

YOUNG WOMEN WORK

Community Economic Development to Reduce Women's Poverty and Improve Income

Molly McCracken,
with Kate Dykman, Francine Parent and Ivy Lopez

Partners:

Andrews Street Family Centre
Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence
SEED Winnipeg Inc.
Wolseley Family Place



Project #105



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February, 2005

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STUDY NEIGHBOURHOODS IN WINNIPEG



YOUNG WOMEN WORK: Community Economic Development to Reduce Women's Poverty and Improve Income

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young women work – in their homes, in our community, in schools, with other youth and in the labour force. But young women who live in poverty continue to find themselves unable to make our economy or society work for them. Struggling to stay in school, working for low wages, and lacking childcare, young women face many challenges. At risk of a future living in poverty, and possibly raising another generation to do the same, young women told us they want to work to build a better future and community.

How do we support them to do this? By believing in young women's capacity to learn, grow and thrive, and providing them with suitable supports and encouragement to do so. Community Economic Development (CED) is emerging as a supportive, sustainable and empowering means to end poverty among young women. It starts by understanding young women's practical needs for food, shelter, childcare, transportation; and their strategic needs for education, equitable wages, and equal gender division of labour; and reproductive choice. Both practical and strategic needs are important, and need to be included in programs

with young women. Moreover, a strong safety net and supports such as adequate housing and childcare are required in order for young women to participate in CED.

This is a participatory feminist research project which sought to describe the barriers and opportunities for young women in the “new” economy, and outline Community Economic Development approaches to preventing poverty among young women ages 15 - 24. We worked with young women in two-inner city Winnipeg neighbourhoods, and asked them which community supports they used, in order to understand how we could build CED approaches into the current network of community-based organizations they already access.

We talked to 50 young women, the majority of whom are Aboriginal. We asked them about their neighbourhoods, unpaid and paid work, school, computers, motherhood, teenage pregnancy, role models, and what they hoped for in their futures.

Young women face formidable challenges to improving their economic status and quality of life. Growing up in poverty means that options are limited. The schools they attend are not necessarily culturally relevant for Aboriginal peoples, and they may have difficulties getting to school because of a lack of support and encouragement in their lives. Young mothers lack community supports and childcare to enable them to go to school, or work for pay. Educational programs that segregate teen mothers may isolate them and restrict the course options they have available. Young women are concerned with meeting their basic needs for safe and adequate shelter and healthy food. Access to skills development with computers, and to computers themselves is limited.

Young women want to work for pay, but are often limited to finding low paying jobs in fast food restaurants or babysitting. They have ideas of the types of jobs they want to do when they “grow up”, but these are influenced by the career guidance they receive. They want better lives for themselves, but have a limited understanding of what it takes to get there. Young women had little demonstrated knowledge of what kind of education and training it takes to achieve different professional designations. They had little true understanding of the earnings they would need when they are older, and what kind of material quality of life this would translate into.

This research project also included a scan of programs offered in inner-city Winnipeg. It found that community supports available to young women are limited, and generally concerned with young women's health. Community supports generally served practical needs for food, shelter, health services and education, and there is a lack of programming that incorporates economic skills and economic development for young women.

Aboriginal young women want and need supports around them that uphold their traditional cultures and teachings. These activities are important for their identity formation and well-being, and need to be available in all aspects – for pregnant and mothering young women, in educational programs, and in skills and paid work programs designed for young women.

In order for young women to build a strong future for themselves and their families, they require adequate supports to do so. This includes motivation and supports to stay in school. It is also important to help young women make the link between their choices today and the implications for the future. This needs to happen not only in terms of paid work and career guidance, but for birth control, pregnancy, reproductive choice and motherhood as well.

Young women in this study demonstrated incredible possibilities for improving their quality of life and income. They wanted to give back to their communities and work with other youth, and develop and share their cultural identities. They wanted to help other youth, by inspiring and motivating them, and supporting them to stay in school.

As young mothers, they want access to education and training so they can be better parents for their children in the long term. This requires childcare that is close to their home or school. To be good parents, they also need supports and breaks from their children to reduce stress and isolation.

This study finds that programming and supports need to encompass both young women's practical daily needs and their strategic long term needs, for both are equally important. This study has a variety of implications for Community Economic Development approaches to preventing poverty and improving the incomes of young women. It finds that a strong social safety net is a key support to economic development efforts with young women. Young women also require safe, welcoming spaces in order to participate in programming.

The study finds that CED approaches should be centred on young women's needs – childcare was most frequently mentioned as a key component of any support to young mothers, for example. CED must consider the long-term benefits for women to improve their wages and economic security by building transferable skills that are valued in the economy. Moreover, these should be guided and led by young women themselves, who identified that they wish to have the opportunity to lead the next generation of youth.

Finally, this study found that many of the supports young women are accessing do not incorporate economic skills. This restricts the scope of the programs to meeting only practical needs, however we must remember that much gender inequality is inextricably linked to economic equality. More supports and incentives need to be developed at every site where young women access services to assist them to build their economic skills, find meaningful work, and plan for their futures.

Partnerships between organizations with different core competencies can result in holistic programming to this end. For example, CED organizations can partner Aboriginal organizations, and women's organizations, to build on the strengths of each.

The study concludes with suggestions and ideas for CED emerging from the findings of this research study. The following key features are identified as essential and should be incorporated to support young women's success in the programs:

- Aboriginal cultural teachings led by the Aboriginal community
- Basic needs such as childcare, transportation, and nutritious food
- Living wages where applicable
- No cost to participants
- Economic literacy and career guidance
- Mentorship / role modeling

The study finds that young women are ready and willing to participate in holistic programs that respect their cultural backgrounds and build strong futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

JEUNES FEMMES AU TRAVAIL: Le développement économique communautaire pour la réduction de la pauvreté et l'amélioration du revenu des femmes

RÉSUMÉ

Que ce soit à la maison, dans la communauté, dans les écoles, avec d'autres jeunes et au sein de la population active, les jeunes femmes travaillent. Cependant, certaines, aux prises avec la pauvreté, sont incapables de tirer parti de l'économie ou de la société. La lutte pour poursuivre ses études, le travail mal rémunéré, l'absence de services de garde essentiels comptent parmi les nombreux obstacles que doivent franchir les jeunes femmes. Risquant de demeurer dans la pauvreté et de la perpétuer pour la génération à venir, les jeunes femmes nous disent qu'elles veulent travailler à bâtir un avenir meilleur et contribuer à leur communauté.

De quelle façon pouvons-nous les aider à concrétiser leurs aspirations? En croyant en leurs capacités à apprendre, à s'épanouir et à réussir, et en leur donnant un soutien et un encouragement adéquat pour aller de l'avant. Le développement économique communautaire (DEC) est un moyen prometteur, durable et stimulant pour mettre un terme à la pauvreté chez les jeunes femmes. Il s'agit, en premier lieu, de cerner les besoins pratiques des jeunes femmes, notamment l'alimentation, le logement, les services de garde, le transport, et de déterminer les besoins stratégiques en matière d'éducation, de rémunération équitable, de partage égal du travail d'après le sexe et des choix en matière de reproduction. Tant les besoins pratiques que stratégiques sont importants et doivent être couverts par les programmes destinés aux jeunes femmes. De plus, un solide filet de sécurité et des appuis stables, tels qu'un logement adéquat et

des services de garde, sont essentiels pour permettre aux jeunes femmes de participer au développement économique communautaire.

Le présent document résume un projet de recherche féministe participatif qui visait à déterminer les obstacles et les possibilités d'accès à la nouvelle économie pour les jeunes femmes, et à dégager des avenues pour le développement économique communautaire en vue de prévenir la pauvreté chez les femmes de 15 à 24 ans. Nous avons travaillé avec des jeunes femmes provenant de deux zones urbaines de Winnipeg, et pour comprendre comment intégrer des initiatives DEC dans le réseau d'organismes communautaires auxquels elles ont déjà accès, nous leur avons demandé quels services elles utilisaient.

Nous avons discuté avec 50 jeunes femmes, la majorité étant autochtone, et avons abordé avec elles des questions sur leur voisinage, le travail rémunéré et non rémunéré, l'informatique, la maternité, la grossesse chez les adolescentes, les modèles d'identification et leur vision de l'avenir.

Les jeunes femmes doivent relever d'importants défis pour rehausser leur situation économique et leur qualité de vie. Grandir dans un milieu défavorisé restreint les possibilités. Les écoles qu'elles fréquentent ne sont pas nécessairement adaptées à la culture autochtone, et il leur est difficile de poursuivre leurs études en raison d'un manque de soutien et d'encouragement dans leur vie. Les jeunes mères n'ont pas toute l'aide de la communauté et les services de garde nécessaires pour leur permettre d'étudier ou d'occuper un emploi rémunéré. Les programmes d'enseignement destinés aux mères adolescentes tendent à les isoler et les options de cours offerts sont restreintes. Les jeunes femmes se préoccupent de combler leurs besoins de base pour un logement sécuritaire et convenable et une saine alimentation. L'accès au développement des compétences en informatique et même aux ordinateurs est restreint.

Les jeunes femmes veulent un emploi rémunéré, mais sont souvent confinées à des emplois peu payés, dans des restaurants-minute ou la garde d'enfants. Elles ont une idée du genre de travail qu'elles aimeraient accomplir lorsqu'elles seront « grandes », mais elles suivent les modèles de carrière qui leur ont été donnés. Elles souhaitent améliorer leur sort, mais ne savent pas comment s'y prendre. Les jeunes femmes ont démontré peu de connaissances sur le genre d'études et la formation à suivre pour l'acquisition de diverses compétences professionnelles. Elles

n'ont pas vraiment d'idée sur les revenus qui leur seront nécessaires lorsqu'elles seront plus âgées et quel niveau de vie ces moyens leur permettraient d'atteindre.

Le projet de recherche comprenait également une exploration de programmes offerts dans des zones urbaines de Winnipeg. On a constaté que les services de soutien communautaire offerts aux jeunes femmes sont peu diversifiés et visent habituellement la santé. En règle générale, le soutien communautaire permet de combler les besoins pratiques comme l'alimentation, le logement, les soins de santé et l'éducation, et on a observé un manque de programme destiné à l'intégration des aptitudes et au développement économique des jeunes femmes.

Les jeunes femmes autochtones veulent obtenir les services nécessaires qui mettraient en valeur leur culture et leurs traditions. Des activités dans ce sens sont essentielles à la formation de leur identité et à leur bien-être, et doivent leur être accessibles, qu'il s'agisse de services aux jeunes femmes enceintes ou aux jeunes mères, de programmes d'études, de programmes de développement des compétences et de travail rémunéré.

Afin qu'elles puissent établir de solides assises pour l'avenir de leur famille et leur propre avenir, les jeunes femmes ont besoin d'un support adéquat à cette fin, y compris des moyens d'encouragement et du soutien pour la poursuite des études. Il importe également d'aider les jeunes femmes à faire le lien entre leurs choix d'aujourd'hui et les conséquences de ces choix dans l'avenir. Cela concerne non seulement le travail rémunéré et l'orientation de carrière, mais également le contrôle des naissances, les grossesses, le choix en matière de reproduction et la maternité.

Les jeunes femmes visées par cette étude ont démontré de fortes dispositions à améliorer leur qualité de vie et leur revenu. Elles veulent contribuer à leur tour au bien-être de leurs communautés et travailler avec d'autres jeunes, développer et partager leur identité culturelle. Elles veulent inspirer et motiver les jeunes et les encourager à rester sur les bancs de l'école.

En tant que jeunes mères, elles souhaitent avoir accès aux études et à la formation afin d'être de meilleurs parents à long terme. Pour ce faire, elles ont besoin de services de garde à proximité de la maison ou de l'école. Pour être de bons parents, elles ont également besoin de soutien et de périodes de repos sans leurs enfants pour réduire leur stress et briser leur isolement.

La présente étude démontre que les programmes et les services doivent être axés sur les besoins élémentaires et les besoins stratégiques à long terme, aussi essentiels les uns que les autres. L'étude a des répercussions variées sur les moyens de développement économique communautaire visant la prévention de la pauvreté et l'amélioration du revenu des jeunes femmes. On constate en outre qu'un solide filet social est un élément clé pour soutenir les efforts de développement économique auprès des jeunes femmes. Ces dernières ont également besoin de lieux sécuritaires et accueillants pour participer aux programmes.

Dans l'étude, on conclue que les moyens de développement économique communautaire doivent être axés sur les besoins des jeunes femmes, les services de garde étant le point le plus souvent mentionné comme élément clé du soutien aux jeunes mères, à titre d'exemple. Le DEC doit mettre en perspective les avantages à long terme pour que les femmes puissent améliorer leur revenu et leur sécurité économique en développement des compétences polyvalentes et valorisées dans l'économie. De plus, ces initiatives doivent être menées et orientées par les jeunes femmes elles-mêmes qui souhaitent, en retour, avoir l'occasion de diriger les jeunes de la prochaine génération, comme elles nous l'ont exprimé.

Enfin, cette étude démontre que beaucoup de services d'aide auxquels ont accès les jeunes femmes n'intègrent pas les aptitudes économiques. La portée des programmes est de ce fait limitée à la seule réponse des besoins pratiques. Il faut toutefois se rappeler que l'égalité des sexes est intrinsèquement liée à l'égalité sur le plan économique. On doit offrir davantage de soutien et de mesures incitatives dans les centres de services que fréquentent déjà les jeunes femmes afin de les aider à développer leurs compétences économiques, à trouver un travail valorisant et à planifier leur avenir.

À cette fin, la création de partenariats entre les organismes ayant diverses compétences peut donner lieu à l'élaboration de programmes globaux. Par exemple, un maillage pourrait être créé entre un organisme de développement économique communautaire et un organisme autochtone ou de femmes afin qu'ils puissent mutuellement tirer profit de leurs forces respectives.

À la lumière des résultats du projet de recherche, on a formulé des suggestions et des idées pour favoriser l'essor du développement

économique communautaire. Pour assurer le succès des programmes, on a jugé comme déterminants les éléments suivants qui devraient servir de balise à l'élaboration de services offerts aux jeunes femmes :

- La transmission de la culture autochtone assurée par la communauté autochtone;
- Les besoins élémentaires, comme les services de garde, le transport et la saine alimentation;
- Un salaire minimum vital, lorsqu'il y a lieu;
- La gratuité pour les participantes;
- L'acquisition de notions économiques et l'orientation professionnelle;
- Le mentorat et l'établissement de modèles professionnels.

L'étude nous permet de conclure que les jeunes femmes sont prêtes et disposées à participer à des programmes globaux qui respectent leurs origines culturelles et à se construire un avenir meilleur pour elles-mêmes, leurs familles et leurs communautés.

INTRODUCTION

Young women work – in their homes, in our community, in schools, with other youth and in the labour force. Just like generations before them, they are working to improve their lives - and the lives of those around them - through everyday tasks such as helping a friend, caring for children, or finishing a homework assignment.

But young women who live in poverty continue to find themselves unable to make our economy or society work for them. Struggling to stay in school, working for low wages, confronting teen pregnancy, and lacking childcare, young women told us that they face many challenges. In the face of a future living in poverty, and possibly raising another generation to do the same, young women told us they want to work to build a better future and community.

How do we support them to do this? By believing in young women's capacity to learn, grow and thrive, and providing them with suitable supports and encouragement to do so. Community Economic Development (CED) is emerging as a supportive, sustainable and empowering means to end poverty among young women. CED is a grass roots approach that builds on the assets of individuals and communities as a long-term strategy to reduce poverty. Run by small community-based organizations, programs can be tailored to the needs of the local community.

Appropriate CED for young women in inner-city Winnipeg starts by understanding their practical needs for food, shelter, childcare, transportation; and their strategic needs for education, equitable wages, equal gender division of labour, and reproductive choice. Both practical and strategic needs are important, and need to be included in

programs with young women. Moreover, a strong safety net and supports such as adequate housing and childcare are required for young women to participate in CED.

The “new economy”, with its emphasis on computer literacy, technology and innovation, may be a place for many young people to find their niche. Women and men need particular levels of education and a familiarity and comfort with computer technology to be part of this “new economy”. But is this appropriate for inner-city young women? What resources, skills and experience do they need to take part and aspire to move out of poverty? Do they already have the resources they need, and if not, can those resources be made more available? What can be done to be more inclusive of the particular needs of these young women?

Our research project is one step in this direction. We sought to describe the barriers and opportunities for young women in the new economy, and outline Community Economic Development approaches to addressing poverty among young women. By focusing on young women in two inner-city Winnipeg neighbourhoods, we set out to understand which community supports do help young women, and how we could build CED approaches into the current network of community-based organizations they already use.

This research was developed with community resource workers who identified the need for information about young women living in Winnipeg’s inner-city. While people who work daily with young women know and understand their circumstances, formal evidence is needed to strengthen program development and determine appropriate responses for CED approaches for young women at risk of poverty. The Manitoba Research Alliance’s call for proposals came at the same time that these needs were being identified, and the proposal was granted funding.¹

Using a feminist, social justice approach we document the realities in the lives of young women in inner-city Winnipeg, ages 15 – 24, who make use of some community program and thus can suggest action to improve their economic status and quality of life, identifying opportunities to develop an “up stream” approach and prevent a lifetime of low-wages and poverty for women and their families. These young women are on the “cusp” of adulthood. As girls and women, the participants speak of shared experiences based on their

The young women we spoke to come from many different backgrounds; most (72%) identified as being Aboriginal. When we were designing this research project, we anticipated that we would likely talk to many Aboriginal women, however we did not set out to do a research project exclusively with Aboriginal young women, but with young women in West Broadway and the North End as a cohort. Through the research process, leaders in the Aboriginal community were consulted with on the questions, methodology, analysis and report. As this project progressed, we learned very strongly that research by and with Aboriginal young women needs also to be supported so that the explicit Aboriginal perspectives on the issues facing young women are articulated.

¹ This research study is also supported financially by the Margaret Laurence Endowment in Women’s Studies and through in-kind support from the Prairie Women’s Health Centre of Excellence, Andrews Street Family Centre, Wolseley Family Place and SEED Winnipeg.

gender. But at the same time, their situations vary because of race, ability, and sexual orientation.

The paper is divided into four sections. We begin with a discussion of the world in which young women are growing – they continue to face a wage gap and an economy that discriminates against women. Some programs have emerged to buffer some of the challenges this brings, and a new programming focus on girls and young women promises to help strengthen their development. The second section of the paper describes the feminist research methods we used. Section three is a discussion of the research findings. We talked to 50 young women, the majority of whom are Aboriginal. We asked them about their neighbourhoods, paid and unpaid work, school, computers, motherhood, teenage pregnancy, role models, and what they hoped for in their futures. What they have to say is both inspiring and heart wrenching – these are young people dealing with some very difficult circumstances. Notwithstanding this, they want to build better lives for themselves, their families and their community. We have a responsibility to provide them with the resources to do so. The final section of this report will discuss some options to this end, guided by the directives the young women gave us.

PART 1. YOUNG WOMEN AND POVERTY

In order to prevent poverty among women over the lifecycle, substantial efforts must be made to understand and address women's economic inequality.

The current so-called "new economy" has been fuelled by information technology. According to Jane Jenson of the Canadian Policy Research Networks, the rise of information technology increases the risk of social exclusion for many.¹ This has given rise to changes in the labour market, and a polarization of job structures, which increasingly rely on part-time and temporary work.² These changes will only entrench women's status as part-time workers – women have accounted for seven out of ten part-time employees since the late 1970s.³ Currently 40% of employed women, compared with 27% of men, are now working in non-standard jobs such as part-time, temporary, part-year and contract work, as well as self-employment.⁴ Furthermore, the "new economy" continues to restrict Canadian women in the same way the "old" economy did, by undervaluing women's unpaid and paid work.

The strongest indicator of these inequalities is the persistent feminine face of poverty, demonstrated in the chronic wage

¹ Jenson, Jane. 2003. "Canadian Economic and Social Policy: North American or Mid Atlantic" Statistics Canada Economic Conference, May 12, 2003 <http://www.cprn.com/documents/23247_en.pdf> Downloaded August 15, 2003.

² Ibid

³ Statistics Canada 2003. *Women in Canada: Work Chapter Updates* Ottawa: Statistics Canada. p. 8.

⁴ Townson, Monica 2004. "Women's Poverty Reaches 20-year High" Straightgoods website. Downloaded June 10, 2004 <<http://www.straightgoods.com/item276.shtml>>

gap. In Canada women's average earnings are 73% of men's.⁵ Women are over-represented among low-wage workers: in Manitoba 36.5% of women earned low wages in 2002 compared to 25.8% of men,⁶ and in Winnipeg women had averaged earning 66% less than average earnings by men.⁷ The trend continues among young people: eight out of ten women ages 15 – 24 earned low wages compared to seven out of ten young men.⁸

Aboriginal peoples face dramatically higher rates of poverty than non-Aboriginal peoples. For example, 45.5% of the Aboriginal population aged 15 – 24 is low income in Winnipeg, compared to 16.2% of the total population of this age range.⁹ Nearly half of Aboriginal young women (49.7%) and young men (40.1%) aged 15 – 24 live below the poverty line.¹⁰ This is reflected in our study: 72% of the participants were Aboriginal young women.

Cultural traditions shared by Aboriginal people in Manitoba are based on different values than the Euro-centric approaches that shape the economic and social rules under which Aboriginal young women live. The present economy rewards certain skills, and upholds structural barriers that have historically excluded groups based on race and gender. This monetary system of rewards must be examined in order to understand what opportunities and barriers exist for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young women. The economy is a function of societal relations, which shift and change over time. Asking young women about their experiences related to the economy can help to transform prior unequal relations and develop local skills, capacity, equity and equality.

⁵ Drolet, Marie. 2001. "Perspectives on labour and income" Statistics Canada website. December. Downloaded June 20, 2003
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/indepth/75-001/online/01201/hifs_200112_01_a.html>

⁶ Black, Errol and Todd Scarth. 2003. "Rising Job Tide not Lifting Low-Wage Boats" *Review of Economic and Social Trends in Manitoba*. Winnipeg: CCPA Manitoba P. 1

⁷ Statistics Canada 2001. *2001 Census City of Winnipeg*
<<http://winnipeg.ca/census/2001/Cith%20of%20Winnipeg/>> Calculations by author.

⁸ Black and Scarth. 2003. P. 2

⁹ Statistics Canada. 2001. *2001 Census*. Topic-based Tabulations. Aboriginal Peoples of Canada. Downloaded August 10, 2004. <<http://www.statcan.ca>>

¹⁰ Ibid.

WHY LOWER INCOMES FOR WOMEN?

There are many reasons for women's lower earnings compared to men, including tenure in the labour force, occupational segregation, unionization and discrimination. Statistics Canada has found that 18% of the wage gap is explained by the fact that women generally have less work experience than their male counterparts, supervise other employees less often and are less frequently involved in administrative decisions. Roughly 7% of the pay gap is explained by the fact that women are more likely to work part time than men.¹¹ Other factors include differences in job tenure and the fact that men are more likely to graduate from programs leading to high-paying jobs, such as engineering.¹² When controls for occupation and employment industry are added, about 20% of the pay gap is explained by differences in occupation and industry.¹³

The presence of children is also a factor. Women who postponed having children after age 28 earned at least 6% more in 1998 than women who had their children earlier. This is because wage growth and promotion opportunities occur early in on women's careers.¹⁴

A 1996 study found that low paid workers tended to be young and female, with an education of high school completion or less. In addition, they often worked part time in service occupations. Their workplaces tended to be small and non-unionized, and they tended to live in the Atlantic Provinces, Saskatchewan or Manitoba.¹⁵ Women were twice as likely to be low paid than men: 44% of women were low paid compared to 21% of men. Men were twice as likely as women to advance as women.¹⁶ Women improved their odds of moving up if they obtained a university degree, worked in a

WHAT IS LOW INCOME?

For policy purposes, low income is commonly defined using Statistics Canada's low income cut off (LICO) rate, also known as the poverty line. "A LICO is an income threshold below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income to the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than an average family would". Low income, or poverty, can also be defined as a strict limit on choices and opportunities for how people live our lives. "Poverty in Canada means to be surrounded by wealth but have no access to it. It means having to choose between paying your rent, bills, groceries, transportation, doing your laundry and buying necessary medical supplies". While many people experience poverty, more women than men struggle with this reality every day. Sources: Statistics Canada 2004. Low income cutoffs from 1994 to 2003 and low income measures from 1992 to 2001. M. Morris. 2004. Women, poverty and Canadian public policy in an era of globalization. Downloaded August 10, 2004 <http://www.criaw-ciref.ca/factSheets/Poverty_and_globalization.htm>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Statistics Canada 1997. "Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics: The wage gap between men and women" *The Daily Monday*, December 20, 1999 Statistics Canada website. Downloaded August 29, 2004.

<<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/991220/d991220a.htm>> However, recent post-secondary enrollments suggest this trend is changing for those who can afford to attend.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Statistics Canada 2002. "Wives, mothers and wages: Does timing matter?" *The Daily Wednesday*, May 1, 2002. Statistics Canada website. Downloaded August 29, 2004 <<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/020501/d020501a.htm>>

¹⁵ Statistics Canada 2004. "Study: Moving out of low-paid work" *The Daily Friday* March 26, 2004 Statistics Canada website. Downloaded August 29, 2004

<<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/040326/d040326d.htm>>

¹⁶ Ibid.

large organization, worked in the public service, or in professional or science occupations and industries.¹⁷

Unions give a tremendous wage advantage to women. Women in unions earned an average \$6.29 per hour more than those who were not part of a union.¹⁸ This difference reflects factors other than union membership alone; union members are more likely to be older and more experienced, work in public services, or large firms, and be highly trained.¹⁹ Belonging to a union brings further advantages such as health benefits and paid leave.²⁰ For instance unionized childcare workers (predominately female) earn \$5.31 per hour more than non-unionized childcare providers.²¹

GENDER: refers to the socially constructed roles of men and women that are learned and change over time.

GENDER-EQUALITY: Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether we are born male or female.

These studies suggest that any options to reduce the wage gap and help employed young women improve their incomes must be considered on a number of fronts. Young women need specific supports to enter the paid labour force. There must be continued challenges to the male/female segregation that persists in some occupations, and measures can be taken to increase the number of women in non-traditional, higher paying fields, including public service. Unionization is also important for improving the overall wages for women in some sectors.

Each of these efforts is substantial, and requires approaches that build on both the capacities of young women, and community supports to maximize the impact. In Manitoba, Community Economic Development is emerging as a sustainable response to poverty and has the potential to reduce the wage gap and help young women move out of poverty.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ No author. 2004. "Canada's unionized workers earning \$5.80 an hour more than those without a union" *CCPA Monitor* February. p. 31.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Community Economic Development (CED) is a “bottom-up” rather than “top-down” approach to economic development. CED uses a capacity-building approach to poverty: considering individual and community assets as starting places for building the local community capacity and economy. CED is a community-driven process that combines social, economic and environmental goals to build healthy and economically viable communities. It is an alternative to conventional approaches to economic development, founded on the belief that problems facing communities – unemployment, poverty, job loss, environmental degradation and loss of community control – need to be addressed in a holistic and participatory way.²² It can be defined as action by people locally to create economic opportunities and enhance social conditions in their communities on a sustainable and inclusive basis, particularly with those who are most disadvantaged.²³

CED is preceded by Community Development (CD), a process of engaging communities in addressing local needs through capacity building; CED takes this process one step further through the integration of economic goals.

In Manitoba CED is commonly defined around the following principals developed by the Neechi Workers Cooperative (a complete list can be found in Appendix 1).²⁴

1. Use of locally produced goods and services
2. Production of goods and services for local use
3. Local re-investment of profits
4. Long-term employment of local residents
5. Local skill development
6. Local decision-making
7. Public health
8. Physical environment
9. Neighbourhood stability
10. Human dignity
11. Support for other CED initiatives

²² <<http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/en/pages/home.asp>>

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ An Aboriginal owned and run grocery store developed to respond to food security issues and local economic development in inner-city Winnipeg.

However, CED must be considered within a broader policy context. Since young women are more likely to live in poverty than young men, they rely on the social safety net more often. Programs such as social assistance, employment insurance, childcare, and social housing exist to meet the basic needs of young women. CED does not replace the need for these programs, but begins where they end.

GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS

(GBA) is used to review policies and programs with consideration given to the differing needs and circumstances of men and women and the contexts of their lives. GBA considers the possibilities of inequities of social standing for men and for women and is a critique of who will be truly included in a proposed policy and who may be left out. GBA considers not only biological differences but social standing, responsibilities, roles, as well as race, ability and other possible realms of discrimination.

If young women are to share equally in efforts toward CED, the gendered implications of the process and programs must be considered. A gender-based analysis of CED programs would likely find divisions between the types of CED activities women and men do. Women may be found doing community catering and sewing. Men often work in local home construction. This is often because community-based organizations start with the interests and activities participants feel comfortable doing. At the same time, we cannot deny the gendered nature of the activities. While both sewing and construction are equally beneficial and worthwhile, consideration must be given to the gender implications and the longer-term economic benefits of the skills developed by these CED activities. Cooking and sewing skills will likely remain low-paid, whereas construction skills can lead to substantially higher earnings.

Solutions to this end are two-fold. CED needs to support skill development in non-traditional fields for women. For example women learn best in non-intimidating environments, and an all-female training and construction crew would be an excellent CED activity to meet the housing shortage. At the same time, it's important to work strategically toward improving wages in traditionally female occupations, such as childcare, and sewing operators. This has frequently been done through unionization.

As we have seen, unionization improves wages for women workers, however the idea of incorporating unions in CED activities needs consideration. CED businesses with relatively low revenues may not be able to support union wages. Where it is possible, it should be examined as one tool to improving the wages of workers in CED initiatives.

CED does offer the potential to help young women make a transition to better-paying positions in the public sector, or larger organizations. As we shall see, CED can meet both the short-term needs young women have to earn income, and the

long-term needs of gaining marketable skills they will take with them into their futures.

PRACTICAL AND STRATEGIC GENDER NEEDS

Caroline Moser's conceptualizations of practical and strategic gender needs have been pivotal in development theory. She explains that any efforts towards gender equality require us to think in terms of women's practical and strategic gender needs.²⁵ Practical gender needs refer to assistance for women in their existing subordinate position in society.²⁶ They do not challenge the gender divisions of labour, but are a response to an immediate perceived necessity within a specific context.²⁷ They are concerned with basic needs, health care and employment. The family centres which were partners in this project are funded to provide for the practical needs of those most vulnerable: they are used to a large extent by women because they offer services such as free laundry facilities, childcare for parents who are on-site, a low-cost store, and health services.

Strategic gender needs are those required to transform women's existing subordinate position to men. Meeting strategic gender needs helps women achieve gender equality and changes existing roles.²⁸ This includes instituting change in gender divisions of labour and power, the threat of domestic violence, equitable wages, division of household responsibilities and child rearing, access to credit and other resources, and reproductive choice. As we will see in this study, there are few resources available to assist young women to meet their strategic gendered needs to eliminate the wage gap – economic skills and development. Family centres in the community do not (cannot) provide programs about economics, and there are very few organizations with the capacity to transform structural barriers, which are the cause of young women's poverty.

²⁵ Moser, Caroline. (1989) "Gender planning in the Third World: meeting practical and strategic gender needs", *World Development*, 17(11):1799-1825.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

A gender analysis of programs offered can help us understand the important strategic role CED can play in improving young women's status in the long term. This presents an opportunity to build more partnerships between family centres, which are supporting community women daily, and CED organizations which have the expertise in building economic literacy and skills. For example, SEED Winnipeg offers an Individual Development Account (IDA) program that supports people to save money toward education, housing or a business. It can be tailored to the needs of the population being served. Such a program for young women could take into consideration some of the circumstances they face as a group.

In grade 6, 72% of Canadian girls report that they have confidence in themselves, dropping dramatically to 62% in grade 8 and again to 55% in grade 10. As girl's confidence levels drop, their preoccupation with their bodies and weight increases. "When asked the question, 'Is there anything about your body you would like to change?'...43% of grade 6 girls and 77% of grade 10 girls said yes."¹ Counter-acting the strong cultural forces faced by girls and young women requires strong counter-messages that help them deconstruct these messages. This is often best provided in an all female environment.

Source: Ms Foundation for Women 2001. *The New Girls; Movement: Implications for Your Programs*. New York: Ms. Foundation for women. p.6.

PROGRAMS WITH YOUNG WOMEN

Young women are growing up in a culture steeped in mass media and conflicting messages about youth and adulthood, and what it means to be a girl and a woman. Feminists explain that once girls enter adolescence, they move into a more obviously patriarchal society, where attention is granted to women as objects. As girls, they are free to be "tom boys", however, as they begin the transformation to womanhood, girls see from mass media and the dominant culture around them that women gain their power from their sexuality and subscribing to a thin, white, ideal of beauty.

There is an emerging focus on the need for programming for girls and young women in Canada. One study found that "Girls overwhelmingly identified the need for 'safe' and girl-specific spaces in schools, shelters, and services...for reasons of safety, positive development of self, and identity formation".²⁹ In the US, the Ms Foundation supports gender-specific programming because "universal" programming for youth does not distinguish between the needs and strengths of girls and boys.³⁰

To be fully effective for girls and boys, the design and operation of a program must consider gender – not in a manner that regards gender differences as innate and unchangeable, but in a way that explores the social construction of gender and invites young

²⁹ Jiwani, Yasmin, Kelly Gorkoff, Helene Berman, Gail Taylor, Glenda Vardy-Dell and Sylvie Normandeau. 1999. *Violence Prevention and the Girl Child: Final Report*. The Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence.

³⁰ Ms. Foundation for Women 2001. *The New Girls' Movement: Implications for Youth Programs*. New York: Ms. Foundation for Women. p. 6

*women and men to challenge gender norms, examine gender privilege, and create a balance of power between girls and boys.*³¹

A number of groups are organizing around issues facing young women in Manitoba. A group of young women at the University of Winnipeg, *New Waves Against Violence Against Women*, aims to raise awareness and take action on issues of violence against girls and women. The Manitoba Legal Education Action Fund hosts an annual conference on rights-based issues for young women, and the UN Platform for Action Committee (UNPAC) hosted a Girls' conference to follow up on the rights of the girl-child, one of the 12 critical areas of concern at the last UN Conference on Women in Beijing.

The North Star Girls' Club at Andrews Street Family Centre, and the Girls' Club at Wolseley Family Place were created to provide safe spaces for girls ages 8 – 12. They are funded by the Province of Manitoba through Neighbourhoods Alive!, a Community Development fund, and The *National Crime Prevention Strategy* of Justice Canada. The Laurel Centre is a partner with Andrews Street Family Centre, and runs the girls' club at that Centre. With funding from Justice Canada, the Laurel Centre created "It's Our Turn: A handbook for youth role models" which encourages young women's leadership in inner-city Winnipeg. Both the North End Women's Resource Centre and the North Point Douglas Women's Centre have started teen women's drop-in clubs that feature activities such as self-defence training and media literacy.

Elsewhere, Powercamp National has emerged as a Canadian leader on girl-centred programming, offering camps and school programs for girls and teen women in Ottawa, Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver. Powercamp programs are holistic and empowering to promote self-esteem, health, and prevent violence against girls and women. Powercamp recently hosted "Transforming Spaces: Girlhood, Agency and Power", the first national conference on "girls' studies" in Montreal in November, 2003.³²

Programs by and for girls and young women build on the "third-wave" feminist movement: a blend of feminist, post-modernist theory that embraces multiple definitions of

WHAT GIRLS NEED IN YOUTH PROGRAMS

- A "safe" space to meet
- Expanded definitions and opportunities to develop leadership
- Relationships between girls and women fostered across generations
- Respect for girls' cultures and communities
- Opportunities for community-building and social change work.

³¹ Ibid, p. 6 – 7.

³² The Young Women Work research study was presented as a poster presentation at this conference.

girl/woman/race/class/ability/sexuality.³³ Third wave feminists intend to break down prior notions of “sisterhood” that centred on universalist ideas. Third wave feminist theory is centred on questions of identity, socialization, and sexuality, and embraces creative art-activism.

PROGRAMS FOR ABORIGINAL YOUNG WOMEN

Aboriginal women traditionally enjoyed high status in their communities as leaders and life-givers. Colonization brought patriarchal approaches to family and state. However, Aboriginal women have always fought for their rights and the rights of their communities. For example, Sandra Lovelace, a Maliseet woman from the Tobique Reserve in New Brunswick, fought all the way to the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations. Her actions led to the revision of the Indian Act in 1985 that finally permitted Native women in Canada married to non-Aboriginal men to retain their status.³⁴ Nationally, the Native Women’s Association of Canada advocates for the rights of First Nations women. Locally, the Mother of Red Nations organizes and advocates for girls and women in Manitoba.

Manitoba-based Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc. has been developing and delivering programs which uphold Aboriginal culture and values with Aboriginal women. They recently launched a new community-based training program licensed through Red River College that offers Microcomputer training with a holistic approach that incorporates Aboriginal culture into the program.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre offers many personal development and support services at a number of sites in central Winnipeg. Guided by a holistic Aboriginal and

³³ The first wave of feminist was the suffrage movement that achieved the vote for some women in Canada was in 1918; Aboriginal women had to wait until 1960 to get the vote. The second wave of feminism started with Betty Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique* and was characterized in Canada by the 1967 *Royal Commission on the Status of Women*. There is debate on whether the third wave is here or not. Those feminists who define themselves as such characterize it as an opening up of feminism to consider more closely issues of race and sexuality.

³⁴ Women’s Voices in Leadership. no date. Status of Women Council, Northwest Territories. Downloaded September 7, 2004
<<http://www.statusofwomen.nt.ca/leadership/cdnwomenleaders.html>>

community-based approach, they offer services to families in the community. Most recently they opened a new safe home for teen women ages 13 - 17 “Honouring the Spirit of Our Little Sisters”, which provides education, employment, training, mentoring and life skills. They provide an Adolescent Parent Residential Learning Facility for pregnant young women, and Circle of Care, emergency residential care for teen women ages 13 – 18. They also offer “Ototema” – Her Friend, a mentorship program for Aboriginal young women.

Other youth programs include Boy’s and Girl’s Clubs, and “Ndinawemaagag Endaawad Inc.” (Our Relative’s Home), a safe house. Ndinawe, as it is commonly known, just opened a youth resource centre in the North End which offers Aboriginal cultural programming, employment and computer programming.

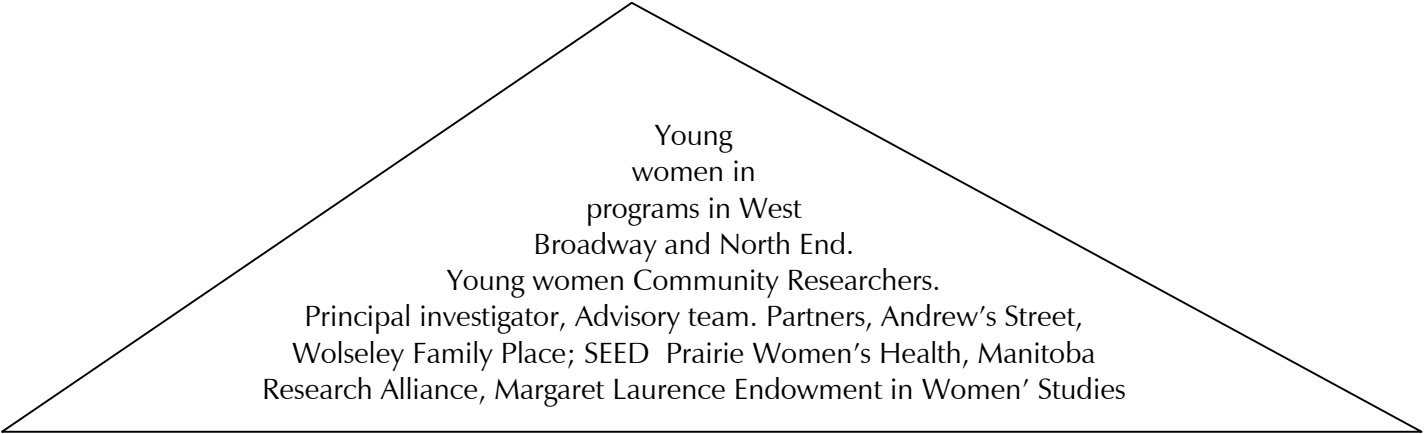
While there are a number of innovative programs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young women in inner-city Winnipeg, there are not enough to meet the demand. The programs are scattered throughout the community, and rely on project-based funding to operate, meaning continuous infrastructure is tenuous. There are few programs which consider and provide the economic basis for CED with a focus on young women ages 15 – 24, as we shall see in the results of a survey conducted in the winter of 2004.

PART 2. METHODS

PARTICIPATORY FEMINIST APPROACH

This research project is participatory in nature. Participatory research is committed to the emancipation of marginalized and oppressed groups, and honours the principles of respecting, valuing and bringing into the foreground the lived experience and indigenous knowledge of those being researched.³⁵ Participatory research also uses methods that minimize hierarchical relationships between the researched and researcher, and involves a collaborative approach throughout all stages of the research process.³⁶

There were many people involved in the research.



Young
women in
programs in West
Broadway and North End.
Young women Community Researchers.
Principal investigator, Advisory team. Partners, Andrew's Street,
Wolseley Family Place; SEED Prairie Women's Health, Manitoba
Research Alliance, Margaret Laurence Endowment in Women' Studies

³⁵ Rose, Damaris. 2001. *Revisiting Feminist Research Methodologies: A Working Paper* Ottawa: Status of Women Canada.

³⁶ Reason. 1994. in *Ibid.*

The preliminary research question was developed in consultation with a number of community-based organizations working in the inner city. Wolseley Family Place, Andrews Street Family Centre and SEED Winnipeg came forward to support the research study. Representatives then formed the Advisory Team to the project. We also invited a member with a strong background in education in the inner city to join the Advisory Team.

The Advisory Team (Appendix 2) guided the research project. They met several times to discuss the research process and provide feedback on the interview and focus group guides. The Principal Investigator also met with several leaders in the Aboriginal community for their perspective on the research project, and advice on the research process and questions.

Participatory research approaches use varying degrees of participation by the population involved. Given that we were trying to reach many young women in a short period of time, most participants were involved in the research through a focus group or interview only. However, in *Young Women Work* two young women from West Broadway and Central North-End Winnipeg were hired and did 14 hours of training to be Community Researchers. They were involved in shaping the interview and focus group guide, leading the interviews, and interpreting the data. In methodological terms, this is known as the “insider” approach – it assumes that researchers who belong to the same social or cultural group as the people we are studying generate richer and more valid findings.³⁷ In this project it meant that young women were talking with other young women. We hoped that this provided a welcoming atmosphere where young women felt they could associate to some degree with the ‘researchers’.

THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Our research questions were:

- What community resources exist, and what resources are needed, to support young women ages 15 - 24 to achieve economic equality?
- How do young women participate in the unpaid and paid economy now, and how do they anticipate participating in the future?

³⁷ Ibid.

- What are the opportunities and barriers young women see for themselves in terms of unpaid and paid work?

We attempted to answer these questions in several ways. Firstly, we conducted a scan or survey to ascertain the types of programs available to young women. Secondly, we talked to 50 young women: 28 participated in interviews and 22 participated in focus groups. We used both focus groups and interviews to diversify the ways we collected information. The focus groups allowed us to hear how groups of young women build on the questions we raised with them. The interviews were a chance to talk in-depth with young women about their lives. For a copy of the Interview Schedule, please see Appendix 3; the focus group schedule is in Appendix 4.

The Ethics in Human Research and Scholarship Committee of the University of Winnipeg approved the protocols. Participants granted their informed consent or it was provided by parents or guardians for those under eighteen. Every effort was made to guarantee confidentiality of the participants in the research project. All participants received a \$25 honourarium for participating. Childcare was offered and provided to all participants who required it. We also provided food and drinks.

The research took place in two inner-city neighbourhoods, West Broadway and the North End (see map). As well, we conducted eight interviews in North Point Douglas. Staff at Wolseley Family Place and Andrews Street Family Centre were essential to help us reach the participants. Staff at both these centres helped advertise for the focus groups. At the focus groups, participants were given brochures and asked to tell their friends that we were going to be conducting interviews later. We went to community-based organizations in the neighbourhood explaining the research project to staff, and posting notices to invite young women to be interviewed. In some cases we met participants at community programs and invited them to be involved. Some young women who were interested saw the poster or brochure and called to schedule an interview.

The sampling technique is based on the snowball effect, and the initiative of young women volunteering to be interviewed. Several young women left messages about their interest, but did not have a phone to which we could return the call. The young women we talked to were all involved in programs in

West Broadway or the North End. Most, but not all, live in these neighbourhoods, not including those we interviewed at the North Point Douglas Women's Centre.

Since poverty is experienced differently among different young women, we sought out Aboriginal young women, racialized young women, young women with disabilities and young women who are bisexual and lesbian in order to ensure that a diversity of experiences were reflected. When we found that we did not yet have the involvement of any immigrant or refugee young women, we sought out two women to interview through an immigrant-serving group.

The interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Participants' names were coded to maintain their confidentiality. The transcripts were analyzed by summarizing and contrasting the responses to each question and themes arising from the responses. The first report draft was circulated to the Community Researchers, the Advisory Team, and several others for comment and feedback. A final draft and a plain language version were then created.

PART 3. RESULTS

SURVEY OF PROGRAMS AVAILABLE FOR YOUNG WOMEN, AGES 15 – 24

One facet of this research project was a scan of programs available to young women (ages 15 to 24) between January and April 2004. We gathered information on programs primarily located in Winnipeg's North End and West End and geared towards improving young women's economic status. Please see the Results of Survey of Programs in Appendix 5.

Of 80 community based-organizations investigated in Winnipeg, 35 of those organizations had programs and services geared for young women. These 35 organizations collectively offered 54 different programs and support services which were included in this survey.

Only 9% of the 35 community-based organizations provided programs and services specifically for the age range of this study. However the remaining 91% of the programs may not have been specifically for this age group, but we found that they were the age group that made most frequent use of these programs. In addition there were a variety of programs available specifically for young women between the ages of 12 to 17, but no programs specific to young women ages 18 to 24.

Overall, our survey found a definite lack of community *economic* development programs and services for

young women. Results showed 74% of the 54 programs provided community development programs for young women. Of these, only 11% offered employment skills and technical training development (CED), while 20% were supports for pregnancy and adolescent parenting issues. Other support programs deal with issues young women are facing such as sexual exploitation, behavioural management, crime prevention, and health and sexuality. These findings point to the lack of the economic component in community development efforts for young women.

The North End and West End areas of Winnipeg have the most community-based organizations, yet the opportunities for CED with young women, enhanced employment and skills development have so far not been effectively addressed in these neighbourhoods.

Organizations that do provide community economic development programs such as employment skills and technical training for women include Urban Circle Training Centre, SEED Winnipeg and the Women's Enterprise Centre. However, these programs and services are not exclusive to young women between the ages of 15-24. Also, organizations that provide recreation programs to develop young women's leadership skills and self-confidence are Andrew Street Family Centre, Wolseley Family Place, Canadian Girls in Training, Nor 'West Co-op Community Health Centre, Rossbrook House, and Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs. However, most of these programs are for teenage girls ages 6-17.

This scan demonstrates a lack of community development activities, which are geared specifically to young women in the 15 – 24 year age range that address directly the economic needs of young women living in poverty. For this reason, we sought to ask young women themselves what they thought about their present opportunities with regard to what they envision for their futures. We did this with the intention of suggesting CED activities that could build upon the already strong network of supports available to young women in their communities.

WHO DID WE TALK TO?

We spoke to 50 young women in total from a broad range of backgrounds and living situations. The average age of the participants was 18.

Young women's living arrangements

	n	%
Single parent guardian	15	30%
Both parents/guardians	6	12%
Friends/roommates	2	4%
Boyfriend/girlfriend/partner	4	8%
With own children	11	22%
Alone	7	14%
Other	8	16%
staying with friend to help her and her baby(1)/		
aunt and her family (1) / in care (6)		

Most of the young women we spoke to identified as Aboriginal (72%). We spoke to two immigrant young women and one who identified as being a visible minority. Two young women identified as having disabilities.

Self-Identified Background N= 50

	n	%
Aboriginal	36	72%
Visible Minority	1	2%
Immigrant	2	4%
Refugee	0	0
Person with a disability	2	4%

We talked to young women who were mothers and parenting (16, 32%), and those who were not. Most of the young women we spoke to did not have children (60%); four volunteered the information that they were pregnant (8%). Of the mothers, eleven had children under age one, and the average age of the children was two and a half. The youngest child was one month old, and the oldest was nine years old. These demographics

confirm that young women using programs in West Broadway and the North End are a diverse group.

THE NEIGHBOURHOODS

The North End and West Broadway neighbourhoods play a large role in defining the experiences of the young women in this study. Both these neighbourhoods have a high incidence of poverty and this can deeply affect what young women see as possible in their lives. Living closely with other people in poverty creates a “culture of poverty” which feeds upon and reproduces itself.³⁸ Jim Silver explains that both the culture of poverty and the structure of the economy perpetuate poverty in inner-city Winnipeg:

*The high levels of unemployment and single parenthood, the high incidence of inadequate housing and low levels of educational attainment, the violence and discrimination – all become part of a self-reinforcing process by which the conditions reproduce themselves and the exclusion and structured disadvantage intensifies.*³⁹

This shared reality can restrict people’s escape from poverty. Coupled with structural changes in the economy, inner-city residents do not often have the skills to take advantage of the changing demands of the new economy.⁴⁰ Furthermore, if they are employed, women are often segregated into occupations which are particularly low paying such as the service industry, thereby placing them at a further disadvantage.

The following table gives a basic indication of the level of poverty in the neighbourhoods considered in this study. Data are taken from the 2001 Census, disaggregated by Winnipeg neighbourhood. The West Broadway neighbourhood as defined by the Census has the same boundaries as in this study. West Broadway is bounded by Broadway, Maryland,

³⁸ Silver, Jim. 2001. “Solutions that Work: Fighting Poverty in Winnipeg’s Inner City” *Solutions that Work* Editor Jim Silver Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba. p. 126 – 154. p. 146.

³⁹ Gans, 1996; Marcuse, 1996; Mingine, 1996, Wacquant, 1996 in *Ibid*, 146 – 147.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 147.

Osborne and the Assiniboine River. The North End neighbourhood close to the Andrews Street Family Centre where our study took place is a cluster of neighbourhoods including William White and North Point Douglas, entitled Point Douglas South by Census Canada. Albert St. borders it to the north, Sutherland to the south, the Red River to the east and Keewatin Blvd. to the west.

Incidence of Low-income in Study Neighbourhoods

	Females ages 15 – 24 as a proportion of total population	Incidence of low income for economic families	Male average employment income (full and part time)	Female average employment income (full and part time)
West Broadway	11%	54.5%	\$18,018	\$14,632
Point Douglas South	6.7%	51.5%	\$19,513	\$15,513
Winnipeg Overall	6.9%	15.5%	\$34,797	\$23,143

Source: Statistics Canada Census Data 2001, West Broadway, Point Douglas South <http://winnipeg.ca/census/2001/>

We can see that the incidence of low income is higher than the City of Winnipeg average for all neighbourhoods, the highest being in West Broadway. The male and female average income variable includes both full and part time workers, and draws a rough picture of the wage gap between men and women. While both men and women in these neighbourhoods earn low incomes, the incomes of women are consistently lower.

It is fair to say that the high incidence of low income in these neighbourhoods is most likely affected by the larger proportion of female-headed (lone-mother) households, since these households have such low levels of average income.

Female-headed households and incidence of low income

	Incidence of low income for economic families	Female-headed households as proportion of all households	Female-headed household average income
West Broadway	54.5%	33%	\$16,500
Point Douglas South	29.6%	30.5%	\$20,974
Winnipeg Overall	15.5%	15.4%	\$32,562

Source: Statistics Canada Census Data 2001, West Broadway, Point Douglas South <http://winnipeg.ca/census/2001/>

These numbers sketch a small part of the picture for young women in these neighbourhoods. The following section serves to put some faces to these numbers. We began the focus groups and interviews by asking young women what they thought about their neighbourhoods, and what they liked and did not like.

North End

We concentrated our efforts on talking to young women who visit the Andrews Street Family Centre, located in the Central North End. The centre offers programs for families and child development, and takes a community capacity-building approach. Pritchard Place, a children and youth drop-in centre, is located in the basement of Andrews Street. We were also invited to interview young women at the North Point Douglas Women's Centre. This Women's Centre provides drop-in support, counselling and programming to local girls and women.

When the young women spoke positively about their neighbourhood they said they appreciated the good people they knew, and community resources they saw around them. Many of them knew about the North End Women's Centre and the Turtle Island Community Centre, for example.

There are resources around like the Women's Centre...for women if you have kids and stuff and you can't afford to go to the store.

They have a boxing program and they have a community centre where kids can go and play after school til like 7:00. There's bingo halls, there's stuff to do.

Several other young women said they were restricted because the activities they wanted to do cost money.

When the young women were together in the focus groups, they spoke out strongly about the poverty they see around them in the North End, and the risks to their own safety they have experienced growing up female. When asked what words she would use to describe her neighbourhood, one young woman said:

Slums, slummy, whores, loud, reserve – No, reserves don't have women standing on every corner.

Another two women explain:

Starting from I'd have to say from Main all the way to Arnot, yeah even Arlington to at least Burrows. That's the ghetto. And to Jarvis.

Like all the bad things that happen, like that fire the other day. Like drug busts and all the drunk people around here. I don't like that.

Young women also spoke about sexual harassment they experience in their neighbourhood.

If we go somewhere every car, every guy thinks you're...no matter how you dress or no matter how you look. Even if you're with your kids...no matter how young you are, I mean I was like 12 and I was walking down the street and some guy was honking at me. That's what happens to every young woman nowadays.

Having experiences like this every day can be hard on young women. The threat of danger wears on those who live in neighbourhoods with higher levels of violence. Young women are more at risk for gender-based violence such as sexual harassment. It requires proactive efforts to create safe spaces for young women. This is already underway through the women's centres located in the North End, but also clearly requires a substantial amount of effort from a broad range of organizations if the young women are to feel truly safe.

West Broadway

When the young women spoke positively about West Broadway, they said they liked the fact that the neighbourhood is close to downtown, has stores close by, and has many community activities:

I like the fact that there's a community garden close by...I like the one garden over at Magnus Elias Centre on Furby and Ellice, they have sage for smudging. I'm hoping they grow some more.

It's quiet, there's always somewhere to go around here that's close, like stores and hairdresser, and like places like this to go. I bring her (daughter) here (family centre) like every day. I'm pregnant right now too so...

Several of the young women talked about the detrimental aspects of West Broadway, which are summarized by the following young women's comments:

I don't like the garbage, I don't like the crime. Last summer... there was a gang fight right in my courtyard with bear mace and knives and guns. Like boy, they ran up once on the stairs, my stairs was the next set of stairs, and my kid was out there, my girlfriend's kid is out there... They're building a bunch of university buildings on the street and stuff so I'm hoping they're cleaning up all those houses those people belong to and shut them down.

The experience of the young women in West Broadway is similar to those in the North End. They experience violence around them, and rely on community-based organizations for support. The only difference was that the young women in the North End volunteered the word “ghetto” to describe their neighbourhood, while the young women in West Broadway did not use that term at all.

Neighbourhood Programs

The young women participated in a number of activities in their neighbourhoods, such as the drop in programs at Wolseley Family Place and Andrew's Street; local women's centres; after school programs; Youth Opportunity Project; Healthy Child programs; Art City; pow wow classes; Community Centres. The Green Team was mentioned several times as positive for the community, and something young women wanted to join.

A majority were interested in trying programs that they saw: employment programs, computer courses, recreation and sports, fun activities like roller skating, but said they had not had the chance to yet. Some young women wanted to volunteer by working with children in their community.

We added the question “Do you participate in cultural activities if the community offers them?” at the suggestion of one of the Community Researchers, to learn more about the role culture plays in young women's lives. Since most of the young women we spoke to are Aboriginal, generally participants interpreted this to mean Aboriginal cultural activities. One young woman says:

Just learning, I just like learning about different things, learning about other cultures and learning more about mine and getting out and meeting new people.

Learning more about their culture is important for many people, and especially Aboriginal people. The legacy of colonization and residential schools means many Aboriginal people have lost touch with their cultural identity. Research has shown that cultural identity plays a key role in health and well-being, healing and growth of Aboriginal women.⁴¹ One young woman summed it up:

Just being with like my culture is helping, helps me sometimes, helps me get over my problems and stuff.

Some young women did not know where to find cultural activities, which they generally defined as pow wows or traditional dancing. Two young women were not interested in participating in cultural activities.

UNPAID WORK

Unpaid work is work that is not paid but needs to be done to sustain daily living, such as housework, yard work, caring for children and elders. The greater likelihood that women do a great deal of unpaid work is one of the structural reasons for women's poverty.⁴² This work is required for households to function, and for children and elders to be cared for, but is not counted as economically valuable.⁴³ According to Statistics Canada, if Canadian women's unpaid work were valued monetarily, it would be worth between \$234 and \$374 billion dollars per year.⁴⁴

Consider the 2001 Census statistics on unpaid work of women and men ages 15 and over (table below).⁴⁵ Nineteen percent of women in Winnipeg do 30 hours or more of unpaid housework; 17% do 30 hours or more unpaid childcare and 4% give 10 hours or more of unpaid care to seniors. We can see in every case women are performing more unpaid work than men. In some cases more than double the proportion of women than men take on these responsibilities. The high proportion of women using this much of their time in unpaid work can mean they have less time available to them to work

⁴¹ Wilson, Alex, 2004 *Living Well: Aboriginal Women, Health and Wellness* Winnipeg: Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence.

⁴² Morris.

⁴³ Waring, Marilyn. 1988 *If Women Counted* Hampshire: MacMillan.

⁴⁴ Statistics Canada. 1995. "Unpaid Work of Households" *The Daily*. December 20.

⁴⁵ City of Winnipeg, 2001 Census. Calculations performed by Principal Investigator

for pay, or they are responsible for a heavy load of unpaid and paid work.

Females and males - unpaid work

	30 hours or more housework		30 hours or more unpaid childcare		10 hours or more unpaid care to seniors	
	female	male	female	male	female	male
West Broadway	8%	5%	12%	4%	3%	2%
Point Douglas South	22%	8%	26%	11%	4%	4%
Winnipeg Overall	19%	7%	17%	8%	4%	2%

Source: Statistics Canada Census Data 2001, West Broadway, Point Douglas South, City of Winnipeg
<http://winnipeg.ca/census/2001/>

All of the young women we spoke to did some sort of housework. If they were not mothers, many of the young women cared for other people’s children in some way. When asked “Do you take care of any kids like sisters, brothers, or cousins?”, nearly half (48%) of the young women who answered this question said yes. When asked how often they did this work, their answers ranged from daily to a couple of times a month. Several of the young women wanted to take babysitting certificates.

Young women also did unpaid work in the form of volunteering at local organizations like the community club or drop-in centres.

PAID WORK

We asked the participants questions about paid work they do now, and might want to do in the future when they “grow up”. Before we get to these responses, several considerations must be made about women and paid work. First, a lot of the important work women do is not paid, and by asking what paid work young women aspire to do, we were careful not to devalue their unpaid work. For example, being a mother is a full time job in itself.

Secondly, seeking out paid work should always be the choice of women themselves. Policies such as workfare, that force social assistance recipients into the workforce, “...create a source of low-wage and free labour by providing subsidies to the private sector and forcing recipients to volunteer in

exchange for assistance”.⁴⁶ These policies are based on a distrust of those living in poverty, and do not empower, but malign people into working for pay.

Thirdly, taking on paid work in the face of women’s gendered responsibilities for housework and childcare means women face a double-burden that can affect their quality of life and health. The National Population Health Survey found that: *For some women...changing from a routine to a substantially longer work week may have increased the chances of weight gain, smoking or alcohol consumption*⁴⁷

Work-life balance is an important part of leading a healthy life, and we must be cautious that when discussing paid work for women we also consider the resources that ensure unpaid work also gets done equitably.

This being said, working for pay is currently the only way that people can elevate themselves out of poverty. It can be difficult, when making the transition from social assistance to the paid labour force, to offset the benefits recipients are eligible for, such as paid prescriptions and dental coverage. Full time work at minimum wage provides a living at only 70% of the poverty line and rarely offers health plan benefits. People need to earn at least \$9.44 per hour in order to earn a living wage in Manitoba.⁴⁸

Paid Work Now

Young women living in the neighbourhoods in question have higher rates of unemployment than average in Winnipeg, and are also less likely to be in the labour force.

Most of the participants in this study said that they did not work for pay. Some worked casually babysitting or cleaning homes for others. A few had jobs twice weekly in the Youth Opportunity Project. Two worked at fast food restaurants.

Young women identified several barriers to entering into the labour force: lack of work experience and discrimination. Making the transition from school to work can be difficult:

⁴⁶ MacKinnon, Shauna. 1999. "Workfare in Manitoba" *Solutions that Work: fighting poverty in Winnipeg*. Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. P. 60.

⁴⁷ Statistics Canada. 1999. "Longer working hours and health" *The Daily*. Tuesday November 16, 1999 Statistics Canada website. Downloaded August 29, 2004 <<http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/991116/d991116b.htm>>

⁴⁸ Just Income Coalition. 2004. *Minimum Wage in Manitoba*. Brief submitted to the NDP Caucus. April 26, 2004 p. 3

I'm a medical assistant, I graduated a couple of years ago but because I don't have any experience, nobody will hire me. Which I think is crap, because how are you supposed to get the experience if somebody's not going to give it to you?

This one young woman's experience points to the need for internships and co-ops to bridge the gap between education and the workforce.

Several young women were discriminated against as mothers in the paid workforce. One young woman told us about a job interview:

They like me right up to the point that I said I have a kid. Well, all right thank you for your time. And I've never heard from them. But I have all the skills; I have all the qualifications, you know, to do this job. But because I have a baby, they're not going to let me. And I know why, because emergencies. They happen. Yeah and maybe they want someone without a kid, but what about us people with kids. We're not allowed to work, you want us to sit on a government wage, which is barely nothing to live on. Like, this is not fair, it's not fair. .

Females 15 - 24	In labour force	Employment rate	Unemployment rate
West Broadway	66.1%	53.9%	19.7%
Point Douglas South	44.7%	33.1%	23.5%
Winnipeg overall	70.5%	63.4%	10.1%

Source: Statistics Canada Census Data 2001, West Broadway, Point Douglas South <<http://winnipeg.ca/census/2001/>>

I wish there were more jobs that like helped mothers, like who understood what mothers needed, like when they needed to go to appointments...you need the flexibility because of other important things. Like your job is important but still your kids are No. 1 on your list

The young women above are willing they work for pay, however since they are single mothers they know they require support and flexibility at the same time. CED responses to young women's work needs would be a good fit for these young women, because the holistic CED approach considers not only the need for paid work, but creating the conditions under which young women would be successful in this work.

Unions and Fair Treatment

Since we know that unionized workplaces offer benefits to women workers, we were interested in knowing if young

women worked under fair conditions, or belonged to unions. None belonged to a union. Several told us they were not treated fairly in their present or past employment.

I'm getting paid \$6.75 an hour to sit on my knees and scrape vestibules. I had a lady come by and say you know what, "They don't pay you enough to do that."

Lately there's been stuff wrong there, the manager's been yelling at me...I think they're just trying to pick on me, they want me fired or something. For the past couple days I've been thinking of quitting because my mom says that's not acceptable and stuff.

CED employment for young women could provide better quality work environments where skill development is a focus, rather than the poor quality experiences of the young women above.

Paid Work Young Women Want to Do Now

Young women were asked if they wanted to work for pay right now, and what they would imagine themselves doing. The jobs they identified were either in the service industry, such as working in a restaurant or store, or in the caring professions. Young women said they wanted to do things to help their community, such as being a teacher's aide, taking care of pets, babysitting or childcare, or working in the community centre.

Many had good ideas of things they could do to help them get a job, such as taking a baby-sitting course, talking to family and friends to find a job, writing a resume, volunteering, and filling out applications in the newspaper. However, about half of the young women said they did not know what they could do to help themselves find a job right now.

This points to the need to teach young women about job searching techniques, and links to future career options. CED initiatives with young women could offer career planning and job searching skills.

WHAT YOUNG WOMEN WANT TO BE WHEN THEY "GROW UP"

The young women had a broad range of paid work they aspired to do. One of the strongest themes was professions

that give back to the community and help others, such as social workers, nurses, or community workers. For example, one young woman wanted strongly to encourage other youth:

(I want)... to be a motivational speaker I guess you could say? Because I used to be really bad...I was hating on everybody when I was younger, I did lots of bad things and I got into like running around with a bad crowd and everything, but that changed after I had my kid...I mean like I know a lot of these kids need to know like before they run into trouble and something they need living proof.

The young women we spoke to aspire to a wide range of professions and told us they were influenced by those around them. Here are the types of jobs young women told us they would like to do:

Service

Community Centre Worker
Deaf Translator
Hairdresser
Family Support Worker
Marine Biologist
Nurse

Children's Worker
Paediatrician
Veterinarian
Police Officer
Teacher
Probation Officer

Business / Professional

Work in a business office
Work in government
Lawyer
Own her own business
(restaurant, bar, taxi cabs)

Forensic Scientist
Interior Designer
Botanist
Architect
Actor
Writer

Some young women knew what career they wanted to have, and had some idea of what was needed to get there:

I want to be a police officer, I've wanted to do that ever since I was young, so that's like my goal. (What kind of training would help you get this job?) This summer I was planning on going to Bald Eagle. It's like military camp...I think that would help out a lot.

Others knew what they wanted to be, but were not clear on what education or training they might need:

I want to be a veterinarian (What kind of training do you think would help you get this job?) Probably have my own pet or something like that, I don't know.

I'm going to college after school, after my high school and I'm going to take teaching lessons...like to be a math teacher, I like math (What do you think your school could do to help you get this job?) give me lots of math work? I don't know.

Another theme that emerged is the aspiration to professions familiar to young women.

I would like to work for the government and my mom works for Aid Administration for farmers? And that's one of the things I'd like to do, help farmers.

Young women in the focus groups who told us they had been to career planning and career fairs with their school had a much broader range of professional aspirations, whereas those who said they had not had any career planning, aspired to work that is likely more familiar: social workers, nurses or probation officers. More research is needed to corroborate this, however it is safe to say that career education and role models for youth can only broaden their horizons and teach them a broader range of paths to take in their lives.

When asked, young women have enthusiasm for the possibilities the future holds, however they lack information on how to get there, and the career possibilities that exist. CED programming for young women could build on this identified need, by offering skills development and career information sessions and mentoring young women. As we shall see, though, there are other impediments to the opportunities young women have.

PREGNANCY AND MOTHERHOOD

Pregnancy

Pregnancy and motherhood were on the minds of many young women we spoke to, often because they may be pregnant or parenting themselves, or have close friends who are.

Consideration for the social context in which young women become pregnant is essential to support young women to make the best choices for themselves.

Manitoba has the third-highest rate of teen pregnancies in Canada, after the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. In 1997 there were 63.2 pregnancies per 1,000 teens in Manitoba – substantially higher than the Canadian average of 42.7.⁴⁹ In Manitoba 36.3 per 1,000 end in abortion; 23.6 in live births, and 3.4 of the fetuses are miscarried.⁵⁰ Teen pregnancy is almost five times more common in the lowest income neighbourhoods compared to the highest.⁵¹

A study by Health Canada found there were three groups of teenaged young women that were predisposed to pregnancy – teens who had accidental pregnancies; teens who are disenfranchised; and Aboriginal teens.⁵²

Young women’s pregnancies evoke different reactions in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. When asked what they thought about teen pregnancy, two leaders we spoke to from the Aboriginal community both emphasized the need to support young mothers and the fact that “it takes a community to raise a child”. The Aboriginal Roundtable on Reproductive and Sexual Health highlighted the cultural differences in the consideration of teen pregnancy between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures:

On the issue of teenage pregnancy, participants acknowledged the vigour with which adolescent parenthood is frowned upon in the country at large. However, they were unwilling to censure all Aboriginal women who become pregnant at early ages. Noting that early onset of parenthood was common in traditional Aboriginal societies, participants agreed it is the breakdown in traditional support structures and values, rather than teenage pregnancy per se, which is responsible for the health and social problems teenage parents and their families often face.⁵³

Additionally, the high incidence of births in Aboriginal communities must be considered in the context of colonization, and the cultural genocide from which Aboriginal peoples are still emerging. Coming from a history of struggle

⁴⁹ Dryburgh, Heather (2003) “Teenage Pregnancy” Health Reports Vol. 12 No. 1 Statistics Canada website. Downloaded August 24, 2004 <<http://www.statcan.ca/English/kits/preg/preg3.htm>>

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Health Canada. 2002. “A Framework for Action to Reduce the Rate of Teen Pregnancy in Canada” Health Canada website. Downloaded August 24, 2002 <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dca-dea/publications/reduce_teen_pregnancy_section_1_e.html>

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Dion Stout, Madeline and Gregory Kipling. 1999. *Aboriginal Roundtable on Sexual and Reproductive Health* February 21 – 22, 1999. Ottawa: Health Canada. Health Canada website. Downloaded August 29, 2004 <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/msb/pptsp/aborig_e.htm#Key>

and suffering, giving birth and building the next generation is a form of survival and strength.⁵⁴ Raising the next generation is a vivid way that Aboriginal peoples can be assured that their culture and people will survive and live on.

However, in the absence of traditional support structures in urban settings, Aboriginal community leaders explained that culturally-based supports for Aboriginal young mothers are essential to meeting this need. This is corroborated by one young Aboriginal woman in a focus group. She was supporting her niece, close to her own age, by staying with her and her newborn. She said:

...after having my second daughter I was still in school where it was nothing but Natives and it was common for young teenagers to get pregnant so it was normal I guess...I just feel bad because I see young women and they're all stressed out and you know because of the resources and the way they get treated, it's like holy, we're the givers of life, you know? Why are you treating the givers of life like you don't respect them, you know what I mean?

The young woman above gets at the heart of how Aboriginal young mothers are treated and supported. Aboriginal cultures honour mothers as life-givers. The role of mother is a sacred one, and support to mothers supports the whole family. Woman-centred wisdom holds that if you mother the mother, then she can mother her child, however it can be difficult for young mothers to receive proper support if they live in poverty.

There is very little published discussion from Aboriginal sources on teen pregnancy, and what is written is from non-Aboriginal sources and considers the rates of teen pregnancy a problem. This suggests a cultural divide between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community when it comes to teen pregnancy. It would be helpful for non-Aboriginals who support Aboriginal teens to have guidance from an Aboriginal perspective on this topic, given the fact that Aboriginal teen women have a rate of pregnancy that is four times higher than non-Aboriginal teen women.⁵⁵ More research is needed from an Aboriginal perspective on teen pregnancy: the source above from the Aboriginal Roundtable was the only

⁵⁴ Fontaine, Nahanni. 2004. Panel Presentation. Mondragon Coffeehouse. Winnipeg. October 15.

⁵⁵ Health Canada. 2002. "A Framework for Action to Reduce the Rate of Teen Pregnancy in Canada" Health Canada website. Downloaded August 24, 2002 <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dca-dea/publications/reduce_teen_pregnancy_section_1_e.html>

discussion on this topic found in the literature scan for this research project.

More direction from the Aboriginal community is important because we know that teen pregnancy and motherhood have important implications for young woman's education, economic status, and health. Teenaged mothers are less likely to finish their education, although they may return to finish at a later date. Staying out of school for a portion of time does set them back. Additionally, since they are more likely to be single, they lack a partner to contribute to household income, therefore they are more likely to live in poverty.⁵⁶

If they do become pregnant, teens with low incomes have a higher probability of parenting their children than choosing to terminate the pregnancy. Winnipeg pregnancy rates by income quintile demonstrate that:

...birth rates were highest, and abortion rates lowest, among young women in the lowest income quintiles. Birth rates decreased, and abortion rates increased, with each income quintile. Pregnant young women in Winnipeg's wealthiest neighbourhoods were least likely to give birth and most likely to terminate their pregnancies.⁵⁷

What is the connection between poverty and teen pregnancy? "Research has shown that those teens who have low expectations of their own future have a higher risk of teenage pregnancy and often welcome the pregnancy as a way to bring meaning to their lives"⁵⁸. Lack of supports for teen mothers means that they often experience risks such as low income, low expectations of their futures, low self-esteem, alienation within family, sexual abuse, and poor parenting.⁵⁹

The young women in one focus group hinted at the normalcy of teen pregnancy for them, when they noted that only one young woman among their friends had not been pregnant. When young women around them are getting pregnant, compounded with living with limited opportunities, young women may welcome an accidental pregnancy and a chance

⁵⁶ Dryburgh, Heather. 2003. "Teenage Pregnancy" Health Reports Vol. 12 No. 1 Statistics Canada website. Downloaded August 24, 2004 <<http://www.statcan.ca/English/kits/preg/preg3.htm>

⁵⁷ Donner, Lissa. 2002. *Women, Income and Health in Manitoba* Winnipeg: Women's Health Clinic.

⁵⁸ Health Canada. 2002. "A Framework for Action to Reduce the Rate of Teen Pregnancy in Canada" Health Canada website. Downloaded August 24, 2002 <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dca-dea/publications/reduce_teen_pregnancy_section_1_e.html>

⁵⁹ Ibid

to be a mother. It offers an important role for them to play as caregiver, possibly a chance to get out of their parents' home, and limited financial stability in the form of the Child Tax Benefit.

When asked in the interviews what they would say to a friend if she was pregnant, most young women said they would be supportive to her and her needs. Only one young woman out of 28 we interviewed raised the option of having an abortion, and she did not see it as a real option.

To keep the baby? Keep the baby because I read up on abortions and stuff and that's scary. My baby sister's pregnant and my oldest sister, we're all pregnant, 2 weeks apart. My youngest sister had like no support from anybody but me. She was going to have an abortion, and she was bawling her eyes out and I went to the [name withheld]. Got some packages and I read a bunch of them to her and she totally changed her mind, I told her how big a baby was and took her there myself.

This quote exemplifies how young women's decisions about pregnancy are influenced by peers and by what information is available to them. Abortion in Manitoba is safe and legal, provided in a clinic or hospital in Winnipeg. It is a funded service in Manitoba, but there are a number of steps for young women to take. Confidential counselling is available at community clinics, and women can also be referred by a family physician. Each of these requires some early motivation and readily available, accessible information in plain language so young women can make an informed choice to continue a pregnancy or not. Young women's personal beliefs and values are fundamental to any consideration of terminating a pregnancy and young women may also require support from their peers or family.

Given the cultural aspects of pregnancy and motherhood, it is important that programs concerned with slowing or stopping teen pregnancy are balanced with appropriate supports for young women who are mothering, and their families.

Mothering

We asked young women in this study about their attitudes toward motherhood because we know that motherhood and the presence of children has an important effect on women's economic status. These young women are aware of the impact

that becoming a mother has on their lives. The question was “what would change for a young woman if she got pregnant”. Most responded that her freedom would be affected, she would have more responsibility, she may have trouble completing her education, and could be forced to go on social assistance. Many spoke about the difficulties balancing financial and family responsibilities, and how hard it is to find childcare. This is exemplified in this comment from a young woman who is pregnant herself:

A lot of them (young mothers) will end up on social assistance, and they'll never find the time to go back to school. They've just lost out on every opportunity that has just flown right by them because they have a child and now they have to worry about where I'm going to get daycare if I want to go do this, and how much is it going to cost and I'm a fixed income, and well is somebody going to hire me because my kid's going to get sick you know?...Like I'll be 22 before my baby's born and I'm still scared to death of what I'm going to do. When the baby's 6 months old it'll be great, it can go to daycare, but where am I going to send it, where am I going to find a job...am I going to get her packed up, send her off and have to get to work on time and pick her up before her daycare closes?

This young woman is clearly very concerned about the lack of supports available to her to support her and her child. She knows very clearly the difficulties she will face, most notably in terms of income and childcare.

Poverty and Motherhood

For a young woman, becoming a mother can be both wonderful and challenging, depending on what supports she has from a partner, close family, and community. These supports need to be geared to young women's unique needs since young women are still growing and developing themselves.

When asked “what do you like about being a mother” one young woman said about her children:

They're cute! I like I guess I like looking after them because I always...had to look after somebody in my life, my brothers or my cousins you know. I just have to so I guess I'm used to it sort of, and I enjoy it.

The experience of caring for children herself, and the example of peers and people she looks up to have a very strong influence on a young woman's thinking about pregnancy and motherhood. One 19-year-old woman explained that she'd always looked up to her older sister who was a single mother with three children because she looked so strong. But when her own daughter was born with a disability, she wished someone had told her how hard it can be to be a mother. She said:

*Why have kids...because you're just going to be hurt in the end?
What's the point?*

Being a young mother can be very hard on young women. This young woman told us she wished that someone had talked to her about the realities of being a mother. The young women at one focus group all agreed that it would be helpful if someone they could relate to could come to talk candidly about what it was really like to be a mother.

When asked what would make it easier for them to be mothers, basic support such as transportation and access to healthy food was mentioned consistently.

I went to Mom and Me. But other than that, I really don't think that pregnant women are given enough support. Like sure we get ourselves pregnant or whatever, but I mean, we have no means of transportation you know...I don't like how they keep raising the bus fares, that's going to make it even harder for women.

After the baby is born, they (mothers) should get like a lot more help where food and stuff's concerned because the Child Tax doesn't always kick in right away, I had to wait three months.

The young women know which social supports exist for them, and which do not. While they receive government support to meet some of their practical needs through Healthy Child programs, or through the Child Tax Benefit, young women did not say they received any support from government for their long-term needs – getting an education, improving their skills or help finding a job.

The Need for Childcare

Most of the young women talked about mothering, getting an education or working for pay in terms of how hard it would be to find childcare.

Yeah cause most of the young women in the North End have kids, and maybe that's why they don't want to go to programs...I have kids and I can't go.

Young mothers who live in poverty particularly need programming with childcare because of the stresses they face surviving day to day. One young woman who had had her first child apprehended by Child and Family Services explains that she needs further support if she is going to parent the child she's pregnant with:

You don't find very many programs where you can leave your baby for like a couple hours just to go get groceries, diapers, take a hot shower, go see a friend or another mother to help you for a little while. Like your baby might be frustrating you for a little bit after for crying for God knows how long and you want to leave it for a little while.

Young mothers may not have supports such as extended family to take care of children. Living in poverty means they can't afford to purchase occasional childcare services. As the young woman quoted above explained, mothers need a break to care for themselves.

Childcare was raised **unprompted** and **repeatedly** as the key policy and programming support to young mother's education, pre-employment training, paid work and well-being. The problems young women face in getting childcare are structural. *A Time for Action: An Economic and Social Benefit Study of Childcare in Winnipeg* found access to be a systemic problem - there are only enough licensed childcare

spaces for 1 in 6 children; unequally distributed across the city.⁶⁰

The following chart describes how many licensed childcare spaces are available in the City wards that include the neighbourhoods in this study.

Licensed Childcare Spaces by City Ward 2004

	Nursery spaces (part time only)	Infant (0 – 2)	Preschool (2 – 5)	School-age (6 – 12)	Total Spaces	Rate of licensed spaces for child population
Point Douglas	154	124	636	312	1,226	16%
Fort Rouge (includes West Broadway)	115	80	646	148	989	22%
City of Wpg	1,735	808	7,004	5,029	14,576	17%

Source: Prentice, Susan and Molly McCracken (2004) *A Time for Action: An Economic and Social Analysis of Childcare in Winnipeg* Winnipeg: Childcare Coalition of Manitoba. www.childcaremanitoba.ca

If there are not enough licensed childcare spaces for children, parents often get by with informal arrangements. “Thanks to the requirements for quality, safety, training and licensing, we know that regulated childcare contributes to children’s development; the same cannot be said for the large informal market”.⁶¹ A young woman we spoke to concurs:

...I want a public daycare where I know what’s going on with my son, because he can’t talk right now, so I want lots of witnesses you know? And I can’t do it because it costs too much money. And that right there is another reason that we can’t seem to get up off our feet.

Paying for childcare is a problem for mothers living in poverty. Even if they are eligible for a subsidy, they pay \$2.40 per day or \$48 per month per child.⁶² Even mothers on social assistance who receive childcare still pay \$1.40 per day or \$28 per month out of their monthly allowance.⁶³ Part-time and occasional childcare spaces are particularly limited.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Prentice, Susan and Molly McCracken. 2004. *A Time for Action: An Economic and Social Analysis of Childcare in Winnipeg*. Winnipeg: Childcare Coalition of Manitoba. <<http://www.childcaremanitoba.ca>>

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid. p. 11.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

One young woman explains how government funding can be channelled into childcare and employment support programs to help women get off of social assistance:

If mothers had a place where they can bring their children which was a trustworthy place that didn't cost an arm and a leg, I'm sure a lot more mothers would be working rather than sitting on welfare. And then the money that those women would have rather used on welfare...they can put that money to better use. That's the money they can use to run these programs for these women.

...a lot of women who aren't educated, and even if you are, you can't find a job for at the very most for \$7.50 an hour...and if you have 2 kids then you're paying for a babysitter...so you're going to work only to make like say \$10 a day because the rest of the money that you have goes to childcare

This young woman intuitively knows what research has proven. The cost of childcare is directly correlated to the decisions women make about whether or not to enter the labour force. Childcare costs are a “tax” on mothers’ take-home earnings: the decision to work for pay at all is directly affected by the cost of childcare.⁶⁵ An American study found that if universal no-cost childcare were available, the participation of women in the labour market would increase 69%.⁶⁶

The availability of childcare not only affects a woman’s short-term decision to enter the labour market, but her long term earning capacity and economic status. With childcare, women experience fewer and shorter labour force interruptions, they accumulate longer and more continuous labour market experience, which opens more opportunities and improves women’s abilities to save for retirement.⁶⁷

Maternity Benefits and Other Supports

Maternity leave benefits in Canada are only available to women who are eligible to receive Employment Insurance (EI) – but if you do not qualify for EI, you do not receive maternity benefits. In Manitoba in 1996 14,090 women gave birth and 6,310 women claimed EI maternity benefits – this means that less than 50% of mothers who gave birth in

⁶⁵ Blau et al. 1998. *The Economics of Women, Men and Work* Prentice-Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ. 155.P. 104.

⁶⁶ Connelly in Blau et al. P.104.

⁶⁷ Blau et al. P. 104.

Manitoba received maternity benefits.⁶⁸ If you're a young mother living in poverty in inner-city Winnipeg, chances are slim that you will have paid into EI and are eligible.

Statistics Canada found that the presence of children, rather than education, age or marital status was the main reason for the wage gap between men and women.⁶⁹ This is because women are more likely to stay out of the labour force to care for children, or to work part time because of childcare responsibilities. Providing on-site or accessible childcare for programs, education, training and employment is fundamental to any effort to support young women to improve their income.

EDUCATION

In a knowledge-based economy, education is assumed to increase the productivity of workers, and therefore workers with higher education, it is reasoned, are paid more. From a community development perspective education is key to self-sufficiency and quality of life. For most impoverished people, education is the only way out of poverty.

Research has shown that the more education a woman has, the more likely she is to use birth control, have a smaller family, and for her children to be educated also.⁷⁰ Therefore, for young women, education holds implications for their reproductive health and families. Their decisions about continuing their education are influenced by what they expect for their future. If a young woman anticipates (implicitly or not) that she will not be in the labour force because she will be caring for children she will not find it as worthwhile to spend time getting an education.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Friendly, Martha, Jane Beach and Michelle Turiano (2001) *Early Childhood Education and Care in Canada 2001* Toronto: Childcare Resource and Research Unit. Downloaded August 29, 2004 <<http://www.childcarecanada.org/ECEC2001/>>

⁶⁹ Statistics Canada. 1995. *As Time Goes By: Time Use of Canadians*. Ottawa: Minister of Industry.

⁷⁰ United Nations Development Program 1995. *Human Development Report 1995: Gender and Human Development*. United Nations Human Development Reports website. Downloaded July 30, 2004.

<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1995/en/pdf/hdr_1995ch5.pdf>. P. 12.

⁷¹ Blau et al. 1998. *The Economics of Women, Men and Work* Prentice-Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ. P. 155.

Currently Canadian universities are seeing a surge of female university students – there were 510,000 female university students and 377,000 males last year.⁷² However, the education gap between classes of women is widening. Significantly fewer young women in the neighbourhoods in this study attend school at all, compared with the Winnipeg average.

School attendance for females ages 15 – 24 in West Broadway and the North End

School attendance 15 - 24	Attending school full time	Attending school part time	Not attending school
West Broadway	37.2%	7.2%	55.6
Point Douglas South	38.5%	10.1%	50.4%
Winnipeg Overall	50.9%	7.7%	41.4%

Source: Statistics Canada Census Data 2001, West Broadway, Point Douglas South <<http://winnipeg.ca/census/2001>>

We asked the young women what they liked and disliked about school. The answers of the Aboriginal participants were consistent with Silver and Mallett’s findings in *Aboriginal Education in Winnipeg Inner City High Schools*. This study explains that “Many Aboriginal people operate from a different set of cultural assumptions than those in the dominant culture.”⁷³ We also found this to be true: students we spoke to who attend Children of the Earth High School spoke very positively about their school:⁷⁴

I like my school because it’s not like other schools because our school’s an all-Aboriginal school...And our school’s like all about respect and respecting other people and you’ll get it back. Our school’s very friendly, very supportive.

The students appreciated the respectful environments that provided personal attention and worked at the student’s own pace, corroborating Silver and Mallett’s study. One young woman explains:

...I work at my own pace at my own time, you know it’s not like pressure, and it’s more like a one to one thing? So like me, I had trouble in Math and I was doing way better, like I was having a

⁷² Anderssen, Erin. 1994. “On Canada’s campuses, women are almost in class by themselves” *Globe and Mail* Saturday July 31, section A. P. 1 and 8.

⁷³ Silver, Jim and Kathy Mallett. 2002. *Aboriginal Education in Winnipeg Inner-City High Schools* Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. P. 8.

⁷⁴ Children of the Earth high school is in the North End neighbourhood.

tutor because I work better on a one-to one...it's easier to do now, and I get a lot higher marks.

The young women in our study also liked teachers they could relate to, in gender, race or age. One young woman explained,

Like I had a teacher who's 23, he's 8 years older than me, he's just so funny. He knows when something's wrong or how to get our class really into the subject to talk

When we asked young women what they did not like about their schools, several young women cited bullying as the reason why they stopped going to school:

This year I got into a fight after school, I was walking home and they caught me and then after that I stopped going to school because of that. So I was too scared to go to school

Safety in and near schools is an important for creating communities that support young women to go to school. Young women who were pregnant or mothering and in high school had problems with the quality and courses available to them in segregated programs just for teenaged mothers. They told us there was a lack of course options available to them. In one program, for example, there was no grade 10 math, or the size of the class was so small that the opportunities they had for class discussions in a larger school setting were lost. One young woman who had already graduated said:

And it's great that there's schools for young pregnant girls, but academically "ABCs" sucked, I mean it was all about learning how to be a parent...The quality was just not there, and it was ok for learning how to be a parent. But I didn't go to school to learn how to be a parent. I went to school so I could be a better parent for my child.

This participant makes an excellent point about the importance of her education as an investment in her future. However, she felt that the program geared specifically to teen mothers did not provide the education she needs to further herself and provide more for her children.

One young woman who had been a teen mother in high school discussed her experience being segregated from the rest of the school population. She explained that the young women on her reserve were pressured to change schools if they were pregnant or parenting, and consequently felt stigmatized at a difficult time of their lives.

...they're young mothers but then they're being sent to a different school just because they're pregnant. They're bringing their self-esteem down and sending them somewhere else it's like, holy, What? you don't want anybody to see me pregnant, you know, it's not the school's fault...

When asked what helps them get to school, young women identified having support, people in their lives who encouraged them, and helped to make school a priority. The importance of childcare was raised again in this section. When asked what she liked about her school, one young woman replied:

I like the fact that I don't have to pay for daycare!

The things they identified as getting in the way of going to school were financial - tuition fees, in the case of post-secondary education. For young women living in poverty, low or no cost programs are important, as explained by one young woman:

Definitely would need financial support. In order to get a student loan you have to have great credit but once again if you've screwed up in the past well you're "S-O-L" now. Because with me I have a \$200 phone bill and because I had that \$200 phone bill which I'm not able to pay off right now I can't do my credits. It's a mess now, so that pretty much leaves out any options of financial aid at all which is pretty stupid because it's just a friggin' phone company, you know? Whatever, give me some time, let me get a better job and I can afford to pay it off, you know?

Other barriers they mentioned about school were the basic costs of getting to school, like bus passes and lunches. Peers were mentioned as an influence in school attendance. Several young women told us that drugs, specifically marijuana, got in the way of them attending or performing well in school. Court dates were mentioned by one young woman as a barrier to getting to school.

Of the 28 young women we interviewed individually, five were not in school. All five had plans to return to finish high school, or to take further studies. One young woman in the focus groups who had dropped out of school herself said that she wanted to start a program that greeted young people at their homes and gave them a ride to school. Other young women concurred that sometimes it was too hard to get

themselves, and their kids if they were parenting, out of the door every morning.

Many of the young women were taking steps in their lives toward making sure they went to school and worked toward their future. This is exemplified by one young woman:

I had a boyfriend. Dropped him because he was interfering in my work.

Young women told us that success is connected to their identity, self-confidence, and self-esteem. When asked what she thinks would help young women finish school, one young woman explains:

...well first of all they've got to stop having sex at 14, 15, and 16 years old. That's just ridiculous. And they have to have more determination. They have to have more self-respect, more self-esteem in order to be able to finish because a lot of people just, they don't feel good about themselves and why go if you don't have yourself backing you up.

In order to believe in themselves, young women told us they needed support from other people - family, friends, teachers and community people to stay in school and graduate. Motivation, encouragement, and opportunities to apply their skills were also mentioned repeatedly as key to their success. When asked, young women know what they need to succeed.

USING COMPUTERS

One of the key features of the “new economy” is the dependence on workers who are skilled with computer technology. However, women are under-represented in educational programs and occupations related to technology. Studies have found that male students are more likely to use computers, and enter fields related to Information and Computer Technology (ICT); women who do enter ICT jobs exit at twice the rate of men, citing differential treatment as

their reason for leaving.⁷⁵ This has significant implications for women since a command of information technology is important for jobs in related fields.

In a study of university students entering computer science, Margolis and Fisher found that there was a gap in prior experience with computers between men and women.⁷⁶ In schools and in homes with computers, boys tend to spend more time on computers, and engage in more game playing, which creates a sense of mastery over the computer that in turn increases their confidence with computers.⁷⁷ Economic and social class, a significant factor in the digital divide, exacerbates the greater probability of low computer use by young women. The ability to afford a computer will obviously have an influence on use and knowledge.

This being said, most young women we spoke to (89%) said they used a computer, and 11% said they did not. Most used computers at community access facilities, community centres, school, a friend's house or the library. Only three young women had a computer at home.

Young women we spoke to generally used computers for Internet, emailing, MSN messenger and research. A small proportion used word processing programs for school projects, or used computers for playing games. This is corroborated by Looker and Thiessen's study, which found that while young men and young women both used computers at the same rate, more young men performed a range of activities such as graphics and gaming, than young women.⁷⁸

Whether or not they used computers, *all* the young women agreed that knowing how to use a computer would be helpful in getting a job someday. Young women wanted to learn more about how computers operate, how to build a computer, how to set up an email account and web design. One young woman explained what she wanted to learn:

Word processing, excel, powerpoint. Ha, ha, I'm just thinking about what they need from looking in the newspaper.

⁷⁵ Looker, Donna and Victor Thiessen. 2003. *The Digital Divide in Canadian Schools: factors affecting student access to and use of Information Technology*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada.

⁷⁶ Margolis, Jane and Allan Fisher. 2002. *Unlocking the Clubhouse: Women in Computing* Cambridge: The MIT Press.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ Looker, Donna and Victor Thiessen. 2003. *The Digital Divide in Canadian Schools: factors affecting student access to and use of Information Technology*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada Looker,

The young women in the focus group with her agreed that they need to learn on a computer to get a job, but they said that all the computer training courses they could find cost money they did not have. The young woman in this focus group told us she went to a local family centre because childcare was available and this is where she could use the computers. But there are no printers, so the young women could not even print resumes and jobs advertisements from the internet.

Young women who did not use a computer said it was because they did not have access, and did not know how to use one.

We see then that these young women are severely restricted in their ability to use computers and improve their skills and knowledge. This has important implications for young women in the new economy; if they cannot develop their skills with computers, many jobs will not be available to them. While telephone call centres are examples of low paying jobs using information technology, other opportunities to use computers in engineering, graphic design and web design can lead to much higher-paying jobs. Developing a CED program exclusively for young women on computer skills development is one opportunity to build on young women's interests and needs.

ADDICTIONS

Among the challenges faced by some people living in poverty are addictions. This study did not ask specifically about addictions, and only two participants volunteered information about their experience with addictions. Nevertheless, attention should be given to the possibility that young women may be trying to stay straight, or affected by addictions of friends and family. One young woman we spoke to shared her experience:

I don't trust anybody...because I've just become sober, so all my friends are drunks and drug addicts so I have sober friends finally.

Dealing with this at a young age is difficult for young women: they may not have people around them they can trust for support. Another woman said that she brought her mother and

her baby to the program she attended so that her mother would not stay home and drink.

ROLE MODELS

We asked young women if they had anyone in their life they looked up to, or considered a role model. We wanted to know who motivated and supported them. When asked why they looked up to somebody, the most frequent answer was that the person had supported them to stay in school.

My aunty, she's a really hard-working woman...she's really motivated to get where she is (What has she taught you?) She taught me how to work hard, go to school, she put me in math class when I was younger, me and my cousin, so that really brought my math up. And she always tells me you have to finish school or else you're never going to get anywhere in the world, and that's the truth.

My dad, that's the only thing I, like, keeps me going (What do you like about him?) He just like, just talks to me lots and shows me that I need school and I want school. (What has he taught you?) Just like he's been going to school his whole life. And he's like so smart he can get a job like so fast and the people that I'm supposed to look up to are just like on welfare and struggling to find their bachelor suite and they're all like messed up in the head and like struggling and my family, that's why I don't live with my mother. It's like family problems. It's just like I never want to turn out like that.

My mom, she was young when she had me, she was 18 and that. Well she kind of tells me every day almost, you know it's going to be hard if you get pregnant, and all the responsibilities and you can't just leave whenever you want, you have to worry about your kid first. She tells me that almost every day...I like her because she has a good job and even though she was young when she had us, she could still do it though.

Several young women looked up to Aboriginal role models such as (actor) Tina Keeper and...

Angela Chalmer (What do you like about her?) I like how she's succeeding and she's Aboriginal. (Has she taught you anything?) Not to give up, to keep going, chasing my dream.

The meaningful ways the young women talked about their role models exemplifies the respect they give them, and the

important place they hold in their lives. We can see from these narratives that supportive role modelling is key to helping young women navigate their way to adulthood.

WHAT ELSE IS IMPORTANT TO YOUNG WOMEN?

We were also aware that young women have much more going on in their lives than work and school. We wanted to find out what else was important to them and contribute to their quality of life. They mentioned having their basic needs met:

Food! Food is definitely important, and housing. Like good housing, not those crappy little falling down cheap places, condemned, but like good housing.

The participants mentioned a broad range of things such as friends, family, music, art, drawing, dancing, camping, going to the Y (YM-YWCA), playing games, acting classes, shopping:

I write, last night I wrote a song...I'm in the process of putting all my poetry into a book, which I'm writing. I've been trying to find a coffee shop or something that has poetry readings. So that I can get paid for reading my poetry...I want to meet some publishers so that I can get my stuff published and possibly see it in other books as well as my books.

We asked young women what kinds of activities they wanted to see in their neighbourhood.

I think they need more moms and children's programs like the one downstairs. They do lunch, and they have learning activities. Things about pregnancy and how the child grows and how their brain develops and stuff like that, so interesting...let young women know, like it's important to know that stuff.

Self defence. Exercising and stuff, lots of women are, rather than going and paying them bucks to go and exercise, they'd rather sit there and smoke a rock, because you lose weight that way too, you know?...I know lots of women around here would really enjoy access to a gym or aerobics or even something for them to go and all do, like dream catchers, somewhere where they can go and somebody can watch their kids.

...with the Aboriginal dance I think if we could make sort of a parallel group, like I'm willing to teach anybody who wants to learn how to dance pow wow, we can like raise money, we can take girls and go to a pow wow.

It'd be good if they actually had like a place where if you've been out of school for a while and you can kind of get into it and they don't like pressure you, like give you all the assignments at once...Especially for young mothers because they have a lot of stuff, they just have so much to do.

More daycares... I think I'd get my Grade 12 faster if I had daycare for my son - I'd be in school right now.

They should have more tutors for school to help students because some people are scared to go back to school.

More elders to talk to.

They also suggested cooking groups, and many young women emphasized the importance of community activities they already attended in their neighbourhood and accessed frequently.

Based on the responses to this question, we observe that the young women do not know about the programs that are currently available. Information about current supports and programs that is friendly to young women, written in plain language, or provided through short presentations, could go a long way to connecting young women to what's already happening in their communities.

VISIONS FOR THEIR FUTURES

All the young women had strong visions of better futures for themselves and their families. We asked them to map out a "day in your life" five years from now. It was hard for some to imagine, but all envisioned they would be working for pay, either part time or full time. Most thought they would see the same people as they do today. Many anticipated owning a home.

In terms of future earnings, few could pin down how much money they would earn in five years. Here are an assortment of responses:

As much as I can get.

I don't really care about the money or anything. Because money comes and goes.

Hopefully \$300 every two weeks.

Probably \$6.00 or \$7.00 an hour, something like that.

\$7.50 an hour.

I don't know I'd probably want to make at least \$9.00 or \$10.00 an hour.

Right now with Social Assistance yearly is like \$10,000 a year. That's crazy...It's not even \$1,000 a month really..So I think I don't know, \$30,000 a year?

...just enough to live comfortably, you know. To live comfortably and be able to go out every once and a while and watch a movie or something, go to the bar, have some fun, stuff like that. Be able to get internet.

We can see by the responses above that the participants did not aspire to high earnings, possibly because they do not have a sense of how much money is required to earn a living wage, and/or because they have grown up in poverty. The latter two respondents have a sense of the connections between earning and living standards. The gap in knowledge around earning capacity could be one starting place to help young women assess how much they need to earn in order to attain a living wage. The need for economic literacy is starkly apparent from the responses above.

PART 4. CONCLUSION

This study found a strong need for Community Economic Development approaches to reducing poverty and improving income with young women, and that young women want to participate in programs that respect both their short and long term needs.

Currently, a patchwork system of community supports exists for young women. Our study found that programs are concerned primarily with issues of health and crime prevention. These are important to young women, and they identified the need for more supports and information in these areas. Consider crime prevention, for example.

One of the most concerning risks to young women in neighbourhoods with high incidences of poverty is violence – both from other youth, and gender-based harassment. Neighbourhoods must be safe places for young women, and *feel* safe to them. This could take be undertaken in the form of participatory safety audits with young women. Young women identified the need for self-defence programs to better protect and educate themselves as well.

In terms of the provision of health services, our study finds that there is a requirement for more youth-friendly information about birth-control, information and support for reproductive choice, and resources for young women who choose to be mothers. Taking a broader look at health, young women exposed mass media messages require supports to develop media literacy skills, and develop self-respect to deal with mixed messages they receive from peers, the media, and others. Young women also identified the need for quality food and housing for their well-being and health. Certainly, a strong safety net is essential to supporting young women.

Given the historical realities facing Aboriginal peoples, it is imperative that Aboriginal young women have many chances to learn more about their cultures and to practice their cultures. It is promising to see that programs are being developed by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people to this end. Non-Aboriginal people need to learn more about Aboriginal perspectives on many issues, including pregnancy and motherhood, to develop understandings across cultures. More research from Aboriginal perspectives needs to be supported for these voices to come forward.

Some of the strongest inequities we saw in this study are from young mothers. They faced formidable barriers, the most dramatic being the lack of access to childcare. Young mothers are more likely to be single and living in poverty; this increases their need for childcare, not only to maintain their own well-being, but also to function in any other capacity other than mother. Young women access family centres because this is where childcare is freely available. Good childcare, preferably on site, is needed if they are going to be participate in any programs.

Education for young mothers is very important, however young women we spoke to pointed out the difficulties to accessing quality education. Some young mothers had experiences where their education was interrupted, or found a lack of quality in the education they had access to as pregnant women. This is concerning, because as one young woman pointed out, she needs a quality education so she can be a better parent for her child in the long run. More research is needed in order to fully understand the scope of this problem and a comprehensive solution to it, because education is key to supporting young women, and their families, out of poverty.

The young women in this study want to learn, and appreciate educational programs that are respectful and centred on their needs, specifically Aboriginal-centred educational programs. At the same time, young women told us they require significant support to go to school and do well. This includes everything from transportation and food, to tutoring, mentorship and encouragement. This suggests that programs that take into account the holistic needs of students are best equipped to support students to succeed.

Young women also identified financing as a barrier to advancing their education and building their skills. Credit history can be an issue. They wanted to learn more about computers, because all agreed that learning how to use computers would be important for getting a job, however, they did not have access to computer skills training. This needs to be provided at no cost. Young women's interest in learning, and specifically learning about computers, offers an opportunity to develop CED initiatives for social enterprise development.

Knowledge about job searching techniques was limited. Young women who did not have exposure to career development supports did not know specifically what they could do to prepare for getting the job they wanted to have when they "grow up".

While we did not survey the types of work available for young women, indicators of the changing nature of the new economy point to an increase in part-time work in the service sector. CED can offer young women a buffer against the pitfalls of this economy – by providing skills and enterprise development in areas that are higher paying, such as computer technology or trades, and by working to raise the status of traditionally lower-paid sectors, such as childcare. The latter can also happen through unionization.

Small CED initiatives may not offer high wages, however CED does offer the potential as a type of incubator. Young women could develop skills in CED initiatives, that they can take with them and transition to higher paying jobs in the public sector, where studies show women's wages are proven to improve. CED can be considered as a place to foster and develop skills. This could be put to the test with an internship program, for example. A group of young women could be hired and trained, partnered with a mentor, and then placed in CED organizations in their neighbourhoods to deliver CED programs to youth.

Young women require more economic literacy skills. This can be offered as modules through programs young women already access, like Healthy Child, or girl's clubs. Economic literacy should also include education on the rights of workers, so that young women know their rights if they are mistreated at some point by an employer. Programs such as Individual Development Accounts could be established with

young women's groups to help them save toward things for the future, such as an education, or a computer.

Programming that is gender-specific is also an opportunity to empower young women towards positive identity formation, and examine gender socialization. This is especially key when it comes to issues of work, since many occupations are segregated along gender lines. Working with young women-only groups to encourage them to try non-traditional fields such as home construction or computer design offers a safe, non-intimidating environment where young women can take risks and explore new skills.

Young women possess their own community. They already spend time together supporting each other through difficult and good times. Young women need resources and structures in order to foster and develop leadership among the youth community. This can be done through creating more youth boards of organizations, for example, or creating jobs for youth where they teach and mentor other youth.

Community Economic Development (CED) offers possibilities for supporting young women to escape from poverty because it starts from the ground-up. It offers the opportunity to tailor programs to the needs of local young women with their participation and guidance. At the same time, more resources are needed if CED efforts are going to systematically address women's poverty in the long run. Evaluation and research on CED must take place to identify what works, and community-based organizations need to have the infrastructure to innovate and grow to meet the demand in their neighbourhoods.

An evidenced-based, holistic approach to CED must be fostered that meets young women's short term practical needs for food, housing, childcare, transportation; and long term strategic needs for education, equitable wages, equal gender division of labour; and reproductive choice. Both practical and strategic needs are equally important, and are at the heart of reducing poverty and improving income with young women.

The following table is meant to summarize some of the aspects young women identified in this study, and identified in the literature, as important to supporting young women to escape from poverty:

Practical and strategic gender needs identified by young women participants and in the literature.

PRACTICAL NEEDS	STRATEGIC NEEDS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • healthy food • healthcare • safe, affordable housing • transportation • social assistance • living wage • access to information in plain language • safe communities • addictions services • drop-in centres • recreational programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support for young women’s cultures and creativity • Aboriginal cultural teachings • quality, culturally-relevant education • training at no cost • accessible childcare • awareness-raising on violence against women • self-defence training • reproductive health services and information • leadership development • mentorship • career guidance • economic literacy • access to credit and savings • unionization • information on political processes and participation

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH FOR COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (CED)

1) The social safety net is essential to CED

Social programs such as funded childcare, social assistance, unemployment insurance, and social housing must be in place to meet the basic needs of young women. Strong social programs are foundation that allows young women to be able to participate in CED and then be able to move out of poverty.

2) Building safe spaces and gender equality

Efforts must be taken to make young women feel welcome and safe in programs, in their neighbourhoods, schools and communities. Participants asked for programs specifically designed for them, offered in a way that is not intimidating. The CED organizations and the greater community needs to challenge female and male

gender norms so that young women are provided with every opportunity to fulfil their potential, and that the responsibilities of unpaid work are shared equally. Young women-only programs are important for building non-intimidating environments where young women can take risks and try new things.

3) Develop CED that is appropriate for young women

Young women require holistic economic and social supports to learn new skills and acquire paid work. CED approaches to skill development and job creation should be centred on young women's needs, and therefore provide the ancillary supports such as childcare and transportation. Young women consistently told us that without childcare they could not participate. Ideally childcare would be provided on-site. Otherwise full reimbursements are needed for the child care they use.

4) Gendering CED

CED approaches need to consider long-term benefits for women to improve their wages and economic security in the emerging economic climate. This requires support to develop transferable skills. For example, many young women are already familiar with computers, creating an opportunity to augment computer literacy and provide support for micro enterprise development.

3) Appropriate Community Development is intrinsic to CED for young women

Programs must be centred on what young women themselves identify as their needs and priorities. Young women have their own community and youth culture. They hang out, talk, and share ideas together. They require safe spaces to discuss their needs and to mentor the next generation of young women. More mentorship programs and youth-to-youth leadership development programs could build upon the capacity and strength of young women, while at the same time develop their leadership skills.

4) Community Development is not enough

Many of the supports young women are using do not incorporate economic skills, and largely meet only practical needs. However we must remember that much gender inequality is inextricably linked to economic equality. Thus, greater support is needed for young women to learn economic skills, find and create meaningful work, and plan for their futures.

SUGGESTIONS OF CED ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG WOMEN

While many important community development activities exist, this study demonstrates the need for “the economic” to be available in community activities for young women. Partnerships between organizations with different core competencies can work collaboratively to provide holistic programming to this end. For example, CED organizations can work with Aboriginal organizations to build on the strengths of each.

Here are some suggestions and ideas emerging from the findings of this research study. The following key features should be incorporated to support young women’s success in the programs:

- Aboriginal cultural teachings led by the Aboriginal community
- Basic needs such as childcare, transportation, and nutritious food
- Living wages where applicable
- No cost to participants
- Economic literacy and career guidance
- Mentorship / role modelling

Powercamp: Develop and deliver a two-week camp with young women based on the Power Camp model. Incorporate leadership development, violence-prevention and economic literacy. www.powercampnational.ca

Young Women’s Computer Club: Build a computer lab in a family centre or local community-based organization. Create a training program, which teaches basic computer skills, and marketable job skills for young women at no cost.

Young Women’s Website and Graphic Design Worker’s Cooperative: As a next step to the Computer Club, create a social enterprise - a worker-owned cooperative with interested young women. Local organizations could contract with this cooperative for the design and maintenance of web sites and graphic design work.

Young Women’s Home Construction Training and Building: Train young women on the job in home construction using an all-woman crew so as to be non-

intimidating for women. This could start with one house in the inner-city as a pilot.

Young Women's CED Internship: Hire and train young women in CED practices. Connect them with a mentor, and place them in local organizations to run economic literacy and CED programs with youth. This offers them the chance to develop skills and be work with a range of local people and organizations.

Worker-owned Child Care Coop: Provide loans for young women with low incomes to be trained as Early Childhood Educators. Loans are forgivable if young women start a worker-owned Child Care Coop in the inner-city and are working members for two years. Proper supports and infrastructure would have to be provided to train worker members and help them to set up the centre, get capital for building etc... Additionally, continuous work would have to take place to advocate for higher wages for Child Care workers.

Young Women's Leadership and Economic Literacy Program: Support existing leadership development programs, such as the Laurel Centre's mentorship program, to continue to offer leadership and mentorship programs where young women mentor girls in their neighbourhood. Incorporate into these programs economic literacy and career guidance.

Young Women's Individual Development Accounts (IDA): Currently offered by SEED Winnipeg, participants learn economic literacy skills, and save for a goal. Participant's savings are matched 3 to 1, and participants' savings can be used to start a business, for an education or for home ownership. With further resources, this program could be expanded and incorporated in more activities offered to young women.

Young Women's Small Business Incubator: Support young women to develop business plans through a series of workshops. Interested young women with viable business plans can be provided with access to credit, and supported in a business incubator to build their businesses.

These are just some suggestions as to CED activities that can meet both the practical and strategic needs of young women.

A myriad of other possibilities exist, and young women are ready and willing to participate in holistic programs that respect their cultural backgrounds and build strong futures for themselves, their families and their communities.

Appendix 1 – Complete List of Community Economic Development principals developed by Neechi Workers Cooperative¹ of Winnipeg.

1. Use of locally produced goods and services

- ◇ Purchase of goods and services produced locally
- ◇ Circulation of income within the local community
- ◇ Stronger economic links within the local community
- ◇ Less dependency on outside markets
- ◇ Greater community self-reliance

2. Production of goods and services for local use

- ◇ Purchase of goods and services produced locally
- ◇ Circulation of income within the local community
- ◇ Stronger economic links within the local community
- ◇ Less dependency on outside markets
- ◇ Greater community self-reliance
- ◇ Restoration of balance in the local community

3. Local Re-Investment of Profits

- ◇ Use of profits to expand local economic activity
- ◇ Investment that increases community self-reliance and co-operation

4. Long-Term Employment of Local Residents

- ◇ Employment in areas that have experienced chronic unemployment or under-employment
- ◇ Reduction of dependency on welfare and food banks
- ◇ Opportunities to live more socially productive lives
- ◇ Personal and community self-esteem
- ◇ More salaries spent in the local community

5. Local Skill Development

- ◇ Training local residents, geared to community development needs
- ◇ Higher labour productivity
- ◇ More employment in communities that have experienced high unemployment

6. Local Decision Making

- ◇ Local, co-operative forms of ownership and control
- ◇ Grassroots involvement

¹Neechi Foods is owned and operated by Neechi Foods Co-op Ltd., an Aboriginal worker co-operative that provides employment, training and collective business ownership to inner-city residents. Neechi also promotes local and regional employment. All profits are reinvested in the store or in other community development initiatives. Source: <http://www.assiniboine.mb.ca/com_connections/cg_neechi_foods.asp>

- ◇ Community self-determination
- ◇ Working together to meet community needs

7. Public Health

- ◇ Physical and mental health of community residents
- ◇ Healthier families
- ◇ More effective schooling
- ◇ More productive workforce

8. Physical Environment

- ◇ Healthy, safe and attractive neighbourhoods
- ◇ Ecological sensitivity

9. Neighbourhood Stability

- ◇ Dependable housing
- ◇ Long term residency
- ◇ Long term community development

10. Human Dignity

- ◇ Self-respect
- ◇ Community spirit
- ◇ Gender equality
- ◇ Respect for seniors and children
- ◇ Social dignity regardless of physical, intellectual or psychological differences; regardless of national or ethnic background, colour or creed

11. Support for Other CED Initiatives

- ◇ Mutually supportive trade among organizations with similar community development goals in Winnipeg and elsewhere

Appendix 2 – Project Advisory Team

Cindy Coker and Ivy Lopez, SEED Winnipeg

Health Block, Andrews Street Family Centre

Jayne Flett, Andrews Street youth representative

Sharon Taylor, Wolseley Family Place

Kim Melnick and Cathy Hayes, Laurel Centre

Don Reid, Former Vice-Principal and Educator

Appendix 3 – Interview Schedule

Before the Interview:

1. *Welcome the participant. Tell her where the washrooms are, offer something to drink or eat.*
2. *Explain the research project:*

We are asking about forty girls and young women about work, school, and your lives. We want to know what kinds of community activities you would like to help you and help you earn good money.

What you tell me today is being recorded. We are going to type up the recording and read it over. What you say will be put together with what the other young women say in a report to government and community groups. The goal of what we are doing today is to learn more about your life and the lives of young women so we can make better community activities and help young women to help themselves earn good money.

3. *If she is under eighteen:* Did you bring the consent form from your parent/guardian?
4. *Read the consent form out loud with the participant*
 - After this Say:*
 - What you tell us will be kept confidential, which means that your name will not be in the report and will be kept secret.
 - You can withdraw from the research at any time
 - Do you have any questions? (Answer them, or if you don't know the answer, you can ask Molly to answer them)
 - Thank you for agreeing to participate
5. *Receive her signature on the consent forms before starting*
6. *Ask her to fill out the "Information about you" demographics form. Read over it with her.*
7. *Check the tape recorder*
8. *Start the interview!*

The Interview

I'm going to start with asking you some questions about your neighbourhood.

1. Where do you live?
What do you like about your neighbourhood?
What don't you like?
2. Do you ever do any activities in your neighbourhood, school, or community-centre?
If so: What do you do?
If not: Is there anything you would like to try?
3. Do you involve yourself in any cultural activities when the community offers them?
If so: What interests you about them?
If not: Why don't you involve yourself?
4. We're interested in "A Day in the Life" of (Her Name).
Take a moment to think of all the things you do in a day.
Can you tell me about average day weekday for you, like today?

Tell me all of the things you do in regular day:

What do you do for fun?

Who are the people you usually see, your family and friends, family and other people
Probes: so who do you live with?

If she says she lives with her child/ren:

...So, you're a mom...
What do you like about being a mom?
What's hard about being a mom?
What would make it easier?
Who helps you with your kids?

What kind of chores do you do around the house?
Do you take care of any kids like sisters, brothers or cousins?
If so, how often?
Do you ever volunteer? What do you do? How often?

What kind of work do you do for pay?
How many hours a week?
Do you like it?
Do you make enough money to live on?

Is there anything else you do on an average day?
If she mentions school:
What do you study?
What level are you in?

Thanks for telling us about an average day in your life...

5. *If she works:*

Has there ever been a time at work where you felt you weren't treated fairly?
If so: What happened? What did you do?

6. Is there a job you would like to do right now?

If so, is there anything you think you could do to help you get this job?
What other things do you think would help you get this job?

7. What kind of job would you like to do when you "grow up", say when you're 30?

What kind of training do you think would help you get this job?
Is there anything you think you could do in your life now to help you get this job?
What other kinds of things do you think would help you?

If she goes to school:

What do you think your school could do to help you get this job?

We know that a lot of jobs now and in the future rely on computers.

8. Do you ever use a computer?

If so: Where do you use it?

How long do you use it on average?

What do you use it for?

Do you think knowing how to use a computer will help you get a job someday?

Is there anything you want to learn how to do on a computer?

If not: Do you ever want to use a computer?

If yes: What would help you use a computer?

Do you think using a computer is important for getting a job?

The next set of questions are about school.

9. *If she goes to school:*

What do you like about your school?

What don't you like?

Is there anything that gets in the way or stops you going to school?

Is there anything that might help you do better in school?

When you finish your program, is there anyone you will thank?

If she doesn't go to school:

Do you think you'll go back to school?

If so, what would you like to take and where would you like to go?

What do you think you need to help you go to school?

10. Why do you think young women don't finish school and graduate?

What do you think would help young women finish school?

One thing that can have an impact on young women finishing school or looking for a job is pregnancy and being a mom.

11. Imagine a friend of yours tells you that she's pregnant.

What would you say to her?

What do you think would change in her life if she became a mother?

We're interested in knowing what kinds of role models young women have.

12. Is there anyone that you look up to like someone famous or someone you know?

If so: What do you like about them?

What have they taught you?

13. We've just asked you a lot of questions like what you think about working, school, computers, pregnancy and being a mom, and what your life is like. We asked these questions because we learned that these are important in young women's lives.

Are there any other things that we haven't talked about which are important to how good your life is?

(Things like... sports, dancing, writing, music, drawing, spiritual activities, hanging out with friends, free time, camping etc...)

14. Do you have any suggestions of activities in your neighbourhood for girls and young women?

15. Fast forward in your mind. You're five years older than you are today, how old will you be? What will your life be like?

Tell me all of the things you do in a regular day: Take a moment to think about it.

What do you do for fun?

Who do you see, like family and other people...

What kind of work do you do around the house?

What kind of work do you do for pay?

How often do you work (full time, part time?)

How much do you earn?

If she doesn't have children:

Do you have any children?

Is there anything else you might do?

Those are all the questions I have, thank you.

Is there anything else you want to tell me?

STOP THE TAPE!

Do you have any questions for me?

Do you want a copy of the final report?

If yes, please give us your address

Would you like to get an invitation to the final event when we launch the report? If yes, please give us your address.

(Thank her. Assure her again that her name will be kept confidential at all times)

Appendix 4 - Focus Group Schedule

Before the Focus Group:

3. *Welcome the participants. Tell her where the washrooms are, offer something to drink or eat.*

4. *Explain the research project:*

We are asking about forty girls and young women about work, school, and your lives. We want to know what kinds of community activities you would like to help you and help you earn good money.

What you tell me today is being recorded. We are going to type up the recording and read it over. What you say will be put together with what the other young women say in a report to government and community groups. The goal of what we are doing today is to learn more about your life and the lives of young women so we can make better community activities and help young women to help themselves earn good money.

3. *If she is under eighteen:* Did you bring the consent form from your parent/guardian?

9. *Read the consent form out loud with the participant*

After this Say:

- What you tell us will be kept confidential, which means that your name will not be in the report and will be kept secret.
- You can stop at any time
- Do you have any questions? (Answer them, or if you don't know the answer, you can ask Molly to answer them)
- Thank you for agreeing to participate

10. *Receive her signature on the consent forms before starting*

11. *Ask her to fill out the "Information about you" demographics form. Read over it with her.*

12. *Check the tape recorder*

13. *Start the focus group!*

The Focus Group

We're going to start with introductions in pairs. (Pair people off). Can you tell the other person your name and what you did today. After 5 minutes we will take turns introducing our partner to the group.

1. We want to know what think about your neighbourhood, can you throw out some words you would use to describe it? What kinds of things are there for girls and young women to do in your neighbourhood? Which ones do you go to or use?
2. What kid of work do you that isn't paid, like chores around the house or taking care of children or volunteering? How much time do you spend on this in an average day or week?
3. How many of you have a job? For those of you with a job, what do you do? How many hours? Do you like it?
4. What kind of work do you hope to do in the future when you "grow up"? What do you think you will do to get this job? What else would you need to get the job? (Probe for training, mentoring, networking, childcare, volunteer experience etc...)
5. Do any of you use computers? What do you use them for? If you don't use them, why not?
6. Can you name one thing you like about school? What is one thing you don't like? (Is there anything that gets in the way or stops you going to school? Is there anything that might help you be a better student? Why do you think young people don't finish school? What do you think would help young people finish school?)
7. Can you think any community programs or events you would like to see in your neighbourhood for girls and young women?
8. Is there anything else you want to add?

Thank you very much. Do you have any questions for us?

(Assure them again that their names will be kept confidential at all times)

Circulate sign up sheet for people who want a final report and to be invited to the launch.

Appendix 5 - Scan of Programs Research Results

1. Total Community-based Organizations contacted: **35**

Organizations located in:

North End	11	West End	11
Downtown	5	Centennial	2
St. Vital	2	West Kildonan	1
West St. James	1	Tyndall	1
North East	1		

2. Total number of organizations providing programs and services geared to young women ages 15-24 are **3 out of 35. (9%)**

3. Total Programs and Support Services Examined: **54**

4. Areas of training or support offered by these Programs and Services include:
(Some Organizations offered more than one type of program of support service)

Pregnancy and Parenting	20%
Recreation: Leadership skills and self-confidence (CED)	16%
Support Counselling and Behaviour Management	16%
Employment Skills and Technical Training Development (CED)	11%
Drop-ins/Teen Clinics	9%
Health and Sexuality	9%
Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trade Healing	9%
Residential Care/Safe Homes	4%
Mentorship Program	4%
Crime Prevention	2%

5. Programs and services that were **exclusive** to young women ages 15-24 were **3 out of 54.**

6. Programs and services that were **not exclusive** to young women ages 15-24, although the majority participating were young women ages 15-24 was **33 out of 54.**

7. Programs and services specifically offered to girls between ages 12-17 were **18 out of 54.**

8. Programs and services specifically offered to young women between 18-24 were **0 out of 54.**

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