

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY: SHELTER SERVICES IN THE TORONTO REGION FOR FRANCOPHONE WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN WHO ARE FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP**

# Convergence

NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY:  
SHELTER SERVICES  
IN THE TORONTO REGION  
FOR FRANCOPHONE WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN  
WHO ARE FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

REPORT PRESENTED TO  
ACTION ONTARIENNE CONTRE LA VIOLENCE FAITE AUX FEMMES  
JULY 10, 2006

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AND THEIR CHILDREN WHO ARE FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

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This needs assessment study is an initiative of Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This needs assessment study was made possible due to contributions from many persons. These collaborators made every effort to ensure the success of this study despite the short time frame. We wish to sincerely thank all those who participated in any way in the study. In particular the team wishes to thank:

- Each of the women who participated in different focus groups and in individual interviews. We are conscious of the time and energy required of this type of participation. Thank you to each of you.
- All of the workers who took the time to participate in a focus group to discuss with us their vision and the need for a shelter service to address spousal violence. Thank you.
- All of the Francophone and Anglophone partner groups who shared with us their views of the shelter needs for Francophone women in the Toronto region. Thank you for your collaboration and for your contribution to the development of French language services for women victims of violence.
- Workers who recruited participants for the focus groups and the interviews. Special thanks to: Dada Gasirabo, Mina Razzokia and Tatjana Sekulic from *Oasis Centre des femmes* and to Sylvie Gauthier from the *Centre francophone de Toronto*.
- The Ministry of Community and Social Services for shelter statistics and information concerning the context of shelter service development for women victims of violence. We wish to specifically thank Ginette Desmarais from the Eastern Region and Karen Turner from the Toronto Region.
- Ghislaine Sirois, Executive Director of *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes*, for her ongoing support and her much appreciated contribution to the data analysis. Heartfelt thanks.

## STUDY SUMMARY

### WHY A STUDY NOW?

For several years now, the community of French-speaking women of Ontario has called for the establishment of women's shelters to better serve, in their language, women who deal with spousal violence and criminal harassment. This need was affirmed in the November 2004 *Forum*, in which close to 150 community and ministry representatives participated. This study examines the pertinence of the establishment of such a shelter in the Greater Toronto region.

### WHERE DOES THE DATA COME FROM?

The results of this study are the fruit of a literature review, focus group discussions and individual interviews. The data, collected between June 12 and 23, 2006, reflect the contributions of 45 persons.

### WHOM DID WE INTERVIEW?

- 1) Francophone women fleeing violence: (some of the profile characteristics);
  - Most of the 25 women consulted are between 30 and 39 years old, are currently single parents, first generation immigrants, originally from Africa and have lived in Canada less than 5 years. The annual personal income of three-quarters of these women was less than \$9,999 in 2005.
  - Three-quarters of the women have experienced spousal violence and one-third have experienced family violence. All of the perpetrators were men. One of the respondents indicated that she had never been a victim of or a witness to any form of violence. Half of the women have experienced many forms of violence and sexual assault.
- 2) French language services (FLS) workers who deal with violence against women (some profile characteristics);
  - The eleven workers all work within organizations that offer FLS where all the clients are Francophone.
  - These persons have mainly worked at the *Centre francophone de Toronto* for an average of 3.5 years and at *Oasis Centre des femmes* for an average of 4.3 years.
- 3) Francophone and Anglophone partners (some profile characteristics).
  - The nine partners consulted work in a provincial or regional capacity and were solicited because of their significant knowledge of the issues in the area of spousal violence or FLS or the workings of the government.

### WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP?

#### 1) IN A WOMEN'S SHELTER:

- A range of counselling services for her and her children;
- Priority to the needs of children who witness and rapid access to specialized services;
- Respite services;
- Accompaniment services (divorce proceedings, child custody, refugee status and family reunification);
- An individual plan (that may include, among others, depending on the woman's needs and status, housing search, a school for the children, legal proceedings, a safety plan, etc.);
- Referral services to related resources;

- French language resources to assist them to develop their understanding of violence against women;
- Follow-up services after the shelter stay;
- Information services on the rights and duties of women when dealing with the Children's Aid Society as well as information about their welcoming country.

2) *RELATED SERVICES:*

- Access to employment, assistance in obtaining employment;
- Access to professional training;
- Social and cultural activities;
- Legal services and access to Francophone lawyers;
- Rapid and adapted medical services;
- Integration and settlement services;
- Counselling services for violent men.

**WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT FINDINGS?**

- Population percentage is not a good indicator for determining whether or not FLS should be offered;
- The government of Ontario has obligations toward the Francophone minority;
- Francophone women come from many communities and their needs are very diverse;
- In FLS as well as in women's shelters in Toronto, immigrant women and women from visible minority and ethnocultural communities are overrepresented while women of French Canadian descent are invisible.
- Francophone women who flee violence must overcome numerous obstacles, in particular:
  - Poverty;
  - Social assistance benefits below the poverty line;
  - The housing crisis and lack of affordable housing;
  - Insufficient and inadequate settlement and integration services;
  - Lack of space in women's shelters;
  - The inability of women's shelters to offer FLS;
  - The absence of FLS has serious consequences for women fleeing violence and their children.

**IN CONCLUSION**

*GIVEN THAT:*

- From 1994 to 2003, 77 % of the some 2,600 persons murdered by their spouse were women and that 62 % of murdered women were killed by a husband or spouse;
- At least 12,805 Francophone women in Toronto will be assaulted by a spouse and 4,355 of these will fear for their life;
- No women's shelter in the Toronto area is designated to offer FLS and not one of these has the capacity to offer FLS on an ongoing permanent basis;
- Women's shelters are one of the potentially life saving measures for the women;
- The need for a shelter in Toronto for Francophone women fleeing a violent relationship is clear and well documented in this study;
- The *Beaulac* and *Montfort* decisions clearly demonstrated that the Ontario government should offer FLS in order to support the development of the Ontario Francophone community; they ought to protect the Francophone minority, promote the evolution of the French language and encourage the equality of French with English;
- Also in 2004, the Ontario government published *A Domestic Violence Action Plan for Ontario* in which it asserted, "*In accordance with the French Language Services Act, access to French-language*

*programs and services will be improved within all the components of the Domestic Violence Action Plan, including public education and prevention, early intervention, community supports and the justice system response.” It also added, “A French-language services strategic plan will be developed to address key service priorities and gaps over the next three to five years.”*

- In 2005, the government of Ontario recognized that funding parity should exist between Francophone sexual assault centres and Anglophone rape crisis centres throughout the province. It is now the time to apply this principle to services dealing with spousal violence.
- The development of a women’s shelter in Toronto for Francophone women fleeing a violent relationship has been identified as a priority by the French-speaking Ontario community.

*FRANCOPHONE WOMEN FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE TORONTO REGION HAVE THE RIGHT TO:*

- Reliable, free and accessible services of a quality comparable to services offered in English;
- Services rooted in the right of each woman to equality, safety and freedom, rights that are guaranteed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- A women’s shelter that takes a preventative approach and that uses all available means to prevent violence against women on a societal level;
- A women’s shelter that is Francophone, autonomous, free to act and to be in French, managed by and for Francophone women.

*GIVEN THE URGENCY OF TAKING ACTION, WE RECOMMEND:*

- 1) Immediate creation of a development committee responsible for establishing in the Toronto region a women’s shelter for Francophone women fleeing a violent relationship.
- 2) That *Oasis Centre des femmes* establish this committee in collaboration with *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes*.
- 3) That a feasibility study be conducted from January to April 2007 and that it contain the following elements:
  - The feasibility of the project;
  - An architectural study that would examine various housing models (for example: condominiums, houses that include both emergency shelter and second stage, etc.) and the costs of the different options;
  - Zoning information;
  - A plan detailing how the community will be involved in the development and operation of the women’s shelter;
  - The capital costs of establishing a women’s shelter and an estimate of its operating costs.

## CHAPTER I : CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

### INTRODUCTION

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For a number of years, workers in Francophone organizations in Toronto have maintained that French-speaking women in Toronto who are fleeing a violent relationship have significant needs that are not met by the existing network. On numerous occasions the urgency of establishing a women's shelter in Toronto has been raised. In May of 2006, *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes* initiated a study to document the needs of Francophone women in the Toronto region who are fleeing violence.

The situation of these women was discussed with the research team in focus groups and individual interviews that took place during one week in June 2006. Through the women's descriptions of what happened when they tried to obtain help and support, we were better able to understand their needs and especially the consequences of the inadequate, insufficient and unhelpful responses they all too often received.

Before presenting the views of the women who participated in this study, we give a general overview of the context of this study. The first part of this chapter presents the wider national and provincial contexts. We first give a statistical portrait of the Francophone population in Ontario and briefly present characteristics specific to women from ethnocultural communities.

We also present some of the most recent data on the prevalence of violence against women in Canada and in Ontario, as well as the dangers faced by women who experience violence, the cost of violence against women and the impact of women's shelters. This part concludes with a description of the most recent commitments of the Government of Ontario and *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes* to the issue of spousal violence.

In the second part, we look at some regional specific characteristics. First we present statistical data on the Francophone population of the Toronto region, followed by a report on the French language services that are currently being offered to women who are fleeing violence and on shelter services.

We conclude with information concerning shelter service usage and projections of waiting periods for social housing.

## PART 1 : THE PROVINCIAL SITUATION

### DEMOGRAPHICAL DATA ON THE FRANCOPHONE POPULATION OF ONTARIO

The Francophone women of Ontario are vulnerable to violence in a manner particular to them<sup>1</sup>. In order to present them, we consulted the statistical profile of Francophones in Ontario prepared by the Office of Francophone Affairs (1999 and 2005). The data given below is from the 1996 and the 2001 censuses.

Note that between 1996 and 2001, the Francophone population of Ontario increased by 6,600 persons. The number of Francophones increased in the Eastern and Central Regions and decreased in the other regions.

Characteristics	1996 Census <sup>2</sup>	2001 Census <sup>3</sup>
	Ontario	Ontario
Proportion of the Francophone population that are female	52.4 %	52.7 %
Women according to age groups		
▪ 0-34 years	40.7 %	55.2 %
▪ 35-64 years	59.4 %	44.8 %
Women according to education		
▪ Less than grade 9	15.0 %	11.7 %
▪ Grade 9-13	38.6 %	36.5 %
▪ Post secondary education without a diploma	34.3 %	36.7 %
▪ Bachelor's degree or more	12.4 %	15.1 %
Participation in the work force	57.8 % (Other women 60.0 % Francophone men 70.5 %)	59.2 % (Other women 61.5 % Francophone men 70.7 %)
Average income as a percentage of men's income	68.0 % (\$21,509 compared to \$32,915)	67.5 % (\$28,731 compared to \$42,593)
Proportion of women below the poverty line	18.3 % (Francophone men 15.2 %)	15.8 % (Francophone men 12.3 %)
Women who are most vulnerable to poverty		
▪ 20 to 24 years	30.7 %	24.6 %
▪ 65 years and over		22.8 %
▪ 75 years and over	33.5 %	29.9 %
▪ From a visible minority	Not available	33.7 %
Proportion of Francophones from a racial minority in the city of:		
▪ Toronto	22.5 %	33.2 %
▪ Ottawa	8.9 %	14.1 %
▪ Proportion RM Francophones living in Central Ontario	54.0 %	59.6 %

<sup>1</sup> Brunet and Garceau, (2004), p. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup> The data are taken from two Office of Francophone Affairs (OFA) publications, (August 1999), and (October 1999). The source of the OFA data is the 1996 Census.

<sup>3</sup> The data are taken from five OFA publications, (2005A), (2005B), (2005C), (2005D) and, (2005E), (28 p.). The source of this data is the 2001 Census.

While in 1994 few positions in organizations were filled by women of diverse origins, today their number has increased. Since then, because of the great needs, the *Mouvement ontarien des femmes immigrantes francophones* (MOFIF) has recently been established and an increasing number of immigrant women of diverse origins now participate in the various existing organizations, most particularly in Hamilton-Niagara, Ottawa and Toronto<sup>4</sup>. Because of this, organizations are learning more and more about the issues facing Francophone immigrant women.

Women who immigrate to Canada or who are part of a visible minority face many problems in addition to the experiences they share with women from “conventional” society who deal with violence, including the feeling of powerlessness, racism<sup>5</sup>, isolation<sup>6</sup>, loss of their support group, such as the family of origin, and the loss of employment<sup>7</sup>.

The immigration process can create family conflicts, or intensify them if they already exist, because of culture shock, changes in family roles, loss of status and loss of a support network<sup>8</sup>. Once the women have immigrated, they may encounter many challenges and obstacles in seeking much needed resources. Immigrant women have had the experience of being refused Canadian job training services as well as second language courses, which limits their financial options<sup>9</sup>. The discriminatory manner in which countries treat their immigrants is possibly acquiescence to violence or an indicator of the ways that families in these cultures will be treated<sup>10</sup>. Some immigrant women have a great fear of authorities such as police and social workers because they fear the possibility of deportation<sup>11</sup>. This fear may originate in their experiences with the authorities in their country of origin<sup>12</sup>. This fear may on the other hand, prevent them from reporting spousal violence to the authorities or to services in their country of welcome.

Immigrant women have a number of valid reasons not to report violence to authorities such as the police. We list three main concerns: the potential impact of the criminal justice system on the immigration status of their husband; the belief that an arrest is equivalent to a criminal record; and the fear of seeing their husband arrested or deported, delaying citizenship proceedings. Women do not trust the Canadian criminal justice system to dispense justice or impose a fair and appropriate punishment<sup>13</sup>.

Brownridge and Halli’s secondary analysis of the 1999 General Social Survey data concludes that of the women who experienced the most severe family violence, a large number were immigrant women from developing countries, then Canadians, then immigrant women from

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<sup>4</sup> Brunet and Garceau, (2004), p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Mann, (1995) ; Smith, (2004).

<sup>6</sup> MacLeod and Shin, (1990); Mehotra, (1999)

<sup>7</sup> Anderson, (1993).

<sup>8</sup> Gill & Matthews, (1995).

<sup>9</sup> Mann, (1995).

<sup>10</sup> Levesque, (1994).

<sup>11</sup> Tutty, Thurston, Christensen & Eisener, (2004).

<sup>12</sup> Mann, (1995).

<sup>13</sup> Tutty, (2006), p.13.

developed countries<sup>14</sup>. In addition the authors suggest that younger immigrant women, those who have children, those whose level of education is superior to that of their spouse and those whose spouse shows possessive sexual behaviour are most at risk for assault.

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<sup>14</sup> Brownridge and Halli, (2002).

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## THE PREVALENCE OF SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

Recent statistics on the prevalence of spousal violence in Ontario are for all practical purposes inexistent. We have however obtained some interesting data which we present here.

### AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

As an example of the serious nature and the prevalence of spousal violence, the World Health Organization, referencing the World Bank's *World Development Report 1993* noted in 1997: "Worldwide, it has been estimated that violence against women is as serious a cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer and a greater cause of ill-health than traffic accidents and malaria combined<sup>15</sup>."

### SPOUSAL VIOLENCE IN CANADA

According to the 2004 Statistics Canada *General Social Survey (GSS) - Victimization*<sup>16</sup>:

#### GENERAL STATISTICS ON SPOUSAL VIOLENCE

- 7 % of Canadian women are assaulted by a spouse. Of the women who were assaulted, 27 % were beaten, 25 % choked, 44 % injured and 13 % sought medical help. Without doubt the most informative point is that 34 % of abused women fear for their life in reaction to the violence;
- An examination of the most serious acts of violence that were declared in the survey reveals that a greater proportion of women than men reported having been beaten, strangled, threatened with a knife or a firearm, or attacked by a knife or firearm by an intimate partner (23 % versus 15 %);
- The women were also more likely to indicate that they had been the target of more than 10 violent incidents by their partner (21 % versus 11 %) and to state that they were injured because of the violence (44 % versus 18 %);
- In addition, the women who were victims of spousal violence were three times more likely than male victims of spousal violence to fear for their life (34 % versus 10 %) and three times more likely to take time off from their everyday activities because of the violence (29 % versus 10 %);
- Persons between the ages of 15 and 24 living common law for three years or less and whose partner is a frequent heavy drinker (that is, who consumed five or more drinks on one occasion at least five times per month) are at increased risk of becoming victims of violence by their intimate partner;
- The rate of spousal violence among gays or lesbians was double that declared by heterosexual persons (15 % versus 7 %). The results of the survey also reveal that persons who indicated

<sup>15</sup> Tutty, (2006), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Statistics Canada (2006), p. 8-11.

that their sexual orientation is gay or lesbian were more likely not to have a current partner than heterosexual persons (40 % versus 16 %);

- Survey data show that the rate of spousal violence is higher among common law couples and those who have an ex-spouse or ex-partner;
- Over half (58 %) of persons who indicated they had been stalked by a spouse, an ex-spouse, a common law partner or an ex-common law partner in the previous five years reported that they had also been victims of spousal violence during the same period. This applied in particular to women who are victims of criminal harassment by an intimate partner (61 %);
- 27 % of victims of spousal violence reported the incident to police, this percentage relatively unchanged from that of 1999 (28 %). A higher percentage of women victims of spousal violence than male victims informed the police of the incident (37 % versus 17 %);
- Close to one third (32 %) of the victims of spousal violence who reported the incident to police also obtained a protective order or a restraining order. Female victims of spousal violence who reported the violence to police were much more inclined than their male counterparts to ask for imposition of a protective or restraining order (38 % versus 15 %);
- In 1999 and in 2004, 47 % of women victims of spousal violence stated that they had sought help from an agency that deals with violence.

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#### *STATISTICS ON CRIMINAL HARASSMENT*

- According to data from the GSS of 2004, more than 1.4 million women 15 years of age or older (11 % of the population) were victims of criminal harassment in the five years preceding the survey to the extent that they feared for their life or for the life of someone they knew;
- Obscene phone calls (47 %), being spied on (28 %) and threats or attempts at intimidation (43 %) were the forms of harassment most often cited by women;
- The majority of the victims (80 %) were harassed by a male regardless of the sex of the victim. The most frequent victim-aggressor combinations were female-male (53 %) and male-male (28 %);
- To cope with criminal harassment, more than one third of the women who are victims of criminal harassment (35 %) decided to not go out alone and 15 % of these women decided to move;
- Nearly one-third of harassment victims feared for their life, that is 31 % of women victims. The intensity of the fear was directly related to the relationship between the victim and the harasser. Nearly two-thirds of women who were harassed by an ex-partner feared for their life. (60 %);
- Close to one-half of the victims stalked by a former intimate partner (45 %) reported the criminal harassment to the police while only 35 % of those harassed by a stranger and 36 % of those who were stalked by an acquaintance informed the police of this behaviour;

- Of the criminal harassment activities reported to police, charges were laid against the perpetrator in just under one-quarter (23 %) of the incidents. Charges included assault (50 %), uttering threats (49 %), criminal harassment (46 %) and other charges (24 %);
- Just over one in ten victims of criminal harassment (11 %) had a restraining or protective order imposed on the aggressor; 12 % of women victims obtained a restraining order. Just under one-half of these orders were violated (49 %).

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*STATISTICS ON SPOUSAL HOMICIDES*

- Between 1974 and 2003, the rate of spousal homicides against a female spouse was typically four or five times that of homicides against of male spouses. The homicide rate of a female spouse declined from 16.5 homicides per 1 million female spouses in 1974 to 7.5 homicides in 2003 and the rate of homicides of a male spouse from 4.4 per 1 million spouses in 1974 to 1.7 in 2003;
- Women in common law relationships and women who are separated from a spouse were overrepresented as victims of spousal homicide relative to their population in Canada: 26 % of the separated women were killed by a spouse;
- Between 1994 and 2003, women between the ages of 15 and 24 had the highest rate of spousal homicides (22.5 homicides per million spouses). This rate is almost three times the overall rate of spousal homicides for the same period (7.7 homicides per million female spouses) and close to three times the rate of homicides of male spouses between the ages of 15 and 24 (8.5 homicides per million male spouses);
- Between 1994 and 2003, two thirds of solved murders of children and youth were committed by a family member (67 %), the vast majority of these being the father of the child;
- In 2003, the number of children and youth killed by a family member dropped to 4.4 per million children and youth, nearing the record low reached in 2000. The drop in 2003 was driven by a decrease in the number of young male victims;
- A disproportionate number of parents accused of killing their child are young. The accused killers between the ages of 15 and 24 account for 6 out of 10 homicides involving infants under 1 year of age and 13 % of parental homicides involving children and youth between the ages of 1 and 17 years.
- Homicide rates of infants under 1 year of age consistently account for the highest rate of homicide among children and youth killed by a family member. Moreover, male infants were more likely to be killed than female infants;
- Between 1994 and 2003, 4 out of 10 solved homicides of older adults (65 years and older) were committed by a family member, most often by the victim's adult son;
- Between 1997 and 2003, more than half (54 %) of the accused in spousal homicides had a previous conviction.

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#### *STATISTICS ON HOMICIDE-SUICIDES*

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- Three quarters (76 %) of the homicide-suicides in Canada that occurred between 1961 and 2003 involved family members. More than half of these crimes were committed by a male spouse or an ex-spouse while 97 % of the victims were female spouses (N = 834 female victims). Homicide-suicides were most often committed with a firearm, regardless of the relationship between the victim and the chargeable suspect;
- Women between the ages of 15 and 44 who had an intimate partner had a higher rate of being victims of homicide-suicide (3.5 per million women in a spousal relationship) than women 45 years and older (approximately 2.5). Homicide-suicides between spouses were often characterized by jealousy, arguing and the dissolution of the relationship;
- Between 1961 and 2003 more than one quarter (26 %) of murder victims of homicide-suicides were children and youth under the age of 18 (N = 517). The majority of these children and youth (N = 459 or 89 %) were killed by a parent or step parent. Of the victims that were killed by a parent, 69 % were killed by their father, 3 % by their step father and 28 % by their mother;
- Male infants under one year of age and girls between the ages of one and 5 year were most at risk of being a homicide-suicide victim at the hands of a parent;
- Older adults were least likely to be victims of homicide-suicide: 137 cases were reported between 1961 and 2003. Most of these were committed by a spouse.

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#### *STATISTICS ON FAMILY VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND YOUTH*

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- According to data from 122 police services, in 2003 children and youth under 18 years of age represented 21 % of all assault victims;
- In 7 out of 10 cases, parents were accused of assault against children.

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#### *STATISTICS ON FAMILY VIOLENCE AGAINST OLDER ADULTS*

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- In 2003, older adults (65 years or older) were the least likely age group to be victims of violent crimes reported to 122 police services. The rate of victimization of older women was 119 per 100,000 population;
- Older women were more likely to be victims of family violence than their male counterparts. Close to 4 out of 10 older female victims were assaulted by a family member, while 20 % of older males were victims of assault;
- Older persons who were victims of family-related assault most often were victims of common assault (55 %) and of uttering threats (19 %);
- In 2003 nearly 8 out of 10 family members accused of assaulting an older adult family member were male, one-third being the adult male son and 30 % a male spouses or ex-spouses;
- According to information given by police, in 2003 more than one third of older adults victims of family-related assaults suffered minor injuries while 3 % of them suffered serious physical injuries.

## THE PREVALENCE OF SPOUSAL VIOLENCE IN ONTARIO

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According to a recent Ontario government publication, 25 % of Ontario women will be subjected to spousal violence at least once in their life<sup>17</sup>.

### *WOMEN ASSASSINATED BY A SPOUSE IN ONTARIO*

Since June 1995, 226 women and 34 children have lost their lives through male violence. Since January 2006, spousal violence accounts for 27 murders in Ontario, that is, 16 women and 11 children. At the same time last year, ten women (and no children) had been killed in Ontario.

On June 24, 2006, Gwendolyn Pilgrim was strangled to death in her apartment in Toronto. Her companion Donovan Morrison who was free on bail with a non contact clause with Gwendolyn, was charged with second degree murder. At the time this report is being written, 13 persons (9 women and 4 children) had been assassinated in the Toronto region from January to June 2006.

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<sup>17</sup> Government Information Centre, (2005), p. 3.

## THE DANGER FACED BY WOMEN VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Unfortunately, leaving a violent relationship is not always in itself a guarantee of safety. It does happen that violence continues or escalates after the woman leaves her partner. Data shows that in Australia, Canada and the United States, a significant proportion of homicides by intimate partners in which the woman is the victim occur when the woman attempts to leave a violent partner<sup>18</sup>.

On June 1 2006, YWCA Canada published the troubling results of a national study that showed that a high percentage of women seeking refuge in shelters for abused women were at risk of being killed. Of the 368 women who were interviewed at ten research locations across the country, 77 % were in extreme or in severe danger of death<sup>19</sup>.

The fact that three-quarters of the residents were in such great danger of death confirms that shelters potentially help save women's lives, at least in the short term. The generally accepted statistics are as convincing as the data collected in the YWCA study. Since 1974, nearly 2,600 spousal homicides (including married, divorced, separated or common law spouses) have been recorded in Canada. Seventy-seven percent of the victims were women. Sixty-two percent of murdered women between 1994 and 2003 were killed by their husband or spouse<sup>20</sup>.

Danger levels greatly increase the moment the women leave a violent relationship as is illustrated by the number of women who are stalked, threatened and killed after their separation. Violence often continues after separation. The dangers associated with the dissolution of the relationship can last for years, long after the limited stay in most of the women's shelters<sup>21</sup>.

Threats to women and their children begin again once they leave the safety of the women's shelter and must reintegrate into the community where they have no protection<sup>22</sup>. These threats and associated fears can result in returning to the violent spouse (without adequate legal protection, a woman can come to believe that she will be more safe by returning to the dangerous relationship). If a woman decides to leave her spouse, she must deal with many other decisions related to her needs and those of her children such as: finding housing, resisting pressures to return to live with her violent spouse, finding employment that allows her to meet her needs and those of her children, finding child care, etc.

In this manner, women are at a higher risk of being seriously wounded or even killed when they separate from their spouse. Researchers have shown a connection between spousal homicide and a higher incidence of spousal crimes in common law relationships, separation, belonging to an ethnic group including those of aboriginal heritage and greater age differences. When the woman leaves the women's shelter, she can be subjected to additional violence. Many women therefore incur considerable risks and suffer from anxiety long after having left the security of the transition house<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Krug et al. (2002), p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> Tutty, (2006), p. 47.

<sup>20</sup> YWCA Canada, [http://www.ywcacanada.ca/public\\_eng/advocacy/Shelter/Q&A\\_FINAL\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ywcacanada.ca/public_eng/advocacy/Shelter/Q&A_FINAL_EN.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Ellis, (1992), p. 178.

<sup>22</sup> Tutty, (1996), p. 427.

<sup>23</sup> Tutty, (2006), p. 10.

## THE COST OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In 1995, Hankivesky and Greaves estimated the costs of violence against Canadian women. They took into account social services and education (preventative programs and transition houses); medical care, criminal justice (i.e. police inquests, preparation for trial and court proceedings, programs for offenders, legal aid, incarceration, parole hearings) and employment (i.e. sick leave, workplace counselling services). The authors estimate that violence against women costs 4.2 billion dollars annually for just three types of violence: incest or sexual assault against children, sexual assault or rape of women and violence against women in intimate relationships<sup>24</sup>.

## THE IMPACT OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS FOR WOMEN VICTIMS

The YWCA Canada asked participants what they expected of women's shelters. The most often cited need is moral support or counselling offered by shelter personnel (81 %), followed by a safe place to live (80 %), suggestions for decreasing stress and anger (73 %), for improving self-image (71 %), and referrals for housing (71 %). Safety is an essential aspect for all the women who participated in the study. Emergency crisis counselling personnel in the shelter was one of the greatest strengths expressed by the respondents and one of their most often mentioned concerns.

This study also shows a decline in the number of problems the women face once they leave women's shelters. This finding suggests that residents are better prepared to face the challenges that confront them when they return to the community, with most of them intending to leave the violent relationship.

Elsewhere, in its 2004 report, the Ontario Domestic Violence Death Review Committee recalls that in the three main Chief Coroner's inquests in the years 1998 to 2002, certain major recurring themes were found in the recommendations to prevent deaths due to spousal violence. Among these major themes, the Committee highlighted the importance of:

- Offering better access to essential services for the victims, the aggressors and their families, particularly the children who are exposed to family violence;
- Obtaining adequate financing for community based violence against women services<sup>25</sup>.

The Committee added that "adequate resources are required to institute programs that will help to ensure victim safety and reduce the perpetrator's risk." All the programs and services require resources to become operational. These resources include:

- Assistance in removing the victim from the situation;
- Affordable alternative housing;
- Counselling services for victims and their families;

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<sup>24</sup> *Idem.* p. 7.

<sup>25</sup> Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, (2004), p. 3.

*Needs assessment study: shelter services in the Toronto region for Francophone women and their children who are fleeing a violent relationship, Convergence, coopérative d'expertes conseils*

- Other community based support systems and services for victims, aggressors and children exposed to family violence<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> **Idem.**, p. 7.

*Needs assessment study: shelter services in the Toronto region for Francophone women and their children who are fleeing a violent relationship, Convergence, coopérative d'expertes conseils*

### ONTARIO GOVERNMENT COMMITMENTS IN THE MATTER OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

On December 13, 2004, the Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty and Sandra Pupatello, Ontario Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, announced a new *Domestic Violence Action Plan for Ontario*. In this four-year plan, the provincial government commits to:

- Better community based supports for victims;
- Identifying women and children at risk and intervene earlier;
- Changing attitudes to prevent acts of violence;
- Strengthening the justice system response<sup>27</sup>.

The government promises improved access for abused women and their children to a continuum of supports in their community to help them be safe, heal and to live independently and productively<sup>28</sup>.

The government recognizes that ensuring increased safety for women and their children involves improved access to French language services and targeted initiatives to address the unique needs of people with disabilities, seniors and aboriginal persons, ethnocultural/racial groups, rural/farm/northern communities<sup>29</sup>. It specifies that "Francophone women should receive services in their language in accordance with the *French Language Services Act*<sup>30</sup>."

In fact the last section of the Ontario action plan deals specifically with improving access to French language services. Among other references, we cite the following, "In accordance with the French Language Services Act, access to French-language programs and services will be improved within all the components of the Domestic Violence Action Plan, including public education and prevention, early intervention, community supports and the justice system response. Ministries will report on improved access to French-language violence against women programs and services<sup>31</sup>."

Among the initiatives that were announced, a strategic plan for French language services was promised. However as of June 2006, we have yet to see this plan. AOcVF however drew up its own four-year plan in April 2006.

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<sup>27</sup> Ontario Women's Directorate, *A Domestic Violence Action Plan for Ontario*, press release, Toronto, December 13 2004.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (2005), p.3.

<sup>29</sup> *Idem.*, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Idem.*, p. 7.

<sup>31</sup> *Idem.*, p. 18.

### **THE 2004 FORUM**

From November 4 to 6, 2004, some 150 persons who participated in the Forum on the Development of French language violence against women services outlined the priorities of each of the major regions of Ontario. The second priority in the Toronto and Barrie region was opening a women's shelter for and by Francophone women in Toronto<sup>32</sup>.

In addition to establishing women's shelters in Toronto and Hamilton for Francophone women fleeing violence, the participants also called for second stage housing, transition and accompaniment programs<sup>33</sup>.

### **AOCVF ACTION PLAN 2006-2010**

The AOCVF action plan is made up of six components, the second dealing exclusively with the development of French language services to deal with spousal violence. What follows is the preamble.

“There are significant gaps in access to Francophone services: only a handful of the hundred women's shelters offer FLS 24/7, and since it is often because of the shelters that related services are developed in the community, such as counselling, second stage support and other services, French language related services are far from adequate. The situation is particularly disastrous for women who do not speak English, often the case for immigrant women or women who have recently moved from Quebec for example, and who can live for weeks in a women's shelter before obtaining services. In addition, chronic under funding of shelter services causes serious problems, resulting in an inordinate proportion of their resources allocated to fund raising with disappointing results, and difficulty retaining and recruiting personnel. In the past few years, only one increase of 3 % was granted to women's shelters, far below the increasing needs for salaries, food costs, heating and electricity, taxes, etc.

(...) The French-speaking communities in the Toronto and Hamilton-Niagara regions call for the establishment of two Francophone women's shelters because of the great need and the lack of FLS in existing resources<sup>34</sup>.”

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<sup>32</sup> Garceau and Brunet, (2004), p. 30.

<sup>33</sup> Idem., p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> AOCVF, (2006), p. 5.

THE FRANCOPHONE POPULATION IN THE TORONTO REGION<sup>35</sup>

Although Francophones only account for 1.8 % of the total population of Central Ontario, this region is home to 25.6 % of the province's Francophone population<sup>36</sup>. In the Toronto region<sup>37</sup>, the Francophone population totalled 95,555 persons in 2001, which represents 17.4 % of the Francophone population of Ontario. Immigration accounts for much of the growth of the Francophone population in the Queen City. In fact persons from visible minorities make up 29 % of the French-speaking population in Toronto and 47.4 % of Francophones belonging to racial minorities in Ontario.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FRANCOPHONE POPULATION	TORONTO REGION
Regional Francophone population ( <i>n</i> )	95,555
Francophone population relative to the total regional population	2.4 %
Francophone population in the region in proportion to the total Francophone population of Ontario	16.9 %
Female population ( <i>n</i> )	51,215
(and proportion of the regional Francophone population)	53.6 %
Francophone population belonging to a visible minority ( <i>n</i> )	27,735
(and proportion of the regional Francophone population)	29.0 %
Female Francophone population belonging to a visible minority ( <i>n</i> )	14,070
(and proportion of female Francophone population)	27.5 %
Female population married, separated but still legally married or in a common law relationship with a partner of the opposite sex ( <i>n</i> )	25,220
(and proportion of the female Francophone population of the region)	49.2 %
Average employment income of Francophone females in 2000 ( <i>n</i> )	20,888 \$
(and proportion of average income of male Francophones)	62.2 %

<sup>35</sup> Data from Statistics Canada, *Portrait of official language communities in Canada*, 2001 Census, Ottawa, CDRom 94F004XCB.

<sup>36</sup> Office of Francophone Affairs, (2005A), p. 6.

<sup>37</sup> For the purposes of this study, the Toronto region includes the following eight communities: Ajax, Brampton, Burlington, Mississauga, Oakville, Oshawa, Toronto and Whitby.

<sup>38</sup> Data from Statistics Canada, *Portrait of official language communities in Canada*, 2001 Census, Ottawa, CDRom 94F004XCB.

## EXISTING FLS IN THE TORONTO REGION THAT DEAL WITH VIOLENCE

The designation (of the Ontario government for French language services) applies to all of Toronto. The Greater Toronto Area also includes cities such as Oshawa and Burlington that have Francophone populations but are not designated<sup>39</sup>.

In Toronto, *Oasis Centre des femmes* is the only agency offering a variety of violence against women services entirely in French. *Oasis* broadened its original mandate of sexual assault services to services dealing with spousal violence and other forms of abuse. Direct services and programs are adapted to the needs of immigrant women who are the majority of their clients.

The *Centre francophone de Toronto* (CFT) offers many related services that support the healing process for Francophone women who have experienced spousal violence and for children who witness violence. Among the services CFT offers are:

- Clinical counselling services (medical services);
- Since March 2006, legal advice on family law;
- Section 20: Day treatment centre for children in difficulty (in collaboration with catholic and public school boards);
- Programs for children from 0 to 12 years old with special needs (developmental delays, behaviour problems, etc.);
- The *Espace personnel* program: prevention for children in grades 3 to 6 (often leads to disclosure of violence);
- Housing and settlement support;
- Health promotion (adults and early childhood);
- The *Ici pour aider* program: for children who witness violence against women and for the mothers who are victims;
- Settlement services for newcomers.

Among the twenty women's shelters in the Greater Toronto Area, with the exception of a few isolated workers, no shelters actively offer French language services and few of these refer Francophone women to *Oasis Centre des femmes*, despite the centre's continued efforts to educate them to the necessity of offering French language violence against women services to their Francophone clients.

The regional crisis line *Elle-écoute* was created jointly in 1998 by *Oasis Centre des femmes* and the *Centre de santé communautaire de Hamilton-Niagara*. In the spring of 2006, *Elle-écoute* became the *Ligne de soutien pour femmes victimes de violence* that integrates all the French language regional telephone lines for women who are victims of violence. The service is now jointly managed by three agencies: *Oasis Centre des femmes* in Toronto, *Centre Victoria pour femmes* in Sudbury and *Maison d'Amitié* in Ottawa.

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<sup>39</sup> Brunet and Garceau, (2004), pp. 93-94.

## THE CHALLENGES AND NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY WORKERS

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Twice yearly, *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes* (AOcVF) gathers Francophone workers in the field of violence. At these meetings, the Toronto workers identified the following challenges and needs:

### THE CHALLENGES IN TORONTO

- There are few partnerships between agencies offering FLS and English language services for women victims of violence or with related services (lawyers, hospital personnel, etc.)<sup>40</sup>;
- Women are frequently refused the right to request French language services<sup>41</sup>;
- Reaching women living in the suburbs of Toronto where no FLS are offered<sup>42</sup>;
- It is difficult for *Oasis* to establish transparent partnerships with women's shelters who along with others perceive *Oasis* as an interpretation service. Francophone women do not receive services and there is little cooperation in the manner of referrals to FLS. In addition, many women's shelters have more than one mandate (for example, they might serve women victims of violence and homeless women or women with mental health problems)<sup>43</sup>;
- 80 % of women served are immigrant women from Africa<sup>44</sup>;
- There is a competition problem between workers in English language women's shelters and transitional support workers<sup>45</sup>;
- All women who have experienced violence must go through "Central Family Intake", however this service does not offer FLS<sup>46</sup>;
- English language women's shelters do not give information about FLS to their Francophone clients<sup>47</sup>.

### THE NEEDS IN TORONTO

- More collaboration with women's shelters that offer English language services<sup>48</sup>;
- A French language women's shelter<sup>49</sup> and protocols with women's shelters that offer their services in English<sup>50</sup>;
- A drop-in child care service for women who have many children<sup>51</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> AOcVF, (2004), p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Idem., p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> AOcVF, (2005A), p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> AOcVF, (2005A), p. 5 and (2005B), p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> AOcVF, (2005A), p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> AOcVF, (2005B), p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Idem.

<sup>47</sup> Idem.

<sup>48</sup> AOcVF, (2004), p. 13.

<sup>49</sup> AOcVF, (2005A), p. 5 and AOcVF (2006).

<sup>50</sup> AOcVF, (2005A), p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> AOcVF, (2005B), p. 4 and AOcVF (2006).

## SHELTER SERVICES IN THE TORONTO REGION FOR WOMEN FLEEING VIOLENCE

We were not able to identify the exact number of shelter services for women victims of violence because the number varied depending on the source. According to Shelternet<sup>52</sup>, a service that provides information and resources for women victims of violence, there are at present 23 shelters in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) of which 11 are situated in the city of Toronto. There are also four second stage houses in the area of which two are located in Toronto.

The women's shelters in Toronto are:

- Anduhyaun
- Birkdale Residence
- Emily Stowe Shelter for Women
- Ernestine's Women's Shelter
- Interval House
- Juliette's Place
- North York Women's Shelter
- Robertson House
- The Redwood
- Women's Habitat of Etobicoke
- WoodGreen Red Door Family Shelter

Note however that some shelter services for abused women do not appear on this list such as Nellie's (created in 1973, 34 beds), Streethaven at the Crossroads (created in 1965), YWCA Women's Shelter (created in 1991, 33 beds), YWCA Stop 86 (27 beds).

The second stage houses in Toronto are:

- Amelie House
- Nekenaan Second Stage Housing

The women's shelters in the Greater Toronto Area are:

- Denise House (Oshawa)
- Family Transition Place (Orangeville)
- Halton Women's Place - North (Milton)
- Herizon House (Ajax)
- Honeychurch Family Life Resource Centre (Brampton)
- Interim Place I (Mississauga)
- Interim Place II (Mississauga)
- Sandgate Women's Shelter of Georgina (Sutton West)
- Yellow Brick House (Aurora)
- Y's Wish (Oshawa)

The second stage house in the Greater Toronto Area is:

- Armagh (Mississauga) and Family Transition Place (Orangeville)

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.shelternet.ca/splashPage.htm>

## FLS IN WOMEN'S SHELTERS IN THE TORONTO REGION

According to a study done in 1999, 17 of the 21 women's shelters in the Greater Toronto Area indicated having Francophone personnel. However only two of these indicated that more than one staff member spoke French (*Women's Shelter* and *Interim Place*). Eight (8) of these shelters indicated that they had received 172 Francophone women in the two years preceding the study while others estimated that 8 to 10 % of their clients are Francophone.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, two women's shelters pointed out that there was a concentration of Francophones in their territory:

- African population in the Etobicoke-Jane-Finch region;
- Francophone population in Georgetown (Burlington)<sup>54</sup>.

## USAGE OF WOMEN'S SHELTERS AND THE WAITING PERIOD FOR SOCIAL HOUSING

### *WOMEN'S SHELTERS*

According to the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, there are 13 shelters in the city of Toronto for abused women. Together these shelters offer 380 beds. Between April 2005 and March 2006, 1,368 women and children used the services. However, the shelters had to refuse 7,108 requests in the same period. It is estimated that the shelters operate at full capacity (100 %) or on most days<sup>55</sup>. Nellie's alone must refuse approximately 1,068 requests annually due to lack of space.

### *SOCIAL HOUSING*

The waiting list for social housing in Toronto is currently at 70,000 applications. This translates into a waiting period of seven to ten years depending on the nature of the request<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> Cottenceau, (2000), p. 21.

<sup>54</sup> *Idem.*, p. 27.

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Community and Social Services, numbers obtained by email June 28, 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Toronto Housing, information received by email June 27, 2006.

## CHAPTER II : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes in detail the methodology used to carry out this needs assessment study. We shall first describe the territory covered by the study and identify the characteristics of the research subjects. We shall then explain our data collection methodology, both the literature review and the collection of data directly from Francophone women fleeing a violent relationship, from persons who work with them and from Francophone and Anglophone partners in the field. The chapter will end with a summary of recruitment methods used for the study, the time line and the limitations of the study.

### THE TERRITORY AND THE STUDY SUBJECTS

For the purposes of this study, the statistical data of the Toronto region include the following eight communities: Ajax, Brampton, Burlington, Mississauga, Oakville, Oshawa, Toronto and Whitby.

Many study subjects were chosen at the beginning of the research. The persons consulted are: women fleeing a violent relationship, workers in services offered to women victims of violence and their children as well as potential Anglophone and Francophone partners. Each person contributed important data that assisted us to describe as accurately as possible the reality, the needs, the current environment and ideas for consideration that are presented throughout this report.

### DATA COLLECTION METHODS

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

On May 25, 2006, we began a review of documents, studies and articles dealing with Francophone women in Ontario fleeing a violent relationship.

The information collected was a starting point for a preliminary representation of the context of this needs assessment study. With this information we put together statistical data on Francophone communities as well as on the prevalence of violence against women in an intimate relationship. In addition we retrieved information regarding the commitments of the provincial government and of *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes* to work to end spousal violence.

Other publications and information sources assisted us in preparing a preliminary representation of the danger facing women who are victims of violence, of the impact of women's shelters and

French language services offered in the region. This preliminary representation was subsequently supplemented or refined with the fieldwork data.

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#### DATA COLLECTION FROM FRANCOPHONE WOMEN FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

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Our plan was to hold three focus groups in the Greater Toronto Area however the organizers were only able to schedule two groups. These groups took place at the *Oasis Centre des femmes* on June 12, 2006 at 2:00 pm and on June 13, 2006 at 10:00 am. Each meeting lasted 2 hours. Individual interviews were also held in order to increase the number of participants in the needs assessment study. Of the 25 participants we interviewed, 24 are currently receiving services from *Oasis*. They also completed a demographical profile and a questionnaire dealing with their experience of violence (see Chapter III for more information). Each person received \$30.00 for participating in the study.

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#### DATA COLLECTION FROM FRANCOPHONE WORKERS

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A two hour discussion group was held at *Oasis Centre des femmes* on June 12, 2006 beginning at 2:00 pm. The 11 workers completed a profile detailing their programs or services (consult Chapter III for more detail).

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#### DATA COLLECTION FROM FRANCOPHONE AND ANGLOPHONE PARTNERS

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Telephone interviews were held with Anglophone groups and with one Francophone partner. The telephone interviews varied in length from 30 minutes to 75 minutes.

## RECRUITMENT METHODS

At its semi-annual meeting in May 2006 in Ottawa, AOcVF presented the needs assessment project concerning a women's shelter for the Toronto region in order to recruit Francophone women to participate in the data collection. The executive director of AOcVF, Ghislaine Sirois, described the profile of the women they were seeking to interview in the context of the research. Convergence subsequently spoke by telephone and by email with all the workers referred by AOcVF in order to coordinate data collection in the region.

Workers from *Oasis Centre des femmes*, one worker from the "Ici pour aider" program of the *Centre francophone de Toronto* as well as one worker from the *Centre d'entrepreneuriat en intégration professionnelle féminin de Peel-Brampton* recruited from their clientele women interested in participating in the study.

Violence against women workers were also invited to contribute to the research data during the semi-annual AOcVF meeting. Subsequently, Convergence communicated with *Oasis Centre des femmes* and the *Centre francophone de Toronto* and asked a worker to recruit persons of interest for group discussions. A worker from the *Centre francophone de Toronto* who works as

a counsellor with persons who have housing or settlement needs participated in the group discussion.

The Francophone and Anglophone partner groups were referred by many sources, but mainly by AOcVF and by the *Oasis* director.

## TIME LINE

This needs assessment study took place over a six week period, from May 24 to July 5 2006.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The short time frame we were given and the time of year in which the data collection occurred were the main methodological limitations of this study. Carrying out a feasibility study at the beginning of summer makes it more complicated to recruit clientele. This is the time of year when front line workers close files and prepare for summer vacation.

The short time frame available to complete the needs assessment study required us to simultaneously collect data from women, workers and potential partners. In addition it was difficult to contact certain key persons in Francophone and Anglophone partner organizations.

Finally, one of the other methodological limitations of this study arose from the sample of women victims of violence whom we interviewed. Comparing statistics on the Francophone population of Toronto to the demographical profile of study participants, it is clear that immigrant women or women from racial and ethnocultural minorities are overrepresented while women of Canadian origin are underrepresented.

## CHAPTER III : RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we present the profile of the persons who participated in the data collection. First we profile the Francophone women who participated either in the focus groups or in individual interviews that took place between June 12 and 23 2006. We then summarize the characteristics of the front line workers with whom we met in a discussion group on June 12, 2006. To conclude we give an overview of Francophone and Anglophone partners, both at the provincial and regional levels, whom we interviewed between June 12 and 23 2006.

The profile compilation of Francophone women fleeing a violent relationship and that of the workers interviewed are found in Appendix 3 of this report.

### THE PROFILE OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

Twenty-five (25) women were consulted during the data collection period in the region of Toronto. Two focus group meetings took place June 12 and 13, 2006 at *Oasis Centre des femmes* in which 17 women participated. In addition, 8 other women were interviewed by telephone.

Almost two-thirds of the participants in the needs assessment study are between the ages of 30 and 39 and one-quarter (6) are between the ages of 40 and 49. With the exception of two participants (1 living with a common law partner and the other with her husband), the respondents are currently single parents or living alone. Almost all the women who live alone have children living in their country of origin. All are first generation immigrant women. Two thirds (17) have been in Canada less than 5 years. With the exception of two women, the respondents are from Africa: 7 from the Democratic Republic of Congo and 6 from Morocco. The other women are from Congo-Kinshasa, Cameroon, Burundi, Guinea, Gabon, Somalia, Egypt, Madagascar, France and Haiti.

All the women are heterosexuals. Only one woman has a physical, motor or intellectual disability and another lives with an HIV positive diagnosis. Regarding their highest level of education, close to one-third of respondents (8) have a high school diploma or lower, and almost half (11) of them have completed or partially completed university studies. Almost three-quarters (17) had an annual income of less than \$9,999 in 2005. Only one woman had an annual income greater than \$40,000.

According to the profile completed by the participants<sup>57</sup>, close to three-quarters (18) had experienced spousal violence and close to one-third (7) had experience family violence. All of the sexual assaults or violent acts had been perpetrated by men. One of the respondents indicated that she had never experienced or been witness to any form of violence. For the

<sup>57</sup> Note that the profile of the experience of violence was quite complex and the participants often had difficulty completing the questionnaire.

others, half of them (12) had experienced many forms of violence and sexual assault. These experiences of violence and assault took place in their childhood and in their adult life, by family members as well as by persons they knew and by strangers. Some were victims of organized abusive practices. The other half (12) experienced only spousal violence (7) or some form of sexual assault as an adult (5).

## THE PROFILE OF FRANCOPHONE WORKERS

Eleven (11) workers participated in the focus group held on June 12, 2006 at *Oasis Centre des femmes* in Toronto. Six were from the *Centre francophone de Toronto*, four from *Oasis Centre des femmes* and one was from the *Centre d'entrepreneuriat et d'intégration professionnelle féminin de Peel-Brampton*.

The following programs contributed to the data collection:

- *Centre francophone de Toronto* :
  - Community health
  - *Ici pour aider* (program for children who witness violence and their mothers)
  - Settlement services
  - Legal aid services
  - Health promotion and early childhood services
  
- *Oasis Centre des femmes* :
  - Transitional support services
  - Community outreach services
  - Consultation and accompaniment services
  - Support line
  
- *Centre d'entrepreneuriat et d'intégration professionnelle de Peel-Brampton*.

All of the clients served by these programs are Francophone. The front line workers have worked at *Centre francophone de Toronto* an average of 3.5 years and those from *Oasis Centre des femmes* an average of 4.3 years

## THE PROFILE OF FRANCOPHONE AND ANGLOPHONE PARTNERS

### PROVINCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

#### **Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes**

Ghislaine Sirois, Executive Director

Provincial coalition of regional networks that works to end the oppression of women. Advocates through network cooperation to better respond to the needs of the diversity of Francophone women of Ontario.

#### **Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions (COPA)**

Kathryn Penwill,

*Needs assessment study: shelter services in the Toronto region for Francophone women and their children who are fleeing a violent relationship, Convergence, coopérative d'expertes conseils*

Provincial organization supporting the development of French language programs (training and consulting) for prevention of child and youth assault.

**Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS)**

Ginette Desmarais, Program Supervisor, Eastern Region  
Karen Turner, Program Supervisor, Toronto Region

**Maison d’Amitié (Ottawa)<sup>58</sup>**

Anne Hodge, Executive Director

One of the two Francophone women’s shelters in Ontario. It is located in the Ottawa region and offers its services at two sites. Founded in 1976, the shelter has a total of 30 beds (2 sites).

**Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses (OAITH)**

Eileen Morrow, Coordinator

Provincial coalition and spokesperson for shelters for abused women since 1977 in Ontario. Works to promote public policy and social change in matters related to violence against women and their children.

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**REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**Georges Brown College**

Mandy Bonisteel, Teacher in the *Assaulted Women and Children’s Worker/Advocate* program. Militant feminist dealing with violence against women in Canada and elsewhere.

**Nellie’s Shelter**

Cindy Cowan, Director

Shelter for abused, disadvantaged or homeless women in Toronto since 1998. Clients come from all over the city, the province, other Canadian provinces or territories and even from foreign countries. The clientele is diverse on many levels, culture, language, age, status, sexual orientation, mental health and problems with the justice system.

**Women Abuse Council of Toronto**

Vivien Green, Director

Coordinating organization mandated to improve community intervention in matters of violence against women. The council works to develop policy and service coordination planning. Many protocols have been developed with crown prosecutors, police officers and parole officers.

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<sup>58</sup> Consulted as a member of AOcVF and because of 30 years operating as a women’s shelter. *Needs assessment study: shelter services in the Toronto region for Francophone women and their children who are fleeing a violent relationship, Convergence, coopérative d’expertes conseils*

## CHAPTER IV : HIGHLIGHTS OF THE DATA COLLECTED

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we will look at the types of shelter used by Francophone women in the Toronto region, their needs for support services and the type of approach they would like to see in a women's shelter.

We shall then present the needs as perceived by workers, strengths and weaknesses of FLS offered in the Toronto region, opportunities and threats that might influence the development of a women's shelter for Francophone women, issues to consider, the geographical location of a new women's shelter and the range of FLS required to assist and support women and their children when they flee violence.

Following this, the data collected from Francophone and Anglophone partners will be given: perceived needs, strengths and weaknesses of the existing network of women's shelters, issues and the eventual involvement of their organization in the establishment of a new women's shelter.

### WHAT THE WOMEN FLEEING VIOLENCE SAID

The type of shelter used by respondents varies. They used the following services:

- Shelter for abused women that offers English language services;
- Shelter for homeless adults;
- Shelter for homeless families;
- Shelter for homeless persons and for persons with a variety of problems (mental health, dependence, substance abuse and other behavioural problems).

We found that some respondents, especially women who had recently arrived in the region, had difficulty distinguishing the type of shelter they had used.

### ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF SHELTER SERVICES

We wanted to determine both the positive and negative aspects of the shelter experience of Francophone women victims of violence.

#### *POSITIVE ASPECTS*

The respondents found that being in a women's shelter or in another type of shelter gave them and their children a feeling of security. They also found they were warmly received by personnel.

### *NEGATIVE ASPECTS*

Despite these positive aspects, the respondents said they mostly faced difficulties. Many of the participants speak little or no English, the direct result being that they and their children are isolated from the other residents and the shelter workers. They told us that often they had to wait many days before receiving services while they were in crisis. Francophone women must use an interpreter as intermediary in order to communicate with the shelter workers.

The fact that they had to communicate through a third party was disadvantageous in many ways. For example, intake for an Anglophone woman could take place in a matter of hours. Intake for a Francophone woman might be spread out over many meetings simply because it takes more time to communicate with an intermediary. This results in a delay for services. Also respondents indicated that the interpreters' French is often weak, so that the shelter worker does not receive an accurate account of their history and consequently the women do not necessarily receive appropriate services. In addition, they do not benefit from all the services offered to Anglophones.

They do not like the fact they cannot integrate rapidly into the shelter and consequently they feel excluded. Many respondents are uncomfortable asking for French language services, because personnel from certain agencies had suggested they "return to Quebec". Some were told there was no budget for French language services.

In the shelters for homeless persons the respondents said that it was difficult to cohabit with other residents with various problems such as mental health issues or substance abuse problems. Women who are victims of spousal abuse, sexual assault survivors or survivors of armed conflict do not feel protected in these shelters. Because of this, they feel that having men and women in the same location is inappropriate. The respondents said that they need more support and safety. One of the respondents preferred to remain in a spousal violence situation rather than having to go to such a shelter.

Respondents from ethnocultural communities often had the feeling that some aspects of their culture that were very important to them were not taken into consideration by the agencies. Some respondents said they did not eat for days because the food was not in accordance with their religious customs. Because of this, these respondents would prefer to have access to a private space to prepare their meals.

Immigrant women feel negatively judged due to a reciprocal lack of understanding of their values. This mutual misunderstanding often resulted in difficult situations. For example, some immigrant women were upset that workers reported them to the Children's Aid Society (CAS) after having "slapped" their children. These women would have liked to have been told about Canadian laws and regulations, which they feel would have avoided unnecessary scenes. These respondents were very afraid when a CAS worker came on-site following a report and was ready to remove the child from the mother. The women in question recognize that in their culture spanking is not seen by the state as a crime. They did not think that their actions could have such consequences.

Respondents from visible minorities have the feeling that some workers show favouritism toward certain groups and that they are victims of discrimination. They mentioned that some of their requests had been refused while the same requests had been granted to other groups without apparent reason.

The respondents found that rules were strict at many shelters or women's shelters, even to the point of taking away their freedom. They also mentioned that some rules were childish and that there was lack of flexibility.

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### ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF FLS

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Overall, the respondents had accessed the three main French language services available in the Toronto region. For some it took awhile to discover these services exist. Others consider themselves lucky because they were quickly referred to the following three services:

- *Centre francophone de Toronto*, and all its services including the legal aid clinic;
- *Oasis Centre des femmes* of Toronto, and all its services;
- *Elle-écoute*, now the *Ligne de soutien pour femmes victimes de violence*, a provincial telephone line that assists and supports women victims of violence.

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### ABOUT THEIR SHELTER SERVICE NEEDS

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The respondents identified the services they would like to receive in a women's shelter. The services offered in this Francophone women's shelter should provide a range of counselling services for the women and their children.

The respondents also would like their children's needs seen as priorities and rapid access to specialized services for them. The women would also like to see respite services to allow them to work on healing and to meet other women.

Because of the housing crisis, exorbitant rent prices in the private sector and the shortage of subsidized housing, respondents are faced with many obstacles when they look for affordable housing. An accompaniment service to assist them to find safe, accessible housing would help shorten their stay in shelters (or women's shelters) and to live in neighbourhoods that have the necessary resources for them and their children. Other services would be helpful, such as:

- An individual plan for the women (that may include, among others, depending on the woman's status and needs, housing search, a school for the children, legal proceedings, a safety plan, etc.);
- An accompaniment service for resolving legal affairs such as divorce proceedings, child custody, refugee status and family reunification;
- Referral to related resources;
- Resources in French such as documentation, brochures and anything that might assist them in their process of understanding violence against women;
- Follow up services after the shelter stay;
- Information services concerning women's rights and obligations when dealing with the Children's Aid Society as well as information about their welcoming country.

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### ABOUT THEIR NEEDS FOR RELATED SERVICES

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Shelters for abused women have a specific mandate toward the women they serve. Other agencies however offer complementary services that the women also need. The respondents

would like other agencies to offer a range of services that would facilitate their return to a normal life as soon as possible.

The respondents said that work is a priority and insisted on the necessity of being able to work. Many respondents are unemployed or receive social assistance benefits. They would like to obtain services to assist them in finding work because their precarious financial situation affects their situation as a whole. They are not able to find adequate housing and are limited in their social and networking activities. Some respondents would like to take part in training and to learn English. Social and cultural activities would help women who do not often have the opportunity to meet other persons. They propose that ex-residents be invited. This type of activity would show women that it is possible to deal successfully with the situation.

The respondents suggested the following related services:

- Legal services with Francophone lawyers: proceedings take more time because women must wait longer to obtain French language services. The respondents do not want to sign legal documents when they do not understand their implications (even a lease can pose problems for women who do not read English).
- More rapid and adapted medical services: it took months before some respondents found a family physician. It was difficult to find Francophone psychologists or psychiatrists. Respondents who are survivors of armed conflict have few or no resources to help them heal.
- Services for violent men: some respondents want individual or group therapy services for violent men; some add that they would like to participate in these group counselling sessions with the men;
- Settlement and integration services: these would help to facilitate, accelerate and help the women understand what is involved in their request for refugee status, in family reunification and other problems related to immigration and settlement.

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## ABOUT THE DESIRED FLS APPROACH

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Participants responded to this question by identifying the type of approach they would like, by describing the physical space and the geographical location of the women's shelter.

*REGARDING THE APPROACH, THE PARTICIPANTS MENTIONED THE FOLLOWING POINTS:*

- An approach that is by and for women;
- Services should be offered by Francophone workers who have expertise and who are competent in the matter of violence against women;
- An approach that is respectful of cultural diversity and that is based on a good understanding and integration of the specific aspects of different cultures;
- Workers that reflect the diversity of the women who are served;
- Confidentiality of information revealed to workers and residents;
- Greater flexibility in applying rules;
- Permit and encourage resident participation in the life of the house (to create house rules for example).

*THE PHYSICAL SPACE WOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING CHARACTERISTICS:*

- The shelter would be safe and the address confidential;
- The house would have a warm atmosphere like a real home where one feels at home;
- One room per family;
- A living room near the kitchen to facilitate watching over children;
- A private kitchenette;
- Near a green space;
- Close to French language schools;
- Close to public transportation.

*THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION:*

Some of the respondents would like a Francophone shelter in downtown Toronto, others in North York and others in Scarborough. Even though respondents differed on the location in the city, they were unanimous about one thing, that is, the need for a French language women's shelter in Toronto.

## WHAT THE WORKERS SAID

### ABOUT THE NEEDS THEY PERCEIVE FOR SHELTER FOR FRANCOPHONE WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN WHO ARE FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

Generally in Toronto requests for shelter for abused women and persons in difficulty are centralized through *Central Family Intake*, the city of Toronto referral service. This centre refers women according to availability and resources taking into account admission criteria of shelters in the territory. If women do not speak English, *Oasis* workers will make the call for them, but *Central Family Intake* always wants to speak to the women directly to assess their ability to speak English. According to the workers, if the women can say “hello” and “thank you” they are considered able to receive service in English.

According to workers interviewed, women who do not speak English or who speak little English can live for long periods in a women’s shelter without receiving the services the shelter offers. In these cases, the shelter’s intervention is limited to making sure that the women look after their hygiene and that they eat properly.

The Toronto network of women’s shelters does not refer to Francophone services such as the *Centre francophone de Toronto* or *Oasis Centre des femmes*, even though *Oasis* makes an annual promotional visit to the shelters in the territory. The women’s shelters use the interpretation services of MCIS (a service that is reimbursed by MCSS) instead of using Francophone services. The workers see this practice as a way for these shelters to protect their own interests.

In addition, they indicate the necessity of holding a forum or an event that would bring Francophone workers of Toronto together at which they could share information about practices, make connections, and to come together to lobby or to take action.

### ABOUT THE INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

#### STRENGTHS

According to the persons interviewed, a Francophone women’s shelter would complete the range of violence against women and children services offered in the Toronto region. Existing services are specialized, diversified and are accessed rapidly. In addition, *Oasis* has developed expertise and serves as a model through its practice of hiring workers from racial minority and ethnocultural communities.

#### WEAKNESSES

According to the discussion group, there is a need for cohesion and collaboration between the services. The *Centre francophone de Toronto* is waiting for *Oasis* to produce a protocol to facilitate women’s access to emergency medical services. In addition, the *Centre francophone de Toronto* requires an agreement with the *Mouvement ontarien des femmes immigrantes francophones* to facilitate access to legal services.

They indicate that there is no leader in the Toronto community to take charge of the political lobbying required to obtain a women’s shelter. Staff turnover in French language services and

the worker's focus on services that are already in place are the reasons given to explain the absence of lobbying to obtain new services.

The members of the discussion group feel that French language services that deal with violence are often at the bottom of the list of Anglophone groups lobby efforts, that French language services are rarely visible and that there is little promotion of them in the media.

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## ABOUT THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

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### *OPPORTUNITIES*

Except for support from *AOCVF* for French language services that deal with violence, few elements were mentioned in this regard. However, they stated that the appointment of Madeleine Meilleur to the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, the existence of a French language services committee at the city of Toronto, the recent election of three women to the board of directors of the *Assemblée des francophones de l'Ontario (AFO)* as well as last year's Ministry of the Attorney General's declaration of *Oasis* as a "Star" agency are all positive elements.

### *THREATS*

According to the group, there are many taboos about spousal violence in the Francophone community despite the fact that violence is part of the lives of many persons in Toronto. They said that within racial minority and ethnocultural communities, the signs of spousal violence are not recognized as such. In addition, the group indicated that the presence of a conservative federal government could be a stumbling block.

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## ABOUT REGIONAL SPECIFIC ISSUES CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHELTER SERVICES FOR FRANCOPHONE WOMEN FLEEING VIOLENCE

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Group discussion participants could not identify issues specific to the region.

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## ABOUT THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF THE WOMEN'S SHELTER

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Despite concerns about safety and confidentiality, some of the workers suggested the idea of including the women's shelter within the project of creation of a Francophone centre that would group together all the French language services under one roof. Other options were proposed, to locate the shelter in the Francophone village (in the Yonge, College and Carlton sector) or in the region of North York where there is a concentration of Francophones.

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## ABOUT THE SERVICES TO OFFER AT THE SHELTER

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The discussion group indicated that the women's shelter should be exclusively for women victims of violence and their children. There should be a global feminist approach. The workers

*Needs assessment study: shelter services in the Toronto region for Francophone women and their children who are fleeing a violent relationship, Convergence, coopérative d'expertes conseils*

also indicate the importance of competent personnel able to analyze and understand violence against women and cultural differences. In addition, they would like to focus on peer support services.

As to the shelter facilities it would be important to reserve a space for workers from external related services. Others indicated that the shelter should include accommodations similar to hotel rooms with private bathroom and kitchenette. The group also spoke about creating a non-profit housing organization (NPO) for Francophone women victims of violence and their children, combining emergency shelter services and second stage housing.

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#### ABOUT THE RANGE OF FLS TO OFFER WOMEN FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

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The workers reiterated that the region needs the following services to support abused women and their children:

- Individual and group counselling;
- Children's services;
- Child care services, drop-in day cares;
- Legal services;
- Medical services;
- Housing referral services;
- All of the services currently offered by *Oasis* and the *Centre francophone de Toronto*;
- Bonding programs for mothers and babies;
- Volunteer accompaniment services;
- Interpretation services that are not only linguistic but also cultural provided by workers who are trained to deal with violence against women to accompany Francophone women who require services that are only available in English.

## WHAT THE FRANCOPHONE AND ANGLOPHONE PARTNERS SAID

### ABOUT PERCEIVED NEEDS RELATED TO SHELTER SERVICES FOR FRANCOPHONE WOMEN AND THEIR CHILDREN WHO ARE FLEEING VIOLENCE

The partners interviewed are of the opinion that there is a clear need for shelter services for Francophone women who have been assaulted by a spouse. The partners consider that Francophone women receive limited or inadequate services from the existing women's shelters.

#### *THE DIFFICULTY ACCESSING FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES*

The entry point for emergency shelter services in the city of Toronto is *Central Family Intake*, a telephone dispatching service for families, refugees and assaulted women and their children who need emergency shelter services. According to our respondents, there are no French language services at *Central Family Intake*. When a woman who does not speak English contacts the service, an interpreter is used.

Also it seems that no position in the women's shelter network has been designated bilingual (French-English). Occasionally one or two workers are able to communicate entirely or partially in French, but this is entirely due to chance. Once again interpretation services are used when a woman requests French language services. One of the partners explained that there is a true lack of understanding of the Francophone identity and cultures. The existing services do not grasp the nature, composition or needs of Francophone communities. French language services are thus reduced to exchanging a few words to respond to the essential emergency shelter needs.

Therefore, information and support services that are an integral part of shelters for abused women (such as individual counselling, group discussions, referrals and accompaniment, group sessions with children, etc.) are for all practical purposes, inexistent for Francophone women in women's shelters. At best, they have very limited access through an interpreter.

In addition there is no protocol to assess linguistic needs during intake in women's shelters. Because French language services are not actively offered, there is little demand for these services.

They report that few Francophone women find refuge in a women's shelter. If they do seek shelter, their stay is longer because of the linguistic obstacles due to the necessity of external interpretation services that in some cases are offered only once a week.

In conclusion, note that the partners estimate that between 60 and 90 % of women in women's shelters have a mother tongue other than English.

### *STRENGTHS*

The strengths identified by the partners were of two types. Firstly, there are strengths within the French-speaking community. The positive impact of mobilizing and working together was clearly identified at *Forum 2004 Development of French language violence against women services*. Also highlighted was the important interministerial work accomplished by *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes* over the last few years. Finally, the value of the range of services developed by *Oasis* was noted.

Secondly, the positive aspects of the Toronto network of women's shelters were discussed. The network is solid, well-spoken and has existed for a number of years. Access to interpretative services is perceived as an asset.

### *WEAKNESSES*

As we have seen above, the most significant weakness of the existing Toronto network of women's shelters is its incapacity to offer permanent, continued and on-going French language services. Also, it seems that women's shelters are not sensitive to the needs of women from a culture other than Anglo-Canadian.

In addition, there is little collaboration between women's shelters that offer English language services and organizations that offer French language services. Resistance might be attributed to government funding conditions for women's shelters that are based on the number of women and children served.

The partners outlined issues that can be grouped under five headings. The issues are political, organizational, financial, legal and related to the rationale for women's shelters.

The **political issues** revolve mainly around the perception of the lack of government will to create new French language services. Many partners believe that the current political climate is not favourable to the creation of new services. In principle there are no new funds earmarked for shelter services in the Ontario domestic violence action plan. This situation, according to some, only exacerbates the competition that is growing little by little between women's shelters that have received small increases in their government subsidies in the last ten years. Unless new funding is allocated, the arrival of a new women's shelter could result in additional tension in the network that is already having trouble making ends meet.

In other respects, it is perceived that the current government prefers the one stop approach rather than specialized services.

The **organizational issues** deal with the numerous requirements to which developing women's shelters must conform and the unavoidable partnerships involved. Some partners pointed out that the development of a women's shelter is a very long, fastidious and onerous process. Experience shows that both zoning and negotiating financial at various government levels are processes that can be long and complicated.

Considering the few available French language resources in the city of Toronto, it would be important that the new women's shelter create solid bonds with the *Centre francophone de Toronto*, *Oasis Centre des femmes* and with the network of women's shelters serving the territory.

The **financial issues** deal with funding formulas for different emergency shelter services. Funding for shelters for homeless persons is at the municipal level. The city of Toronto provides \$33 per bed per day for shelters for homeless persons. Operational funding for women's shelters is from the provincial government and more precisely the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services that grants on average \$31,000 per bed per year to women's shelters in Toronto (this works out to approximately \$95 per bed per day).

The **legal issues** highlight the importance of women's shelters negotiating a protocol with the Children's Aid Society (CAS). Since the recent modifications to the Ontario *Child and Family Services Act* certain norms are stricter. Among others, children who witness violence are now considered victims. This means that if a woman returns to live with the violent spouse, shelter workers would be obliged to report a child in need of protection to the Children's Aid Society. The fine for not reporting could be as high as \$10,000 per infraction. Some women's shelters apply the letter of the law while others negotiate with the CAS to include accompaniment plans for women in this process in order to inform the women of their obligations and to equip them to communicate with the authorities. Some women therefore hesitate before going to a women's shelter out of fear of losing custody of their children.

The **issues related to the rationale for women's shelters** are becoming more and more significant given the housing crisis in Toronto that has persisted for many years. The lack of

affordable social housing in Toronto was mentioned many times by the persons we consulted. They also mentioned that there is more and more deinstitutionalization of persons with intellectual disabilities and placing them in group homes, which will add to the 70,000 requests already in the system for social housing in Toronto.

Because of the social housing shortage, women remain for longer periods in women's shelters because they have nowhere else to go. Because women's shelters operate at full capacity, many women are obliged to turn to shelters for homeless persons if they want to leave a violent relationship. Thus they find themselves in a place where they are not necessarily safe and where they do not receive services they need to end the cycle of violence.

Women's shelters exist to protect women who have been victims of spousal violence. However because of the housing shortage, women's shelters find it necessary to restrict their admission criteria to ensure that women who are in danger of death (a risk that increases when women leave a violent spouse) have immediate access to the shelter. This new reality means that women victims of violence who are not in immediate danger of death cannot leave a violent relationship or must find shelter elsewhere.

The great need for settlement and integration services for thousands of newcomers who land in Toronto each year should be added to the picture. Some of the women are fleeing violence, either spousal or other types, even including armed conflict. Statistics clearly demonstrate the immigrant women are among the poorest. They are also overrepresented in shelters, women's shelters and support services for women victims of violence.

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#### ABOUT THEIR EVENTUAL SUPPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SHELTER SERVICE FOR FRANCOPHONE WOMEN FLEEING VIOLENCE

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The potential partners we interviewed are open to eventual collaboration in the development and establishment of a Toronto women's shelter for Francophone women victims of violence. The type of involvement ranges from participation on an advisory committee, to establishing policy, to service development to letters of support.

## CHAPTER V : ANALYSIS FUNDAMENTALS

### INTRODUCTION

The analysis framework for the data collected in this study is inspired by and rooted in the main current ideas and principles found in two documents recently published by *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes*. These are the *Guiding principles for the development of French language violence against women services* and the *Portrait of an ideal quality French language service*. We include these documents here as a review of their concepts.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH LANGUAGE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN SERVICES<sup>59</sup>

These 13 principles were developed by the steering committee established by AOcVF to guide the preparation of the *Plan stratégique de développement des services en français en matière de violence, 1997-2001*. These principles have since constituted the cornerstone upon which rests the vision for the development of French language violence against women services.

1. Francophone women in Ontario have a right to French language violence against women services, regardless of where they live.
2. Women have a right to accessible services free of charge throughout the province.
3. FLS for women victims of violence must be autonomous, free to act and to be in French, and run **by** and **for** Francophone women.
4. French language violence against women services must be developed and managed within the framework of a feminist analysis of violence against women.
5. FLS must reflect and serve women in all their diversity.
6. French language violence against women services must remain community based and, in order to preserve their freedom to act and in order to demonstrate that violence against women is not a problem of individual health but rather a social problem, they must not be absorbed into healthcare institutions or services.
7. The ongoing survival of French language violence against women services must be guaranteed by the government.

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<sup>59</sup> Brunet and Garceau, (2004), p. 32-33.

8. The strategic plan prepared by AOcVF and its members must be addressed provincially and not by opposing the interests of the various regions.
9. French language violence against women services alone cannot eliminate violence against women. The strategic plan must recognize the complexity of the issue, and must intervene globally against the system upon which violence against women rests.
10. Prevention is at the heart of our intervention and includes all measures to prevent violence against women, on a societal, not individual basis.
11. The government and FLS providers must acknowledge their accountability to the Francophone community and commit themselves to it.
12. French language violence against women services must receive appropriate funding to enable them to meet the needs of Francophone women throughout the province.
13. All service delivery must be considered in the context of each woman's right to equality, security and freedom, rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

## PORTRAIT OF AN IDEAL QUALITY FLS<sup>60</sup>

This portrait of an ideal quality French language service was developed in 1998 in the context of a study of French language violence against women services in Ontario (Brunet 1998). The study presented the defining elements of quality French language anti-violence services. This portrait describes an ideal to be achieved in order to ensure accessible, high quality FLS, and serves as a check-list for organizations and government ministries measuring the accessibility and quality of French language services that address violence against women.

1. The personnel speak French and are competent:
  - the service is managed by Francophone women who have the power to make decisions affecting services;
  - the quality of services offered in French is equal or superior to that of services offered to the Anglophone community;
  - all the personnel speak and write French fluently;
  - Francophone staff are found at all levels of the services offered by the organization;
  - staff are sensitive to the reality and the oppression of Francophones living in a minority environment and to their diversity;
  - staff are committed and demonstrate empathy and respect toward clients;
  - workers have the skills and training to offer quality services.
2. The human and financial resources are adequate:
  - the human and financial resources are adequate to meet the demand and to do the necessary community development work;
  - the continuity of service is assured;

<sup>60</sup> Brunet and Garceau, (2004), pp. 33 – 34.

- Francophone volunteers contribute to the organization's activities, but the service does not wholly or in part depend on them to operate.
3. All services are guaranteed and accessible at all times:
- service users may be served in French from beginning to end;
  - the full range of services offered is available in French;
  - access to service in French is guaranteed and not only when it is requested;
  - the services respond to needs;
  - the services are accessible to women who live in distant regions;
  - the services are permanent;
  - Francophone staff are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for emergency services;
  - staff turnover is minimal;
  - the service is free;
  - the service is confidential;
  - French language material is easy for all women to understand and to use.
4. There is a feminist and holistic approach to services that respects the diversity of women:
- services offered have a feminist orientation founded on respect, choices offered to women, prevention and social change;
  - a range of options is offered to women;
  - services are holistic and geared to the needs of users;
  - services are accessible to women in all their diversity and can meet the needs of women from racial and cultural minorities, women with a disability, and other women with special needs;
  - empowerment and individual and collective responsibility are encouraged.
5. The organizational structure supports offering and developing services:
- the structure is homogenous, Francophone and autonomous;
  - the organization takes seriously its mandate to serve Francophone women;
  - the organization actively offers services in French;
  - publicity material and media interactions are in French;
  - Francophone and Anglophone communities are well informed of the existence of the service;
  - management and staff create a climate in which users are encouraged to express themselves in French;
  - employees are supported by other French-speaking colleagues in the same field;
  - the board of directors and committees are composed of Francophone women representative of the community;
  - management and those responsible for the various services and programs are French-speaking and are sensitive to the reality of Francophone women living in a minority environment;
  - training for staff and volunteers is available in French and meets clients' needs;
  - networking and referral to related resources is done in French whenever possible;
  - the service is accountable to the Francophone community and reflects its values.

## CHAPTER VI : DATA ANALYSIS

### INTRODUCTION

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In this section we will make connections between what the women fleeing violence, the workers and the partners shared with the researchers and the social, economic and the political context. We will deal with the right to French language services and government obligations with respect to these rights. We will then describe characteristics of Francophone communities to be taken into account in offering services.

We will then describe the numerous obstacles faced by women and children when they leave a violent relationship. Our findings will show that poverty, social assistance, housing and inaccessibility of support services are all obstacles and undermine women's efforts to put an end to the violence they experience.

We conclude by summarizing the impact that the absence of services has had on women, whether at the critical moment they left a violent spouse or the point at which they decided not to avail themselves of services.

## WHY THE PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION IS NOT A GOOD MEASURING TOOL FOR FLS

Since there are no designated beds in the Toronto region and that the French-speaking population numbers 65,300 persons, this number seems to justify the establishment of a women's shelter, because there is one in Cornwall (that has a *total* population of 45,640), in North Bay (with a *total* population of 52,770 inhabitants), in Kapuskasing (with a *total* population of 9,238 inhabitants), in Hawkesbury (with a *total* population of 10,310 inhabitants) and in Wawa (with a *total* population of 3,668 inhabitants). The percentage of Francophones relative to the total population does not seem to us to be a valid argument in determining community need for a women's shelter for abused women and their children.

## THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE ONTARIO GOVERNMENT TOWARD FLS

With the *1986 French Language Services Act*, the provincial government guarantees the public the right to receive French language services in 25 designated regions<sup>61</sup>. Recall that the designation applies to all of Toronto. The Greater Toronto Area also includes cities such as Oshawa and Burlington that have Francophone populations but are not designated.

The *Beaulac* and *Montfort* decisions demonstrated that the Ontario government should offer French language services (FLS) in order to encourage the development of the Ontario Francophone community. These services also should be offered to protect the Francophone minority of Ontario, to develop the French language and to encourage the equality of French with English<sup>62</sup>.

These decisions are important because they highlight the government's obligation to offer access to FLS in the same manner as services offered to the population in general. In order to promote equality with English services, French language services should be reliable and of a quality comparable to English language services<sup>63</sup>. Therefore it is unacceptable that the majority of women we interviewed had to wait long periods before obtaining French language services while women who speak English are able to access services within 24 hours after arriving at an emergency women's shelter.

Furthermore, according to Article 1 of the *Human Rights Code*, each person has the right to equal treatment with regard to services. Many grounds for discrimination are listed, for example: sex, race, ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, etc.<sup>64</sup>. The *Ontario Human Rights Commission* has in the past upheld Ontario government's obligation to ensure equal access to services offered to the general public and that this government obligation extends to specialized services such as a service to children suffering from autism.

Shelters for women victims of violence are organizations mandated and subsidized by the Ontario government to offer specialized services. This study clearly demonstrates that

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<sup>61</sup> Office of Francophone Affairs, <http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/english/FLSA.html>.

<sup>62</sup> Guilbeault, (2005), p. 6.

<sup>63</sup> *Idem.*, p. 14.

<sup>64</sup> *Idem.*, p. 8.

Francophone women of Toronto have a crying need for shelter services when they leave their violent spouse. However the existing women's shelter network does not have the ability to offer FLS. Not one women's shelter in the Toronto region is designated to offer FLS, and not one of them can offer FLS on an ongoing and permanent basis.

Given that they cannot offer the full range of support services to Francophone women, the shelters use interpretation services during intake. In the best of situations, some women and children were also able to receive counselling services, always through interpreters, but to a lesser extent (compared to the support services offered to residents who speak English). Recall however that the *Ontario Superior Court of Justice* recognized that French is a language that has official status in Ontario and that the presence of an interpreter does not meet the Ontario government's obligation to offer French language services<sup>65</sup>.

Faced with the absence of active offer of FLS and the network's inability to offer support services to Francophone women (beyond emergency housing and food), few Francophone women have access to services offered by women's shelters offering their services in English in Toronto.

## A CLIENTELE WITH A FACE AND MULTIPLE NEEDS

As mentioned in chapter IV, there is a real lack of understanding on the part of the English speaking community of Francophone cultures and in this context, in women's shelters. It appears that existing services do not grasp the nature, or the composition or the needs of Francophone communities.

One of the strongest manifestations of this incomprehension is the use of interpretation services. While these services can help and allow for an initial contact, they only allow for minimal exchange of words. It is as though one forgets that being Francophone means more than just speaking in French. The collective imagination of the Anglophone community seems to make abstraction of the identity of a group or of a people. However, this identity is not only built around a language, but also around a number of cultural, artistic, emotional, historical, geopolitical and other reference points. It is not enough to translate words in order to have real communication. Take humour as an example. British humour is very different from Canadian and American humour, but these three peoples share the same language.

It is true that a good number of Francophone women in Ontario speak English. However, what is also true is that just as many women do not understand, understand little or are not fluent in English. They need to express feelings or deal with highly emotional and difficult topics in their mother tongue. Even with some English, it is difficult to understand the nuances that are often so important in the context of violence. It is essential, even crucial in moments of crisis to know how to understand what is not said, what is implied and what cultural references mean in order to intervene effectively and adequately.

Another common sign of misconceptions about Francophone identity and plurality is the erroneous belief that Francophones are all of Quebec origin. As we saw in chapter IV, some women who insist on obtaining FLS are still being told that if they are not satisfied with what

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<sup>65</sup> *Idem.*, p. 13.

they are being offered, they can simply “return to Quebec”. Must we be reminded that Francophones, of all ethnocultural origins, participated in the colonization of Ontario as in all of the other Canadian provinces and territories? Are we not aware that Canada adopted the *Official Languages Act* because we recognize the equal status of Francophones and Anglophones? Must we be reminded that Quebec is not the only territory that has linguistic obligations?

And while we are highlighting the importance of reference points and cultural baggage, we should deal with the changing nature of the Ontario Francophone community. In Toronto it is probably more accurate to speak of Francophone communities. In the last ten years the profile of the population of Toronto has been greatly transformed. It is estimated that 42 % of newcomers in Canada establish themselves in Toronto, making this city the most multicultural in the world, in which 90 languages are spoken. The Francophone community in Toronto reflects this diversity and includes approximately 27,735 persons<sup>66</sup> mainly from Asia, Europe and North and Sub-Saharan Africa<sup>67</sup>.

Succeeding waves of immigration brought many women fleeing armed conflict. Considering their experience in their country of origin, few of them will seek assistance from police services or authorities. Those who have not yet obtained permanent resident status may fear deportation. A good number of the immigrant women we met live in conditions of extreme poverty and have no notion of Canadian laws or services to which they have the right. They therefore need access to establishment and settlement services. Even before beginning the healing process subsequent to the violence in their lives, they need to meet their basic needs. Because many of these women do not speak English or have limited knowledge of the language, services for them should be offered in French. Their needs are so multiple and numerous that newcomers and women of visible minority communities are overrepresented in the existing FLS offered.

At the same time we report an obvious absence of Francophone women of Canadian origin in the FLS offered in Toronto. Even though they represent 72.5 % of the female Francophone population in the Toronto region, they only make up 10 to 15 % of the violence against women service users. Where are they? To whom do they turn to get help and support?

Maybe they found it difficult to access to FLS because the services were over-burdened and because the services are asked to respond to all the community’s needs while at the same do not receive the necessary human and financial resources. Perhaps they too often arrived at places that promoted FLS but found that FLS did not continue past the reception area.

Or maybe they have stopped asking for help because they are in a situation where their safety is in danger and that they no longer have the energy to claim their rights as Francophone citizens; that asking for FLS would be equivalent to indefinitely postponing their access to services; that communicating through an interpreter could lead to a series of misunderstandings that could have serious consequences on their well-being; that obtaining services designed for Anglophones would mean that they would not be understood, that they would feel isolated, that they would have the impression of losing themselves instead of rebuilding their lives.

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<sup>66</sup> This represents 29 % of the French speaking population in the Toronto region and 33 % of the Francophone population in Ontario.

<sup>67</sup> Convergence, (2006), information sheet 6.

One thing is certain, that Francophone women of Canadian origin are invisible in the existing network of women's shelters and in FLS offered by community organizations in Toronto. All this leads us to believe that these women are simply not being served by existing systems.

## THE OBSTACLES FACING WOMEN IN THE TORONTO REGION

Women seeking to end the violence they experience at the hands of a spouse face enormous obstacles. One of the most significant obstacles is, without doubt, the extreme poverty that threatens them as soon as they leave their violent spouse. Social measures and programs that should facilitate their transition to a healthy, safe and productive life instead act as barriers, resulting in many cases in difficult if not impossible choices for the women. Francophone women in Ontario also experience this reality; in some ways, their economic instability can result in increased vulnerability to violence.

In order to better grasp the extent of financial difficulties Francophone women who are victims of violence must overcome and the impact that poverty has on the probability that they will succeed in living a healthy life free from violence, it is important to look at their economic situation, social assistance benefits and the housing situation.

## POVERTY

The following statistics are taken from the series of publications from the Ontario Office of Francophone Affairs (2005A, B, C, D, and E) and are from the 2001 Census. Although they do not specifically deal with abused women, they give a general picture of the economic situation of women from French-speaking Ontario.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FRANCOPHONE WOMEN IN ONTARIO	THE STATE OF THE MATTER
ALL FRANCOPHONE WOMEN OF ANY AGE OR ETHNOCULTURAL ORIGIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relative to their male counterparts, Francophone and non-Francophone women are overrepresented in income categories less than \$40,000 and underrepresented in income categories greater or equal to \$40,000;</li> <li>▪ In all of Ontario, the proportion of Francophone women living below the poverty line is slightly higher than that of non-Francophone women (15.8 % compared to 15.6 %).</li> </ul>
FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BELONGING TO A RACIAL MINORITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proportion of Francophone racial minorities (FRM) living below the poverty line is twice that of Francophones (33.7% compared with 14.1 %). The proportion of FRM living below the poverty line is also higher than that of non-Francophone racial minorities as a whole (25.9 %);</li> <li>▪ The proportion of FRM living below the poverty line is higher for women than for men (34.8 % versus 32.5 %)</li> </ul>
YOUNG FRANCOPHONE WOMEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 20 AND 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Young women are more disadvantaged than Francophone and non-Francophone young men;</li> <li>▪ 24.6 % of Francophone women between the ages of 20 and 24 live below the poverty line compared with 20.1 % of Francophone men of the same age group;</li> <li>▪ Among non-Francophones, 21.4 % of young women live below the poverty line compared with 17.3 % of their male counterparts.</li> </ul>
FRANCOPHONE WOMEN 65 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Older women are twice as likely to live below the poverty line as men; 22.8 % of women and 10.8 % of men 65 years and older live below the poverty line;</li> <li>▪ In the non-Francophone older population, the proportions are 18.4 % for women and 9.8 % for men;</li> <li>▪ The difference between the sexes is even more significant for Francophones 75 years of age or older than those who are between 65 to 74 years of age. Three Francophone women out of every ten (29.9 %) 75 years of age or more have an income below or equal to the poverty line, which is almost three times the proportion observed among Francophone men of the same age group (9.6 %). Among Francophones between the ages of 65 and 74, 17.7 % of women and 11.4 % of men live below the poverty line. Francophones 65 years and over are most disadvantaged in the Central Ontario Region. More than 23.7 % of Francophone women and 15.3 % of Francophone men 65 years and older living in the Central Region live below the poverty line.</li> </ul>

This data paints a dismal picture of the economic situation of Francophone women in Ontario. Although this does not describe the situation of abused women, all indications are that women who live with violence live in even more difficult economic conditions. Recall that almost three-quarters of this study's respondents had a personal annual income of less than \$9,999 in

2005. Only one had an annual income of more than \$40,000. In addition we should mention that the number of poor families in Toronto grew by 69 % from 1981 to 2001<sup>68</sup>.

## SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

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In their report on abused women and their experience of Ontario's welfare system, Mosher, Evans and Little (2004) explain why social assistance benefits are clearly insufficient to allow women fleeing violence to get back on their feet.

First, it is important to recall that social assistance benefits were reduced by 21.6 % in 1995 and they have only since been increased by 3 %<sup>69</sup>. With the increase in the cost of living since 1995, the real decline in purchasing power is 34 %<sup>70</sup>. A look at some examples of the benefit rates illustrates the degree of poverty of women who depend on benefits.

A single woman who is part of the *Ontario Works* program receives a maximum of \$520 per month, that is a \$325 shelter allowance and a \$195 basic needs allowance. The permissible asset level for this same person is \$520. This means that asset depletion is a prerequisite to social assistance benefit entitlement. Current social assistance rates in Ontario for a single person are equivalent to 35 % of the poverty line. Conditions are slightly better for a single person in receipt of *Ontario Disability Support Program* benefits who can receive monthly benefits of up to \$930.

A woman who is a single parent with one child receives a maximum of \$997 per month. This amount is equivalent to approximately 58 % of the poverty line and she is allowed an asset level of \$1,457<sup>71</sup>. A survey conducted in 2003 by *Daily Bread Food Bank* in Toronto found that the average daily income (after the rent was paid) of persons receiving *Ontario Works* who use food banks in Toronto was \$3.72<sup>72</sup>. The Canadian government created the *National Child Benefit* program to assist low-income families. However the poorest families do not benefit from this measure because some provinces, such as Ontario, granted themselves the right to deduct this amount from social assistance benefits<sup>73</sup>.

Moreover the lack of support from government agents who deal with the women, the suspicion with which they are treated, the degradation and humiliation they experience as well as the inability to access information and predict outcomes are all elements that contribute to the women's decision to return to their abusive relationship<sup>74</sup>.

Six of the 58 jury recommendations of the Hadley inquest deal specifically with income support<sup>75</sup>. The jury specifies that abused women need an adequate income and that the Ontario

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<sup>68</sup> Dawn Ontario, <http://dawn.thot.net/poverty-report.html#3>, quoting United Way of Greater Toronto, (2004).

<sup>69</sup> In May of 2004, the Ontario government increased social assistance benefits by 3 %, the first increase since the 1995 cuts.

<sup>70</sup> Income Security Advocacy Centre, (2003) as cited in Mosher, Evans and Little, (2004), p. 13.

<sup>71</sup> Income Security Advocacy Clinic, (2003) and National Council on Welfare, (1999) as cited in Mosher, Evans and Little, (2004), p. 13.

<sup>72</sup> Daily Bread Food Bank, (2003) as cited in Mosher, Evans and Little, (2004), p. 13.

<sup>73</sup> Convergence, coopérative d'expertes conseils (2006), p. 21.

<sup>74</sup> Mosher, Evans and Little, (2004), p. 65.

<sup>75</sup> Recommendations 31 to 36 inclusive.

government should develop measures to respond to the specific needs of women and children fleeing a violent relationship. These measures should include intake and screening procedures for cases of violence, an increase in housing allowance, an allowance for moving and automatic deferral of *Ontario Works* participation for six months. In addition, recommendation 31 adds that the Ontario government should review the social assistance rates and ensure that these rates reflect the actual needs of the recipients considering the social and geographical environment in the location in which they reside<sup>76</sup>.

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## THE HOUSING CRISIS

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In 2005, the average rent for a two bedroom apartment remained at 2004 levels in the Toronto CMA (Census Metropolitan Area), that is, \$1,052<sup>77</sup>. Toronto, Vancouver and Ottawa are the cities with the highest average rents for two bedroom apartments (\$1,052, \$1,004 and \$920 per month respectively<sup>78</sup>. With social assistance benefits of \$997 per month, how is a single parent woman to find lodging in Toronto?

The obvious answer would be that she should seek subsidized housing. However there are currently 70,000 requests for social housing in Toronto. This translates to a seven to ten year waiting period depending on the nature of the request. Women fleeing a violent relationship can be placed on a priority list. It is estimated that they must wait 2 to 3 years on average to obtain social housing<sup>79</sup>. According to Falvo, Toronto now has more homeless persons than in all the large Canadian cities combined<sup>80</sup>.

The United Way of Greater Toronto reports that there has been a significant increase in the number of poor neighbourhoods in Toronto. In 1981, a survey reported 30 neighbourhoods in which a significant proportion of persons lived in poverty. In 2001, there were 120. The growth is concentrated in the former municipalities of Scarborough, North York, Etobicoke, York and East York where the total of poor neighbourhoods grew from 15 to 92 in a 20 year period<sup>81</sup>.

One of the direct consequences of the endemic housing crisis in Toronto is that abused women remain in women's shelters for longer periods. Women's shelters are thus practically transformed into second stage housing. Because of this, fewer and fewer women have access to women's shelters even though their life and those of their children may be in danger.

As illustrated above, Francophone women are more likely to be poor. Many women leave abusive relationships with only the clothes on their backs. Even worse, some of them are dealing with large debts created by their abusive partner<sup>82</sup>. Social assistance benefits are clearly insufficient because they are not enough to pay the rent and to buy food. The affordable housing shortage is one of the most common reasons many women do not leave or return to their violent spouse.

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<sup>76</sup> Penwill, (2002), p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> CMHC, (2005), p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> *Idem.*, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> Toronto Housing, information received by email June 27 2006.

<sup>80</sup> Falvo, (2003), p. 3.

<sup>81</sup> United Way of Greater Toronto, (2004), p. 26.

<sup>82</sup> Mosher, Evans and Little, (2004), p. 68.

The Ontario Chief Coroner's inquiry held following Gillian Hadley's murder (in June 2000) highlights the importance of immediate access for abused women to emergency shelter services that are safe and appropriate, of long term assistance and of access to adequate and affordable housing on a priority basis. Jurors were of the opinion that the long waiting list for subsidized housing was unacceptable<sup>83</sup>.

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## SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SERVICES

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Immigrant women who experience violence are met not only with the same obstacles as women of Canadian origin, but also countless other difficulties.

Canada likes to see itself as a country that welcomes diversity. Canadian embassies throughout the world promote a vast country full of riches, where all its citizens are equal under the law and have guaranteed rights and liberties, where two official languages exist side by side and are recognized. Each year thousands of immigrants arrive in Canada (mainly in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver) in the hopes of rebuilding their lives and improving their situation. Persons who come to Ontario settle mainly in Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton.

In many cases, reality quickly paints another picture of their welcoming country. The many obstacles women and their family face end up destroying any dreams they held. Rather than finding prosperity, many newcomers live in extreme poverty. Because their diplomas are not recognized and not having experience in the Canadian workplace is held against them, they are unable to obtain work. Many of these women do not know their rights, the laws, the institutions and services of their new country.

France and many other European countries have limited or closed their doors to immigration. The fact that Canada is a bilingual country is often a deciding factor for women from Francophone countries, particularly from the African continent, in immigrating to Canada. Many of these women do not speak English. Once they arrive in Toronto, they are surprised and disoriented by the absence of French language services.

There are settlement and integration services that are mandated and financed by the Ontario and Canadian governments to welcome newcomers but they are too few to meet the demand. As in other areas, hardly any of these organizations offer French language services beyond the reception area. Some women who accessed these services were told it would be better for them to learn English than to persevere in their search for French language services. It is therefore not surprising to hear some women admitting that they prefer to establish bonds with the majority Anglophone community.

Some of the women we interviewed during this study have many traumatic experiences to overcome, many wounds to nurse. They are fleeing a violent relationship, have fled a country where there was armed conflict or have fled the experience of gang rapes in refugee camps. Some also have experienced different types of aggression all their life. But it is almost impossible for them to treat these wounds when they have no roof over their head, not enough to eat and only rudimentary knowledge of their rights.

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<sup>83</sup> Recommendations 23 to 30, as cited by the Ontario Women's Justice Network.  
*Needs assessment study: shelter services in the Toronto region for Francophone women and their children who are fleeing a violent relationship, Convergence, coopérative d'expertes conseils*

## WOMEN'S SHELTERS FUNCTION AT FULL CAPACITY

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According to the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, there are 13 women's shelters for abused women in the city of Toronto offering a total of 380 beds to abused women and their children. In 2005-2006, 1,368 women and children received shelter services. The occupancy rate was 100 % most days. Some 7,108 requests were denied. From this we can extrapolate the average stay of each woman and child in a women's shelter at 100 days (or 14 weeks), that is, a 138 % longer stay than normally expected<sup>84</sup>.

## WHAT HAS NOT WORKED WELL IN WOMEN'S SHELTERS OFFERING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SERVICES

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For women who have experienced much violence in their life, the women's shelter is meant to be a positive, welcoming place where they feel safe or where their children are protected from harm; a place where they do not feel isolated and alone but rather a place where they can meet other women who have also lived with violence and who are trying to rebuild their life; a place that gives them a new support circle; a place where they meet workers who listen to them, who understand and who assist them with social aid, housing, the legal system and many other services that will assist them in re-establishing themselves. In summary, women's shelters are lifelines for many abused women.

However, for Francophone women in Toronto, women's shelters offering English language services do not serve this role. This occurs neither out of contempt nor of ill will, but because their approach and their services were modelled for the majority Anglophone culture and because the workers are English-speaking and are not able to communicate directly with the women.

The repercussions of inadequate access to quality, permanent and ongoing French language services are many and are very costly for women, their children and for the entire community.

Because women must communicate through an interpreter, shelter intake is slower and less well documented. It ends up that most of the Francophone women find themselves without an individual plan or with an inadequate plan. Support services such as discussion groups, group empowerment sessions and accompaniment are simply not accessible. The women become more and more isolated because they are left to themselves.

Women's shelters offer services that are both unique and essential to ending violence against women. They are not simply a place to stay where women come to have a roof over their heads and food. If this were the case, a hotel room would suffice. Neither is their mandate limited to ensuring the safety of women and children. If this were the case, a security guard posted at their hotel door would suffice.

What distinguishes women's shelters from other emergency shelter services is the intervention that takes place, the information that is transmitted, the listening and the accompaniment that is offered, the advocacy on behalf of and with the women. All these are women's shelter services. And these are the services that are not accessible to Francophone women.

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<sup>84</sup> Program supervisor, Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, numbers obtained by email June 28 2006.

According to the workers' experience, intervention happens in the group, and thus the importance of a Francophone community environment in the shelter. As a result of not having an individual plan or counselling services (individual or group), the women deny the violence they experienced, are not aware of the cycle of violence analysis and are not equipped to recognize the manifestations of violence. Because they cannot communicate with workers, women do not receive enough information and incur problems that might have been avoided if only they had been given the information, particularly in the case of the *Child and Family Services Act* and involvement of the *Children's Aid Society*.

For the children, finding themselves in an Anglophone environment with strangers with whom they cannot speak has negative consequences on their well being. As is the case of their mother, they feel isolated. After leaving the family home in often difficult conditions, children can also be upset and experience feelings of abandonment, disorientation and instability. The children also need quality French language services if the cycle of violence is to be broken.

## THE IMPACT OF THE ABSENCE OF SERVICES AT THE CRITICAL MOMENT OF LEAVING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

When FLS are not actively offered, the options for Francophone women are limited. Some will try to obtain shelter in an Anglophone women's shelter where they will only be provided with shelter and food. They will certainly appreciate the sense of security and the warm welcome that they will find, but because they are not able to communicate, they will feel the burden of isolation and exclusion, as well as powerlessness and frustration because they are not equipped to take action, to begin the healing process and to move forward in their lives.

Because women's shelters in Toronto function at full capacity, others will find shelter in centres for homeless persons and families. There, they will be immersed in a universe where women, men and children with multiple difficulties and mental health problems live and share side by side. They will not feel safe and no one will offer them the support they need to rebuild their life.

Many women will choose to act by depleting their own resources. They will leave a violent spouse, change the locks or they will move, install a security system, and ask friends, boyfriends and members of their family to watch over their home or apartment. They will advise police services and will ask for a restraining order for the violent spouse. They will do all these things that in the end may expose them to great danger and put their lives at risk. Gillian Hadley did all these things with the dramatic result of which we are aware. The 2005 report (distributed in June 2006) of the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee indicates that one of the primary risk factors in homicides of spouses is an actual or a pending separation<sup>85</sup>.

In the absence of the active offer of French language services in women's shelters in Toronto, the majority of Francophone women probably remain in the hold of violence. Often in order to avoid extreme poverty for their children and also to avoid subjecting them to the maze of a system that risks hindering instead of helping, many women will decide to stay with a violent spouse. There will be a heavy price for them to pay, for those around them and for society as a whole.

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<sup>85</sup> Domestic Violence Death Review Committee, (2005), p. 6.

## CONCLUSION

The YWCA Pan-Canadian study shows that three-quarters of women's shelter residents are in grave danger of death. The fact that women find refuge in women's shelters confirms that women's shelters are potentially life saving for the women, at least in the short term. The generally accepted statistics are as convincing as the data collected as part of the YWCA study. Close to 2,600 homicides between spouses (married, divorced or separate or living common law) have been recorded in Canada since 1974. Seventy-seven percent of these were committed against women. From 1994 to 2003, sixty-two percent of murdered women were killed by their husband or spouse<sup>86</sup>.

According to a recent Ontario government publication, 25 % of women in Ontario will be subjected to spousal violence at least once in their life<sup>87</sup>. And according to the Statistics Canada 2004 General Social Survey: *Victimization*<sup>88</sup>, 34 % of women assaulted by a spouse fear for their life because of the violence. Based on these numbers, one can reasonably estimate that at least 12,805 Francophone women will be assaulted by a spouse in the Toronto region and that 4,355 of these women will fear for their life. However, no women's shelter in the Toronto region is designated for FLS and not one of them has the capacity to offer FLS on an ongoing permanent basis.

The need for a women's shelter in Toronto for Francophone women fleeing a violent relationship is evident and well documented in this study. The women who use the services, the partners and the persons who work in services that offer FLS all agree on this need.

The *Beaulac* and *Montfort* decisions clearly demonstrated that the Ontario government should offer French language services in order to support the development of the Ontario Francophone community. These services should be offered in a manner that protects the Ontario Francophone minority, promotes the evolution of the French language and encourages the equality of French with English. In this light, we believe that Francophone women in the Toronto region who are fleeing a violent relationship have the right to:

- Reliable, free and accessible services of quality comparable to English language services;
- Services rooted in the right of each woman to equality, security and freedom, rights that are guaranteed in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*;
- A women's shelter that is prevention based and that uses all available means to prevent violence against women on a societal basis;
- A Francophone women's shelter that is autonomous, free to act and to exist in French, managed for and by Francophone women.

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<sup>86</sup> YWCA Canada, [http://www.ywacacanada.ca/public\\_eng/advocacy/Shelter/Q&A\\_FINAL\\_EN.pdf](http://www.ywacacanada.ca/public_eng/advocacy/Shelter/Q&A_FINAL_EN.pdf).

<sup>87</sup> Government Information Centre, (2005), p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Statistics Canada (2006), p. 8.

In 2005, the Ontario government recognized that there should be financial parity throughout the province between the Francophone sexual assault centres (CALACS) and Anglophone rape crisis centres. It is now the time to apply this principle to services that address spousal violence.

The workers and partners we interviewed recognized that the community needs to gather the key players who work in French language services in Toronto in order to strengthen its leadership for developing a women's shelter for abused Francophone women.

We therefore recommend the immediate establishment of a development committee that will be responsible for establishing a women's shelter in the Toronto region for Francophone women who are fleeing a violent relationship. We propose that *Oasis Centre des femmes* take the lead in establishing this committee in collaboration with *Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes*.

Once the development committee is well established, we suggest they take the necessary steps to conduct a feasibility study that would include the following elements:

- The feasibility of the project;
- An architectural study that would examine various housing models (for example: condominiums, houses that include both emergency shelter and second stage, etc.) and the costs of the different options;
- Zoning information;
- A plan detailing how the community will be involved in the development and operation of the women's shelter;
- The capital costs of establishing a women's shelter and an estimate of its operating costs.

Work on the feasibility study should begin in January 2007 and conclude with a definitive report in April 2007.

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## APPENDIX 1 : DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

In this appendix, we present the tools that were used to gather data on the needs of Francophone women and their children in the Toronto region fleeing a violent relationship. The different tools include:

Facilitation guide for focus groups with women fleeing a violent relationship;

Individual interview guide for women fleeing a violent relationship;

Facilitation guide for discussion groups with persons working in the field of spousal violence;

The individual interview guide for Francophone/Anglophone partners;

Needs assessment study: shelter services for women and children fleeing a violent relationship  
Women's focus groups – facilitation guide

Time	Subjects Addressed
Welcome and snack	
10 minutes	<p>Welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction of facilitation team and participants (first names)</li> <li>▪ Presentation of AOcVF needs assessment study (objectives and methodology)</li> <li>▪ Presentation of session objectives and agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Francophone women who have experienced spousal violence</li> <li>▪ Evaluate FLS shelter services needs of abused women and their children</li> <li>▪ Understand the desired approach to service provision</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Mention confidentiality and anonymity of treatment of data and the allowance given at the end of the session</li> </ul>
15 minutes	<p>Experiences of shelter services</p> <p>We wish to find out about the shelter experiences of women and their children of the region who are victims of spousal violence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have you or someone you know used women's shelter services in the region?</li> <li>▪ If yes, what did you or the other woman appreciate the most about these services? Appreciate the least?</li> </ul>
25 minutes	<p>Other experiences of the services</p> <p>To help you in the healing process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the French language services you <u>use</u>, <u>have used</u> or to your knowledge <u>are available in the region</u>?</li> <li>▪ Have you used English language services? If yes, how do you describe your experience?</li> <li>▪ Would you have liked to have received other types of services?</li> </ul>
45 minutes	<p>Services you would like to see in women's shelters</p> <p>If you were in need of a shelter service, what are the services you would hope to have or receive? (And a description of the services)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safe place (24/7);</li> <li>▪ Support services;</li> <li>▪ Mutual support services:</li> <li>▪ Accompaniment services (legal, medical, financial matters, etc.);</li> <li>▪ Support line;</li> <li>▪ Follow up services (after shelter stay);</li> <li>▪ Children's services;</li> <li>▪ Referral services;</li> <li>▪ External consultation services (without shelter).</li> </ul>
20 minutes	<p>Service approach</p> <p>Now that we have defined shelter services, what type of approach should these services have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Type of welcome;</li> <li>▪ Confidentiality;</li> <li>▪ Feminist approach (overt or implied);</li> <li>▪ Offered by women</li> <li>▪ Accessibility of the service (geographical, physical, flexible schedule and rapidity of service);</li> <li>▪ Language of service;</li> </ul>
5 minutes	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Word of thanks</p>
	Distribution of demographical profiles and participant allowance
	End of the session

Needs assessment study: shelter services for women and children fleeing a violent relationship  
Interview guide for women

Word of welcome (5 minutes)

- Presentation of AOCvF needs assessment study (objectives and methodology)
- Presentation of session objectives and agenda:
  - Francophone women who have experienced spousal violence
  - Evaluate FLS shelter services needs of abused women and their children
  - Understand the desired approach to service provision

Mention confidentiality and anonymity of treatment of data and the allowance given at the end of the session

Experience of shelter services (5 minutes)

1. Have you used women's shelter services in the region?  
 yes                       no

If yes, what did you appreciate the most about these services? The least?

If no, is it because you did not need them? Or is it for other reasons? If yes, which reasons?

Experience of French language services (10 minutes)

2. What are the French language services in the region that you use, have used or are available to your knowledge to assist you in your healing process?
3. Have you used English language services? If yes, how would you describe your experience?
4. Would you have liked to have received other types of services?

Services you would like to see in a women's shelter (20 minutes)

5. If you needed a shelter service, what are the services you would hope to have or receive? (And description of the services)
  - Safe place (24/7);
  - Support services;
  - Mutual support services;
  - Accompaniment services (legal, medical, financial matters, etc.);
  - Support line;
  - Follow up services (after shelter stay);
  - Children's services;
  - Referral services;
  - External consultation services (without shelter)
6. What approach would you like to find in a women's shelter for Francophone women and children?
7. Collection of the demographical profile and distribution of the participant allowance.

Word of thanks

End of the interview

Needs assessment study: shelter services for women and children fleeing a violent relationship  
Discussion group with workers – facilitation guide

Time	Subjects Addressed
Before beginning	Welcome and snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Distribution of profiles</li> </ul>
15 minutes	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction of facilitator and workers</li> <li>▪ Presentation of AOcVF needs assessment study (objectives and methodology)</li> <li>▪ Presentation of objectives and session agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update on information related to FLS in the region that address violence against women;</li> <li>▪ Evaluate the French language shelter service needs for abused women and their children;</li> <li>▪ Analysis of the regional environment and the issues concerning French language shelter services for abused women and their children.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Mention the anonymous treatment of data.</li> </ul>
10 minutes	Update on FLS offered in the region What FLS exist in the region that deal with spousal violence?
20 minutes	Needs for French language shelter services for abused women and their children In your work dealing with spousal violence, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have you received requests for shelter from Francophone women? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If yes, how did you deal with these requests?</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ If you made referrals to women's shelters in the region, what was your experience of this intervention?</li> </ul>
45 minutes	Regional environment <u>Internal:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the strengths and weakness of FLS for abused women and children in your region?</li> </ul> <u>External:</u> Considering the regional political or social climate in addressing shelter services for abused women and their children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What would favour their development?</li> <li>▪ What could impede their development?</li> </ul>
25 minutes	Regional issues concerning violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are there specific regional issues around the development of French language shelter services for abused women and their children?</li> <li>▪ What is the best location for a shelter for Francophone women and their children to cover the territory belonging to the Toronto region? Why would you choose this location?</li> <li>▪ If there was a Francophone women's shelter in the region, should it have particular characteristics, and if yes, which characteristics?</li> <li>▪ In addition to a shelter for abused women, does the region need other FLS that address violence? If yes, what services?</li> </ul>
5 minutes	Conclusion Word of thanks
	End of the session

**Needs Assessment Study: Shelter Needs of Women and Their Children Fleeing Violence**  
Interview guide for Francophone/Anglophone Organizations/Potential Allies

**Initial contact and general presentation**

Presentation of AOcVF's needs assessment survey and its objectives:

- Update information on French language services offered to abused women in the region;
- Assess needs for French language shelter services for abused women and their children;
- Analyze the regional environment and issues related to French language shelter needs of abused women and their children.

**Needs for French language shelter services for abused women and their children**

1. Are you aware of a need or requests for shelter on the part of French-speaking women fleeing violence?  
 Yes       No       Do not know
  - How do you know this? What is your source of your information?
2. What are the options offered to French-speaking women who require emergency shelter? Where are they referred? How does the existing service network deal with these requests?

**Regional environment**

3. With respect to French-speaking women fleeing violence, what are the strengths and weaknesses of existing shelter services in your region?
4. What aspects of the current political climate might facilitate the development of French language shelter services in your region?
5. What might impede (represent barriers to) the development of such services?

**Violence-related issues in the region**

6. What issues are specific to your region in terms of developing French language shelter services for women and their children fleeing violence?
7. In addition to a women's shelter for French-speaking women fleeing violence, does the region need other French language violence against women services? If so, what type of services?
8. What could be your organization's involvement in the development of shelter services for French-speaking abused women and children in your region?

**Respondent's profile**

Ask the respondent to complete the profile questionnaire

**Conclusion of interview**

Thank you

## APPENDIX 2 : PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRES

This appendix contains the profile questionnaire completed by the women who participated in the focus groups and in individual interviews. The summary compilation of the participant profiles is presented in *Chapter III* of this report and in more detail in *Appendix 3*.

# Needs assessment study: shelter services for women and their children fleeing a violent relationship

**NOTE : All your responses will remain confidential and anonymous.**

## DEMOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

For statistical purposes, we ask that you answer a few questions to give us a better picture of the participants in this needs assessment study.

**In what age group do you belong?**

- 15 - 19
- 20 - 24
- 25 - 29
- 30 - 34
- 35 - 39
- 40 - 44
- 45 - 49
- 50 - 54
- 55 - 59
- 60 - 64
- 65 - 69
- 70 - 74
- 75 - 79
- 80 and +

**Where do you currently live?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What is your sexual orientation?**

- heterosexual (man)
- homosexual/lesbian (woman)
- bisexual (man and woman)

**About your health and mobility, do you have:**

- physical, motor or intellectual disabilities
- dependence (alcohol, drugs, medication, gambling, etc.)
- HIV positive
- no disability

**What is your family structure?**

- Woman living alone
- Woman-woman
- Common law spouses
- Wife-husband
- Single parent family
- Other, specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- without children
- without children
- without children
- with children
- with children
- with children

**What is your country of origin?** \_\_\_\_\_

**If you were born outside of Canada, how long have you lived in Canada?**

- less than 2 years
- between 2 and 5 years
- between 6 and 10 years
- 11 years or more

**How many children (16 years or under) are currently living with you?**

- none
- none, but pregnant
- 1 child
- 2 children
- 3 children
- 4 or more children

**What is your highest level of schooling completed?**

- lower than grade 9
- secondary school studies incomplete
- secondary school diploma
- professional studies
- college diploma
- university certificate
- university studies with no bachelor degree or graduate diploma
- university studies with bachelor degree or graduate diploma
- other, specify:

**What was your personal annual income in 2005?**

- no income
- less than \$5,000
- \$5,000 - \$9,999
- \$10 000 - \$19,999
- \$20 000 - \$29,999
- \$30 000 - \$34,999
- \$35 000 - \$39,999
- \$40 000 - \$44,999
- \$45 000 - \$49,999
- \$50 000 or greater

## EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE

In this part of the survey, we would like to find out about your experience of violence.

What type of violence have you experienced or witnessed? Please check all that apply to your experience.

Type of assault or violence	YES	NO	Did you witness?	Were you a victim?	The sex of the aggressor: (F) female or (M) male	Your age at the time of the assault
1. I have not been a victim of or witness to violence.			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2. I do not remember having been a victim of or a witness to a violent act.			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
3. Incest by a family member						
4. Attempted sexual assault						
5. Sexual assault in childhood by a person not a member of the family						
6. Sexual assault in a relationship/dating						
7. Sexual assault by a person known by you						
8. Sexual assault by a person not known by you						
9. Sexual harassment (at work or elsewhere)						
10. Ritual abuse (satanic cults or others)						
11. Obscene phone call(s)						
12. Violence by a spouse (male or female) (including physical, verbal, sexual, financial, psychological violence)						
13. Family violence (from a family member other than a spouse)						
14. Sexual exploitation (participation in pornography, striptease, etc.)						

***THANK YOU for your valued collaboration***  
*From the research team and Action ontarienne contre la violence faite aux femmes*

## APPENDIX 3 : COMPILATION OF THE PROFILES OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

### COMPILATION OF THE PROFILES OF WOMEN FLEEING A VIOLENT RELATIONSHIP

<b>Respondent age groups</b>	<b>Current residence</b>	<b>Sexual orientation respondents</b>
(0) 15 - 19      (1) 50 - 54		(25) heterosexual (man)
(1) 20 - 24      (0) 55 - 59	(25) Toronto	(0) homosexual/lesbian (woman)
(2) 25 - 29      (0) 60 - 64		(0) bisexual (man and woman)
(7) 30 - 34      (0) 65 - 69		
(8) 35 - 39      (0) 70 - 74		<b>Health and mobility of respondents</b>
(3) 40 - 44      (0) 75 - 79		(1) physical, motor or intellectual incapacities
(3) 45 - 49      (0) 80 and +		(0) dependence (alcohol, drugs, medication, gambling, etc.)
		(1) positive HIV diagnosis
		(23) no incapacity
<b>What is your family structure?</b>		<b>Respondent country of origin</b> Democratic Republic of Congo (7), Morocco (6), Cameroon (2), Burundi (2), Congo-Kinsasa (1), Guinea (1), Haiti (1), France (1), Egypt (1), Somalia (1), Gabon (1) and Madagascar (1)
(10) Woman living alone		
(0) Woman-woman	(0) without children	(0) with children
(1) Common law spouses	(0) without children	(1) with children
(1) Wife-husband	(0) without children	(1) with children
(12) Single parent family		
(1) not answered		
		<b>If born outside of Canada, number of years living in Canada</b>
		(8) less than 2 years      (1) not answered
		(8) between 2 and 5 years
		(6) between 6 and 10 years
		(4) 11 years or more
<b>Number of children (16 years and over) currently living with you</b>	<b>Highest level of schooling completed by respondents</b>	<b>What was your <u>personal</u> annual income in 2005?</b>
(10) none	(1) not answered	(5) no income
(0) none, but pregnant	(2) less than grade 9	(4) less than \$5,000      (2) not answered
(5) 1 child	6 secondary school studies incomplete	(8) \$5,000 - \$9,999
(8) 2 children	2 secondary school diploma	(1) \$10,000 - \$19,999
(1) 3 children	3 professional studies	(2) \$20,000 - \$29,999
(1) 4 or more children	(1) college diploma	(0) \$30,000 - \$34,999
	(3) university certificate	(2) \$35,000 - \$39,999
	(2) university studies with <u>no</u> bachelor degree or graduate diploma	(0) \$40,000 - \$44,999
	(5) university studies <u>with</u> bachelor degree or graduate diploma	(0) \$45,000 - \$49,999
		(1) \$50,000 or greater

## EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE OF THE WOMEN INTERVIEWED

Type of assault or violence	YES	NO	Did you witness?	Were you a victim?	The sex of the aggressor: (F) female or (M) male	Your age at the time of the assault
1. I have not been a victim of or a witness to violence.	1		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2. I do not remember having been a victim of or a witness to a violent act.			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
3. Incest by a family member	2			1	1 X male	
4. Attempted sexual assault	6			5	4 X male	40, 13-35, 24,14
5. Sexual assault in childhood by a person not a member of the family	2			2	2 X male	37, 13-35
6. Sexual assault in a relationship/dating	5			4	4 X male	13-35, 16
7. Sexual assault by a person known by you	6			3	4 X male	30, 28-29, 13-35
8. Sexual assault by a person not known by you	3			1	2 X gang rape by males and 1 X male	46, 34, 23
9. Sexual harassment (at work or elsewhere)	4			2	4 X male	38, 22, 28-29, 24
10. Ritual abuse (satanic cults or others)	3			1		
11. Obscene phone call(s)						
12. Violence by a spouse (male or female) (including physical, verbal, sexual, financial, psychological violence)	18			8	10 X male	35, 24-34,41, 28-32, 28-29, 27+, 28
13. Family violence (by a family member other than a spouse)	7			4	3 X male and 2 males	35-38, 15, 47, 13-27, 27
14. Sexual exploitation (participation in pornography, striptease, etc.)	1					

## COMPILATION OF WORKER PROFILES

### OASIS CENTRE DES FEMMES

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Dada Gasirobo, transitional support program (100 % French-speaking clientele)

- Support and accompaniment service for abused women or survivors of violence.
- This program served 68 women in 2005.

Rahma Hashi, prevention and awareness program (clientele 99 % French-speaking)

- Community outreach, violence awareness programs in schools, courses in self-defence, workshops and other promotion programs.
- This program served more than 200 women in 2005.

Mina Himmi Razzokia, program for immigrant and refugee women (clientele 100 % French-speaking)

- Accompaniment and consulting service to assist with basic needs.
- This program served 65 women in 2005.

Samite Yusuf, support line (clientele 90 % French-speaking)

- Support line service, referrals, crisis intervention.
- This program served 1,200 women in 2005.

### CENTRE FRANCOPHONE DE TORONTO

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- Lucie Chauvette, health promotion program (clientele 100 % French-speaking)
  - Community health, health promotion, and community support.
- Sylvie Gauthier, *Ici pour aider* program (clientele 100 % French-speaking)
  - Service for children who witness and their abused mothers.
  - This program served 22 women in 2005.
- Patrick Bizindavyi, housing and settlement program (clientele 100 % French-speaking)
  - Settlement support service for newcomers and refugees and support service to assist in finding affordable housing in Toronto.
  - Women make up 40 % of the clientele.
- Laurence Makanda, settlement services program (clientele 100 % French-speaking)
  - Support services for persons wishing to settle in Toronto, orientation and information services.
  - Women make up approximately 40 % of the clientele.
- Aissa Nauthoo, legal aid services program (clientele 100 % French-speaking)
  - Legal aid services for disadvantaged Francophones in Toronto.
  - This program served about 300 women in 2005.

- Jasmine Thibault, health promotion and early childhood program (clientele 100 % French-speaking)
  - HIV prevention service, health promotion, workshops on health, mental health, and infant health, early childhood development, service for children who witness violence, prenatal nutrition, support for the homeless, social intervention.
  - This program served about 100 women in 2005.

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**CENTRE D'ENTREPRENARIAT ET D'INSERTION PROFESSIONNELLE FÉMININE DE PEEL-BRAMPTON (CENIP)**

Brigitte Chatué, director (clientele 100 % French-speaking)

- Orientation and support service for employment and business start-up.
- This program served 20 women in 2005.

## APPENDIX 4 : EXAMPLE OF AN OPERATING BUDGET

**CAPACITY:** 16 beds

**REQUIRED HUMAN RESOURCES:**

- 1 director
- 1 administrator
- 5 permanent full time employees
- 1 permanent part time employee (24 hours/week)
- 3 on-call part time employees (48 hours/ month)

<b>BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES, ANNUAL BUDGET</b>		
Salaries	\$348 000,00	
Benefits	\$53 000,00	
Transportation	\$8 000,00	
Training and hospitality expenses	\$12 000,00	
Programs	\$8 000,00	
Equipment	\$16 000,00	
Supplies	\$5 000,00	
Food	\$24 000,00	
Board of directors	\$4 000,00	
Purchase of services: administration	\$3 000,00	
Occupancy	\$20 000,00	
Repairs and maintenance	\$21 000,00	
Publicity, promotion, printing	\$5 000,00	
Membership fees	\$2 000,00	
Professional fees	\$30 000,00	
Insurance	\$20 000,00	
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$579 000,00</b>	