
MAKING A DIFFERENCE REPORT

1. SUMMARIES:

ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION AND PLANNING

The purpose statements from the constitution of the West Kootenay Women's Association (WKWA) is used in place of a mission statement. It is:

- to promote the rights of all women to have social, economic and physical control of their person regardless of race, class, status, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, age, size, spiritual or political beliefs;
- to supply and render service of a charitable and educational nature to women.

It was felt that the above statement is a good start but WKWA and the Women's Centre need to maintain separate identities and therefore should have quite separate mission statements. WKWA is a political organization. Membership is limited to those whose philosophical position is compatible with the feminist perspective of the association.

The Centre, on the other hand, provides specific direct services to a broad range of women from the community.

WKWA is currently engaged in a review of its mission statement, goals, purposes, values, etc. and it was felt the Women's Centre should do the same. Some terminology that perhaps should be included but isn't: feminist perspective, advocacy, lobby. The Centre's Mission Statement should be concise, simple and workable on a day-to-day basis; something that can be mounted on the wall and for which the collective and staff can be held accountable by women who use the Centre. Full recognition was given to the merit of the existing purpose statement. It just needs some work.

The group also acknowledged the need for some additional direction beyond a mission statement, values and philosophies. There are no goal statements currently but some should be developed. Direction is not always clear.

Up until now the Centre has not used workplans, etc.. The staff and C.C. operate on some shared assumptions about the nature of the work to be done. Direction comes from the society's purpose, discussion until consensus and the demand from women who use the Centre. Although there has not always been predetermined structure to the work undertaken there was recognition given to its value.

ENVIRONMENT, RESPONSIVENESS AND RELEVANCE (EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL OPERATIONS):

ENVIRONMENT – EXTERNAL

Political climate, responsiveness of media and level of cooperation between service-providing agencies all impact upon the visibility of the Centre, and thus upon the number of women using it. The wide area serviced by the Centre physically, the uncertainty of funding and the economic climate of the area affect the quantity and quality of the services we are able to provide to women. The cultural milieu of Nelson affects the service we provide to women because women in this area are, in large percentage caucasian, and women of colour/different ethnicities and cultures may feel less included in our services.

In the area of co-operation between service-providing agencies, the fact that Nelson has a Transition House lends greater visibility to the issue of violence against women and eases slightly the frustration staff and volunteers at the Centre feel when we receive a crisis call, as we know there exists a place to refer women to. Also in the area of cooperation between service-providing groups, where cooperation

and cross-referrals exist between agencies, we lessen duplication of services and provide a wider range giving women the sense that they have numerous avenues open to them. Where there exists animosity or lack of respect between groups, or even lack of knowledge about other agencies, the resultant competitiveness, lack of trust or credentialism leads to a narrowing of services provided to the women of this community.

In order to keep in touch with the rest of the community we are on a number of outside committees with several women from WKWA being extensively involved in these, as well as going to workshops and seminars to further educate ourselves/create awareness in ourselves and in turn the Centre. We are involved in co-sponsoring projects with other groups/organizations resulting in direct contact with other service providers. The Centre also puts on special events both "fun" and "issue" related, has a portable display, produces a newsletter and does a membership survey.

The Women's Centre in Nelson seems to be well-known and thought of as a place to go to in a crisis, such as abuse/economic crisis/emotional crisis. We have heard this comment in membership surveys, from women participating in our support groups, from the consistent attendance and repetition of some support groups, and feedback from women visiting the Centre. We have a good selection of books relating to these areas in our library as well.

We seem to be respected and well thought of by most of the media services in town. They come to us to get cogent feminist statements about issues that affect women. Co-ordinators, volunteers and Association members are often quoted in the weekly paper or the daily paper in town, and are interviewed on the radio.

We have developed good relations with local police through our involvement in the VAWIR project and constant close communication about issues legal and social which affect women.

Our neighbors, some initially reluctant to have the Women's Centre in their neighborhood, seem to have come around and accepted our presence.

We see from responses to our membership survey that at least some women found the Centre to be too lesbian. This exists in part due to a generalized stigma that always dogs women's centres, and in part due to the fact that there is a strong lesbian presence in the Centre, partly as a reflection of the fact that, for a rural community, this area has an extraordinarily large number of lesbians and gays. Other concerns which came through in the survey were that we were "too radical" for the mainstream and should be more welcoming of less radical, more "mainstream" (their word) women.

RESPONSIVENESS (EXTERNAL)

At present, many changes are happening in our community which directly and indirectly affect us. There have been a lot of cutbacks lately, including the dissipation of services for the youth and elders of our community. This has created unrest and increased polarization both politically and socially as well as increasing the flow of women through the Centre. Although we are educating and supporting more women than ever, we could still further extend our outreach to include and welcome younger and older women.

The recent Gay Pride Parade fueled discussion as well as added to the increasing visibility of lesbian presence in our community and Centre. From our survey it has been brought to our attention that this makes some heterosexual women feel uncomfortable, unwelcome – perhaps we need to look at this and increase our welcome/programs even further to include all women, and/or target some programming specifically for heterosexual women.

The Women's Centre has tried, continually, to achieve inclusiveness, and we try to make our understanding of that word as broad as possible; we would ideally want all women to feel they are safe, heard and valued here.

The Centre has, in the past, provided a large menu of activities and services to do with children, pregnancy, etc. – this corresponded to the "baby boom". Such services as midwifery, women's

reproductive health and rights, childcare and other parenting issues are still seen as very necessary and are still an important part of the Centre's mandate and they are now offered alongside many other useful programs: support groups for survivors of abuse, lesbian and bisexual women's resources, economically marginalized women (e.g. an unemployed women's group), smoking cessation support group and many others. Perhaps also as a result of the baby boom we often have active groups for menopausal women and now have a thriving COOWS group (Company of Older Women).

The economic climate in this region and the situation of many of our members and the women who use the Centre has made it even more necessary than in the past that our programs be either free or very inexpensive. We now offer many women the option of work exchanges rather than paid membership, library privileges, or a door fee for events. This has brought more women to us, as they can afford to participate, but it means we are helping more women with less money.

Having our own house has made a big difference for WKWA. Although we are further away from the downtown and not as easy to get to, we now have a bigger space with more amenities and are attracting more visitors and more volunteers. Because we have more space, we can run more support groups and offer organizing space to other community groups – at times increasing our networking capabilities in the community. One such group was Kootenay Gay Pride, a group consisting of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered individuals who recently planned and orchestrated Nelson's first Gay Pride Parade. Their job would have been much more difficult had our space and facilities not been open to them. Gay Pride created a lot of discussion in the media and on the streets and we at the Women's Centre were pleased to be able to support this event.

With the increase in funding we received we have been able to hire more paid staff, which has increased our capacity to utilize the more volunteers we have attracted recently. We could, of course, use even more paid staff, time and energy but this has been a very positive thing for outreach in the Centre. We have been offering a drop-in volunteer training program which has been popular and useful. Women who have taken the training have felt better equipped to help women who come in to the Centre or phone. With more funding dollars we know we could do much more outreach to women we want to reach.

RELEVANCE (EXTERNAL)

The Women's Centre works collaboratively with other community organizations. We feel in many ways that we act as a point of connection between women and other women, women and services, women and the "system".

Our age spectrum in both volunteers and women visiting the Centre and attending groups has broadened, although we'd like even more variety.

Our connections with other community organizations are generally good, so as such, we don't perceive duplication of services to be a problem. We sometimes would like to work on joint projects with other organizations or agencies, but have more opportunities to do so than time and person/hours. We try to avoid getting into competition or becoming involved in concerns about credentialism with other agencies as we know competing and bickering limit women's needs being adequately met.

Out-of-Nelson women have indicated they would like to receive outreach from our organization — we have neither sufficient funding nor staff time but wish this kind of inter-community cooperation were possible.

Nelson and area suffers from an unmet need for adequate employment and accessible childcare, affordable housing generally, short-term accessible crisis housing, second-stage housing for women leaving the Transition House, a bigger transition house, more and varied services for elderly women, crisis childcare services and a lack of female law enforcement officers.

We need to figure out how to address employment concerns in the area and to utilize employment

initiatives, such as the Human Resources Investment Fund, to better support women and their families.

Does our organization still make sense? Yes. Yes, increasingly so because we are still controversial while at the same time we are being used and referred to more than ever. Our opinion is sought out by the media and we now have three paid staff and a house as well as a number of volunteers.

ENVIRONMENT (INTERNAL)

Need for clarification (clearer boundaries) of roles and responsibilities of Women's Centre and WKWA exists. Policies and procedures need continual work and documentation – the shared practices, analysis and assumptions need to be documented as well as determining whether 2, 3 or more staff would work better.

The most significant internal problem is the potential for staff and volunteers to be overworked – rate of pay and amount of work compared to number of hours have resulted in high staff turnover, specifically in the last seven months. This could be alleviated by more funding to increase rate of pay, number of paid hours for existing staff and hiring of additional staff – e.g. resource centre person, volunteer co-ordinator. Programs need to focus on specific areas, and priorities should be set about programming, so that staff has some guidelines about what suggestions to promote and what ideas need to be turned down. Workplans to determine time available to planning and implementing programs would also be useful. Work load needs to be shared, individuals need to learn to delegate and/or set priorities and continue to work on communication – this includes staff and CC. More work could be given to volunteers and a volunteer co-ordinator would alleviate a lot of work presently done by staff. Increasingly, various agencies expect us to provide participation in their services (i.e. – M.S.S.) and we are trying to respond to these many requests without any increase in funding.

Staff members are extremely committed to communication and this ensures smooth operations. Staff members' skills are complementary, resulting in a high level of trust and efficiency. Staff, volunteers and CC are all dedicated, meaning staff do not get (as) burnt out (as they could). We care about each other and the work that we do. The Women's Centre also communicates well with the membership via the newsletter and have had very positive feedback.

Communication is also something which could be improved between CC members, specifically around defining responsibilities and sharing workload. This could be accomplished by completing workplans monthly in conjunction with collective meetings. Also there is a need for a work station for WKWA within the Women's Centre and a physical cleanup/organization of the Centre. The collective also needs to represent a broader cross-section of the community.

Overall, the morale in the Centre is good/high – we want to be here. This results in work being completed and operations running smoothly. When the morale is low, which happens when we are struggling and feeling overwhelmed with work loads, we do not work as efficiently and may even (no!) avoid the Centre.

RESPONSIVENESS: (INTERNAL)

Commitment and respect for one another, commitment to consensus decision making and conflict resolution processes creates safety enabling staff, volunteers and CC to address concerns (relatively) quickly and easily/efficiently. However, if there is not follow up/thru/completion around issues or if they are not dealt with immediately this creates frustration, higher levels of stress and burnout.

RELEVANCE: (INTERNAL)

The Centre's internal operations are definitely still relevant to our work with women and the community. The structure we work within models an alternative to the community/other agencies which we believe is important. Sometimes it feels as if we are taking too long to process and clarity regarding direction and responsibilities would definitely help staff.

ORGANIZATIONAL FINANCE AND RESOURCES

The Nelson Women's Centre is the longest established rural W.C. in Canada. It is financially solvent but somewhat vulnerable. Over its twenty-plus years of operation it accumulated a surplus, most of which went into the purchase of the house which has recently been renovated and now provides space for almost all Women's Centre programs. There is an absolute necessity to run on a balanced budget.

The financial controls are adequate to protect the assets of the society. Two signatures are required, there is a good receipting process, cheques must be requisitioned and they are compared to the annually approved budget before disbursement. There is an active finance committee, monthly financial reports to the CC and ongoing fundraising events.

Reports are sent in to MWE, the chief funder, on a semi-annual and annual basis.

A binder of historical data is maintained at the Centre – the financial records are on disc. a back-up copy of the computer records should be made after the month-end financial statements are completed. This disc should be stored "off-site". Currently these records are stored in the Centre's computer and in the bookkeeper's computer. An accountant performs an annual review and is available to answer questions throughout the year.

Financial Planning could be improved. Although an annual budget is prepared and the purchase of the house is seen as a good move, ongoing financial concerns and the need to pay the mortgage require constant vigilance. A financial development plan including fundraising objectives would be useful.

All insurances are in place to protect physical property and third party liability.

It was the unanimous voice of the group that the Centre is not adequately funded. Demand is there for additional services which cannot be met.

Gaps in funding were cited for more staff, program costs, child care, books and reference materials, equipment, property taxes, subsidies for participation in Centre programs, physical improvements to the Centre, accessibility and transportation. It was also deemed that a paid volunteer coordinator would be most helpful.

Ideas for risk prevention included making back-up copies of financial and other important records and keeping those discs off-site; getting all Centre volunteers and staff to sign declarations of confidentiality.

The Centre may require a policy on criminal record checks; another to outline a process for client dispute resolution and another outlining a healing response for staff/volunteers who are maligned or otherwise harmed in the line of duty or who suffer trauma as the result of their duties.

WOMEN'S CENTRE WORK

The Women's Centre works in four broad categories in terms of services.

We provide a DROP-IN, in order to provide information, resources and referral, emotional support and counselling, networking, socializing, coffee and tea, a library and office services such as a fax, photocopier, phone, computer, etc.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – which raises our profile in the community and lets women know we're here, raises community consciousness and keeps us abreast of other community service providers. We often provide a visible presence at community events as well as sponsor and co-sponsor events in the community.

ADMINISTRATION allows the Centre to function through grants and proposals, correspondence, fundraising and tracks our progress through statistics, reports, financial statements, etc..

PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT GROUPS such as Wonderful Wednesdays, mom and tots program, menopause group, lesbidyke drop-in, unemployed women's group, 3 abuse groups, emotional empowerment group, drumming class, smoking cessation group and Company of Older Women attract women to the Centre, help and empower them and keep them coming back.

OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS:

The success of the programs we offer has been good, although we have received some helpful comments from women we sent our questionnaire to.

The DROP-IN is well-used and liked but some of the comments we received stated we felt "too lesbian", "not friendly enough", "insufficiently informed". Other women answering the survey stated that we were safe, welcoming, inclusive and open. We are welcoming to children but our play area could be bigger and better supplied. Overall, the drop-in could increase in inclusivity and awareness.

Our COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT is generally very positive. We are visible and acknowledged in the community and the door feels open to continue this. The media and the local police and RCMP respect us and ask us for feedback and commentary. Our visibility in other community groups feels quite adequate, although with more time and money we could make it even better and contribute more.

ADMINISTRATION could be improved. Grant proposals are always done in a crisis environment due to needing to complete more "on hand" work first. Responsibilities, tasks and women in crisis don't go away because it's time to write a report. We are less creative and innovative in our search for new funding avenues because of time pressure – we tend to rely on what's already there. Correspondence can become lost or low priority, the work is not usually the most fun or pressing thing to do and the stress of administration work contributes to burnout.

COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT GROUPS are a very successful example of our programs. We receive good feedback from women involved, requests for repeats and consistent good attendance of most support groups. On the other hand, some groups didn't happen due to poor attendance, inaccessibility due to high cost, conflicting events, poor publicity, lack of childcare, etc.. Confidentiality is an important concept that needs to consistently be stressed to volunteers, staff and participants of groups. The groups bring in women new to the Centre or who wouldn't normally think of the Women's Centre as a place for them. Within our small community some group facilitators have reputations or personal contacts which can either draw or dissuade women from joining these groups. Again, due to the size of the community, some group facilitators of abuse groups are peers and or co-workers of people desiring to join the group. Also it is sometimes difficult to draw enough women to form a support group over a particular issue at any one time, even though such a group may be strongly desired by one or two individuals.

Factors which influence the providing of these four services are listed below:

As regards the DROP-IN, a lack of money means we can't increase our hours or staff the drop-in more thoroughly. It also means we can't pay staff to train more volunteers in drop-in skills such as emotional support, familiarity with community resources, etc.. A perception of a "lesbian agenda" intimidate some women who might require or desire our services. Drop-in is not convenient for many out-of-town women or women who hold down day jobs. We could always do with more publicity such as postering, newspaper coverage, etc. – to let women know we are here.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT is positively influenced by our good networking. Our willingness to take controversial stands may result in a loss of support from some community sectors and an increase in support from others. We don't have enough money to keep up with community expectations. We need a Speakers Bureau to help counter the community's resistance to women's empowerment. Some controversies increase our visibility in the community – increased media coverage due to Gay Pride and projects of the Centre have attracted new members to us.

ADMINISTRATION: A perennial problem with our operations is a lack of staff paid hours within which to coordinate volunteer efforts and do other specially trained tasks. Fundraising is difficult in the current economic climate of the Kootenays as few people have extra \$ resources to share. Interest in the topic of administration is low, we have a difficult time attracting and keeping people interested in dull, repetitive tasks like filing, etc., so they often fall to paid staff who are already fairly busy.

PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT GROUPS: Factors which affect the success of the support groups and programs include accessibility, issues, publicity, staff turnover and economic climate. Lack of adequate childcare and transportation, and specific health issues affect our programming. The overall economic climate in our community affects both the type of groups we provide and their attendance. The money issue directly affects the amount of publicity we are able to buy, although we do a lot of publicity that is free or very cheap - i.e. postering, newspaper articles and community calendar postings. With more money we could notify more women about what we offer. Staff turnover is also a factor as staff have different skills to share and as staff changes the configuration of types of support groups changes as well. The last factor is of course, public interest and relevance. If women are not interested in a topic, or are consistently interested, we either won't or will fund that particular group.

OTHER OPTIONS TO EXPLORE:

DROP IN: We would like, and women in the community have also expressed the desire for, extended drop-in hours. An evening drop-in, Saturday drop-in and a heterosexual women's drop-in (paralleling the LesBiDyke drop-in) have all been suggested to us as a way to become more accessible. To do these extra shifts we would need more money to pay staff (not to mention increased heating costs, loss of revenue from groups and/or rentals, etc.). Other useful drop-in suggestions we received were to have an Internet access for women who dropped in, but this could require another computer and internet access fees. Late-breaking news: we are applying for Internet access through BC21, and someone has offered to lend us a computer for this on a long-term loan!

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Increased community involvement would increase our visibility and reach more women. We would like to do presentations in schools, participate more in employment issues, poster and advertise more and distribute newsletters more widely. We'd also like to focus on reaching a wider range of culture and age groups.

ADMINISTRATION: We would like to increase our fundraising activities, focus on a more proactive approach to grants, foundations, etc., and canvass our membership more for funds.

Computer security is another concern we'd like to address - backup computer discs and keeping duplicate records elsewhere were good suggestions we came up with. Making admin tasks seem more fun and rewarding were suggested as options to explore.

PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT GROUPS: We would like to increase our outreach to communities other than Nelson, which requires person energy and money. A specific addition we'd like to make to the groups would be to fund childcare for women attending the groups.

HOW DO WE QUANTIFY THE VALUE OF THE WORK WE DO?

DROP-IN: We log a significant number of volunteer hours and a large number of volunteers. Our staff allow volunteer hours to be well spent by giving direction and priority to tasks. We are the only immediately available, face-to-face support service in town, so we can provide early intervention. If drop-in is not busy, the staff can take care of admin. tasks and so forth.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Our involvement in the community has a direct relationship with increasing our membership and the use of the Centre. People see us out there and are more aware of what we do. Our interaction with other community groups allows us to avoid duplication of services and have a better idea of what is available where, and allows us to receive feedback from these groups about how we're doing.

ADMINISTRATION: A well-run organization attracts support, creativity, accountability and credibility. We are certainly attracting all of these things, so we think we're doing something right.

PROGRAM AND SUPPORT GROUPS: We provide affordable, early intervention which can save the community money, as problems don't always become crises if you discuss them early. With two and a half hours of staff time we actually manifest at least 33 hours of client contact - an excellent ratio.

HOW HAS THE WORK MADE A DIFFERENCE TO WOMEN?

The Centre raises consciousness about relationships, community services, diversity, violence, parenting, alternatives to prevailing attitudes toward money, women's issues, global awareness, alternative decision-making and fears of difference. We are a group that is vocal about violence and we believe that this willingness to speak out against violence and take public stands on controversial issues of interest to women makes a difference in our community. The women's centre also provides a good public space to display alternative resources, etc..

WHAT'S NEXT:

Some suggestions that came up through the evaluation process:

- identify our targetted client groups
- guest book, suggestion box
- ensuring follow-through of suggestions
- clarifying CC duties
- laminated "Group In Progress" sign

Some matters to consider:

- how to attract, keep and best utilize volunteers
- volunteer program development planning
- more fundraising
- clarify roles of staff/CC
- increase membership inclusiveness (broader cross-section of women, different economic backgrounds, colour, orientation, age.)
- increased funding
- work plans
- get mission statement on the wall
- improving division of labour.

COMMENTS FROM THE EVALUATION PROCESS

- too much work for one and a 1/2 days
- repetitious, tiring
- could use prioritization of tasks
- survey of membership was really useful
- great food and camaraderie
- learned lots
- re: surveys – more surveys out, fewer questions; two levels of surveys: one for people well-informed about the Centre, one for brand-new people (e.g. people coming into the drop-in)
- how to survey illiterate women
- braille?

2. How does the Women's Centre make a difference?

The Centre acts as a focal point for the women's community of the area. The fact we now have an entire house of our own is a major factor in how much we can do with/at the Centre. It is a safe place for women to come at any time. Rural women use the Centre as a "home" when they are visiting Nelson. The presence of the Women's Centre is a significant factor in drawing women to the Nelson area.

The Centre is a meeting place to learn about current community issues and events. It is a network of

resources where women can learn about work opportunities, how to find a lawyer, counsellor or doctor etc.

The Centre makes a difference by creating an opportunity for women to participate and in so doing to feel that they belong to the community.

3. THE RESULTS OUR CENTRE HAS ACHIEVED SINCE APRIL 1, 1992 ARE:

COMMUNITY COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP:

- Active on many community committees.
- Worked with Women in Trades and Technology on summer camp (Girls Exploring Trades and Technology camp) for girls.
- Active in founding Transition House.
- Coordinate many community activities: e.g. International Women's Day; Women's Festival; Take Back the Night; March in Support of Beijing Conference; December 6; Women's March Against Poverty.

INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

- Distribute flyers and newsletters widely.
- Have maps to Centre on local bulletin boards.
- Weekly advertisement of events in newspaper.
- Frequent newspaper articles.
- Frequent responses to media questions.
- Letters to the editor.
- Speakers to schools and clubs.
- Self-defense courses, both through the Centre and at schools and colleges.
- Representative on Safer Campus committees.
- Role modelling program and course materials.
- Speakers at events.
- Well-used and ever-growing library and resource files.

PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

- Groups on abuse, boundaries, employment, teens.
- Self-defense courses.
- Seminar and support group for victims of sexual harassment on the job.
- Newspaper articles.
- Mall displays in conjunction with Transition House.
- Peer support groups on empowerment and abuse.
- Hosted health conference.
- Smoking Cessation groups.
- Menopause information sessions.
- Childbirth preparation classes.

INCLUSION AND ACCESS FOR ALL WOMEN:

- Company of Older Women.
- Financial advice for women, especially older women
- Lesbian/Bisexual Drop-in.
- Moms and Tots program, with clothing exchange.

- Childcare for events and meetings.
- Worked closely with Gay Pride.
- Wheelchair accessible house and washrooms.
- Large type in newsletter.
- Signers at Women's Festival.
- Being Heterosexual and Feminist workshop at Women's Festival.
- Francophone workshop at Women's Festival.
- Cultural Appropriation discussions.
- Pre-birth classes.
- Teens groups.

4. HOW HAS THE OPERATIONAL FUNDING FROM THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S EQUALITY HELPED YOUR CENTRE ACHIEVE THESE RESULTS?

Funding from the MWE has allowed the West Kootenay Women's Association to operate with more paid staff hours – which has allowed us to offer more drop-in time, workshops, support groups and other outreach to the Community.

5. Key pressures on our Centre over the last three years were:

- lack of money
- increased need to fundraise and lack of new potential donors.
- increased pressure for the survival of the Centre to operate with volunteer energy.
- financial pressure being passed on through various bureaucracies, less money from Feds to Prov, less from Prov to Mun. This means increase in taxes for all and probable loss of tax exemption status for the Centre.
- inability to run new programs due to lack of financial resources
- having to cancel some programs because women couldn't afford to pay for them, and thus we couldn't afford to pay the trainers / facilitators.
- moving the Centre – unpacking, organizing in the new space. Then attracting women to come to the new space
- staff turnover - not enough of a living wage and high burn out.
- need for a paid volunteer coordinator
- limitations on the programs we can offer due to poverty within community i.e women do not have financial resources for child care or admission

6. New trends in community and how will they affect the work of the Centre

- less and less for youth
 - there is an increasing need for programs for teenage women. The centre would like to address this but at this moment does not have capacity.
- more women ageing (baby boom generation, active women approaching or undertaking retirement)
 - there is an increase in numbers of older women wanting to be involved in the Centre. This is something we want to encourage.
- rise in poverty and lack of funding
 - see # 5 “money”
- rise in violence in community
 - resulting in more women arriving at the Centre in a state of crisis and the need for resources to address this

- right wing government
 - this has resulted in the proposed removal of the Centre's tax-exempt status add to our financial burden.
 - shift towards right wing attitudes
 - this community has always been a melting pot of different lifestyles. The recent shift towards the right necessitates more effort be directed towards promoting inclusiveness.

7a. What needs are not being met:

- need for outreach programs in schools
- issues about personal finances for women are not being sufficiently explored.
- perception that needs of heterosexual women not being adequately addressed.

7b. NEXT STEPS:

- establish a support group for un- or underemployed women.
- continue to work with Kootenay Women in Trades and Technology to raise awareness among young people in schools about employment options for women
- work with Transition House and Community Services on issues of violence.
- continue to offer support services and programs in this community.
- continue to reach out to heterosexual women in the community.

8a. AS A RESULT OF THE SELF-EVALUATION THE AREAS WE HAVE IDENTIFIED TO STRENGTHEN THE OPERATION OF OUR ORGANIZATION OVER THE COMING YEAR ARE:

- Creating workplans was something that came up more than once during the evaluation.
- Sharing the workload throughout the CC (workplans could help this).
- Keeping focused on the type of work we want/need to do and not spreading ourselves too thin.
- Encouraging and “challenging” heterosexual women to become “more” involved in the organization.
- Fundraising is something we could use help with. Though we do raise funds through numerous events – some annual – there are undoubtedly other means we’ve not tapped into yet.

8b. THE EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE OUR ORGANIZATION MIGHT SEEK OUT IN THIS PROCESS IS:

- information/advice on fundraising.
- information/assistance with planning.

9. PLEASE COMMENT ON THE CONTENT OF THE SELF-EVALUATION JUST COMPLETED.

- We were reminded that heterosexual women’s needs were not being adequately met.
- We found out that out-of-area women would like more outreach.
- We do a lot of work maximizing the paid staff hours and using volunteer resources.
- We allow other community groups to share our resources and space.
- Our focus and services have changed and grown to meet community needs.
- We are a vibrant and vital part of this community.

10. Comments on the process of evaluation

- it was too long in that many women did not want to come for a third day (and beyond!) to attend the wrap-up session and this work was left for a few to complete.
- it asked too many repetitious questions