

Family Violence Services Delivered by Women's Shelters in Saskatchewan: How Does the Province Recognize Them?

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian province of Saskatchewan counts over twenty resources that provide help to women victims of violence. In this paper we present the results of exploratory research conducted with directors of women shelters on how services are being supported and recognized by the provincial government and we discuss the relationships existing between the State and the shelters in Saskatchewan.

RÉSUMÉ

La Saskatchewan compte plus de vingt ressources qui fournissent de l'aide aux femmes victimes de violence. Comment ces services sont-ils appuyés reconnus par la province? Dans cet article nous présentons les résultats d'une recherche exploratoire faite avec les directrices d'abris pour femmes. Nous discutons des relations qui existent entre l'état et les abris en Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION

This exploratory study on the State recognition of family violence services delivered by women's shelters in Saskatchewan is part of a broader group of social economy studies conducted in the province. We were most intrigued by shelters since they have sought State recognition for their services and an appropriate place in the services network since the 1970s. When we began the study in October 1999, it was our firm belief that the experiences gained by those involved in the shelter network would underscore the importance of this social economy sector in the delivery of services for women. We also felt it would be worthwhile to draw the State's attention to the underlying changes within this network.

STATE RECOGNITION OF SHELTER SERVICES

In responding to the needs of women, shelters offer services in various parts of the province. As non-profit organizations, they are able to deliver these services through grants from the Saskatchewan Department of Social Services. Since they derive most of their funding from this department, it would seem evident that the

provincial government recognises the services they deliver. But does this fact indicate genuine State recognition?

Saskatchewan Social Services provides \$120,000 to \$600,000 in shelter grants, including grants to some shelters for supporting child victims. These amounts correspond to about sixty percent of total shelter budgets, with the remaining forty percent stemming from private donations and fundraising campaigns.

We believe that public funding is a necessary but insufficient condition to assert that the government of Saskatchewan fully recognises and adequately supports the services delivered by women's shelters. State/shelter dynamics and the respect accorded to shelter missions and mandates are among the factors underscoring this issue. In our view, by studying the role shelters are actually playing in the province and the practices the government has implemented over the years as provider of services to women in need, such shelters will achieve the recognition they deserve in our communities.

Through interviews conducted province-wide with women's shelter directors regarding their interactions with the Department of Social Services, our study focused on both the positive aspects of these relationships and the

problematic factors impacting the delivery of shelter services. Our intention was to demonstrate that unless funds are injected into the shelter network, the situation will remain precarious in Saskatchewan and some needs will remain unmet.

PARTNERSHIP RELATION WITH THE STATE

Our analysis was inspired by the Ursel report (1991) on what impact women's movements' efforts to eradicate violence against women had made on the government of Manitoba. We found Ursel's work relevant in the way that it distinguished between divergent State and women's movement interpretations.

Such interpretations regarding services offered to victims, aggressors and child witnesses seemed to fall into two categories: 1) a negative analysis describing an "invasive government" that imposes regulations and standards to service dispensers, and 2) a more positive analysis describing a governmental commitment leading to the establishment and State recognition of the services delivered by shelters. We found the second interpretation particularly interesting in that it allowed for bi-directional questioning. On one hand, we could ask how shelter management styles influenced and transformed violence intervention approaches. On the other hand, we could still critically question the involvement of the State in these activities. Gillian Walker (1990, 3) has summarized the relationship between the women's movement and the government by saying that it "has produced a situation whereby much of the activity of the women's movement has been directed towards or funded by the State." Some would see in this a growing institutionalisation (Barnsley 1988) or co-optation (Schechter 1982) of shelters compromising the original mission and philosophy of women's groups (a perspective promoting a resistance strategy). It might be more opportune to envision interpreting this State and shelter rapport within a partnership perspective in which State and shelter dynamics lead to changing practices on each side. This approach promotes broader questions and considers major organizational and structural transformations in the delivery of public services.

The decline of the welfare state since the

1980s has led to redefining State and non-profit organization dynamics and envisioning new strategies and collaborations among those involved in delivering human services. Indeed, the establishment of two innovative partnerships, the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence in 1983 and Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions To Violence (a provincial organization) in the 1990s, reflects promising changes in State and non-profit organization dynamics. The enactment of *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act* in 1995 and the implementation of the Family Violence Policy Framework in 1997 further reflect the State's willingness to recognize family violence issues.

As proponents of a social policy perspective primarily aimed at redefining State and nonprofit organization dynamics, we believe there is a need to develop a more flexible decentralized model that further considers community needs. In the past thirty years, women's shelters have been a prime example of the type of organizations that have become indispensable to women and children as a result of the way in which they meet local community needs.

WOMEN'S SHELTERS AND SERVICES DELIVERED

Saskatchewan has a solid network of women's shelters. When we began this study, the province's Women's Secretariat listed thirteen transition and interval houses within its directory for the year 2000. There are also other organizations in the province that deliver services to women victims of violence and their children. There are four safe homes and crisis centres, four second-stage housing initiatives and one Violence Intervention Program in Saskatchewan. Although these do not provide official shelter to victims, they represent significant human service initiatives. We therefore include them (with the exception of second-stage housing) under the term "women's shelters" because they represent primary service responses to women victims of violence in their region. In fact, there are no transition and interval houses in these areas of the province.

The mission of the transition and interval houses is to provide support and a safe place for

women, and to guide them through their time of crisis, respect their decisions, provide referrals if needed, take necessary steps to eradicate violence against women in the community, provide information and raise community awareness. These shelters offer a 24-hour hot-line service, seven days a week. Services vary from one shelter to another depending on available financial resources, the region and the characteristics of the population served.

Some shelters have broadened their mandates over the past few years, offering services to a more diverse clientele. Others also provide services to women who are addicted to alcohol or drugs or to women in crisis. Several reasons may explain this phenomenon: the absence of services available to this clientele in some areas, the need to make shelter operations sustainable, and divergent interpretations of the role of women's shelters. This constitutes an important element in our study since it greatly contributes to understanding the often diverging views held by shelter directors. It also allows us to explain the importance of meeting service needs in remote regions. Finally, some shelters have established treatment programs for violent partners.

Like transition and interval houses, safe homes and crisis centres provide support services to victims of family violence. Safe homes are private homes whose owners offer temporary emergency shelter to women and their children. While these centres exist in four of the province's rural areas, few provide shelter services because of the difficulty in finding sponsors well known to the centres. As such, these centres mostly transport women to transition and interval houses in neighbouring locations. The four second-stage housing initiatives in Saskatchewan currently provide 29 low-cost apartments to women and their children following a shelter stay. The Violence Intervention Program, the only program of its kind in Saskatchewan, delivers services to victims of family violence, domestic violence and sexual assault; however, as with safe homes and crisis centres, space is limited, and so the program usually provides transportation to the nearest transition or interval house. Thus, there are a variety of services offered to victims of family violence in Saskatchewan.

BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF SHELTER DIRECTORS

Shelter directors are primarily responsible for budget and staff management, operations, service delivery and violence intervention program development. They are accountable to a board of directors and act as a bridge between the organization and the provincial Department of Social Services. As such, we believe they represent ideal key informants for better understanding of the factors facilitating State recognition of women's shelters and those inhibiting the delivery of services.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

For interview purposes, we contacted all 18 directors in the province who manage women's shelters (13), safe homes, crisis centres (4) and the violence intervention program (1). Most interviews were conducted in June and August 2000. It should be noted that we covered most of the provincial network, having obtained a response rate of almost 77 percent (14 out of 18 directors). In this article we use fictive names to protect the directors' anonymity.

By covering most regions, we obtained relevant information on service diversity, on variations in State-shelter dynamics and on how directors perceived the State recognition of services from one region to another. The low population densities in some regions, strong rural component and presence of native populations in others were among the factors that led us to interview directors across the province.

The questionnaire we used for the interviews covered four dimensions: service delivery, funding, relations with the State, and service needs. The directors were asked to describe the services delivered by their shelter, as well as those services that are delivered in collaboration with other organizations and institutions. The directors were also asked to describe the relations they were developing with the government, especially with their local representatives from the provincial Department of Social Services. Interviews were taped-recorded and transcribed afterwards onto computer files.

STATE RECOGNITION OF SERVICES

When we began this study, we wanted to examine how the provincial government recognized the work performed by shelters. How much leeway did shelters have in running their operations, activities and interventions? Did Social Services funding impact their operations, management style, service options, and so forth?

The mere existence of women's shelters is not the only indicator of State recognition. Indeed, State recognition is also perceived in terms of financial support, the dynamics of those involved in the network, collaboration in the delivery of services, the respect of the mandates and roles on each side, etc. We therefore chose to underscore how women's shelter directors perceived State recognition in terms of each of those factors.

FUNDING AND STATE RELATIONSHIP

Over the course of our interviews, we focused on shelter funding issues. We wanted to find out which funding sources shelters could access and the nature of that support, how directors went about obtaining funding, the dynamics between them and public officials in this regard, and more generally, the relationships they had developed in recent years.

From the start we observed that not all directors shared the same perceptions of their governmental interactions, although most maintained good personal relationships with their local Social Services representatives. This report considers two interpretations of directors' perceptions with regard to State recognition of their services. When directors discussed their governmental interactions at the provincial (and therefore more general) level, they were inclined to question the role of Social Services regarding the shelters and were more critical of the Department. Difficulties with governmental relationships seemed exacerbated by a lack of understanding of shelter mandates and realistic departmental expectations.

When directors approached department officials at the regional or local level, they found they could rely on the quality of their working relationships to get their views across. Krista's comments provide a good example of more personal

working relationships with departmental officials at the local level:

We have a very good working relationship with the people that we deal with at Social Services and it is a relationship that has been developed on both sides. The organization that I am with has been involved with the Department for many years and it is a Native-run organization and it has a very good reputation. . . . I know that it is not the same for all the shelters; it depends on personalities and who is in there, and it depends on how you present your case.

Shelter directors indicated that they had positive, cordial relationships with Social Services officials, especially with local representatives. At the local or regional level, interactions were said to be pleasant and funding requests understood. However, problems arose more frequently when requests were made at the provincial level, as indicated by Erin's comments:

I find that quite frustrating because we put a lot of work into the proposal. For example, this last year we asked for our budget to be revised and we worked on that with our local representative from the Department of Social Services. When it went to the central office, it was completely ignored and the budget was sent back exactly as it was before which doesn't suit our needs. So, things like that get to be quite frustrating.

Relationships were deemed more difficult for financial matters and issues such as service needs and respecting shelter mandates, etc. Directors questioned the relevance of the procedures they were required to follow to obtain funding and described their difficulty in obtaining support for specific intervention programs, particularly with regard to children.

To obtain a grant from Social Services, women's shelters must submit a duly-completed application every year. The application must include information such as worker job

descriptions, shelter intervention programs and mandates. The shelters must also provide quarterly reports and supporting material justifying additional expenses not included in original applications. Although women's shelters are funded to deliver services to victims of family violence province-wide, their financial support remains precarious since they must submit annual grant applications.

Nevertheless, some directors felt it was preferable for most of the funding to come from a single source, namely, Social Services, since it avoided having to meet multiple funding requirements. "It is not that difficult because we are essentially funded by one organization. If you are not that makes it more difficult because you are trying to please many masters rather than one" (Krista). Directors also found it beneficial to obtain organizational funding for delivering services to victims of family violence versus per-project funding, a process that is more costly and time-consuming on a yearly basis.

However, directors openly criticised the need to submit an annual grant application. Since funding amounts and services offered remain essentially unchanged from year to year, many of them questioned the relevance of this time-consuming annual exercise: "My attitude about that is that it is an absolute waste of time to do a funding proposal when they know they are going to give a two percent across the board increase and they do not pay attention to any of our numbers..." (Jane).

In addition, when directors submit a new application emphasising the need to develop a specific intervention program or their intention to invest money for the support of workers, Social Services seemed inattentive to their requests:

They still do not give it the respect it deserves. I think they do not understand the kind of stress shelter workers live with. They never give any money to deal with this. Provincially, there is no recognition of the need for ongoing training or support of shelters staff as a whole. (Jennifer)

With regard to the financial support obtained from Social Services, the directors stated

that they were privileged to benefit from it, but would make better use of their time if applications could be submitted every three years. Such multi-year funding agreements are in place currently in Quebec and are now under discussion in Saskatchewan.

FUNDING AND SHELTER'S AUTONOMY

Directors also expressed criticism over the service responsibilities of the Department versus those services which the directors felt should be left to shelters. Being a government-funded organization was said to impact on the roles of shelters in delivering services: how could shelter mandates be changed given their relationship to the Department? Some directors questioned if shelters were sometimes acting on behalf of Social Services or if they were an extension of government services. They stated that there were many overlapping Social Services and shelter responsibilities, citing the billing of services and child protection as examples of such ambiguity.

In some cases, shelter directors in Saskatchewan must recover the lodging costs of the women in their care from relevant institutions, which means they must perform billing duties to recover costs for client services delivered from another government jurisdiction.

For instance, in Saskatchewan, shelters must bill services rendered to First Nation women. When a First Nations woman leaves her reserve to enter a shelter, her Band Council must assume all lodging costs - a phenomenon stemming from two-tiered government funding. Reserves receive money from the federal government to deliver social services to band members, while shelters are funded by the provincial government. Directors must therefore contact Band Council representatives to indicate that a member from their community is at their shelter and that they will be billed as soon as she leaves.

This procedure raised two major problems for some directors. First, who should be assigned as a recovery agent and, more importantly, to what extent should shelters reveal the identity of the women they are sheltering for reimbursement purposes? Remarks made by Amy provide a good illustration of this concern:

All we are doing is serving as a collection agency for the government. Further up than us they need to straighten that out because the reserves are going to refuse to pay if we do not phone first. But some of these communities are too small and the women won't come if we can't protect their identity.

Directors taking in women from the reserves remarked on Department and shelter responsibility issues directly impacting their objectives and violence intervention mandates. Since some twelve percent of Saskatchewan's population is Aboriginal and most shelters are located outside the reserves, this problem affects many shelters. It is but one example reflecting the extent to which the blending of various jurisdictions in human service delivery matters weighs on shelters. This issue is also felt by directors who run shelters funded by the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development or the Department of Social Services of a bordering province. Three women's shelters are funded by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and one women's shelter is funded by the Department of Social Services of a bordering province. This last shelter gets its core funding from another provincial government because it is located in a border town. In fact, when this shelter delivers services to women from Saskatchewan, the director has to bill the Department of Social Services of Saskatchewan!

The directors expressed the view that they were performing government tasks and had to pay for the lack of harmonization among the various jurisdictions. Their comments underscore the administrative headaches caused by having to deal with two jurisdictions to recover shelter lodging costs, a lack of harmonization among various government tiers that has also led to confidentiality problems for shelters wishing to shield the identity of the women they are mandated to protect, as well as overlapping State-shelter responsibility issues.

When the issue of child protection was raised, directors indicated their strong objection to taking on a responsibility that was not theirs to assume. Indeed, child protection was an especially thorny issue for some: Should they broaden their

mandates to deliver services to clients whose situation did not fall within the scope of their responsibilities? Over the course of our interviews, we were often told that women were referred to shelters because the safety of their children was being compromised:

We have had incidents with Social Services. I am speaking here mainly of child protection workers. They will give the woman a choice of either going into a shelter or having her children apprehended. We do not like that. . . . It's very difficult if not impossible to work with a client like that because they are going to resist you every step of the way. They see you as being in cahoots with Social Services, even though we are there for her and our hands are tied. . . . We will not police clients for Social Services and we make that very clear. (Lucie)

Some directors also noted they felt pressure from Social Services to take in women who had not willingly chosen to enter a shelter: "Are we just a little longer arm of the government? I think we are even though we are not government. So we do their work for them" (Lisa).

Not all directors agreed on the role of shelters in child protection matters. Some believed shelters should provide such services, while others felt that the responsibility fell directly to Social Services. Indeed, the controversy raises a serious funding debate on the mandates and roles of the various players involved in delivering human services. Will women's shelters be asked to act as temporary shelters in the future? Although the various parties will ultimately have to reach consensus on their respective mandates, they certainly have their work cut out for them given that even shelter workers disagree on the issue. Amy was among the few directors we interviewed who felt that shelters should play a direct role in child protection matters:

We are just signing a service agreement with Social Services. Say I am a mom of three little kids and I do not have parenting skills and I have been reported for not

parenting them properly. Rather than always apprehending the children, Social Services are using the shelter more to say to the mom, "If you are willing, go to the shelter so they can work with you and see what the problem is and teach you life skills."

Amy didn't see a contradiction between shelter mandates and providing services to women with special needs. On the contrary, she stated that when shelters broaden their mandates, occupation rates went up, and shelters could therefore continue to shelter clients; otherwise, justifying the need for their existence was far more difficult.

While Social Services requires shelters to take in women whose children become part of abuse investigations, the directors explained that it was difficult for them to obtain funding for violence intervention programs aimed at the child witnesses or victims of violence. When we began our study, only four shelters were receiving grants from Saskatchewan Social Services to cover the costs of child counsellors.

This creates a paradox. It was said that few women's shelters could offer support to the children of the women they sheltered and that workers were thus reduced to "babysitters." Further, the directors could not see why their shelters should have to deliver a service that was not officially theirs to provide. This reality reveals the extent to which shelter mandates are not always clearly understood by Social Services. Directors indicated that if shelters were called upon to play a larger role in delivering services to a more diverse female clientele, an agreement would need to be reached between Social Services and the shelters; otherwise, the shelters would be forced to adopt a resistance strategy to Social Services requests.

Band billing and child protection were thus two areas where the complexity of State and shelter dynamics was apparent to those directors who spoke of the lack of collaboration in service delivery. They indicated that shelters played a major role in delivering services to women and their children and that without them, victims would have little choice but to rely on family and friends. For all practical purposes, they stated, it would be unthinkable to envision a modern social services

system for victims of domestic violence without taking into account the importance of the shelter network. However, before considering the expansion or change in shelter mandates with regard to service delivery, the survival of these organisations and the support of women after a shelter stay would have to be ensured. In addition, adequately meeting intervention needs would inevitably require improving the working conditions of shelter workers:

The main challenge now in the shelter program is the lack of funding for proper salaries for counselors. Most of them have a degree or years of experience and they're sorely under-funded. Number two is when we need to build a new facility we need to fundraise and save money for it and I think that shouldn't be. The challenges within those confines are just the sheer paper work of everything; the bureaucracy is a challenge. (Nicole)

Another issue identified by our study was the lack of worker support. For example, shelters are rarely given psychological assistance services or training days. Budgets for the support and training of workers are thin and are usually allocated to client services.

However, directors also unanimously agreed that in the past three years, Social Services had made major strides towards improving the plight of women in Saskatchewan. Indeed, some directors hoped their comments would not be viewed as a denouncement of the Department.

The main criticisms leveled at the State were the control of shelter grants through mandatory annual applications and the perceptions of shelter roles and services. Daily problems encountered by directors were said to stem from a lack of harmonization between the various governmental tiers and a lack of understanding of shelter mandates.

Today it would be difficult to reduce the shelter's funding support because the services are not provided elsewhere in the social services delivery system. Shelters were established at a time when neither the State nor the private sector could meet the needs of battered women. Indeed, it could

be said that the women's groups who progressively set up shelters made these services indispensable. Today, various Saskatchewan departments are involved with the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence and are working with women's groups to establish the Family Violence Policy Framework (2001-2004). The directors recognize the provincial government's willingness to eradicate family violence and violence against women, but underscore that as they stand, shelter service does not respond to the needs of all women across the province. The point that they most wanted understood was that current services are inadequate and that many improvements are needed.

UNMET NEEDS IN SASKATCHEWAN FOR WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Studies from different provinces show that local shelters are unable to respond to some women's needs and that of their children because of the lack of resources within the shelters and outside when women are leaving shelters. Hornosty and Doherty (2002) highlighted that the lack of outreach services in rural and farm areas, as well as the lack of affordable housing, are barriers experienced by abused women. As Tutty and Rothery (2002, 29) have noted: "[] leaving an abusive spouse requires addressing many issues including housing, employment, child-care, children's emotional reactions to the separation and the myriad pressures of single parenthood."

Over the course of our interviews, directors emphasised the difficulty they encountered in meeting client needs in their respective regions. They stated that requests for assistance could not be fully met through the current presence of shelters, 24-hour phone hot-line services, individual and group interventions, or workshops and seminars in local communities. One out of three directors interviewed agreed on three essential improvements they would require for providing a more adequate service than currently available:

- ▶ Offer affordable, adequate, and safe family housing to women who have been staying in a shelter;
- ▶ Ensure that outside resources conduct a follow-up once the women leave the

shelter; and

- ▶ Recognize the importance of supporting child witnesses or victims of violence during their shelter stays through the funding of child counselor positions.

AFFORDABLE, ADEQUATE AND SAFE HOUSING

As previously mentioned, Saskatchewan can currently only provide 29 low-cost apartments for battered women. The lack of affordable, adequate and safe housing is a limiting factor in the fight against violence against women.

Directors further remarked that battered women often returned to their abusive situations after shelter stays because they couldn't find the kind of safe and affordable housing that would facilitate their decision to escape the cycle of violence. It was said that shelters were only a temporary remedy to these women's problems, and that while a few of the women would be given the opportunity to stay in a second-stage housing after their shelter stays, the others would have a far more difficult time securing decent housing.

Many directors cited Saskatchewan's housing crisis since the 1990s. Indeed, two recent studies (Geller and Kowalchuk 2000; MacNeil and Warnock 2000) revealed that the province has faced a residential housing shortage (especially affordable housing) in urban centers in recent years. The issue has also been identified in Alberta (Tutty and Rothery 2002), British Columbia (Jiwani 1998) and, New-Brunswick (Hornosty and Doherty 2002).

FOLLOW-UP AND OUTREACH SERVICES

What happens to women after they leave the shelter? When this question was raised, directors expressed concern over the safety of women after their shelter stays. Shelters are temporary refuges for battered women who have chosen to escape their violent situations. They provide a timely intervention in that shelter workers are able to work with women in crisis at a critical juncture in their lives. But the directors stated that since maximum stay periods do not generally exceed 30 days and that average stays are approximately 10 days, most women find

themselves without support once they leave the shelters. A report published in 1995 by the Research and Evaluation Branch of Saskatchewan Social Services revealed that 83 percent of women who entered a shelter for the first time remained 12 days. They were not always able to count on the support of shelter workers to either discuss changes that might affect them, become accustomed to a new environment, or understand the ramifications of returning to their abusive situations. It should be noted that shelter workers counsel residents mostly inside the shelters. Some shelters conduct follow-up with former residents via individual or group meetings; however, they do not offer any official telephone follow-up to see, for example, how former residents are doing.

Directors not only raised the issue of work needing to be done during the shelter stay, but the importance of offering post-stay support, and above all, forestalling new crises, repercussions from ex-partners and other problems faced by the women in their care. In addition to the need for post-stay follow-up, the directors also indicated the high demand for outreach services.

Marilyn McCrea (1995, 139-40) raised a key point with regard to outreach programs: the need to offer support services to women from rural areas that would not compromise their safety. She noted that outreach programs should not be limited to information sessions or shelter transportation. They should also ensure the safety of the women who wish to remain in their community.

Since follow-up and outreach services can be very time-consuming, the directors indicated that implementing these would require more case workers and especially, more efficient service coordination (i.e., collaboration among the various services offered in the community). While there are currently a few Domestic Violence Outreach Program initiatives offering such services, the core issue is: up to what point can such a program be used in conjunction with shelter services? Since shelter workers have privileged contacts with the women in their care and have already established a relationship of trust, it would seem a natural extension to offer formal outreach services in the shelters themselves. Clearly, follow-up services are important in supporting women in their decision after a shelter stay. This has been identified in a

study conducted in Ontario (Grasley, Richardson and Harris 2000, 19) where "60% of the women thought they would like to make use of the follow-up services."

SUPPORT TO CHILD WITNESSES AND VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

As previously mentioned, it is difficult for shelters to obtain grants that would allow the hiring of child counselors to address the needs of children sheltered with their mothers. Although shelter workers are confronted with the needs of child witnesses and victims of violence on a daily basis, they are not able to address the specific needs of this clientele.

The directors felt that it would also be beneficial to work with the children to help them cope with this period of transition in their lives, to allow them to express their feelings, to discuss their parental relationships, and so on. All of the directors who raised the issue of child witnesses were unanimous in stating that they did not expect an individualised therapy or intervention program since such specialised interventions were currently handled by health and social services professionals. They merely felt that shelters would benefit from having empathetic child counselors to speak to the children about their problems.

CONCLUSION

The services examined in this study represent well-established social economy initiatives in Saskatchewan. Within the framework of creating positive changes in the dynamics between the State and other sectors delivering human services, we can certainly draw several conclusions from the women's shelter experience. As indicated in our study, the Department of Social Services funds shelters, a reality that inevitably creates resistance and underscores how and at what price the State can establish and impose the scope of responsibilities attributed to these organizations. The directors also felt that they often had to make do with very little, a reality creating daily frustration in their work.

Our examination of the State-shelter funding dynamics revealed that practices developed

by women within a social economy perspective were not fully recognized despite cordial relationships among shelter workers and local government representatives. The main frustrations identified were: the necessity to produce new funding applications despite the relatively stable amounts granted; the low amounts granted to improve working conditions or to hire child counselors; and the requirement to bill Band Councils and Social Services, thereby rendering shelters responsible for recovering money.

It is obvious that solutions are needed to improve the services already delivered by shelters. There is a need for more secure funding; shelters would benefit from a 3- or 5-year funding plan so that they can concentrate energy on programming and services to their clientele. There is no reason to leave the cost recovery responsibilities to the shelters. In addition, some mechanisms should be put in place to ensure the confidentiality of the clients. Department of Social Services officials must also realize the delicate situation which they create for the shelters and their clients.

It is important to remember that shelters are delivering diversified services at a very low cost in terms of salaries, etc. It is thus difficult to recruit and retain staff, especially in towns away from the main centres. There is an apparent need for further research into the working conditions in shelters and the shelter funding issue. This kind of research could help to clarify the difficulties in keeping qualified workers at these agencies. A comparison with workers from the public sector doing similar jobs could also be relevant.

However, State and shelter interactions were not all negative nor one-sided and often led to positive changes on both sides. Our study revealed that both parties are involved in a dialectic process that, in the long-term, has had some positive impact; for example, on their mutual understanding of family violence and violence against women issues, intervention approaches and partnerships to be developed. Further investigation should be pursued on civil servants' perceptions of the recognition of shelter services, with particular attention paid to the perceptions of regional government representatives versus provincial representatives. This research could produce an excellent understanding of the dynamics at the government level and the relationships with the shelters.

It must also be noted that State and shelter interactions have led to changes in family violence services delivered by women's shelters and that changes have also taken place within the Government of Saskatchewan. While we believe these phenomena are likely to continue, the main issue for future consideration will be ensuring that the influence of the social economy sector continues to be felt in the public sector.

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