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Chair

Ms. Hélène LeBlanc

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•(0845)

[*Translation*]

The Chair (Ms. Hélène LeBlanc (LaSalle—Émard, NDP)): Welcome to the 36th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Today is a great day for us because we are starting a new study as a result of a motion passed in the House of Commons.

Together, we are going to examine promising practices to prevent violence against women. In order to prevent violence against women, we want to include both the practices that are already in place and promising new ones. The title, in fact, allows us not only to examine all the practices in place, but also those that could be put in place in the future.

Today, we are pleased to welcome Linda Savoie, from Status of Women Canada. She is the Senior Director General, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate.

From the Public Health Agency of Canada, we welcome Kimberly Elmslie, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Branch.

From the Department of Justice, we welcome Pamela Amott, Director and Senior Counsel, Policy Centre for Victim Issues, and Gillian Blackwell, Senior Counsel and Coordinator, Children's Law and Family Violence Policy Unit.

From Statistics Canada, we have with us Kathy AuCoin, Chief, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, and Cathy Connors, Director, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

Thanks to all of you for coming here and for preparing the documents that all the committee members already have in their possession. The analysts have not prepared briefing notes, given that we have people from the departments with us. The same will be true for the next meeting. For the third meeting, the analysts will prepare documentation to assist committee members.

I extend an official welcome to John Barlow, who today becomes a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Welcome and thank you for being here.

Voices: Hear, hear!

The Chair: We are very pleased to have you as one of us.

Each presentation will last 10 minutes and will be followed by a period for questions.

I would like to start with Ms. Savoie, from Status of Women Canada. Ms. Savoie, you have 10 minutes.

Ms. Linda Savoie (Senior Director General, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, Status of Women Canada): Madam Chair, with your permission, I would like to suggest that we start with the officials from Statistics Canada so that we have all the data that provide information on our different areas of activity. Would that be acceptable to you?

The Chair: I think that the members are in agreement.

So, let us start with the Statistics Canada officials. They have 10 minutes.

Ms. Savoie, I am going to follow the agenda that the clerk has so nicely prepared for me but that I had not yet seen. Ms. Connors, the floor is yours.

[*English*]

Ms. Cathy Connors (Director, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada): Thank you for the opportunity to present to the committee on the issue of violence against women in Canada.

In this presentation we use two complementary sources of national data on victimization. The first is administrative data that are collected from police services across the country and include information on all criminal code offences that are reported to and substantiated by the police. The second source is self-reported data that are collected from Canadians age 15 years and older through the 2009 general social survey on victimization. This survey provides contextual information on victimization in Canada and highlights that many crimes are not reported to the police.

This presentation contains the most recent Statistics Canada data on violence against women in Canada with the important caveat that these data have limitations. All data sources are clearly indicated on the slides, as are any pertinent notes.

My colleague, Kathy AuCoin, is here to help answer any questions.

If you would please turn to the next slide in the deck, first we'll look at police-reported violence against women. Police-reported surveys provide an indicator of the extent and nature of all Criminal Code offences that come to the attention of the police.

Slide 3 shows the prevalence of violent incidents reported to police in Canada in 2013. We see that there were more than 300,000 victims of violent crimes. Slightly more than half of these victims were women 15 years of age and older. The rate of violent victimization for women was 1,090 female victims for every 100,000 women in the population, slightly higher than the rate for men.

Slide 4 shows the types of violence that were most frequently reported to police in 2013. Regardless of sex, the most frequently occurring forms of violence experienced by both men and women were physical assault and uttering threats. Six in ten female victims 15 years and over experienced a physical assault. A similar proportion of male victims experienced this type of violence. About 13% of female victims and 16% of male victims were victims of uttering threats.

There are some notable differences between men and women in the types of violence they reported to police. Women were almost 10 times more likely to be sexually victimized and they were three times as likely as men to be a victim of criminal harassment. Women were twice as likely to be the victim of indecent or harassing phone calls. On the other hand, men were twice as likely to be the victim of robbery.

On slide 5, we look at some of the most severe forms of violence and how they've changed over time. From this table we can see that for the most severe forms of violence, namely homicide and attempted murder, there's been a decline in rates over the five-year period for both male and female victims. Similarly, for the most frequently occurring form of violence, that is physical assault, we also see a decline in the rate over this time period. However, for sexual assault we do not see a similar decline in rates over time.

On slide 6, we look at the relationship between the victim and the accused. For the most part, female victims of violence knew their perpetrator and most, eight in ten, were victimized by a male.

Intimate partner violence, which includes both spousal and dating relationships, was three times higher for women than for men, with more than four in ten women being victimized by an intimate partner. Men are less likely than women to be victimized by an intimate partner and are more likely to be victimized by a friend, an acquaintance, or a stranger.

On slide 7 we see that consistent with patterns for violence overall, being young was a risk factor for all forms of police-reported violence against women, both within and outside the context of intimate partner relationships.

In 2013, females aged 15 to 24 generally experienced the highest rates of violence, with rates subsequently decreasing with age.

Slide 8 shows the rates of police-reported sexual victimization by age and sex of child and youth victims. In 2013, there were more than 14,000 victims of a sexual offence who were under 18. More than 80% of these young victims were female. Girls of all ages were more likely than boys to be the victim of a sexual offence, particularly during the teenage years. That being said, it's important to acknowledge that incidents of sexual violence often go unreported to police.

● (0850)

Turning now to slide 9, self-reported data from the general social survey complement police-reported data by providing information on self-reported incidents of victimization that are both reported and unreported to police. The survey captures eight offence types, three of which are violent offences: physical assault, sexual assault, and robbery.

The following slides show provincial results from the 2009 survey.

The first is slide 10. Looking at self-reported data, we find that most victims of violence choose not to report the incident to police. This is true for both spousal and non-spousal forms of violence. In 2009, among incidents of both spousal and non-spousal violence, more than two-thirds of female victims did not report the incident to police. Men were less likely than women to report the incident to police. Rates of reporting to police differ, depending on the type of crime. Among violent crimes, robberies were the most likely to be reported to police, followed by physical assaults. However, the majority of sexual assaults were not reported to the police.

Slide 11 shows the reasons given by victims for not reporting spousal violence to police. The most common reasons women gave for not reporting spousal violence to police were that they dealt with it in another way and that it was a personal matter. As you can see, women and men sometimes differ in their reasons for not reporting spousal violence. Women were six times more likely than men to say that the incident was not reported out of fear of their spouses. Women were almost twice as likely as men to say that they didn't want anyone to find out about the incident. While not shown in this chart, for non-spousal violence similar reasons were given for not reporting to police.

Looking at slide 12, victimization data suggest that certain factors are associated with the risk of violent victimization for women even when other factors are taken into account. For spousal violence, these factors include being young, having an activity limitation, and being emotionally or financially abused by a spouse. Women most at risk for non-spousal violence included those who were young, single, participated in many evening activities, used drugs, identified as an aboriginal person, or lived in a community with such social disorders as vandalism, noisy neighbours, and people using or dealing drugs.

On slide 13 we examine further the issue of spousal violence. When we refer to spousal relationships, we include both legally married and common-law relationships, both current and former. In 2009, 6% of women currently or previously living in a spousal relationship experienced spousal violence in the previous five years, similar to the rates reported for men. On this slide we see that women are more likely than men to experience the most severe forms of spousal violence. While not shown, just under half of female victims of spousal violence reported that the violence had occurred on more than one occasion in the previous five years.

Looking at slide 14, most women, eight in ten, who had been victimized by their spouse told family, friends, or another person about the incident, compared with only 56% of men. As well, 38% of women who had been victimized by their spouse used a social service. That's two times higher than for male victims. The most common services used by female victims of spousal violence were counsellors or psychologists, crisis centres or lines, and community or family centres.

Slide 15 presents information from the transition home survey. The data in this slide refer to the snapshot day of April 18, 2012. On that day, there were over 8,000 women and children staying in shelters across Canada for reasons of abuse and otherwise. Of these residents, 56% were women and 44% were their dependent children. Almost three-quarters of these women were living in shelters primarily because of abuse. Approximately one-third of women living in a shelter on snapshot day had stayed at that shelter before. In 2010 there were 593 shelters servicing the needs of abused women in Canada, which represents an increase of 17% since 2000.

● (0855)

I'll now turn to slide 16. The 2014 general social survey introduced new questions on dating violence, and expanded the set of questions on physical and sexual victimization in childhood and children witnessing spousal violence. It also added a new question on sexual violence to capture those incidents in which the person was not able to consent to sexual activity because of being drugged, intoxicated, manipulated, or forced in ways other than physical.

This survey is currently in collection, and the data are expected to be available in the fall of 2015.

● (0900)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

The floor now goes to Ms. Savoie.

You have 10 minutes for your presentation.

Ms. Linda Savoie: Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

I wish to first thank the committee for the opportunity to appear here today. We truly welcome your committee's study of best practices in education programs, social programs, and policies that can prevent violence against women in Canada.

It's especially timely that the committee launches this important study as Canada prepares to mark the 16 days of activism against gender violence from November 25 to December 10. This includes,

as you all know, December 6, Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This year will mark the 25th anniversary of the tragedy at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal, where 14 young women lost their lives.

Each year, commemorative events such as the 16 days of activism, and others such as the International Day of the Girl, which took place on October 11, provide us with the opportunity to raise awareness among Canadians of ways to reduce and prevent violence against women and girls.

These commemorative dates are part of the comprehensive approach that Status of Women Canada takes to promoting gender equality between men and women. We do this by addressing three distinct but interconnected priorities: first, ending violence against women and girls; second, increasing women's economic security and prosperity; third, encouraging increased representation of women in leadership and decision-making roles.

Through this approach, reducing and preventing violence against women and girls is a key building block for success in other aspects of their lives.

[Translation]

In Canada, addressing violence against women and girls is a responsibility that is shared quite widely. This includes a number of federal departments and agencies, some with representatives here with me today, other levels of government, and many organizations at the national, regional and local level. I hope that I can talk you into wanting to hear from a number of them.

The approach of the Women's Program at Status of Women Canada is to partner with groups and organizations across the country that in turn engage local communities in reducing and preventing violence against women and girls.

This includes projects to end violence against women and girls in rural and remote communities, violence committed in the name of so-called "honour", and working to prevent the trafficking of women and girls. We are also helping communities engage youth in preventing or eliminating cyberviolence and sexual violence against young women and girls.

And while the Women's Program does not fund projects directly with schools, the organizations we partner with provide a variety of learning opportunities in the community, which can include schools. I will talk to you about this again later.

[English]

For example, Status of Women Canada is funding the white ribbon campaign to deliver the project Huddle Up and Make the Call. Those of you who are football fans may recognize this. It is done in partnership with the Toronto Argonauts Football Club. The project utilizes the power of student-led initiatives and athlete testimonials to address gender-based violence in high schools in the greater Toronto area. It promotes and supports equitable, healthy relationships and safe environments for all students, and it inspires students to engage their peers and their communities in ending all forms of violence against women and girls.

Another example is our support to the Canadian Red Cross and Respect Group Inc., which are working together on a project to prevent relationship violence among Canadian teens. As part of this project, an online educational workshop is being created to raise awareness about relationship violence and to promote healthy relationships among young Canadians aged 14 to 18 years.

These are just sample projects. We also undertake calls for proposals that reflect our very deliberate efforts to invite stakeholders to come forward with new ideas that address different forms of violence.

● (0905)

For example, a recent call for proposals was aiming to engage communities to end violence against women and girls. It included themes of engaging men and boys in ending violence against women and girls. The projects that are being supported through this call are developing and strengthening the skills of men and boys, working in partnership of course with women and girls to identify and respond to the issues of gender-based violence in their communities.

[Translation]

We also have a number of other projects underway. Their specific aim is to engage young people in preventing violence against women on university and college campuses. These projects are addressing institutional barriers and other factors, such as institutional policies and programs, social dynamics, security provisions and physical safety issues, that limit the efforts of campus communities to address the issue of violence against their young female students.

These projects are building partnerships in order to respond to the specific issues of gender violence on campus, and to meet the needs of their female students. At Status of Women Canada, we feel that the best way to define local needs and to develop the strategies, tools and resources to meet those needs is to work with skilled partners. Each of the initiatives I have spoken about today reflects that approach. I hope that I will have the opportunity to tell you about other initiatives in the next hour.

We share the results of these projects widely through our website and we hold knowledge-sharing events to ensure that best practices and sustainable solutions can be encouraged and replicated across the country.

[English]

I hope this information I've provided will be useful for your committee's study. I would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have.

[Translation]

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

We now move to Ms. Elmslie, from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

[English]

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie (Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Branch, Public Health Agency of Canada): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

Thank you for the invitation to address this Committee about best practices in education programs, social programs and policies in Canada that prevent violence against women.

Violence against women is a significant public health issue affecting Canadians, their families and communities. It can have significant and long-term impacts on physical and mental health.

[English]

Women abused by their intimate partners experience high rates of injury, chronic pain, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance use problems. Children who have been abused or exposed to abuse in the family have a higher risk of developing chronic illnesses later in life, such as heart disease and mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, and self-harm.

Boys raised in violent homes are at increased risk of becoming perpetrators of violent behaviour when they reach adulthood, thus continuing the cycle of violence. Girls exposed to violence in the home are at increased risk of being victimized as adults.

The Public Health Agency of Canada focuses on preventing and addressing family violence. This is defined as any form of abuse, mistreatment, neglect that a child or adult experiences from a family member, or from someone with whom they have an intimate relationship. As you know, family violence takes many forms, and includes abusive behaviours that are physical, sexual, emotional, and financial in nature.

Violence against women, the focus of your study, deserves particular attention within this context. As our colleagues from Statistics Canada have indicated, violence accounts for one-quarter of police-reported violent crime in Canada. Almost 70% of family violence victims are women and girls, and 80% of intimate partner violence is against women.

Of course we know that certain populations in Canada are more affected. Aboriginal women experience spousal violence at a rate nearly three times higher than non-aboriginal women.

Female victims of spousal violence are twice as likely as male victims to be physically injured, three times as likely to experience disruptions to their daily lives, and almost seven times as likely to fear for their life.

At the Public Health Agency of Canada we address family violence from a public health perspective, meaning that we put a focus on supporting prevention at the community level and working with our partners to address those conditions that put women and families at risk of being in violent situations.

Under the leadership of the Minister of Health, the agency has engaged with national health professional organizations to discuss their particular role in responding to family violence. Health professionals recognize very specifically the importance of this issue. They are committed to working with us to ensure the health sector is well-equipped to address this problem.

Within the agency we are working in four areas to prevent and address family violence. We have the honour of coordinating the federal family violence initiative. We conduct surveillance and research. We compile and share information to help health professionals and community groups effectively respond to violence. We support community-based children's programs that promote healthy relationships and positive parenting.

Let me expand for a moment on each of those four areas.

The first area of agency action is our leadership and coordination of the family violence initiative, working with 15 federal departments collaborating to address family violence in Canada, including my colleagues here today. This approach ensures that violence is addressed from multiple perspectives, including promoting healthy relationships and empowering women and girls, supporting victims, ensuring that the justice response is appropriate to deter offenders and is sensitive to the needs of victims, and tracking and analyzing data on the nature and extent of family violence. This initiative is our federal forum to ensure that these activities complement each other.

The second area of agency action is research and surveillance. The agency contributes an important piece of the picture of family violence in Canada by conducting national surveillance on child abuse and neglect, including children's exposure to intimate partner violence.

• (0910)

We support research into effective practices to prevent violence against women and their children. Currently we are supporting two multi-year research projects to test the effectiveness of the nurse-family partnership, a specific program to prevent violence from happening in the homes of at-risk young mothers.

We also work to share effective approaches for family violence prevention. We have supported a systematic review of violence prevention programs from around the world to identify those that show evidence of effectiveness. We share information about these programs through the Canadian best practices portal. More than 80 violence prevention interventions are currently posted on the portal, helping professionals and organizations to learn and to implement what works.

The third area of agency action is sharing information across sectors with health professionals and communities. Through the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, the agency plays the role of knowledge broker, providing resources on family violence to help professionals, community groups, academia, and the general public.

Another important contribution to family violence prevention is our community-based maternal and child health programs. We recognize the crucial importance of creating positive environments at the earliest age. Positive parenting, parental involvement, attachment, resilience, and healthy relationships are all factors that are associated with reduced risk of violence later in life.

That's why we invest more than \$112 million each year in our children's programs. These programs reach 250,000 at-risk children and their parents in more than 3,000 communities across the country. Many women served by our programs have had exposure to violence in the past, and 77 of our projects are currently delivered out of shelters for women and children leaving abusive situations. These programs serve as important points of access whereby women living in situations of abuse and violence may be referred to more specialized intervention services.

Earlier this year, we invested a \$3-million fund in projects to train community workers to deliver parenting programs that build coping skills and promote the mental health of mothers to address the needs of survivors of violence in a safe and sensitive way.

I'd like to point out to members of the committee that there is growing international recognition of violence as a health issue. Canada sponsored and contributed to a historic resolution at the World Health Organization's World Health Assembly last spring on the specific role of the health sector in addressing violence against women and children.

I had the opportunity to speak about this issue recently at the Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization. There is a strong interest internationally and in the Americas region and strong momentum to address this issue as a global health problem.

• (0915)

[Translation]

In closing, by continuing to bring attention to the issue, as this Committee is doing, we can continue to make progress towards achieving a world where violence against women is not acceptable.

Thank you for your attention. I would be pleased to answer any questions you have.

[English]

Hot off the press, members of the committee, I would like to let you know that *The Lancet*, one of the world's pre-eminent journals, will release online tomorrow a series on violence against women and girls. This I'm sure will provide the members of this committee with some very important evidence from the research of a very esteemed group of Canadian and international researchers.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much. That is very timely. Thank you for providing us with that information.

I now invite Ms. Arnott, from the Department of Justice, to make her presentation. Ms. Arnott, you have 10 minutes.

Ms. Pamela Arnott (Director and Senior Counsel, Policy Centre for Victim Issues, Department of Justice): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

My name is Pamela Arnott. I work at the Department of Justice, more specifically at the Policy Centre for Victim Issues. I am accompanied by my colleague, Gillian Blackwell, who works in the area of family violence.

[English]

Gillian will speak about the Department of Justice's contribution to the family violence initiative. I would like to speak to you about the federal victims strategy, and particularly about two components within that strategy.

The federal victims strategy is led by the Department of Justice. Its objective is to give victims a more effective voice in the criminal justice and federal corrections system. While the strategy focuses on all forms of victimization, there are a number of components of its work that are particularly relevant to violence against women. I'd like to speak to you about the work we do with the victims fund as well as the work we do in criminal law reform.

[Translation]

The Victims Fund currently has \$11.6 million per year available to fund projects and activities. Although prevention is not one of the objectives of the fund, its provisions can allow projects to be funded that establish exemplary practices in service delivery.

I would like to spend a few minutes on two areas of funding that are particularly relevant in fighting violence against women.

[English]

The first group of projects that I would bring to the committee's attention is the work we've done for child advocacy centres. Since 2010, more than \$10 million has been made available for child advocacy centres, and we have financed more than 20 locations across Canada.

Child advocacy centres reduce the trauma that child victims and their families may experience in dealing with the criminal justice system, often including children who have witnessed or experienced violence, including violence against women or against themselves.

Second, the victims fund has been instrumental in advancing culturally sensitive services for aboriginal victims of crime and for families of missing and murdered aboriginal women. Early reports from those projects indicate that the projects have been quite successful in advancing dedicated services for families of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

[Translation]

In the area of criminal law, Canadian legislation provides for basic procedural or sentencing measures that together provide an overall

response to violence against women, girls or other vulnerable groups.

Testimonial aids and other protection tools facilitate meaningful participation by women and girls who have suffered acts of violence. These include the fact that, in sentencing, courts are required to deal more severely with offences in which there is evidence that the crimes were motivated by age or gender or when the offence involves a breach of trust or the abuse of someone in a vulnerable situation.

● (0920)

[English]

The Government of Canada has pursued a robust criminal law agenda in the past few years that strengthens the criminal law's response to all forms of violence, including violence against women and girls. Some of its initiatives include increasing penalties for sexual offences committed against children—this was done in Bill C-10 in 2010—targeting the exploitation inherent in prostitution in 2014, and strengthening responses to child sexual abuse in the Protecting Victims From Sex Offenders Act in 2012.

More recently, Bill C-32, the victims bill of rights act, proposes rights for victims of crime, many of which will benefit women and girls who have been victims of violence. The bill proposes to give victims several rights, including the right to have their security and privacy considered, the right to be protected from intimidation and retaliation, the right to request the protection of their identity if they are a complainant or a witness in proceedings, and the right to request testimonial aids.

[Translation]

Related amendments to the Criminal Code support these rights. For example, amendments to the administration of rights to records held by third parties would require that a court consider the plaintiff's right to security of the person when determining whether it is appropriate to produce or examine a file. Testimonial aids should be more easily accessible to vulnerable victims and the security of the victims should be considered when making parole orders.

I will ask my colleague Gillian to continue the presentation.

Ms. Gillian Blackwell (Senior Counsel and Coordinator, Children's Law and Family Violence Policy Unit, Department of Justice): Thank you, Pamela

Thank you for inviting us to appear today.

I would like to talk to you about the justice component of the family violence initiative. The initiative has several components, including legal policy, research, professional training, public awareness and project funding.

Most of our work has to do with violence against women.

[English]

The justice family violence initiative, or FVI, supports policy development aimed at strengthening legal frameworks.

[Translation]

The “justice” component also funds various research projects, including a revolutionary report on the economic repercussions of domestic violence in Canada. Using data from Statistics Canada, the report estimates that the cost of domestic violence rose to \$7.4 billion in 2009, or \$220 per person.

[English]

This study is available on the Justice Canada website.

Justice Canada also funded a report by the Aboriginal Research Institute entitled “Compendium of Promising Practices to Reduce Violence and Increase Safety of Aboriginal Women in Canada”, which provides key information on promising practices that respond to issues that communities face with respect to reducing violence and improving safety for aboriginal women and girls.

[Translation]

We are also working with our governmental partner and our non-governmental partners to implement projects designed to prevent and reduce family violence. For example, in 2012, we released our document entitled *A Handbook for Police and Crown Prosecutors on Criminal Harassment*. The offence of criminal harassment was created in 1993 to respond directly to the problem of violence against women, especially in intimate relationships.

[English]

We also co-chair with our colleagues from Status of Women Canada an interdepartmental working group on early and forced marriage and honour-based violence as well as female genital mutilation and cutting. This is a subset of family violence. Since 2009 we have held seven sector-specific workshops with police, crown prosecutors, child protection officials, shelter workers, front-line community service providers, and academics on preventing and responding to these forms of gender-based family violence.

As part of the family violence initiative, Justice Canada has produced a series of public legal, education, and information materials that help raise awareness of the legal frameworks to respond to family violence. For example, the multilingual “Abuse is Wrong in Any Language” brochure is used by newcomer services across Canada and includes information about gender equality in Canada. This was recently updated and is available in 12 languages. I have some samples here. Similarly, “Abuse is Wrong in Any Culture” is specifically addressed to Inuit women and girls who experience violence in their relationships or in their families and is available in five languages.

Finally, Justice Canada's family violence initiative supports non-governmental organizations and other levels of government through funding of more than half a million dollars annually for projects to improve the justice system's response to family violence, including violence against women. Similarly, at Status of Women Canada we hold calls for proposals. The most recent one, last year, was on forced marriage.

● (0925)

[Translation]

In conclusion the “justice” component of the family violence initiative continues to play a crucial role in supporting a range of measures designed to prevent violence against women in Canada.

We will be pleased to answer your questions.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will now move to questions.

Mrs. Truppe, the floor is yours. You have seven minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Susan Truppe (London North Centre, CPC): I'd like to welcome everyone. Thank you for coming today.

It's the beginning of our new study. We're really looking for promising practices, as we said, or best practices, so we really appreciate some of the information you've given us.

I'd like to start with Kimberly. You had a wealth of information that you were giving. One thing you touched on was, I think you said, a best practices portal. I think you said there were 80 best practices there.

Could you tell us a bit more about that? This might be something we'd like to include if you have best practices there already.

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Yes, absolutely. The Canadian Best Practices Portal is a mechanism we use at the Public Health Agency of Canada to fulfill our mandate in sharing what we know about the evidence on best practices. We receive submissions from organizations both nationally and internationally to have their programs reviewed as a best practice. They're put through a rigorous methodology, and at the end of that process we determine whether or not they can be designated as a best practice.

One of the key criteria is that a fulsome evaluation be done of the intervention, because as you will well know, oftentimes organizations are finding it difficult to determine which programs are most likely to be effective. Once they start to implement programs, even if they're not effective, it's sometimes hard for them to stop.

What we're trying to do is, up front, give organizations evidence-based practices that they can look at, adapt, and go to the research community to talk about further as to how they apply in their context. Through that process, we have programs that cover a wide range of violence prevention practices that have been determined through a rigorous process to be effective.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: How does one know about this portal in order to give you the information to evaluate and make it number 81 on there?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Through the public health community, we make the portal well known through that network. We rely on our public health colleagues to spread the word beyond to others. We also interact with academic institutions. They're almost always involved in some way in the evaluation of these programs. They also are aware of the Canadian Best Practices Portal.

We're always looking for new ways to bring greater visibility to this work. We are right now in the process of evaluating the portal and we will, through that process, find better and more effective ways, hopefully using social media, to reach out further and ensure that those who need to know about these interventions know.

● (0930)

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

You probably don't remember everything that's on there, but is there anything that stands out as a best practice, something that you think was just a great idea?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Let me tell you about one of our children's programs that is offered in Toronto. It is called Connections. The program in Toronto that runs this is called Breaking the Cycle. Under that program they have put in place opportunity for women experiencing violence to receive services and counselling and to come to a safe place to discuss their issues and get the support they need, and also to get the referrals in the community to sustain support that will help them break the cycle of violence and hopefully not be re-victimized.

That's one example. There are many. I know that as you do the study you're going to be very impressed as you look across the country by the number of dedicated community organizations that are leveraging funding and expertise to make a difference in violence against women and children.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Great. Thank you.

I think you also said that maternal child health programs are funded with \$112 million per year and reach 250,000 at-risk...is it families?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: It's families, yes.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Is there a good program or something you'd like to share in regard to this particular initiative?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: I'd like to take a look at that, because I want to give you the best programs we have in terms of relevance to what you're doing in this study. If you don't mind, I'll take that back—

Mrs. Susan Truppe: No, that's fine.

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie:—and ensure that you get some samples from the children's program.

Just on that point, from a public health perspective the evidence shows that the earlier you start to intervene in at-risk families and children, the better. That's why these children's programs are working so far upstream, to get at positive parenting for families who are in the most vulnerable situations. These target single parent families of low socio-economic standing in high conditions of risk. That's why we feel from a public health perspective that the way we can add value is to move upstream and look at prevention, look at

boys and girls in preschool and at school age, so that we're able to correct it before it happens.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Linda, I have a quick question for you. It has to do with the cyber violence, which of course we're all aware of. We've been working on this for the last year and a half to two years. I know that Status of Women had a call for proposals and we funded some of the projects. You may not know this off the top of your head either, but do you recall a really good project that was funded that might be included as a best practice for cyber violence?

Ms. Linda Savoie: I liked a number of them, and I'm a bit reluctant to toss one out there, because these projects are still under way. They're fairly new, in fact, because even if they were selected about a year ago—

Mrs. Susan Truppe: They're not finished and evaluated.

Ms. Linda Savoie:—it takes some ramping-up time. At this point, we've connected project proponents from the different groups that are working on this to get them to exchange among themselves. We're still at a point where the projects could shift a fair bit, because they're acquiring knowledge, and so I'm a little bit...

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Sure. Do I have any time left?

The Chair: No.

Mrs. Susan Truppe: That's it. That was fast.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Ashton, the floor is yours. You have seven minutes.

[*English*]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill, NDP): Thank you very much to all of our witnesses for coming today and starting us off on this very important study.

I have a number of questions and obviously not much time, so I ask you to keep your answers succinct.

First, we're looking here at comprehensive ways of preventing and ending violence against women. Increasingly, more and more voices in the violence against women community have been calling for a national action plan to end violence against women.

Madam Savoie, is Status of Women responding to that call? Is there any work being done in your department when it comes to looking at the possibility of creating a national action plan? What do national action plans in other parts of the world of like-minded countries look like? Is there any work happening on this front currently in your department?

● (0935)

Ms. Linda Savoie: Part of our mandate is certainly to continuously monitor what's happening in that field. We are aware of the various action plans that exist internationally and in various provinces, and we are responsive to our government's direction on this. At this point, as you know, our individual efforts are focused more on implementing in our spheres and in a coordinated manner various initiatives that address the different forms of violence. But as you know there is no government policy for a national action plan at this time.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Okay. Thank you very much.

Again to Status of Women, obviously we have heard that one of the major risk factors for experiencing violence is being aboriginal. With the cuts to funding of Sisters in Spirit, an organization that did work that falls entirely within the mandate of what we're looking at and studying today—awareness, prevention, etc.—I'm wondering if there is any clear beacon in the form of an organization that is being supported that deals only with indigenous women and that is focused on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women in our country today.

Ms. Linda Savoie: As you all know, the Native Women's Association of Canada is very much an expert in the field of violence against aboriginal women. At Status of Women Canada we've had a consistent funding relationship with them. Since 2005 we have funded this organization every single year. Not only did we fund the Sisters in Spirit initiative but we funded the follow-through, the projects called Evidence to Action. Even this year we're continuing our investments, because we believe in the expertise and the importance of NWAC's voice in successfully addressing this issue. We've been a consistent funding partner.

Ms. Niki Ashton: I appreciate that, but in the absence of Sisters in Spirit, it falls to NWAC in general, with reduced funding, to deal with this. I think it's important to point that out, but thank you for your feedback.

I'll turn now to Statistics Canada. Thank you very much for sharing some pretty shocking numbers, including the figure that shows that sexual violence remains stagnant in Canada while other forms of violence decrease. As a result, I think that also points to the need for our committee to pay particular attention to sexual violence as a form of violence against women. I felt it was a comprehensive presentation but pretty slim in terms of talking about risk factors, and that's ultimately what we're trying to get at here in this committee.

I'm looking at page 12, where it talks about risk factors for non-spousal violence, and I see no mention of socio-economic conditions. It seems a bit strange to me that we refer to living in a community with social disorder and examples of vandalism and noise as being risk factors. Are we getting at, perhaps, poverty or low-income housing as being a situation in which you might see more violence? We know women of all socio-economic backgrounds experience violence, but in this case I think we're speaking to a socio-economic status that we're not explicitly explaining. I'm wondering if you could share some information on that.

Ms. Kathy AuCoin (Chief, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada): We gave you a list of publications, and in it there is some information on low income and its impact. When we're looking at small sub-populations and want to do a factor analysis, we sometimes can't do as much as we would like to do. There are some indicators that low income is a risk factor, but we had 10 minutes. We put in as much as we could, but "Measuring violence against women: statistical trends" will capture all of it. When we say aboriginal, is it aboriginal or low income and other demographic variables? Again, when we start getting to small subsets, we're limited by the numbers and the data. So your point is valid.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you very much.

Turning to the Public Health Agency, there was considerable focus on maternal health in today's presentation. I appreciate the

strong connection between mothers and their children being well and family relationships being on better ground.

I wonder whether you could explain why, for example, the strengthening families program in Manitoba that is offered on 16 first nations has been told to wrap up by the end of this fiscal year, despite countless examples of success of the program, despite the fact that it's a program led and delivered by first nations, that works with 16 first nations, all of which have tremendous risk factors when it comes to maternal health and also incidents of violence.

Given the emphasis from the Public Health Agency, why is it that communities in Manitoba, for example, are hanging by a thread under threat that such a successful program will be cut?

• (0940)

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: I'm assuming you're referring to a Health Canada program that deals with first nations on reserve.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Yes.

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: That is a question the committee would need to refer to my colleagues in Health Canada's first nation and Inuit health branch.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Perfect, and I appreciate that. Thank you for the correction.

I'm wondering, though, where your focus on maternal health is, even though Health Canada clearly is involved.

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Our focus is on all Canadians. In the context of aboriginal peoples, we work off reserve to complement the work that our Health Canada colleagues do on reserve.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Perfect. I appreciate it.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mrs. O'Neill Gordon, the floor is yours. You have seven minutes.

[English]

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon (Miramichi, CPC): I want to thank all of you for being here with us today. You have given us lots of great information to add to our study, a study that we are certainly focused on, looking for the best ideas.

My first question is for Kim. You mentioned to my colleague the different programs. It is so true that it is important to create a positive environment and that this must be established at a very early age. I have been a teacher of very young kids and I can see the importance of starting at that age as well.

Can you outline some of the action programs for the children that you undertake and that give a more positive environment? What are some of the problems that you encounter, and what are some of the positive results? I'm sure you see lots of positive results from the work you're doing.

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Absolutely, we do. Through our three children's programs, specifically the community action program for children, the Canada prenatal nutrition program, and the aboriginal head start in urban and northern communities program, we're focusing on supporting local community-based needs to help high-risk children and families develop their positive esteem and positive emotional and resilience skills.

Resilience is becoming more and more important in the literature as a fundamental skill for children to have to enable them to overcome negative situations in their environment. We focus on positive parenting. We focus on building resilience. We focus on healthy nutrition and physical activity. We focus on all of the things that a well-rounded individual needs in order to have the most positive mental and physical health outcomes.

Those programs differ across the country because they're tailored to the particular communities they're serving. In the head start program, for example, we are offering programs that are designed to allow children going into the school system to be at their optimal mental and physical health so they can learn readily and be very productive and culturally adapted parts of their communities going forward. Our aboriginal programs are very focused on cultural identity and bringing that to kids and into the school system.

The evaluations for these programs have shown very positive results in terms of, in early ages, moms continuing breastfeeding, which again is very important to early child development in the attachment between mothers and children. Also, we don't forget boys and men in the context of these programs, because they, as you all will know very well, are really important to the overall supportive environments that avoid having violence and abuse happening in families.

I hope you will invite some representatives from those programs to come to this table. I'd be glad to give you some names of people who could take you right into the world they're dealing with in terms of at-risk families and the way these kids flourish when they come out of these programs because of the support they have received and because of the reinforcement of the values they bring to their communities. It's a beautiful thing to see.

• (0945)

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: It sounds very good. Do you find that more and more people are coming out to be involved in those programs? There was a time when some parents would not step forward and admit that they needed help. How do you find it now? What do you think is the reason for them coming forward?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: I think more are coming forward. In some programs, for instance, there are waiting lists for services now. I think it's because awareness raising has been working.

People are more willing to come forward in safe environments, and they see these community organizations as safe environments. These organizations often provide them with wraparound services, so they can see their parole officer in the same setting where they're

bringing in their children for a health examination. Women have told us that this means a lot to them, because they don't like having to sometimes go to other services and bring a number of small children with them. When the services come to them, it makes them feel valued, and they can receive these services in what they consider to be a safe environment.

I think we're seeing more uptake of these programs.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Thank you.

Did you have something to add, Linda?

Ms. Linda Savoie: In terms of that, our intervention point tends to be when they're just slightly older. For instance, we have some very interesting projects happening right now where their target populations are tweens. I don't know if there's a French expression for that.

A group in Montreal identified that a particularly high-risk moment in their lives for young girls is the transition from primary school to junior high, or in Quebec, from *primaire* to *secondaire*. They're doing some very interesting work to ensure that at this moment in their lives, where girls' self-esteem typically takes a big drop, they are equipped and accompanied to handle this transition well and not become victims of violence.

Our intersection point tends to be with slightly older children, with tweens, up to young women and to women, but still, there's much interesting work being done.

Mrs. Tilly O'Neill Gordon: Yes, and all the way around at every level we're seeing a lot of advancement and a lot of great work being done. It's great to hear that.

The purpose of the Department of Justice is to ensure that the Canadian justice system is fair, accessible, and efficient, and it has taken great measures to ensure its objectives are met. Can you please explain the victims fund, the grants, and the contribution program through Justice Canada, which provides a more effective voice for victims in the justice system?

Ms. Pamela Arnott: I'd be happy to answer that. The victims fund is one of the tools or instruments we have within the federal victims strategy. It's a grants and contributions program. It is, as I said, one of the tools we use to give victims a more effective voice in criminal justice and federal corrections.

In my presentation, I identified a number of the components within that fund that are particularly relevant to violence against women. We have \$11.6 million available each year and that funding is provided for activities that will increase services for victims, increase training for people who provide services to victims, provide public legal education, and increase awareness of services or issues that are important for victims of crime.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Duncan now has the floor, for seven minutes.

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Thank you to all of you for coming. You've been so gracious with your time.

I'll start with Justice and a clarification.

The economic cost of violence in Canada is \$7.4 billion. Is that correct? I'm looking for just yes or no.

Ms. Gillian Blackell: Yes. That's the result of the study for 2012.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you.

Ms. Elmslie, I'm looking for a number. What is PHAC spending on prevention of violence?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Under the federal family violence initiative per se, let me quickly check that number for you. I believe it's about \$1.8 million a year specifically under the federal family violence initiative.

• (0950)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you. So it's \$1.8 million, and what is PHAC spending on research?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Do you mean in this area?

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Yes.

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: I don't have a specific number for you, but I can certainly get that for you. I would suggest that in addition to that, you might want to know what the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, which is one of our partners, is doing.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Absolutely.

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Recently we have been partnering with them on an initiative for boys and men that looks at violence.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: I'm aware. If that could be tabled, that would be great. Thank you.

Ms. Savoie, what is Status of Women spending on prevention?

Ms. Linda Savoie: As you are probably aware, in terms of grants and contributions funding, we spend about \$19 million per year. Year over year if you look at our average, 50% of our budget typically goes to violence-related projects. We are nearly exclusively at the prevention end of the spectrum. That doesn't include, of course, some of the other investments we make, such as when we support the publication of—

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Could you table with the committee exactly what Status of Women is spending on prevention? Also, what is Status of Women spending on research?

Ms. Linda Savoie: I will have to get back to you with those figures as well. I was about to mention that we fund the statistical publication "Women in Canada". We commission issue briefs. I will get that data to give you some sense of our investments on that side.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you so much.

I will turn now to Statistics Canada. For how many years do we have continuous data with the same questions and variables?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: That's a good question. At Statistics Canada we measure family violence, violence against women, using two different data sources. We have the general social survey on victimization that includes specifically spousal violence and other types of violence, robbery, sexual assault, and physical assault. We have data going back to 1999. We do this every five years.

In addition, we have police records. We collect the data—and I don't want to get too technical. It's microdata that we extract from police services. We want to be able to understand characteristics around the incident, so it's data about the sex and age of the victim.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Would it be possible to table with the committee...? You said the data goes back to 1999?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: There are two datasets.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: There are two datasets. Yes, I'm aware.

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: There's the GSS, which is a sample survey of victimization, self-reported; that's whether the incident was reported to the police or not. It's one data point which has been coming out every five years since 1999. The other one, on an annual basis, is through police records, where we get the volume of the victimization criminal offences that are reported and substantiated by the police. That's on an annual basis.

If you're looking for a specific item detailed to the victim characteristics, we are limited, based on the amount of data we've received from police services. For good 100% coverage, it's for the past five years. We can go back further, but we're not getting full coverage from Canada because not all police services were able to provide us with that level of detail.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay. So it's really the last five years.

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: If you want good coverage.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Could you table with the committee the questions that were asked under the long-form census and the questions that will be asked under the 2014 general social survey?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: Sure.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay.

To go back to PHAC, Ms. Elmslie, does the health sector track violence data through, for example, the hospitals, or emergency, or ambulance? How is the health sector tracking these?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Tracking data? We have a surveillance system that is called the “Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect”. We work with the social service organizations across the country, the child protection services, and the provinces and territories to collect data.

I'm just looking in my notes here very quickly—

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Is that just with respect to children? I'm looking for women and girls.

• (0955)

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: We have that for children. For women and girls, there are data reported through Statistics Canada, I believe, the self-reported data from the Canada community health survey. It contains data—

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: Only child maltreatment.

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Only child maltreatment? I will check, because I think we get some data from Stats Canada that we use and may go more broadly, but it would be good for us to confirm that.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thanks.

If women or young women go to hospital, are we not tracking that data?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: If women go to hospital and they're seen in emergency departments, we are getting some of that data through our injury surveillance program, but through the Canadian Institute for Health Information, there are hospital-based data gathered through that program as well. I'll check for you on the extent of what information and how much is coming through CIHI on women and girls presenting to hospital.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

The time allowed will be five minutes now.

Mr. Barlow, you have the floor.

[English]

Mr. John Barlow (Macleod, CPC): I appreciate everyone's passion and knowledge. I hope I bring a different perspective to things today.

Ms. Elmslie, you mentioned how important it is to address men and boys in this issue as well. If you've grown up in a home of violence, you're more likely to be a perpetrator in the future.

I want to touch on something with Ms. Arnott. As many in this room know, Sheldon Kennedy and I have been friends for many years. I've had the opportunity to work with him through the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary. What I found really interesting with that program is that it brings everybody together under one roof: mental health, social workers, and RCMP.

Can you talk a bit about the child advocacy centres? I don't know of other ones across Canada. I'm finding it interesting that this seems like a program that Justice is working on. Could you elaborate a little on that and on some of the work that's being done to raise awareness

and to cut that chain in order to address these abused children at a young age so they don't continue that cycle?

Ms. Pamela Arnott: I'd be happy to. I could spend the rest of the day talking about child advocacy centres, because they really are a fabulous approach to helping children who have been victims of crime. The Sheldon Kennedy centre is an excellent example. I think we have 22 locations now across Canada that either have an operating child advocacy centre or are somewhere down the line towards opening a child advocacy centre.

As you said, they bring together multidisciplinary teams. They bring together the police—and in some locations there may be a specialized investigation unit—child protection services, forensic nurses, crown attorneys, mental health services, victim services, and any number of other community resources that may be available there. A number of the child advocacy centres, because of the demographics where they are located, include an aboriginal liaison or perspective in their work and may include a multicultural perspective in their work.

I'm in your hands. I can—

Mr. John Barlow: The biggest thing I see with the Sheldon Kennedy Child Advocacy Centre in Calgary is the fact that—and you can ask Sheldon about this too—the children are not having to tell their stories more than once. As well, it's shining a light on an issue that as a society we'd like to ignore. Do you see that helping families to bring these issues forward, that they don't feel they're being shamed anymore? This really is an issue and they should be encouraged to come forward and there is help there.

Ms. Pamela Arnott: Absolutely. I would certainly encourage the committee to reach out to any of the child advocacy centres. You'll find folks there with a passion that will light up the room because, exactly as you say, they are gaining a supportive environment for children and their non-offending family members.

We've done a lot of work at Justice Canada to provide research about child advocacy centres, because before Justice Canada provided funding in 2010 there was no Canadian research about child advocacy centres. Justice Canada is leading the way in Canada on that research. We're finding, as you say, that crown counsels are more efficient in their decisions to lay charges or to proceed with cases. We find that parents are more satisfied with how they have to interact with the criminal justice system. Most importantly, we're finding that children say they are less scared, at that kind of entry level, about having to deal with this group of professionals.

• (1000)

Mr. John Barlow: Excellent.

Ms. Savoie, you talked a little bit about how we involve men and boys in this education issue. You talked about the Toronto Argonauts program. I understand the BC Lions have a similar program that's just become quite popular. What programs are out there to educate men and boys? My daughter was cyberbullied online when she was in high school. We addressed that, but what happens so the boy will learn a lesson from this as well? What programs are in place there?

Ms. Linda Savoie: We're lucky in Canada that this is an emerging field and it's a very innovative field, so there are a lot of people trying all kinds of things with various age groups. You can engage men and boys through those breakfasts with the boys that are popular out west. You have those programs that focus more on kids who are in sports or who have role models that are sports personalities like the BC Lions and the Argonauts. Respect in sport is also very much involved in those spheres. There is so much more to say.

The Chair: Thank you.

You'll have a chance to give other examples in other answers, I'm quite sure.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sellah now has the floor, for five minutes.

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, NDP): Thank you all, ladies, for being here to shed light for us on issues that generally affect women.

My two questions are for Linda Savoie.

How do you explain the high number of women affected by violence in Canada, a G-7 country?

Also, you know that Status of Women Canada has undergone changes in terms of the funding it receives. I am sure that you are also aware that the responses to the violence against women in Canada are largely fragmented, often inaccessible and may well serve as an obstacle, rather than an improvement, to the security of women.

In your view, how have the budget cuts to Status of Women Canada reduced access to legal resources for victims of violence?

Ms. Linda Savoie: First, let us address the first point you raised. In my opinion, the rate of violence against women in Canada is unacceptable. That said, if we compare ourselves to the other countries of the OECD, the rate is more or less the same, unfortunately. So this a problem that affects developed countries just as much as developing ones. It is certainly a global issue and solutions have to be found jointly. That is why we are constantly observing initiatives elsewhere, to see if there are lessons we can learn. Although the rates are unacceptable, they are unfortunately real. Canada sits right on the average.

Now let us turn to the changes made in 2007. As everyone knows, the organization has seen a lot of changes since 2007. Investment in communities has increased. In 2007, I think that we barely had \$7 million to invest in communities. Today, that amount is \$19 million.

I believe that some of our approaches have been particularly helpful. If I look at the calls for proposals that specifically target

violence on college and university campuses, we really heard what was happening on the ground. Our call for proposals was launched before the media really became interested.

I believe that we now have a tool that is being very well used. Despite the changes in our structure, we have found effective ways to keep our ears to the ground and issue calls for proposals that will generate information. Our efforts are now very focused on sharing the knowledge that will come from the calls for proposals and from the projects we have been launching for four years.

• (1005)

Mrs. Djaouida Sellah: Actually, I would like to ask you a question about campuses.

In the course of our study on issues affecting women, we heard from the president of an association at the University of Ottawa. I was very surprised to learn that there is violence on campus. That lady told us in so many words that she got no help at all. Beforehand, we were trying to find out what kind of help she was getting to deal with the problem.

Apart from listening to them and gathering information, what are you doing in concrete terms. What are your results to this point?

Ms. Linda Savoie: My answer will be very concrete.

We have funded 22 projects at the country's universities and colleges. That started a little less than three years ago and all the projects are about to wrap up. In the last few weeks, actually, I met a group that had conducted a project here in Ottawa. Some very interesting information trails are beginning to emerge. One of the discussions, for example, dealt with investing in security by installing cameras and determining their usefulness.

From that project, we found that a very large part of the violence to which young women on campus are subjected comes from people they know. It is something to consider, but it is not enough. We determined that excessive alcohol consumption is a huge risk factor for young female students. Several potential solutions were identified and the work continues.

The Ottawa group is called OCTEVAW. Perhaps you might be interested in inviting some representatives. If not, there are 21 other possibilities. I would be happy to supply you with the names.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Savoie. Potential solutions are always a very interesting subject. I am sure that we will have the opportunity to find out more about it.

Mrs. Ambler, you have the floor. You have five minutes.

[*English*]

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Thank you to all of you for being here today, for your presentations, and for answering our questions so ably and thoroughly.

First of all, I would like to give my friend and colleague Mr. McColeman a minute. He was so impressed by the talk of the child advocacy centres, and he has a question about them, for Ms. Arnott, I think.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brant, CPC): Thank you to my colleague for this. I'm sitting in as a guest at this committee today.

You mentioned there are 22 centres across Canada, and there are more perhaps in the queue for consideration. What are the criteria you're using to decide where those are located?

Ms. Pamela Arnott: The U.S. has the National Children's Alliance. It has 10 criteria it applies for a child advocacy centre. We are trying to have a pan-Canadian approach to have as many places across Canada that will meet those 10 criteria in providing services to children and their non-offending family members.

We operate on a continuous receipt basis. We invite organizations to apply at any time. We have just worked with people who have expressed interest in funding. I have a map that I can provide to the committee that shows the geographic distribution. I'm very proud to say that we have child advocacy centres that are in the process of being created or are open in almost every province and territory in Canada, including in the north, which I think is so important.

Mr. Phil McColeman: Are there any statistics that lead you to certain areas of the country because of the incidence of victimization, enhancing the proposals from certain regions or communities in the country?

• (1010)

Ms. Pamela Arnott: We've taken a little bit of a different approach in the sense that the request for funding has come from communities. This really is a bottom-up approach. Community partners such as police, child protection, victims services have come together and said, "Golly gee, we have to do something. You do great things. We do great things. How can we work together better?" That's where we've been able to support that bottom-up approach.

I'd say that globally there are more child advocacy centres in the west, but I wouldn't want to go so far as to say that's because there is more child abuse or child neglect in the west. Really, that's where there has been a groundswell of community organizations wanting to work together in this multidisciplinary approach.

Mr. Phil McColeman: Thank you for that.

Full disclosure: I'm acting selfishly here, as I represent the largest first nation in Canada. It's part of my riding of Brant. We have a large spectrum of different services as a result of that, so it intrigues me to find this out.

I appreciate your comments.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: That was a great question. You should come to our committee more often.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Stella Ambler: I want to continue on with what Madam Sellah was talking about.

As the mother of a daughter in second year university, and as a member of Parliament who has a shadow here today from McGill University—welcome, Samantha—I want to give you an opportunity, Linda, to finish your answer, because it sounded like you were rushing at the end when you were talking about the 22 projects.

My question was going to be on what kind of federal support services and programs are available, and you had already started answering that, so I'll give you the rest of my time to do that.

Ms. Linda Savoie: For us it has been an extremely interesting call for proposals. We've really enjoyed working with the groups that have examined the issue of the safety of young women on campuses. It will become even more exciting in the next few months, because as the very last months of these projects take place, in the next four months or so, we will be doing a very comprehensive evaluation of this one to see what should be the next steps.

As I was mentioning already, it's interesting, because it's not just physical infrastructure that contributes to safety, it's also awareness of certain risk factors, such as alcohol consumption. We're not the only ones who've noted this, as Ottawa Hospital has been leading-edge in identifying this fact, but large-scale events like frosh week and Halloween parties are extremely high-risk factors for sexual assaults to take place.

We also have some gaps that have been identified through our projects. For the most part, the victims don't know that services exist on campus, if there are some, and often there are no such services on campus. Just having to leave their campus to get the support is a serious barrier for these young women to get help.

The Chair: Thank you very much. I'm sure you're going to have a chance to answer further on that, because that is a very interesting subject that seems to interest the members.

[Translation]

Ms. Crockatt, the floor is yours. You have five minutes.

[English]

Ms. Joan Crockatt (Calgary Centre, CPC): I too want to thank all the witnesses.

I've found this to be a buoying exercise, because we have a chance to hear from each of you on some of the areas that are working. I think sometimes the public can feel very dejected when they keep hearing about problems that we know exist, but if there are solutions that are working, then we owe it to the public to tell them. You have done an excellent job of giving us a glimpse into some of those areas today. I want to thank you for that.

I have a couple of clarification questions that I was hoping to ask.

First of all, someone mentioned that the *The Lancet* is releasing something online tomorrow.

Kimberly, could you tell us what that's about, please?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: Yes, and because we work with our colleagues there, we get an embargoed advance copy. This is a fulsome series of articles on violence against women and girls, which starts with discussion of what the evidence tells us about what we should be doing in prevention, the health system response, a review of how health systems are responding, and some commentary on what more could be done.

An article talks about the range from working with men and boys to changing social norms, so I think that will be of great interest to your discussion in this committee. It talks about a conceptual shift in prevention of violence against women and girls, so our thinking about this encompasses boys and men, as we have talked about.

Regarding prevention, it also covers lessons from practice, getting right down into what we know from what's happening in practice, and it presents a call to action, asking where we need to go from here.

It is a very fulsome set of work.

● (1015)

Ms. Joan Crockatt: To follow up on that, either Linda or Kimberly—I hope you don't mind my addressing you by your first names—

A voice: Please do.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: —could answer this. We have seen the statistics and it doesn't look statistically as though we're making headway in the way we'd like to. Yet we have examples, really some quite stunning and sterling examples, with the child advocacy centres, for example, of how we're moving forward. How can we measure this? Are we just seeing more women reporting as more awareness comes up? Are we actually making progress? How do we measure that?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: That's a good point.

Ms. Linda Savoie: My goodness, when you're trying to tackle an issue of that size, the ultimate indicators are slow in moving, so what we would like to see is more discussion, maybe before we even get to a point of more reporting. Those are the types of measurements by which we can see how many schools are implementing programs, how many boys and girls clubs, YMCAs, etc., are implementing programs. There are a number of players, so it's a matter of the direct influence we have and the indirect influence we have. Ultimately we hope to see some movement on these very large indicators, such as the rates of experiences of violence.

I'm not sure this is a very satisfactory answer, but it is extremely difficult at this point to claim any significant shift in the data in terms of reductions in rates of violence.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: Ms. Arnott, you mentioned in the area of missing and murdered aboriginal women that the projects have been quite successful. Could you expand on that for us a bit?

Ms. Pamela Arnott: I'd be happy to do that. Since 2010, we have funded a number of projects, largely in the west. We've worked with provincial and territorial governments but also with non-governmental organizations. What we've tried to do is adapt or create victim services to help family members, always from a starting point that respects culture. The committee will be aware that the needs of family members of a missing person are very different from those of a direct victim. The same thing goes when it's a murdered person. The family members there will have very distinct needs.

Some of the projects we have worked on, for example, are to put a victim services person who is specialized in that area within a victim services unit. I am thinking here about a project we did in Alberta

that provides that kind of dedicated services to 12 communities, 10 of which are first nations and two of which are Métis.

Ms. Joan Crockatt: What is that called?

Ms. Pamela Arnott: It's in cooperation with the Alberta Solicitor General and it's called the victims outreach specialist project.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Pamela Arnott: If I could mention a few more, we've worked with Project KARE, also from Edmonton, and Ka Ni Kanichik of Medicine Bear Counselling, which is from Winnipeg, and the Tree of Life project, which is in Vancouver.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We now move to Ms. Duncan, for five minutes.

[English]

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Thank you again, everyone.

For Statistics Canada, with the 2014 general social survey, you've listed new questions that are going to be added, and that's important. Have any questions been changed?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: Yes. There are always changes to a questionnaire. It's a tool. We engage our partners to determine whether there are any emerging issues. We engage members from the police services to look at some of the questions. It's an evolving tool, so there have been changes—

● (1020)

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Have any been removed?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: I couldn't tell you, but I could get that information for you.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay. I really would like to see what was under the long-form census—all the questions—and what will be under this.

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: The general social survey on victimization is independent of the long-form census. They're two different tools.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Could we still see the two side by side?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: When we release data from the social survey on victimization, it's released independent from the census.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: I understand that, but it still would be useful to see.

Do we have any idea of the percentage coverage? You've said that it's the last five years, so is it every police force...?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: The GSS asks questions of a random sample of individuals about their experiences of victimization for the past 12 months. When we publish, we would say that respondents contacted expressed that they were victimized either violently through a physical assault, robbery, or sexual assault, or a household victimization, and it's for the previous 12 months. There's a dedicated section looking at spousal violence. In those questions, we ask respondents for their experience for the previous five years.

Again, these are two data points, every five years, that are collected.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Do we have an idea, is it across the police forces? What percentage are reporting?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: The survey goes out to households, to individuals, not to police forces, so—

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Right, but there are two sets. There are the individual households and there are the police. Yes?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm getting clarification.

What we know from Canadians is that not all of their violent victimization gets reported to police. We look at the data. The last time we did it in 2009.... Let me get the exact number.

I guess I need clarification on your question. I apologize.

You would like to know police data. We have 99% coverage from all police services.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: And prior to the five years?

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: I think we were at about 78%, and then going back another five years, we were at 43%.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Do we have that for Health as well?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: I don't know the answer to that question, but I'll find out.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Okay, thank you.

I have one very quick question. You mentioned that we have the 80 violence prevention interventions. I'm wondering if there's any tracking of who's looking at this and whether these are being adopted. If so, by whom, and do the people feel that they're making a difference? What tracking are we doing of that?

Ms. Kimberly Elmslie: I'm writing that question down, because I'm going to find that out for you as well.

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: That's probably my five minutes.

The Chair: You have 55 seconds, maybe to say thank you, but you're okay?

Ms. Kirsty Duncan: Yes.

The Chair: Okay. Thank you very much.

We go to Mrs. Ambler for seven minutes.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: I'm delighted to have the opportunity to find out a little bit more information.

I want to talk to you about young girls and in particular the initiative around the International Day of the Girl. Last month, I think we all know that Minister Leitch and the Government of Canada hosted an event in Toronto with about 500 girls to mark the International Day of the Girl. It was the same day that Malala was supposed to speak, but unfortunately, that didn't happen on that day.

We all know too that the day promotes equal treatment of and opportunities for girls around the world. Canadian girls are generally better off than girls in developing countries in areas like law, nutrition, health care, education, training, and of course freedom from violence and domestic abuse or abuse of any kind. This UN initiative has been, I think, taken on with some gusto here in Canada.

I was wondering if you could tell us about how the initiative helps immigrant women and young girls, and about the kinds of programs that the International Day of the Girl has spurred here in Canada.

•(1025)

Ms. Linda Savoie: You're correct that the pickup around this event has been extraordinary for a day that's been in existence for barely two years. It's quite amazing how popular it has become. We get some indications of interest through, for instance, the pickup of our educators' kits that are on our websites. We provide material if schools want to celebrate International Day of the Girl. It's definitely always a very popular item.

In our projects that are youth-led, we fairly regularly see components that highlight International Day of the Girl. These projects of course are in their early days. I should mention particularly for new members that most of our projects are for a duration of two to three years. What we see in the early days gets confirmed in three years or sometimes later.

In terms of pickup around International Day of the Girl, it has been quite extraordinary. I can't say that I would have a breakdown for you of how it's being picked up differently by different populations of girls whether they are immigrant girls, aboriginal girls, etc., but that's certainly an interesting point and maybe something we could explore. For instance, at the event in Toronto that you mentioned, the 500 girls that were there represented a multitude of ethnocultural communities. It was—

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Were you there?

Ms. Linda Savoie: I wasn't in attendance but I was getting messages from my colleagues throughout the day, because we were in lockdown here in Ottawa. The extraordinary diversity of these girls speaks to how universally this issue touches girls across Canada and across the world.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: That's wonderful. Thank you so much.

I noted that Mr. Barlow talked about involving boys. I know for the International Day of the Girl you see people walking around with the bright pink pin that says "Because I am a Girl". I think that's a good start, but it's so important to involve boys at a young age as well and to talk to them when they're still in grade school. I'm wondering if within those programs that were mentioned earlier about the transition from elementary school to high school there's a component for boys as well or if you think there should be or if you're looking into that possibility.

Ms. Linda Savoie: I should frame my answer in the context that we typically see three categories of interventions with respect to engaging men and boys.

We have the true engaging men and boys projects, where we focus on young men acquiring the confidence to speak out against violence. We're not dealing generally with perpetrators. We're dealing with bystanders who don't know what to do and how they can help. Right? It's equipping them to understand how to behave and giving them the opportunity to interact with the young women who are at the receiving end of this so that they will understand the consequences for their sisters, their girlfriends, and so on and so forth of this sometimes insidious violence. That's one category of project.

There's another category that we've put in the basket of healthy relationships. Those categories of projects will again be working with men and boys, and particularly with boys and girls to give them the tools to understand what healthy relationships are and how to live them throughout their lives. Those could happen exactly in those transition periods, certainly, for both boys and girls.

Then I'd say there's another type of project that we use to address the issues of violence against young women and girls, and those are youth-led projects. Those youth-led projects are not only girl-led—we encourage them to give a role to the boys—but it's also important that the girls are empowered and are the ones who are informing the direction of these. We have found these youth-led projects to be extremely successful in creating the dialogue and the momentum for girls' needs and voices to be heard about the violence they're experiencing on a day-to-day basis.

• (1030)

Mrs. Stella Ambler: I think we would all agree that they're very important. Thank you.

I wanted to thank you, Kimberly, for talking about violence as a health issue. It's not how we often think of it. We think of it as a justice issue only....

That cannot be seven minutes.

The Chair: It is.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Really? Oh, darn.

The Chair: Time sure flies, but I think we got the point. If you want to expand on that later on, you will be more than welcome to do that.

We have Ms. Ashton, for seven minutes.

Ms. Niki Ashton: First I have a quick question for Stats Canada.

I noticed on page 13 at the bottom it says that the statistics exclude data from the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut. Knowing that the north has some of the highest rates of violence against women, I'm wondering why that is the case and why we don't have information on those three territories in this key package.

Ms. Cathy Connors: I'll start, and then my colleague can jump in.

We do collect information from the territories. We collect it separately from the provinces for various reasons. There are different methodologies. When we produce the information, we don't pull it together because it's not comparable. We've created it in different ways for various reasons. The information for the territories is available, and we can provide that to you.

Kathy may have something else to add on that.

Ms. Kathy AuCoin: With the list of publications, we had a dedicated release focusing on the territories. Again, with a limit of 10 minutes and presenting two sets of data points, it could be overwhelming. But the data is there. We've run it.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Please rest assured that for me, I'm from the provincial north, and it would not be overwhelming at all seeing that the severity of the issue is something that needs to be recognized. We'd welcome the information. I'd love to see it as part of the key presentation that we get. But I do need to move on to another question.

Justice Canada, you spoke of important initiatives that you fund working with indigenous women. You spoke of victims services in particular. I was a bit distraught to hear in the case in Manitoba of Rinelle Harper, who was sexually assaulted almost two weeks ago, that it was up front in the news in Manitoba for multiple days and made national news as well, but it took almost a week for victims services to get in touch with the Harper family. I happen to know about this because she's my constituent and her family lives in my constituency.

You fund the programs, but when it actually comes to connecting with the families, it's a bit of another story. I'm wondering if maybe they need more support on the ground. This wasn't a story that wasn't known to the general public, after numerous days of it being in the news.

Ms. Pamela Arnott: I won't comment on the specifics of that case. I think certainly more funding for victim services would not go amiss, as we heard in the presentation today.

Domestic violence and violence against women are the kinds of victimization that people talk about most or are most aware about in Canada. Any of the efforts we can make as a government to improve the response to that particular form of victimization won't go amiss.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Thank you very much.

I have a quick question in terms of language. I suppose this pertains a bit to all of you in what you're looking at.

When we talk about violence against women, particularly on campus, I think there are many examples of how young women activists are really pushing the envelope on how we talk about this. I appreciate, Madam Savoie, the comment about how cameras and emergency lighting aren't the be-all and end-all, and that in fact we have to tackle something broader, which is most notably referred to as rape culture.

I'm wondering if in the language you're using you're mirroring the kind of language that is now very commonly used to describe the culture that exists—arguably, not just on campus, as we deal with sexual harassment here on the Hill—reflecting the kind of language that young women in Canada are using to describe what they're facing and the levels of violence that they're facing. Is that being integrated in either your work on cyber misogyny, or in the questions in the survey, or even in the kind of language that you're using to work with women on campuses?

Perhaps we could start with Status of Women.

•(1035)

Ms. Linda Savoie: I certainly agree with you that language can be extremely helpful and extremely divisive.

In our position as government, at Status of Women we try not to pick a language that will exclude groups. We try to be as generic and boring sometimes as necessary to allow the groups to come to us using their own language. We will have groups that will come to us talking about a rape culture, and we have other groups that are not comfortable using that language, and they're all welcome.

I know we sound boring, but we do try to stick to language that will indicate to groups that they are welcome, no matter what they call the issue. We stick to plainer terminology.

Ms. Niki Ashton: I appreciate that you do accept that, and it is the language that is increasingly being used.

Perhaps we could hear quickly from the Department of Justice. You spoke about cyber misogyny. Often these terms are used in similar discussions. Does your programming reflect that kind of language that's increasingly being used, particularly among young women?

Ms. Pamela Arnott: We don't tend to use that language, as my colleague has said.

We try to adopt language that is as inclusive as possible when we are approaching communities or making funding available to communities.

Ms. Niki Ashton: What if a request for funding comes using that kind of language? Is that a red flag?

Ms. Pamela Arnott: That's not a problem at all.

Ms. Niki Ashton: What about language in terms of your surveys? Is that something you're looking at, that kind of language?

Ms. Cathy Connors: We tend to use plain language at Statistics Canada. We do an awful lot of qualitative testing before we conduct our surveys. Quite often we notice that there are differences in language use across the country.

What we try to do is come up with a language that is the type of language that people use across the board, that everybody will understand. We also define in great detail what we're looking for in our surveys.

Ms. Niki Ashton: That's perfect. Thank you.

I hope you'll consider using it more and more. We're having an unprecedented conversation, I think, both on social media in our communities and in the mainstream media about what is increasingly known to be rape culture.

Thank you for sharing your feedback.

I quickly want to turn the attention of the committee to a motion I put forward asking for the minister to come and present on the supplementary estimates. Obviously, time is of the essence on that front, so I want to make sure we deal with that motion as soon as possible. I believe there are copies that are being distributed.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: Mrs. Truppe, you have the floor.

[*English*]

Mrs. Susan Truppe: Madam Chair, if we're going to discuss committee business, I move that we go in camera.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: We will now vote to decide whether we are going to sit in camera.

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: I would like to take a few seconds to thank our guests for their very important testimony. It gets our new study off to a good start.

I am going to suspend the meeting for a few minutes before we move in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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