrates the part of Status of Women that we belong to, the part that we will be speaking to today. Next week some of my colleagues will be appearing before you, and they will speak to the other aspects of Status of Women—in particular, policy, commemorative events, International Day of the Girl, and a number of other matters that I'm sure will be of interest to you.

Today, however, we will be focusing on the women's program. I will be starting from a fairly broad perspective about the program, and then I will gradually move toward what is of interest to you today: the issues that relate specifically to girls and their economic perspectives.

The women's program is a grants and contributions program. We have a mandate to advance equality for women in Canada. We are one of the very few programs at any level of government with that mandate.

Our mandate, while focusing on gender equality, is quite well aligned with various other federal priorities or initiatives. Whether we're talking about economic prosperity or family violence, there's

quite an alignment between our mandate and the mandates of other departments and agencies within the federal family dealing with those issues.

We have a budget of approximately \$19 million per year. With that grants and contributions budget, we fund some 300 projects every year. Approximately 80, sometimes up to 100, of these projects each year are new. The balance are projects that are continuing for a period of more than one year.

Our program is delivered through offices that are located in Edmonton, Montreal, Moncton, and Ottawa. The Ottawa office, under the responsibility of Madame Robichaud, also has the specific responsibility for national projects and for aboriginal projects. We will be touching on some of these as I advance in the briefing.

Page 4 outlines the role of the women's program. Our primary function, of course, is to fund community-based projects across Canada. In addition to that, we also participate in and bring our expertise to various interdepartmental working groups. We are actively involved in human trafficking working groups within the federal family, working groups that deal with seniors, with family violence, as I've mentioned before, and we try to bring the issues that affect women to the forefront in this work.

On a provincial-territorial level, we share information actively with our colleagues at the provincial level. We share about projects, we share about funding priorities, and we seek out opportunities to at times partner on projects or co-fund certain projects. This happens in a number of fields.

For instance, when we're funding projects that deal with employment of women in non-traditional trades, often the province will be funding the actual cost of training the participants, while we will be working with the employer aspect and the institutional barriers that are detrimental to women's recruitment or retention in that trade. So there's good complementarity between our work and what the provinces are doing, and a fair bit of alignment in terms of priorities.

Our projects can be up to 36 months in duration. We work with three pillars. Our three pillars are ending violence against women and girls, improving women and girls' economic security and prosperity, and increasing women and girls' leadership and democratic participation.

•(1535)

These priorities basically reflect the inequalities that continue to exist in Canada and in many parts of the world today, whether you're talking about the persistent issue of spousal or sexual violence, the gap in wage parity, or the underrepresentation of women in political and business positions. Those pillars are in fact consistent with the way most jurisdictions organize their strategies in tackling inequality.

In terms of what we fund, at times we focus on specific populations, whether we're focusing on girls, aboriginal women, or immigrant women. We have a multi-faceted approach. At other times, we focus on issues, for instance, a gap in services for women who are moving out of shelters and need second-stage housing. At other times, it's the issues, as I was mentioning before, of moving women into non-traditional employment.

We also have different approaches in terms of who we work with. We work with communities. We work with employers. We work with a broad range of organizations. What we are trying to do there, for the most part, is remove barriers that women face in participating in the economic, social, and democratic life in Canada.

This being said, at any given time approximately half of our projects are focusing on the issue of violence against women and girls.

If you'll bear with me for a few more slides on generalities about the program, then I will move into some more specifics with respect to girls.

How do groups apply to obtain funding? Organizations apply for funding to our program through two different routes, which we feel gives a fair bit of flexibility. The first is that they can respond to a targeted call for proposal. That's where we issue out a call and state specifically what we want applications to be addressing in terms of issues, or in terms of models we want to see tested, or in terms of populations that we want to see benefit from the project.

For instance, you may be familiar with the rural call that we launched last fall, in September. We were seeking projects that developed community plans to address either the issue of economic security or the issue of violence against women. That's the *volet* of targeted calls that we use to attract people to our program.

The other way of obtaining funding is simply for a group to identify an issue that they feel they can tackle and develop a proposal and apply it. At any time during the year, bring it to our attention and come up with a good, solid project that's aligned with our pillars.

In terms of the benefits to having this dual approach, we've found that it's allowed us to be responsive and also to be directive. We can do both things by having both the targeted calls and the continuous intake mechanisms. It allows us to invest more strategically than by simply sitting back and waiting to see what the groups are going to come up with. It potentially increases the reach of certain recipes that have shown success in some parts of the country so we can try to get them implemented across the country. We see this as a happy medium that allows us to build positive results from a number of angles.

Who can apply? We have a fairly broad potential market. Incorporated, Canadian, not-for-profit, as well as for-profit organizations can apply. It is an extremely diverse population of groups that apply for funding and that we in fact fund. We have small, local grassroots organizations. We have large national organizations, regional organizations.

Some of these are population-focused. For instance, there are groups that deal primarily with girls. Others are groups that are issue-based, for instance, groups that try to increase the participation of women in politics. Others are service providers. Others offer safe spaces, for instance, the shelters. But statistically, close to half our groups are women's groups in our ongoing analysis of who we're funding in the last four, five, or six years, nearly.

•(1540)

Our reach has been increasing in terms of how many groups are actually receiving funding from us for the first time. At our last assessment, approximately 40% of the groups receiving funding from the women's program were first-time recipients.

Now I'll move to an area of more specific interest to you: what we do with respect to girls. Girls have been and continue to be an important focus for the women's program. In approximately the last two years we have funded some 35 girl-specific projects. In addition to that, we have a number of projects that tackle the issue more broadly so that women and girls are benefiting.

Our approach has been rather holistic. The streams of violence, leadership, and economic security and prosperity tend to overlap and complement one another. This really is an acknowledgment of the complexity of the issues faced by women and girls and the interrelation between them, whether we're talking about the relationship between poverty and violence, role models and economic choices, etc. In our experience we rarely have projects that focus uniquely on one of those pillars.

This is also very much a reflection of the fact that the determinants of a girl's economic situation tend to be outside of her control in early life. Her economic situation will primarily be a function of her surroundings, her parental/family situation, etc. That's why our projects tend to focus on giving the girls skills, creating resilience, and creating conditions for their future success.

Our work varies tremendously in terms of either the approach we take or the population we choose to work with on a project-by-project basis.

For more specifics on some concrete girls' projects, I will defer to my colleagues here. They have much more intimate knowledge of some of the projects we thought we'd present to you as illustrations of our approaches.

Madame Martino will talk to you about the blueprint project theme that had a very girl-focused component last year. Then Madame Robichaud will speak to some aboriginal girls' projects.

Victoria.

• (1545)

**Ms. Victoria Martino (Senior Program and Policy Analyst, Program Analysis and Development Section, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, Status of Women Canada):** Blueprint Projects was SWC's first targeted call for proposals, launched in February of 2011. It was designed to test innovative and promising models and to demonstrate how approaches could best be applied to various population groups and settings across Canada.

It was a success, as more than 330 applications were received and a total of 65 projects were approved. There were seven thematic areas, including a specific theme for youth—girls and boys—to address the issue of violence against girls and women, specifically prevention. This theme was the most popular, with the largest number of applications received. Some 15 projects involving girls were approved and are now under way in communities across Canada.

The youth theme had specific features. All projects had to be youth-led, meaning youth identified the issues of concern to them, and youth also determined activities to be carried out within their communities in support of violence prevention.

To engage in violence prevention activities, projects will work to develop and strengthen the leadership skills of youth. This is a good example of how projects tackle multiple SWC priority areas—namely violence, in this case, and leadership.

I will give you two examples of the types of youth projects being funded. The first is targeting rural youth, to develop web-based resources, to engage young people online to assist them in becoming leaders in working to end violence against girls and women. Because it is web-based, the tools are being accessed by a large number of youth, not only in the targeted area but also across Canada. It is creating a safe forum for rural youth to explore issues of violence against girls and women in ways that appeal to young people.

Another project is targeting youth from immigrant communities. The project is developing a resource guide and tool kit for organizing and facilitating workshops on the issue of violence against girls, teens, and young women. Some topics it is planning on addressing are family violence, silence and shaming in communities, and forced marriages. Youth are identifying strategies and organizing and delivering workshops to other youth, families, places of worship, community organizations, and service providers. This is a good example of a culturally specific approach.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Now, for aboriginal examples...

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud (Director, Strategic Partnerships and Operations, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, Status of Women Canada):** The women's program funds many projects for aboriginal girls on reserve, off reserve, in the north, or in urban centres. The projects serve the Inuit, first nations, and Métis populations as well. The projects are being implemented on a national, regional, or community scale. They are being implemented by aboriginal organizations and also by non-aboriginal organizations.

[Translation]

Here is an example of the variety of projects we fund. The Women's Program funded a project in Winnipeg, an urban centre, for

girls aged 12 to 17. That project had two main objectives. It aimed to help develop the girls' ability to identify the obstacles that stood in their way and the strategies they could use to get fully involved in the community—be it at their school or in their neighbourhood, in their family or in their community in general. Once they were able to identify the obstacles and strategies, we also provided them with tools and leadership training so that they could assert themselves and take a step forward by participating fully in the community.

To be able to do that, the girls participated in various violence prevention and leadership training workshops adapted to the aboriginal culture.

Afterwards, the girls could also participate in monthly open dialogue forums with aboriginal women who shared their concerns. Representatives of social service agencies also took part in those dialogue forums. So the women could speak with those representatives to determine what was truly feasible, what kinds of resources were available in the communities and how they could become fully involved in the community.

Aboriginal women and girls also had discussions in talking circles. That way, the skills acquired during the training could remain in the community because the young girls did have some support.

Here is another example of how varied our projects are. We also funded a project in remote regions. There are eight communities in remote regions of Quebec, ranging from Abitibi to the North Shore and Mauricie. The project used a three-pronged approach. It was an awareness-raising project for girls on the issue of violence, but it also focused on the fact that violence is often trivialized in the communities. It was an opportunity to discuss that. Once again, those awareness-raising sessions were attended by representatives of social service agencies who could talk about the available resources.

• (1550)

[English]

**The Chair:** *Pardon.* We have about 30 seconds left, so perhaps you could wrap up, please.

[Translation]

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** Nationally, there were also joint projects between non-aboriginal and aboriginal organizations. I will now yield the floor to Ms. Savoie.

Thank you.

[English]

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** In a very broad-stroke nutshell, the types of results we're getting for girls are always related to creating conditions for future success. What that looks like is increased access for girls to information about healthy relationships. It looks like delivering workshops that develop girls' leadership skills. It looks like giving them access to mentorship programs to increase their ability to learn life's lessons. It means creating girls clubs, sometimes specifically targeting immigrant girls.

Those are the types of things we're doing. As we get through the questions and answers, I'm sure we'll have an opportunity to give more illustrations of the type of work we're doing.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. That was most helpful and very informative.

My analyst has asked if we could have, please, a complete list of the projects. You referenced some, and you highlighted some initiatives, but a complete list would be very much appreciated.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** For those circumstances where we were referring to specific projects, we will; some were more general comments that relate to multiple projects. But we will make sure that we provide you with something useful.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

We'll begin our first round of questioning with Madam James, please, for seven minutes.

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome to our three guests. It's actually quite exciting, I think, for this committee as a whole to have you here today. As you know, we're starting a new committee on the economic prospects of Canadian girls. I think having you here to briefly go over some of the things that Status of Women can actually do and what you have been doing is of big benefit to this committee.

You mentioned that half of the projects are actually geared toward violence against women and girls, and I found that interesting; we actually just studied that particular area, and we found that to be a direct link to economic prospects for girls and women. One of the conclusions we came out with was that when there is an absence of economic stability or status for women, they tend to be more susceptible to a life of violence. So I just wanted to put that on the table.

You mentioned something about "blueprint projects", although I'm not sure if you actually used that term. I'm just hoping that we're talking about the same thing. You talked about 15 projects that were under way.

Are they actually the same blueprint projects I'm talking about as well?

They are. And I think it was Ms. Martino who had actually talked about it.

**Ms. Victoria Martino:** Yes.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Okay.

I'm just wondering if you could explain to the committee how this approach of the blueprint projects is different from the typical approach of accepting and reviewing applications. Why is this particular project different?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I'll start with some of the key characteristics, and then I'll let Madame Martino give you some examples of actual components of those projects.

The blueprints are very different from the approach of continuous intake. In February 2011 we sought out proposals under seven different themes. One of them was relating to youth, and that's the one that Madame Martino spoke to in more detail.

Now, in terms of the benefits of the blueprint projects, what we had in mind was a streamlined approach so that groups did not invest time and resources as exhaustively as they used to do. It creates less risk for them to be applying for this type of call for proposals. The counterpart to this was that we were prescriptive in certain elements that we wanted to see in the actual projects.

I'll let Madame Martino give you a few examples of some of the prescriptive requirements we had in the blueprint projects, keeping in mind that the intention for us was that we wanted to test a model that seemed promising—or increase the reach of a model that was successful—or learn more about something that various studies were telling us may be helpful.

Over to you.

• (1555)

**Ms. Victoria Martino:** On projects, we're still targeting our three priority areas: violence, economic security, and leadership, but under blueprint they were looking at specific issues such as the youth one I mentioned. They had predetermined or predefined elements like maximum duration and funding amount, key activities—which I will speak to—and key deliverables.

Some of the key activities were beginning with—and each of the projects had to include these key components—the adaptation to the local need or population group, so there was a needs assessment in the gender-based analysis and alignment with partners, the development or adaptation of approaches, models, programs, tools, resources, strategies, supports, etc.

In the delivery and implementation it was normally working with women and/or girls in their communities and key stakeholders.

Finally, there was a key component included of expecting groups to share their learnings and results.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you very much.

I just want to kind of sum that up. Are you saying that this particular project, the blueprint project, actually reduces the administrative burden on organizations that want to apply?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Very much so.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** You mentioned it is less of a risk.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** For a group to just go out on a limb and fully dedicate a resource to developing a project, not knowing if it's perfectly aligned with what we would be seeking, involves risk for them, definitely, so the feedback we've received from groups since we first tried this blueprint project approach and from the next two targeted calls that we had in 2011 has been extremely positive. The groups told us it gave them clarity in terms of what their expectations were, what they were expected to provide, do, etc.

Overall, the response has been extremely positive.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you very much.

In your brief you mentioned two specific things regarding rural youth: engaging the youth online, and also immigrant youth. You mentioned two projects.

Were they related to violence or were they related to economic prosperity?

**Ms. Victoria Martino:** The theme for youth was violence prevention.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** In this committee we're now studying the economic prospects of Canadian girls, so I'm kind of more curious about whether the blueprint projects.... I'm sure you mentioned economic security, so I believe it is included in the blueprint projects.

Could you explain to the committee the different areas or projects that they are related to with regard to economic prosperity?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Yes. Of the seven themes on which we called for proposals in February 2011, we had three themes that specifically focused on economic prosperity. One was to increase the recruitment of women in non-traditional employment. One was to increase their retention in non-traditional employment, because we found at times that people were successful in attracting women but not successful in retaining the women, so we wanted to test a few models in both of these areas. The third that related to economic prosperity had to do with creating growth and financial opportunities for women business owners. Those were the three out of the seven themes that dealt with economic security and prosperity.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now we go to Madam Boutin-Sweet, for seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP):** Ladies, thank you for joining us today. I also want to thank you for all the work you are doing. It appears to be good work, and it is very appreciated.

I have not been sitting on this committee for very long. Considering your age, perhaps you have not been with Status of Women Canada for very long either.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** That's nice of you to say.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** In 2007, the committee produced a report titled "The Impacts of Funding and Program Changes at Status of Women Canada".

Are you familiar with that report?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Yes, I am.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** In that case, I don't think I need to go over the report recommendations. Could you tell us what came of those recommendations? Have they been implemented, five years after the fact?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Are you interested in any specific recommendation?

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Generally speaking, have the recommendations been implemented? Have all, some or none of them been implemented?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** I cannot give you an accurate answer without referring to a specific recommendation. I have a number of reports and recommendations on several topics we have handled in a way—

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** I can give you a few examples, if you like.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Yes, please.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** For instance, it was recommended that Status of Women Canada reverse its decision to close 12 regional offices.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** The information I gave you earlier makes it clear that we have service points in five Canadian cities.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** So 5 out of the 12 have been reopened. Is that right?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** They have not necessarily been reopened, as some of the service points were never closed.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Do you know whether the 12 service points that were closed are still closed?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Some offices were consolidated. For instance, in Vancouver, we had an office that was more of a service point. It was merged with the Edmonton office. We also had a service point in Quebec City that was merged with the one in Montreal. So there was some consolidation.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Another recommendation was that Status of Women maintain its Policy Research Fund to pay for independent policy research.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** That is beyond my purview, as the Women's Program has nothing to do with policy. My colleague Sébastien Goupil could talk to you about policy research in more detail next week.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Could you repeat his name?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** His name is Sébastien Goupil. I think he will be testifying before this committee on March 7.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Thank you.

It was also recommended that the funding through the Women's Program be made available only to non-profit organizations.

I don't think that is the case.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Virtually all of our funding goes to non-profit organizations. To my knowledge, over the last five or six years, only two projects provided funding to for-profit groups.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** How many such projects did you say there were?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** There were 2 out of nearly 500.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** What types of projects are you talking about?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** I am talking about projects for making score cards in order to identify the number of women and members of other minority groups who sit on the boards of directors of the country's 500 largest companies. In the other case, the funding went to a social enterprise that, unfortunately, falls under the definition.... Many social enterprises are for-profit. It comes down to how the enterprise is classified by the Canada Revenue Agency.

[English]

Social enterprises tend to be for profit and would not be otherwise eligible for our funding if we didn't have that exception.

[Translation]

I apologize for continuing in English, but I was unsure whether "*entreprises à vocation sociale*" rendered exactly what I was trying to say when talking about social enterprises.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Another recommendation was that Status of Women Canada remove the limitations on funding for research and advocacy activities in the revised terms and conditions of the Women's Program.

I have with me a document that lists about 35 organizations whose funding was reduced or totally eliminated under the Conservative government. Those organizations' activities include the advancement of equality, research, women's rights advocacy and political action. Giving money to those types of groups was part of the recommendations. Therefore, despite the fact that the recommendations were made by the committee, it appears that several of them have not been implemented. Is that what you have seen in your everyday work?

• (1605)

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** I think it would be better to put this question to political representatives rather than to bureaucrats. That being said, I find that the program's terms and conditions ensure that 99.9% of our funding goes to non-profit organizations.

If you want a political answer to your question, I suggest you ask the minister.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Thank you very much. I will ask some different questions.

On your website, you talk about the three priority areas the program addresses, including improving women's and girls' economic security and prosperity. You also talked about that today.

Do you have an idea of what proportion of the funding applications are submitted by girl-specific types of groups?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** I will not venture to give you a figure on the proportion of applications. As for the proportion of what we fund, I can say that roughly a quarter of our projects focus specifically on women's and girls' economic security or prosperity.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Okay.

I also want to know how many organizations had their applications approved, but that does not help me if I don't know how many organizations applied.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** I think I should let you know that, every time we issue a call for proposals, we receive a lot more proposals than we can fund; that goes without saying.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Perhaps we can save that for the next round.

Madam Bateman.

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

[Translation]

Thank you for your presentation. I am very impressed by your work.

[English]

I understand your intake is year-round. Can you tell me when that happened and if you've encountered administrative efficiencies as a result? I've administered programs in the past, and when we have these artificial deadlines, sometimes we create false requirements for work and then we have to manage peaks that don't really exist. So I'd like to know when that happened and what the impacts on your business capacity were.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** In June 2010, we moved from calls for proposals at fixed dates to a system where we were accepting applications all year. That's going to be two years ago this spring. There were benefits for us in managing the peaks and valleys of workloads and making the best use of our resources, but the primary driver was benefits to groups. Groups were not always able to align the funding from the various sources. These dates, these deadlines, could be different for the federal government, the provincial government, or the municipal government, and they were all seeking support for specific initiatives. By removing our deadline, we gave them more flexibility and the ability to work with whatever the deadline of the remaining funder was, and we would just hop along on that.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** That's so helpful and respectful to your funding colleagues. I appreciate that.

By getting rid of the peaks and valleys, were you able to achieve any staffing efficiencies? How did that affect you?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It allowed us to put more emphasis on our assessment of program results and to better inform our decisions for future funding. So it's definitely a priority for us to analyze.

• (1610)

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** That's my next question, and perhaps my bigger question. You spoke in your presentation—and thank you so much for that—about your various objectives and how you're making your assessments and how you are assessing the worth of your decisions. Could you speak a little bit about that? Tell us what you're looking for and how you do that work.



**Ms. Linda Savoie:** As to process, since June 2010, we've been involving other federal departments as much as possible. We are seeking their input on our project proposals and we are seeking opportunities to piggyback and co-fund certain initiatives. This also allows us to engage departments that should have been engaged but were not. We work with them on issues such as violence, where we don't have the levers that some other departments have. So with respect to process, we've been moving more and more into project sharing and common assessments.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** How do you manage the common assessments, and what are the criteria you're looking for?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It can be challenging, because each program or department has its own terms and conditions. However, we look for things such as value for money. We look for alignment with our three pillars, and we consider whether there are emerging issues and whether they align with the priorities of the federal government. So we have a number of—

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Do you ever go back and actually align it to what's in a throne speech, for example?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** That would be common ground for both departments, of course.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Yes.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** You said the terms and conditions are always different, but do you decide upon goals? If you're going to decide on funding a project, say, with Public Safety to help protect women, for example, do you decide on what you're trying to achieve before you fund the project?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** For instance, before we do a call for proposal we'll consult with members of the federal family in other departments to see if there's an alignment there. What that—

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** I'm just curious. Once you actually make the decision to fund a particular project, is it your responsibility as a co-funder with your colleagues from whatever department, but Public Safety, say, for argument's sake.... Do you then say, okay, what are we trying to achieve? We've decided...a call for proposal, blah blah blah. We are choosing this one because they're going to do X, Y, and Z. And then how are we assessing that?

I don't understand how it would be different for both departments if you're co-funding. Do you know what I'm saying? I'm having trouble leaping to that part.

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** I was thinking about that.

Actually, we did fund a project with Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development. We—the Status of Women and Aboriginal Affairs—sat down to see what the need was, to look at our respective

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** The point is to Madame Savoie, *encore une fois*. When you're co-funding a project, do you or do you not write out what you're trying to achieve?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Definitely.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** So why is it difficult? Why do you have departments trying to achieve different things if you've sat down together and decided what you're trying to achieve with taxpayers and funding?

I'm just not getting that.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I think it was not always perfectly aligned. It's because we're all project-based. So each project has that framework, that logic framework that comes with it. It describes what it's trying to achieve.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** But aren't you funding the project?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Yes, we are.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Would you set up the objective of the project?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Not always. On the calls for proposals, for example, in the blueprints we set out what the outcomes are going to be. In other cases, when groups come forward to see us, they set out the outcomes, and they have to show how those outcomes are aligned with our mandate.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Okay. So you—

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. Sorry.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** I look forward to revisiting that at some other time.

Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** That would be a good thing.

Madam Sgro, for seven minutes, please.

**Hon. Judy Sgro (York West, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Welcome. We've been talking a lot about you, so it's great to finally have you here with us.

In getting ready and doing some analysis on the study we're just starting out on, in many of the areas they pointed out that Canada's women and girls were doing quite well in comparison to many other countries. But the one area that was flagged was the issue of aboriginal girls. I think we're all well aware of the fact that there are many challenges there.

Can you give me some more information on how you're doing outreach and what other programs you're doing specifically for the aboriginal girls? I think that's our biggest challenge.

• (1615)

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** In terms of outreach, for example, the rural call was actually very good in harnessing projects from aboriginal communities. We received quite a few projects.

In terms of outreach, we also have....

[Translation]

My apologies, but I will continue in French.

We begin by contacting other departments with relatively similar projects or programs to see how we could work together. We work with some national organizations, such as the Native Women's Association of Canada.

So we have different ways to reach girls in the communities. We talked about that earlier, and the principle is very similar. We use either targeted calls, or projects where we are familiar with some of the organizations and where we can be proactive. People sometimes come see us and tell us about projects. That helps us figure out whether we could work with other organizations.

As I was saying earlier, there are also organizations that are not necessarily aboriginal, but are working with aboriginal groups. When we meet with organizations, we do our best to consider that aspect. We meet with organizations and ask them where they work, what their target population is, whether they work with aboriginal people and whether they were thinking about aboriginals when developing their project. Sometimes, that is indeed the case. We ask those organizations if they have thought about a more culturally appropriate approach. Therefore, we try to reach the population, either through calls or our work, be it in regional offices or the head office.

I don't know whether I have answered your question fully.

[*English*]

Am I answering your question?

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Do you have some examples of some specific projects that are currently under way that are specific to—

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** Yes.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:**—trying to reach out to the aboriginal girls so that they know there are opportunities for them?

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** Yes, I was just about to do that earlier.

[*Translation*]

I am referring to a specific project. I briefly mentioned it earlier. That project was carried out in remote Quebec communities. As part of the initiative, an organization would go to eight communities and educate young girls. Once that step was completed, some of the girls were asked whether they were interested in doing more in terms of research on the topic at hand—in this case, violence—by creating short films or any other artistic products they could distribute. Afterwards, they could speak publicly about their product. It was sometimes difficult to do that in certain communities. Once the short films or artistic products were completed, the women would get an opportunity to distribute them in their community, in the broader sense, so that those communities would be informed about the issues.

An interesting project was carried out by a non-aboriginal organization that had developed a model based on leadership training for young women. The women had mentors and were given an opportunity to develop peer networks and then go back home to do activities and put the skills they had acquired during the training into practice. They could go back to their respective communities and talk about violence-related issues or other types of issues. An aboriginal organization visited that non-aboriginal organization to see whether the model could be adapted. That model was extremely successful.

They sat down and considered the issues for discussion and the way they should be addressed. Then, they created an advisory committee made up of 10 young aboriginal women to identify the

topics. Afterwards, they created the national forum. Once again, the goal was to try to reach young aboriginal women. Everyone was invited. I think that almost 340 people showed an interest, and a small number of them were chosen because we could not take everyone.

However, that gave us an opportunity to provide those young women with training. They then returned to their communities. They have been given support to develop community projects, try to get their community interested in certain issues and find the right partners.

Those are examples of projects whose scope is regional, but also national. Aboriginal and non-aboriginal organizations working together to get the best of both worlds really worked well in this case. It was very productive.

• (1620)

[*English*]

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** How do you assess the success of some of these different programs? Continue on the aboriginal girls side in particular.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** For a short period of time, success can be measured based on the rate of participation and the resulting projects. When projects are being considered, it comes down to whether they could have a sustainable impact on the community. That is often determined based on participation rates. After a while, it becomes more complicated to determine the long-term impact because the projects have a set length.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** I would add that, when projects are being designed, we often try to create that sustainability by seeking out partners.

[*English*]

For the longer-term success of the initiatives, we'll ask that the community involvement be part of the mix of the project. It creates engagement and ownership in the longer term. Otherwise, we're in, we're out, and then things collapse. We're keen on trying to create circumstances for sustainability.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

It is now Madam Young for five minutes.

**Ms. Wai Young (Vancouver South, CPC):** Thank you very much for being here today and for being so thorough in presenting us with all of this wonderful information.

I know there have been some changes to the program in the last year or two, as you have said. I want to be very specific about it so that we have it clear in our heads, because we've been hearing so much about what the situation is. I notice in your presentation that you said you had over 330 applications and were only able to fund 15 projects in this one area. Is that correct?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** We had some 330 applications for the blueprint projects: 65 were funded and 15 were youth- and girl-specific.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Like most or all government programs, would you say that generally or overall you always received more applications than you were able to fund?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Definitely. Like every program, there is a range in terms of quality and alignment with our program. There are some professional applicants out there. There are always a certain percentage of projects that are not relevant to what we're trying to achieve. This being said, a large number of interesting groups and interesting projects don't quite make the cut as we have the ability to pick the better ones.

**Ms. Wai Young:** When the member opposite said we weren't able to fund some 30 organizations, or some hundreds of organizations, as is the case here, that would be a normal circumstance, given that you always receive hundreds more applications than you're able to fund.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It's always a competitive process, yes.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Right, to make that very clear.

Would you say that the program funding over the last couple of years has been increased for projects across Canada and to groups?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** In terms of money available for grants and contributions, the money that goes out to groups has approximately doubled since 2007.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Under the Conservative government, the budget for programming in Status of Women has doubled?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That's correct. The grants and contributions component went from some \$10 million to close to \$19 million.

**Ms. Wai Young:** That's amazing, given that we're in budget austerity. Doubling a budget is quite good.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It's a rare circumstance in government.

**Ms. Wai Young:** That's an incredible piece of information. Thank you for clarifying that.

I would like to ask you about the blueprint program. In the past, I have supported many organizations in applying for funding or helped them write applications. I used to sit on the board of the YWCA in Vancouver, etc. I am quite amazed by how you've been able to develop and apply this program, because I know sometimes days, months, and years—can I say years?—go into writing a great proposal. It may be something quite complicated and national. Would you say that is accurate?

• (1625)

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It's definitely a big investment of resources, particularly since organizations in the non-profit sector tend to have very few full-time employees and limited capacity to invest in non-essential services. Yes, the feedback I've been receiving from non-profits I have been visiting has been extremely positive with respect to the blueprint projects.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Not only have we doubled the budget for the program, but in addition to that we've obviously implemented some efficiencies to support the communities that are applying for these funds.

If you were to name one or two of the comments or responses you've received from these organizations...why do they like these changes?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** One of the things I get the most is clarity. A lot of groups have stated that it's extremely helpful for them to know exactly what we're seeking. For instance, we want a gender-based analysis as part of their project. Another example is a knowledge-dissemination strategy. They have clarity with respect to that, and they also see that we are serious in terms of project evaluation.

In the blueprints we emphasize the importance of the evaluation, because we did want some learning to come from this, and we wanted to be able to analyze this for years to come and learn and invest more wisely.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Now I have Ms. Freeman for five minutes, please.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman (Argenteuil—Papineau—Mirabel, NDP):** I'll be passing to my colleague, Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet, for a quick follow-up on her question.

[Translation]

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Thank you.

I just wanted to specify something about the 35 groups I mentioned earlier. Those are not new groups, but groups that had already been receiving funding, which was then cut. I also wanted to give you time to finish your answer to my question on the percentage of girl-specific projects.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Are you talking about model projects?

I apologize, but—

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** As part of the Blueprint Projects, you talked about 65 projects, 15 of which were geared toward young women, but I would like to know what the situation is overall.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Through that initiative, we identified 65 projects that received funding. Fifteen of them are youth-related projects. We called for projects carried out by young women and aimed at addressing the issue of violence against women and girls. Those 15 projects are specifically focused on that objective and require the active participation of young girls.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** Given that my question was more general, could you send us a written answer?

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Do you want to know how many projects, out of the 330, were focused on the economic issue or how many were focused on girls?

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** I want to know how many of them were focused on girls and how many have been approved. Thank you.

**Mrs. Linda Savoie:** Okay.

**Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet:** I yield the floor to Ms. Freeman.

[English]

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** *Merci.* Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for being here today. This has been very informative.

I have a few questions, just to clear up a few things. In your presentation I see four regional offices: Edmonton, Montreal, Moncton, and Ottawa. You said there were five. Where's the fifth one?

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** The Ontario region is based in the Ottawa office.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** That's still four offices.

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** National aboriginal is my unit.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Okay, so there are five offices in total, one of them being national, also based in Ottawa, yes?

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** There are, yes.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Okay, great. I started being confused there because I know there used to be 16, and 12 were closed, so I wasn't sure what had happened there.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I think I created that confusion.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** That's okay. It's clear to me now.

We also talked about the fact that we went from \$10 million.... When was that funding?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It was in 2007.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** It went to \$19 million in 2007.

I have a question about what has happened to the community fund and the partnership fund. I can't seem to find it anymore, but it looks like.... In the role it says "develop and strengthen partnerships with federal partners to work...." You seemed to be talking.... Is it now absorbed into the women's program?

• (1630)

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** The \$10 million or \$19 million is not allocated under either fund specifically, so our total funding envelope is unrelated to which mechanism we use to get the money out. Whether it was a community fund project or a partnership fund project was simply the mechanism that was used to seek the project and assess the project.

Basically, over the last two years that distinction, which was becoming a little bit artificial, has faded. We look at all our projects as benefiting from having partners. Having isolated what was the community fund in the past gave people the impression that partners were not necessary in a community fund project, when in fact the partnerships are a tool toward sustainability.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** If that's what's best, then that's good. In that case, what are we now talking about? Is the funding that was previously for the community partnership funds now also agglomerated into the women's program, and that could maybe account for the difference in funding, or is it really an increase in funding?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** No, it's really an increase. It's all women's programs funding. Grants and contributions for the agency were in the order of approximately \$10 million and are now approximately \$19 million, no matter what fund or mechanism.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Okay. But over a longer period of time it's not really an increase, because under the previous governments, before the Conservative government, it was closer to \$20 million. Am I correct?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I have data only back to—let me see—2005, I believe. In terms of grants and contributions, our budget was approximately \$11 million back then. In 2006-07 it was close to \$12 million, and it jumped in 2007-08 to \$18 million, and went on and on.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** This isn't—

**The Chair:** Thank you. I'm sorry. That will have to wait until the next round.

Now we'll go to Madam Ambler for five minutes, please.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our guests for being here today and for their informative presentations.

I noted with interest that the minister recently announced a program to support young girls in leadership roles. It's specifically based on a pilot project in Toronto called Protégé. My understanding of this program is that it encourages leadership in young women by allowing them to job-shadow municipal councillors. Perhaps there's more to it than that, but that's the part I know about.

In fact, a number of us here participated back in November or December, I think, in a similar program that McGill University has. I think it's called Women in the House. I had a young fourth-year environmental studies student shadow me for the day. I thought that was great. I would have loved to have had that sort of opportunity to shadow a councillor or a member of Parliament when I was younger.

I was wondering if you could tell us about that project, its purpose, and how it's going.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That would be the project with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the FCM...?

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Yes.

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** The project started a few months ago. What you described is very true: it's job shadowing, six hours per week, and it's taking place in four different communities, Edmonton being one of them. Unfortunately, the other three escape me, but I can send you the information.

It's also to make sure that while they are job shadowing the women can also try to be on boards during the period of the program and afterward, so they're working with different agencies and boards to make sure there is some continuity. It's also to help them develop skills and leadership skills to run for municipal campaigns, so yes, it is basically.... And it is going as planned. It's going well—

• (1635)

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** That's great.

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** I don't necessarily have the interim report in front of me, but I know that it's a project that is going well. The FCM has a very strong capacity to deliver that kind of project. They're very knowledgeable. It's going pretty well right now.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Do you have any idea of how many young women are involved?

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** Right now I know that they're still recruiting. I know that they have recruited. I don't have the exact number. I'm waiting for my interim report, unfortunately, so I probably will be able to give you more information in a couple of weeks. I should get the report then.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Okay.

Is it joint funding with Status of Women Canada and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities?

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** They provide in-kind contributions and some time to the project.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Okay. So this is new for the federal government, for Status of Women, a new project...?

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** Well, we've funded the FCM before for projects that had the same ultimate goal of getting young women involved or even of going into schools to tell young women about the interests of being involved in the political world. It's not the first time we have had that kind of project.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Actually, in Quebec we funded a group called Femmes, Politique et Démocratie, which has been providing non-partisan training for women who are interested in politics, whether that's at the municipal or other levels. So we do have, on an ongoing basis, a number of projects that touch upon that subject matter, with different recipes.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Right, different ways of doing it. I'd be interested in knowing more. If your interim report is something that you can share with us, that would be welcomed. I'd appreciate that.

I'm not sure how much time....

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** All right. Thank you. That's okay.

**The Chair:** Okay. Thank you very much.

We'll move to Madam Freeman for five minutes, please.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** That's great. Thank you, Madam Chair.

We can continue from where we were. Just to clarify, that funding you're talking about, the funding that's available, is just for the women's program...?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That's right.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** So on the numbers we're talking about when we're talking about \$10 million, it's also just for the women's program...?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That is grants and contributions money that is available for groups.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** But now with the \$19 million, we're talking about what used to be regional offices and what used to be partnership funds, etc.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** No, those would be operating funds. Our budgets are separate. Operating funds pay for our salary and our overhead. Grants and contributions goes in its entirety to groups and organizations. When I was referring to that \$10 million, which was \$12 million, \$11 million, \$10 million, etc., that was specifically

grants and contributions, the totality of which goes out to organizations outside Status of Women.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Right. I'm glad it is increasing there. But what I'm saying is that I fear that it has been given a larger number of things to fund. Meanwhile, the scope has been limited. For instance, it's still the case that initiatives not eligible include domestic advocacy activities and lobbying of federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Is that right?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That's correct.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** In effect, in this \$19 million we're now also talking about the community and partnerships funds, or what used to be, and the mandate is limited. That concerns me a little bit. As my colleague Madam Boutin-Sweet was saying, there are a lot of organizations fighting for women's rights that no longer get funding. The funding may be going up for what's going out, but it's limited. There are a wider variety of things to fund with essentially less money.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** What you are describing is basically what the terms and conditions of our programs are, and terms and conditions evolve over time. We are here to implement them, not choose them. Yes, they have evolved over time. The program's been around for a long time, so there have been multiple iterations. It's always a matter of what the focus is decided to be at the time of the terms and conditions renewal, and that's what we implement.

• (1640)

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Of course.

I'm curious as to what the definition of advocacy is. How do you decide what an advocacy program is?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** The groups are very clear themselves about what they consider to be the advocacy they do. In the two years I've been with the program, I haven't had an issue with definitions of advocacy.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** I'm confused, though. If you were to take advocacy out of your mandate, would that help? Is it just a word? Does it include awareness campaigns?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** What we fund are projects that are directly going to benefit women or are directly going to be removing barriers to women's participation. The activities connected to that are what we fund.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** Another thing I was concerned about is that a project goes up to 36 months. So if you fund an organization's project for 36 months, there is no option to renew.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That's right. We're project-based; we're not group-based. It's not a situation of core funding. Core funding has mostly disappeared from all levels of government across Canada in the last 15 or so years. We're all functioning on a project basis, and that is one of the consequences. When the project is over, we can't refund the exact same project, hence the importance we've been placing on creating community action plans and on engaging partners in the community to create that sustainability once we're gone.

**Ms. Mylène Freeman:** That can be too bad, though, because I know of some projects that do work but that cannot be refunded, and now they can't continue them because there is not really any.... Do you follow up on that? Do you try to find other resources for them? Are there other resources for them?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Rather than create new services, we try to fund things that will improve existing services, so that we're not creating exactly that situation you're describing. For instance, if there are services for immigrant women in a certain part of the country and they're not satisfactory, what we do is help them analyze the defects and work with the service providers to fix those gaps.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Albas, please, for five minutes.

**Mr. Dan Albas (Okanagan—Coquihalla, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank our witnesses for being here today. I am new to the committee, so it's been a great learning opportunity for me.

Earlier, Ms. James was going through a number of questions in regard to different projects specific to girls. Since we are going to be doing a study on girls, I figured I probably could ask some questions along that line so I can learn a little more.

I understand there are 35 girl-specific projects you are currently working with. Is that correct?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That's how many we funded in the last approximately two years.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Okay.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Those are girl-specific. That doesn't mean there are not a number of other projects we are funding that have a girl component, but those would be for women and girls.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I think you also mentioned that obviously violence against women would apply. There would be a benefit to family members such as girls? Okay.

How many of those would you say are related to the pillar of prosperity or of becoming economically engaged? Would it be a third? I know it must be difficult, because it sounds to me as though often it's grassroot organizations that say this is what they see missing in their community.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** I don't have an exact number right now, but we could provide that—the number of those 35 that are economic. But I would say they rarely have an economic focus.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Okay, that's fair to say, and I appreciate that.

I do note that the chair mentioned you would be referring a breakdown of projects to the committee. So that would apply to these 35. Is that correct?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** We could certainly include those 35.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** Could you do that along with some basic figures by region, indicating whether it is more urban-based or rural-based? I think that would be helpful. You mentioned there's a difference between, let's say, aboriginal programs and certain cultural programs that are specific to an area, as well as the cost and what not. I think it would be really helpful for us to get a handle on what we're currently doing, because we may want to use some of those examples.

Speaking of examples, could you give me an example of one of those types of programs that you think is rather interesting from the perspective of someone who deals with and works on these projects on an ongoing basis? Maybe you could give an example and tell us something interesting you found in the outcome from it.

• (1645)

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It's difficult to choose.

**Ms. Victoria Martino:** We're funding a number of projects with a lot of interesting approaches. One project in particular is working to develop girl-led clubs in schools to empower girls and young women to assume leadership roles in their schools and in their communities. It's a project that's working at educating and giving the knowledge to these girls about domestic as well as international issues around gender inequalities. It's interesting that they're working in their settings to allow them to be proactive in their school setting. So this is empowering them, giving them the leadership skills, and giving them the knowledge about the issues and barriers.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** That's interesting.

I was at a Girl Guides conference. I was just there for the opening ceremonies, and I sat down with some of the leaders. They actually said one of the ways they found most effective to get to younger girls is to have older girls such as the Pathfinders present to them.

I guess they would call it the "Game of Life", and they would say, "We're going to fundraise for a project. How will we come up with the money?" They engage them on it, and they find that's the most effective way of doing it. It sounds like a very similar thing.

What region of Canada is this in?

**Ms. Victoria Martino:** It's a national project.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** It's a national one? Excellent.

**Ms. Pascale Robichaud:** It's national. It started in Toronto as a pilot. It's going to Vancouver, and it's also going to be going to the east coast. I don't have the name off the top of my head, but Vancouver is there and so is Toronto. I guess the locations are mostly decided, because they do build partnerships with school boards, and it's quite a process. So they go where the school boards are open to starting those girls' clubs.

**Mr. Dan Albas:** I think that's very interesting, because oftentimes we talk about partnering with other levels of government, such as the province, and on occasion obviously with the province through the municipalities, but also, in this case, with school districts. That's very interesting. I guess that would be one way of reaching them.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much.

Madam James, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm actually going to pass my time over to Ms. Young. I understand she has some questions or a continuation of her questions, and then the order of questions can continue with Ms. Bateman and then Ms. Ambler, if there's time.

Thank you.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Thank you for that, Ms. James.

I just wanted to continue our conversation around the blueprint process, because from what I understood you to say, that has in fact made the process clearer for the organizations as well as possibly for the program overall. I wanted to just sort of explore that to see how that's changed for the program.

You said when I last asked you that the blueprint process had helped the organizations develop a clearer direction or idea of what they want to do with their project. Can you just expand on that a little bit?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** What we were proposing for each of the projects we were going to fund—for instance, under the theme of the blueprint projects—was a specific recipe. But we left it to the groups to propose activities that take into consideration their local circumstances. The big framework was set. There must be a gender-based analysis. There must be a knowledge dissemination strategy. In some cases we wanted to see things such as a mentoring component. So those broad components were required.

The groups had some flexibility in identifying the best fit in implementing their work. So the direction was clear from the outset, rather than starting from scratch. Some groups are more experienced than others in developing project proposals, and each department has its own little framework that they like groups to fit in, as does each province. For the applicants, it was much simpler and they were thankful for that.

• (1650)

**Ms. Wai Young:** So overall, the community groups and the organizations were supportive of the blueprint project?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Every time I go to visit groups they mention this as one of the best changes implemented at Status of Women in the last year.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Has doubling the budget and streamlining the process made people happier about the Status of Women program?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Government programs are such that there are usually people who are happy with them and people who are not. But I would say that the large number of applications we get every time we issue a call speaks to the interest that groups have in our program.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Would you say that the set of clear directions also contributes to better outcomes or stronger evaluations, which you said are now being shared? It sounds as if there is a bit of a downstream process for strengthening the program, getting better outcomes, and sharing the results with other organizations across Canada.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It's totally our intention. We're only one year into our first attempt at doing this, and the blueprint projects were two-year projects for the most part, although I believe some were for three years. As the experience comes to its two-year point, we will be able to analyze our approach in detail.

So far what we have sought feedback on, on the part of groups, has been the application process and whether it was user-friendly. But as we advance we will be seeking input from groups on how the rest of the implementation panned out. We hope to have a much more coherent evaluation, so that rather than doing an evaluation project by project, we will be able to have clusters of projects doing similar things in different environments and learn something significant from this arrangement.

**Ms. Wai Young:** Is there a mechanism for the Status of Women program to share learning or capture best practices across the country?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Yes, at this point we've had a couple of calls with groups. For instance, if four groups are working on a similar project, we've had conference calls with them so they can share and know what each one is doing, avoid reinventing the wheel, learn from one another's mistakes, and share resources. Now that we're approaching the one-year point, we will be doing more of these community calls to ensure that a sharing of knowledge takes place.

**Ms. Wai Young:** I want to congratulate you on this great work.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I'm sorry, that's it.

Ms. Sgro.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** You talked about democratic participation in the programs you're doing for young women. Are you seeing this done, in particular within the new immigrant community?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Our projects tend to be with the higher brackets of girls and young women. We fund a number of projects where we are facilitating the integration of immigrant women into school boards, so there is a natural progression. Some of our groups like to see a sequence in which they make women familiar with their school organizations, give them roles as parents where they feel less intimidated, and then move them along the continuum to municipal politics and other forms of engagement. With immigrant women, we've had some specific projects designed to facilitate their integration into school boards.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** But has literacy, when it comes to the political environment—three levels of government and so on and so forth—been part of the projects with some of these immigrant women, or girls in particular? Or does none of it ring a bell when you've got so many?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** With most of these projects that conduct schools to train women in political literacy or engagement literacy, for instance, if they have a special emphasis on one population of women, it will be on aboriginal women...unless there's something I don't recall.

There's not one that comes to mind that has a specific focus on immigrant women; however, when they're happening in large urban centres like Toronto, Montreal, the participants reflect the diversity of the environment where the project is taking place.

• (1655)

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** What about young women entrepreneurs? Surely the Status of Women must have some ability to provide funding for encouraging entrepreneurs.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That would be theme 7, right?

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** At one point I believe Status of Women was funding certain programs along that line.

**Ms. Victoria Martino:** Under blueprints for theme 7, we were looking at just that, adapting and creating different supports and programs that would assist women in business to develop and grow their businesses. The theme was not specifically targeting young women in business, but it was not excluding them. It was open to women who owned businesses.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Are you continuing to support those kinds of initiatives?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** We haven't had a call for proposals specifically directed at women entrepreneurs, except for that one a year ago. That doesn't mean we're not going to do some more.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Are you precluded from continuing to offer that within your mandate?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** No. Our terms and conditions allowed us to do that last year. It's a matter...we have the three pillars, three areas—

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Resources.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Yes, multiple needs, multiple populations.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Understood.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** We also have to study carefully what the right recipes are and consult with other stakeholders, other members of the federal family, to make sure what we are proposing is logical and that it is going to be successful.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Exactly. I think as taxpayers we all want to see that happen.

What is the total budget for the Status of Women?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** For the entire department it's somewhere in the mid \$34 million ballpark. I don't want you to—

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** I realize it's a bit of a scramble there. I wasn't sure if you were the appropriate person to be asking or if it's next week's group.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Next week's group would have the exact amounts, but I believe I have something close here. For instance, in the main estimates for 2010-11, it was \$30.8 million. I don't have extensive data for the year.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** But you think it's approximately \$34 million, somewhere around there now.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** It's probably closer to the same amount.

**Hon. Judy Sgro:** Closer to the \$30.8 million?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Yes.

**The Chair:** I'm terribly sorry, but our time is finished.

I want to say thank you very much to the presenters, to the department for the Status of Women, for being here and providing us with this information. And thank you certainly to the committee.

Now at this point in time we are going to go in camera, so I will adjourn the committee meeting. We'll take a few minutes to clear the room, and we'll recommence with the subcommittee at about five o'clock or shortly thereafter.

Thank you very much.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*









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