

II Letter of Transmittal

Honourable Sandra Kelly
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
PO Box 8700
St. John's, NL
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Dear Minister Kelly,

On behalf of the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women, I am pleased to present to you the annual report of our Council for the period April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002. The Auditor General's report for the same period had previously been forwarded to you and the highlights are included within this report.

This report covers a full year during which we have served with you as the Minister Responsible for the department dedicated to the pursuit of women's equality, equity and inclusion. My Board and I extend our appreciation to you and your government for the continued respect for the arms-length independent status of the Provincial Advisory Council and the many opportunities we are provided to bring forward the concerns of women and women's organizations throughout the province.

Respectfully,

Joyce M. Hancock
President

III What is the Advisory Council

The Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women is an

organization set up in 1980 by the government of the day to advise and advocate for the social, economic and legal equality of women. The Council is arms-length from government and draws its information, analysis and strategies from the broader women's community throughout the province. The Advisory Council consists of a President, Vice President and nine other members who are appointed by Cabinet for a three year term. The President's position is salaried and she works to maintain an everyday presence on issues of equality and equity.

Advisory Council Philosophy

The Provincial Advisory Council is constantly challenged on working to include feminist process, practices and principles in all of our undertakings. This is accomplished within the framework of our board meeting practices and within our day-to-day team approach to staff work. Working toward the creation of a women-centered environment requires much care and attention to validation, shared decision-making and active and responsive leadership. If the Council is to respond to the needs of women in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Board and Staff must feel connected to shared vision and values. The Advisory Council will continue to evaluate itself based on our shared feminist philosophy.

What does the Advisory Council Do

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women was originally established as a body for research and advising government on matters relating to the status of women. The 1996 reorganizing of the Advisory Council strengthened the Council's links to local and regional equality seeking women's groups.

These vital links provide the Advisory Council with a vehicle for hearing on an ongoing basis the experiences of women as they relate to equality and inclusion. This ensures that the Advisory Council draws its information and analysis directly from the women's community. It further provides the Council a mechanism for bringing forward current realities and experiences regarding how government policy and direction are impacting on women, families and communities.

The Provincial Advisory Council works in the areas of advising, advocating and lobbying the provincial government on issues which affect women's social, economic and legal equality. This work is accomplished by using the information and analysis of the board, the skills of staff and the sharing of strategies with other women's equality organizations with whom we share a common agenda for equality, equity and inclusion.

How the Advisory Council Works

Through Lobbying / Advising / Advocating:

The Advisory Council President meets regularly with the Status of Women Minister and her Assistant Deputy Minister of the Women's Policy Office. In addition, the President meets with various departmental Ministers and senior officials. These are unique opportunities for government to hear about the experiences of women within the parameters of confidentiality. This work is successful because a trust relationship has developed between government Ministers and the Council's President. The Advisory Council Board has close ties with the provincial women's community. This method of collaboration to get women's concerns highlighted is embedded in the respect for the Council's arms-length status, rather than a shared agenda with government departments.

This is a critical piece of the Provincial Advisory Council's work and the leadership of the Premier and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in "opening doors" between their colleagues and the Provincial Advisory Council President and Board continues to mutually benefit women and their elected Members of the House of Assembly.

Through Consultation:

Consultation is accomplished in several ways. A particular government department may undertake policy or legislative changes, and wish to discuss these changes with women. The Advisory Council will draw together a group of women in different communities and regions and participate with these women in providing information and experiences regarding how these changes will affect women and families. Sometimes it is the organized women's groups who wish to meet with Ministers and senior departmental officials, and the President will play a facilitation role in these proceedings. There are also times when a group of women will request a meeting with the Advisory Council President and Staff. These are wonderful opportunities to garner a broad understanding of women's experiences and to ensure that these are presented at meetings with government officials.

Through Communication:

The Advisory Council is constantly responding to requests for assistance from women's equality groups throughout the province. We also facilitate conference calls on issues of concern, as well as focus sessions in our St. John's office. We produce a newsbulletin and moderate a listserv to give women a forum to discuss issues and strategize ways to bring a strong gender inclusive critique on women's issues.

Through Media:

The Provincial Advisory Council has a strong provincial media presence and we use this to put forward a women-centered critique on issues. The President spends a great deal of time providing a gendered perspective on “issues of the day” and often challenges government on particular directions which may be harmful to women, families and communities. Our Advisory Council President and Board must sustain this presence in both a pro-active and reactive way if we are to keep women’s issues on the public agenda.

Through Outreach and Community Involvement:

It is important for the Advisory Council to maintain an active presence outside its St. John’s office. We accomplish this by involving ourselves in the ongoing work of women’s groups in different locations. The Council President and Community Liaison/Communications Director present workshops and facilitate meetings to assist women’s organizations in increasing their skills and ability in gender inclusive analysis, and in developing feminist processes within their organizations.

Through Public Education:

Since 1996, the Advisory Council has not had a position dedicated to policy analysis and research. However, it is still important to produce original presentations and briefs. We are able to do this by using the skills of Board and Staff and working in conjunction with other women’s equality groups who share a common understanding of the issues.

The St. John’s office houses a library with computer access to assist students and others who are researching and writing. The Council also publishes a news bulletin which is

presently being distributed to more than one thousand individual women and women’s organizations throughout the province.

IV Council Members

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women consists of eleven members appointed by Cabinet for a three-year term. The President of the Advisory Council also acts as the CEO and is responsible for the coordination of day-to-day activities undertaken on behalf of the Board.

The present board of the Provincial Advisory Council is drawn from women from different communities and regions throughout our province. At the request of the Status of Women Minister, seven of the members were nominated by long standing equality seeking feminist organizations. Three of these members are from Labrador. Board members have experience and expertise in education, business, community development, aboriginal issues, public service and academia. All of the members of the Advisory Council Board would consider themselves feminists providing a rich diversity of thinking and analysis drawn from a shared world view on the need for the equality, equity and inclusion of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. The strength and commitment of this Board provides the government, through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, with a wealth of information and analysis on gender equality issues.

Members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women for the 2001-2002 period:

Joyce M. Hancock, President, Stephenville
Susan Hollett, Vice President and Finance
Chair, Shoal Harbour
Geri Devereaux, Personnel Chair, Gander
Phyllis Artiss, Signing Officer, St. John's
Michelle Skinner, Bay St. George
Dorothy Fewer, Grand Falls-Windsor
Shirley Squires, Wabush
Frances Murphy, Nain
Michelle House, Corner Brook
Valerie Anderson, Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Joan Wilson, Port Aux Basques

V Council Staff

The work of the Provincial Advisory Council would not be possible without the sustaining presence of staff who are committed to maintaining this organization as a provincial body. In 1996, through program review, this Advisory Council lost one third of its budget and two staff positions. Through short-term projects we have been able to acquire funding to keep an active presence outside St. John's. In the March 2002 budget, the Advisory Council's core funding increased to \$257,000. We are now hoping for more stability within our staff so that there is continuity and planning to our work on behalf of women and women's organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Staff of the Provincial Advisory Council for the year ending March 31, 2001:

Joyce M. Hancock, President and CEO
Melanie Parsons, Secretary/Bookkeeper
Michelle Smith, Community Liaison /
Communications Director
Mary Clarke, Projects Coordinator
Heather Tite, Summer Student

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VI Council Work

In the 2001-2002 year it was the wish of the Board to move forward on the recommendations coming from the Provincial Women's Conference 2000, *Exploring Common Ground*. In order to approach this work in a focused manner it was important for the Council to remain active and involved provincially. The additional project funds for the pan-provincial community focus sessions, which led to the successful October 2000 Women's Conference, clearly enabled the Council to be visible and active throughout the province. The March 2001 budget left the Council with a "bare bones" budget and our dream of building on the momentum from 2000 was subjected to a serious reality check. We had a new Minister Responsible for the Status of Women who shared our desire for building on the previous year's work. We had forged a healthy respectful relationship with departmental Ministers and senior officials and we had a women's community feeling empowered and mobilized to work with the Provincial Advisory Council.

The Advisory Council Board recognized the reality of a limited budget, the need to work with a new Premier and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and a new Women's Policy Office Assistant Deputy Minister, and the need to remain vigilant regarding government's agenda on health care, social services, and justice issues.

There was a strong sense of much common ground and a shared agenda with individual women and feminist organizations since the tremendous efforts made in the Provincial Women's Conference and the Newfoundland and Labrador World March of Women. Clearly as a Board (appointed November 1999 - November 2002) we felt challenged by the feminist community to provide direction to government as to the future composition of the Provincial Advisory Council Board. We also needed to build on our capacity to communicate and network in a more consistent manner with equality seeking women's organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

The work of the Provincial Advisory Council is rich and varied and continues to be directed to a great degree by the concerns articulated by women and women's organizations who share a common agenda for the social, economic and legal equality of women. This Council as a legislated body funded by government also has a mandate to fulfill. Its arms-length status enables the Council to choose its strategies; its connections with government provide a healthy means for bringing forward the concerns of women.

This annual report offers a brief reflection of the multifaceted involvements of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women in the areas of lobbying/advocacy, community involvement/outreach, consultations, presentations, public education and media work for the year ending March 31, 2002

VII Council Meetings

The Board of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women meets quarterly and during this period the 85th, 86th, 87th, and 88th meetings were held in St. John's.

June 14 & 15, 2001

October 4 & 5, 2001

December 13 & 14, 2001

March 21 & 22, 2002

The Board continues to be very involved in the work of the Council. Attendance at quarterly meetings is high, and in this period ranged from eighty to one hundred percent. The Vice President acts as the Finance Chair and oversees the Council's financial direction. She is also available through telephone and electronic mail to assist the President with strategies and decision making. The Council Board member from Gander serves as the Personnel Chair and has given much time to issues of hiring, evaluation, and ensuring that staff issues are monitored and given consideration by the Board. The St. John's Board member constantly provides support to the President between meetings by attending consultations and key meetings to provide a strong gender perspective on all of the Advisory Council's undertakings.

Following from the Women's Conference in 2000, this was an important year to build upon the connections which have developed since that successful endeavor. The Council President has pursued an extensive agenda of travel and work with women new to the active women's movement and emerging women's equality groups. Individual Board members involve themselves when meetings and workshops take place in their home region of the province.

The President, Community Liaison / Communications Director, Secretary / Bookkeeper and project workers provide quarterly activity reports to the Board. These reports, in addition to media and advocacy crisis call reports, allow the Board members to have a detailed account of the work accomplished by staff between meetings.

The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women meets with Board members for a two hour period at the quarterly meeting. This is done following the Board spending a day together discussing community and regional issues so that these concerns can be followed up through internal government mechanisms.

To allow opportunities for members of the Advisory Council board to increase their understanding of current issues, we invite “guests” to attend a portion of our quarterly meeting. These guests present on particular issues and Board and Staff provide feedback. This is followed by a full discussion and possibly a strategy session if the issue requires support and action.

During this period the Advisory Council Board meetings heard presentations from and held discussion with the following:

Pattie McPherson, Coordinator of the Provincial Association Against Family Violence: The Coordinator of the Provincial Association Against Family Violence regularly attends a portion of our quarterly meeting. The Association and the Provincial Advisory Council have formed a strong alliance and work closely on equality and anti-violence issues. Our connection to the Women’s Centres, Transition Houses and Shelters provide us with much information useful to our mutual advocacy and lobbying activities.

Mona Wall, Manager of the Provincial Government’s Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI): Ms. Wall provided an overview of the VPI and to discuss the Advisory Council’s concerns with the lack of activity to date by the departmental ministers responsible for the VPI.

Vivian Randell, Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Employment (HRE): Ms. Randell discussed concerns with the restructuring and redesign that has taken place within that department and some of the difficulties clients are experiencing.

Glynis George, Professor of Anthropology, University of Windsor: Dr. George is exploring a research idea looking at the effectiveness of gender analysis and feminist involvement in the move toward Alternative Dispute Resolution programs in the criminal justice system.

Lorraine Michael, Executive Director of Women in Resource Development Committee (WRDC): Ms. Michael, along with WRDC staff Juanita Fraser and Michelle Brazil, provided information on the successful “Untapped Resources” project. During this presentation the Advisory Council Board learned that one hundred and twenty-nine women in six College of the North Atlantic sites have completed the Orientation to Trades and Technology Course.

Linda Ross, Program Coordinator with Oxfam Canada St. John’s Office: Ms. Ross provided information on the condition of women living in Afghanistan since September 11 and the War on Terrorism declared by the United States of America.

Honourable Julie Bettney and Health Department Officials: Minister Bettney and her officials came to the December 2001 quarterly meeting to hear Board members, concerns following the Regional Health Forums.

Donna Malone, Coordinator of the Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence Eastern Region: Ms. Malone attended to discuss the work of the Coalition and share some concerns with the Provincial Coordinating Coalition and the Violence Prevention Initiative.

Moyra Buchan, Executive Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association: Ms. Buchan provided an overview of the two judicial enquires examining issues surrounding the RCMP/RNC killings of two men who had serious psychiatric health issues.

VII Lobbying / Advocating / Advising

The mandate of the Provincial Advisory Council is to advise government on matters affecting the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. We accomplish this through a number of processes. The President meets fairly regularly with the Status of Women Minister and the full Board meets with this Minister each quarter. This is an ongoing mechanism to ensure that the Minister hears the concerns of women on an ongoing basis. In addition, the President, individually or as a member of a coalition, meets with Ministers or senior bureaucrats to bring forward particular issues with departmental policy or direction which impact on women, families and communities.

The following represents a sample of the issues brought to the attention of government Ministers and Members of the House of Assembly during this period:

- & The Advisory Council President, as a member of the Premier's Council on Social Policy Development, met with Premier Roger Grimes to discuss the commitment of government under his leadership to the province's Strategic Social Plan and a commitment to an integrated approach to social and economic decision making.
- & The Advisory Council met with officials of the Departments of Education, Youth and Post Secondary Education to request a gender analysis in proposed changes to the Student Loan process.
- & The Advisory Council President chaired, on behalf of the St. John's Women's Council, a meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and officials with the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation and the Regional Tenancy Board. The Women's Council presented their findings on housing issues resulting from their Hammer and Nail Project.
- & The Advisory Council President met with members of the Progressive Conservative Social Policy Committee to bring forward a challenge to the official opposition to support the province's Strategic Social Plan, as well as request they take a proactive position on gender inclusion in party policy.

- & The Advisory Council President coordinated a meeting with the Justice Minister and his senior officials. The purpose of the meeting was to seek support for a gender inclusive analysis in proposed changes to the federal Divorce Act as it relates to Custody and Access.
- & The Advisory Council President has met on several occasions with the Minister of Human Resources and Employment and the Council Board has had in depth discussions with the Deputy Minister. The core of our concern is the loss of personal connections and a holistic approach to the multifaceted needs of clients who are unemployed or unable to participate in work and or training. One clear recommendation from the Council is the need for a social work or advocacy presence within this redesigned departmental structure.
- & On behalf of the Gateway Status of Women's Council, the Advisory Council President chaired a lobby session with the Ministers of Human Resources and Employment, Justice, Status of Women and Health and Community Services. The purpose of this lobby was to create a gender awareness of concerns regarding housing, income support, health, training/employment and how women in Southwestern Newfoundland are impacted by provincial government departments responsible for these issues.
- & The Advisory Council challenged the Departments of Human Resources and Employment, Health and
 - Community Services and Justice to provide funding to the Provincial Association Against Family Violence to allow that Association to continue working as the umbrella organization for Transition Houses and Shelters.
 - & The Advisory Council and a number of women's equality organizations mounted a strong lobby for increased funding to the core budget of the Advisory Council, the Provincial Association Against Family Violence, and the Women's Councils, who provide services and advocacy work throughout the province.
 - & The Advisory Council raised concerns with the Minister Responsible for the Violence Prevention Initiative regarding the commitment of the four departmental Ministers responsible for this anti-violence work, as well as community concerns regarding the management style relationship between the community based coalitions and the VPI.
 - & The Advisory Council encouraged the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to work with the Provincial Advisory Council in the development of criteria for future selection and appointment to the Advisory Council Board.
 - & The Advisory Council met with the Health Minister and senior departmental officials to discuss the need for input by women's equality organizations in the Regional Health Forums.

- & The Advisory Council President coordinated a meeting between a number of feminist activists and the leader of the Progressive Conservative Opposition. This meeting was an opportunity to provide an overview of the history and ongoing work of feminist organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador. This meeting was important in that the Advisory Council is hoping that the new Opposition Leader will bring a strong focus to gender as the party begins to build its policy platform.

 - < The need for an increased role for health care providers in health care direction and decision making.
 - < The prohibitive cost of prescription drugs, and the need for more generic drug options.
 - < The problems with staff morale within Health and Community Services; positions are often left vacant and client load is too high.

- & The Advisory Council brought forward to the Minister of Human Resources and Employment concerns with the Legislative Review Consultations and the need for broadening the parameters to include the realities of individuals and families living with inadequate income.

 - < The costs of tele-medicine services are not covered by MCP.
 - < The vast geography of this province and the lack of availability of some services, especially in Labrador, e.g., breast cancer protocols are not being carried out following treatment.

- & A number of concerns were brought forward in a meeting between the Provincial Advisory Council Board and the Health Minister and her officials:

 - < The shortage of physicians and access to specialists in rural remote communities and regions.
 - < The fears expressed by senior women and families living on inadequate income that user fees might be applied to medical services.
 - < The necessity of a strong gender based analysis as a tool for decision making on the future direction of health care.
 - < The use of multidisciplinary teams as a delivery model for health care will need planning, training and real resourcing (time and money).
 - < The need for provincial standards and equity principles in the health care plan.

- < The importance of maintaining adequate institutional structures and provision of community-based services while changing to encompass a wellness model.
 - < The necessity of considering the inclusion of women in any change in the governance model for health care.
 - < The concern for women and children travelling great distances for health services with no family or advocate to ensure their health concerns are understood.
 - < The special concerns of culture, language, class and how racism affects the quality of health care services.
 - < The role of the education system and how health care fits in with the integrated service delivery model, e.g.: cuts to the education health curriculum affect health care as it relates to wellness, prevention and early intervention.
 - < The role of women as voluntary health care providers, and as underpaid home care workers.
 - < The need for the federal government's security budget to embrace health care as a security issue.
- & The Advisory Council expressed concerns to the Premier and members of the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada. The Council is requesting a meeting with the Commission prior to their consultations to discuss the issue of gender inclusion in the process, analysis and final report.
 - & The Advisory Council co-chairs the Coalition of Provincial / Territorial Advisory Councils and in this role the following issues were raised with the Federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the Minister Responsible for Human Resources Development Canada and the Minister of Justice:
 - < The discriminatory nature of Employment Insurance eligibility criteria.
 - < Concerns with the changes to the Divorce Act and the need for the department to be guided by the knowledge and expertise of women's organizations throughout the country.
 - < The lack of concrete results from the use of gender-based analysis tools developed by the federal government.
 - < The need for enhanced mechanisms for the Federal Status of Women department to learn about the social, economic and legal inequalities and inequities.

- < The concerns with women's economic security and the over emphasis by the government on child poverty rather than using the analysis and programs created to address the reality of women's poverty, family poverty and system impoverishment.
 - < The lack of applications by senior women and the need for pro-active measures to ensure that women are provided Guaranteed Income Support.
 - & The Advisory Council President attended the Finance Department's Roundtable in Stephenville. During that time, the Minister of Finance was lobbied to resource the work of equality, anti-violence, advocacy and service delivery organizations.
 - & The Advisory Council lobbied Federal Members of Parliament on the issue of resourcing for victims to attend Parole Board Hearings, as well as allowing them to provide a Victim Impact Statement if they wish.
 - & A number of feminist activists met with the Justice Minister regarding the escape from lawful custody of a convicted sex offender. The risk assessment used by the Corrections Department does not consider the risk to women and girls when a sexual predator is provided an early release program for behavior in the artificial prison setting.
 - & The Advisory Council raised concerns with the appointment of Provincial Court Judges rationalized on the importance of language and culture in the Judiciary. The provincial Justice Minister was asked that his selection committee become aware of the importance of gender and that pro-active measures be implemented to address this issue.
 - & Challenge to the Politicians:
In early January of 2002, the Provincial Advisory Council issued an International Women's Day "Challenge to the Politicians" for the month of February which had been proclaimed by the Government's Violence Prevention Initiative as "Violence Awareness Month." The challenge involved requesting each Member of the House of Assembly to educate and create awareness within their office of the anti-violence services, programs and initiatives ongoing in that area of the province. The challenge also involved setting a time-line in which a letter or report outlining these initiatives should be forwarded to the Advisory Council's St. John's office before March 8, International Women's Day.
- This challenge and the ensuing actions created a heightened sense of the work undertaken in this province by Women's Centres, Transition Houses, Shelters, anti-violence coalitions and other community and school volunteer groups.

The Advisory Council specifically asked that the Members of the House of Assembly not look to the feminist community to provide a “short-cut” to this challenge, but rather to work to “get to know” the anti-violence efforts from the very basic volunteer and service organizations working in their districts. The organized women’s community reported visits and calls from Ministers and Members of the House of Assembly. This was seen as a positive development, as our elected politicians reported learning much about the anti-violence equality work that is ongoing in Newfoundland and Labrador.

On International Women’s Day, the Members of the House of Assembly who had responded to this challenge were presented a certificate of participation and appreciation, while provincial media covered the event. This exercise had a sixty percent participation rate. Notably the Premier and the Leaders of the Opposition parties responded with detailed letters outlining the anti-violence/equality work within their district. All of the women Cabinet Ministers and female Members of the House of Assembly were active in working on this challenge. A list of the participating Members by district and party affiliation is included at the end of this this annual report.

The Advisory Council has received many appreciative letters and calls from Ministers and Members of the House of Assembly.

These members felt that the challenge was a pro-active and positive exercise in keeping with government and community working together in efforts to eradicate violence.

& A brief was presented to the White Rose Assessment Panel by the President of the Provincial Advisory Council and Lorraine Michael, Executive Director of the Women In Resource Development Committee. This presentation included a strong recommendation to the developers of the White Rose Oil and Gas Field to include women in all aspects of training for and employment within this sector.

& The President of the Advisory Council has been participating in the Premier’s Council on Social Policy Development since its inception in 1998. Originally, she was a member of the Strategic Social Plan Provincial Consultation which undertook a province-wide tour resulting in a report with recommendations to government. The Strategic Social Plan and the Premier’s Council were developed in response to that consultation from 1996-1998. The Advisory Council President has opportunities through this Premier’s Council to participate in discussions with the Premier, the lead Minister for the Strategic Social Plan and other Ministers whose departments are working toward a more integrated approach to social and economic policy decisions.

& The Advisory Council President chaired two lobby sessions on behalf of the Provincial Association Against Family Violence. These lobby sessions followed two days of discussions with Administrators and Board members of Transition Houses and Shelters in Newfoundland and Labrador. These discussions with the Minister and senior officials responsible for Human Resources and Employment, Health and Community Services and the Violence Prevention Initiative were opportunities for the women who work with Transition Houses and Shelters throughout the province to put forward the reality of work within these facilities and the need for continued respect and resourcing for the service delivery, advocacy and public education carried out by these staff, administrators and volunteer boards.

& There was a concentrated lobby throughout the past year as the Advisory Council, working with a local Ad Hoc Committee, partnered with the Atlantic Women's Justice Caucus on Custody and Access Issues, as well as endorsing the analysis and recommendations of the National Association of Women and the Law. We requested that the Minister of Justice endorse the following seventeen recommendations on Custody and Access:

1. Legislation should articulate a presumption that custody of children should be with the primary caregiver of the child(ren). This should be based on past history of parenting.

2. The primary caregiver should be the person who has the primary decision making authority. This parent has the most involvement, the most experience, and the most knowledge with respect to what is in the best interest of the child(ren).

3. Sections 16(10) and 17(9) of the Divorce Act which state the "friendly parent rule" should be removed.

4. The current separation of child maintenance and access should be preserved. That is, access should not be tied to child support.

5. The decision to relocate should be made by the primary caregiver. This individual is best able to make choices which are in the child(ren)'s best interest.

6. There should be a presumption that abuse, whether physical, emotional, economic, or sexual abuse of one parent by the other is a primary factor in decisions about custody and access.

7. There should be a presumption, that an abusive spouse is precluded from having either custody or unsupervised access to the child(ren).

8. Legislation must recognize that there are some cases where a no access order may be appropriate. These cases would include situations where there is abuse of children, violence against the mother, or such high conflict between the parents that continued contact is toxic for the child(ren).

9. As was recommended by the Ad Hoc Committee (1998), before a parent is granted supervised access or is moved from supervised to unsupervised access, there should be clear evidence that the batterer has become non-abusive. Evidence must include demonstrated changes in behaviour and attitudes, which encompass taking total responsibility for the abuse, understanding the fear and reluctance for contact, and showing a willingness to engage in access based on the needs of the woman and child(ren). Attendance at an anger management course should not be taken as indicative of these changes occurring.
10. Education, training, and re-training are needed for all workers in the justice system including mediators, home assessors, access supervisors, lawyers, and judges around issues of power, violence, abuse, and gender analysis.
11. Custody and access cases should be given priority in the court system.
12. Civil Legal-Aid must receive more funding from the Federal and Provincial Governments in order to adequately meet the needs of their clients.
13. Supervised access programs must be made available in every jurisdiction. These must be fully funded and sensitive to abuse issues.
14. When adequate supervision is not available, women should not be required to provide access.
15. Mediation should not be mandatory in family law disputes. Further, there should be no requirement that mediation be considered before access to the justice system is provided.
16. Mediators need training, standards, accountability, and clear goals in dealing with custody issues.
17. Mediation should never be used in cases where abuse or violence is suspected.

X Consultations

The work of consultations is an important aspect of the Provincial Advisory Council's efforts toward equality and equity. However, this cannot be accomplished in isolation from the knowledge and expertise which exists in the broader feminist community. The Council uses its strategic position with government departments to encourage greater opportunities by senior bureaucrats and departmental officials to hear from grassroots women's organizations. The relationships the Council President and Board have forged with Ministers and Members of the House of Assembly are crucial to this work as trust between government and community is not easily given. Feminist organizations find consultation without results tiresome and not worth the time commitment when there is so much work to do on the basic issues of poverty and violence. Therefore, an important role for the Advisory Council is to follow up with government when the women's community has given of their time and expertise on matters of government legislation, policy process, or departmental practices.

& Conference Calls with Women's Equality Seeking Organizations ~ One of the key consultation tools undertaken by the Provincial Advisory Council are conference calls with local women's organizations working with a common agenda for women's economic, social and legal equality. There have been five conference calls during the period of this annual report.

September 19, 2001 - Legal Aid

October 23, 2001 - Income Support, Poverty and Housing issues

November 20, 2001 - Regional Health Forums and Women's Voice

January 22, 2002 - The State of Equality Seeking Feminist Organizations

February 14, 2002 - Human Resources and Employment Legislative Review Consultation Process

Participants in these conference calls on a consistent basis are the feminist organizations throughout the province. Women who have knowledge of the issues being discussed gather at their local Women's Centre. The calls are coordinated and chaired by the Advisory Council. Following the call the women's groups participating are provided with a detailed copy of the discussion which is useful to them in bringing a provincial perspective to their local lobby / advocacy efforts. Participating in the conference call discussions in this period:

& Women from the Bay St. George Women's Council/Centre.

& Women from the Labrador West Women's Council/Centre.

& Women from the Corner Brook Women's Council/Centre.

& Trepassey Women's Group

& Women involved with the emerging Carbonear-Harbour Grace group.

& St. Anthony women's group

& Provincial Association Against Family Violence

& Transition House staff in Corner Brook, Happy Valley-Goose Bay Libra House, Iris Kirby House St. John's, Cara House Gander, Nain Safe House, Grace Sparkes House

& Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre

& Central Newfoundland Women's Council

& Gateway Women's Council, Port Aux Basques

& St. John's Women's Council / Centre

& Memorial University Women's Studies

& Nain Women's Action Committee

& Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence, St. John's, Western, Central and Labrador

When the topic for discussion is one where additional knowledge of the issue is required the Advisory Council will invite in women who work with government or community. These women provide an overview, as well as listen to the realities and experiences of women who work to provide services and advocacy on an everyday basis.

- & Elaine Condon, Coordinator / Researcher with the Gender Women's Council Legal Aid Project. Ms. Condon provided an overview of the research and analysis on Legal Aid.
- & Susanne Ingram, Lisa Grandy and Debbie Munden of the Gateway Women's Council presented their research on the experiences of women in Southwestern Newfoundland. The focus of the research project was poverty, housing, health and income support.
- & Vivian Randell, Deputy Minister of Human Resources and Employment, attended to listen to the concerns and experiences of women and families from the perspective of women confronting these issues at local Women's Centres, shelters and advocacy organizations.
- & Rochelle Cochrane, an Assistant Deputy Minister with Human Resources and Employment, explained the process for the Legislative Review Consultation. Ms. Cochrane, who has responsibility for the consultations, also heard the concerns and recommendations of women's organizations.
- & Lorraine Michael, Vice President with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, attended a conference call to present on concerns with the gender based analysis undertaken by governments and how feminist inclusive analysis is not impacting government's agenda.
- & Moving Forward: Responding to the Needs of Victims of Violence ~ The Advisory Council President participated in a process as a member of a working group to make recommendations to the Minister Responsible for the Department of Human Resources and Employment (HRE) on the needs of victims of violence. The working group was set up by the Department of HRE to review the departments current income support program and its responsiveness to victims of violence. In addition to the HRE department officials were representatives from Health and Community Services, Women's Policy Office and the Department of Justice. Participants from the women's community involved Transition Houses in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Provincial Association Against Family Violence and the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

This work included nine months of effort, and has resulted in sixteen issues and proposed solutions being presented to the Minister. The HRE department has responded positively to the proposal. Although community members of the committee were desiring a more holistic equity/equality analysis, this document (a response from the HRE entitled Moving Forward, Responding to the Needs of Victims) is embedded in some strong core feminist values including respect for individual choice, the need for nonjudgmental and validating intervention. In addition, we are hopeful that the HRE income support program will become more responsive in providing services to victims of violence.

& Child Advocate ~ The Advisory Council had previously participated with politicians, community advocates and service delivery organizations in a day long effort by the Health Minister to hear recommendations on the setting up of a Child Advocates Office. In May the Council President was invited to a meeting with the Minister of Health and Community Services prior to the Premier's announcement of the Child Advocate. There were concerns expressed at that time regarding the amount of resourcing for this office, its separateness from the Strategic Social Plan and the parameters not including the education system.

& Violence Prevention Initiative Justice Issues Sub-committee ~ This is an ongoing committee originally organized with the Provincial Strategy Against Violence. The Manager of the

Violence Prevention Initiative coordinates this work which is presently focusing on child victims and preparing for a meeting with the Minister of Justice to bring forward recommendations on the needs of children vis-a-vis the justice system and court processes.

& Barriers to Women In Trades and Technology ~ This was a part of ongoing efforts in collaboration with the Women's Policy and the Women In Resource Development Committee to increase the participation of women in trades, training and employment which have been historically male dominated. The Minister and senior officials from Education, Youth services and Post Secondary Education, the President of the Federation of Labour, the President of the College of the North Atlantic, the President of the Advisory Council, and representatives from the Marine Institute and Memorial University School of Engineering, spent time examining present numbers, barriers and possible solutions to increasing women's participation. We are committed to continuing to focus on advocating for a more holistic direction by government departments and institutions in addressing these inequalities and inequities.

& Provincial Coordinating Committee, Violence Prevention Initiative ~ The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women had lobbied since the beginning of the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI) for the opportunity to play a more pro-active role within the Provincial Coordinating Committee.

The Council was worried that increased participation on this committee through the addition of more groups who do not bring a strong gender analysis to their work might water down the links between inequality and anti-violence within the VPI. It had been a long standing request to the Minister Responsible for this government's anti-violence strategy to include the Provincial Advisory Council and the Provincial Association Against Family Violence. These two organizations' sustained work and advocacy throughout the years eventually led to the government community partnership which forged the Provincial Strategy Against Violence. The Provincial Association Against Family Violence through a strong lobby by the community based Regional Coordinating Coalitions Against Violence was permitted a designated seat within the Provincial Coordinating Committee and in 2002 the Provincial Advisory Council was invited to participate. As a participating member in the Provincial Coordinating Committee, the Advisory Council now has an opportunity to bring concerns regarding violence and gender issues to the attention of the VPI government partner departments.

- & Project on Inclusion ~ The Atlantic Centre of Excellence in Women's Health has been working with a sub-committee of the Premier's Council examining inclusion / exclusion practices from a policy making perspective.

We are especially interested in examining how poverty is impacted by exclusion in policy making. As a member of the Premier's Council Social Audit Sub-committee, the Advisory Council President has been involved in this work for several years.

- & The Advisory Council President coordinated a meeting between the Chief of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, the Provincial Association Against Family Violence, the Eastern Avalon Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence, and the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The purpose of this discussion was to inform the Chief about the work and involvement of our organizations, as well as to encourage him to follow an effective partnership established by his predecessors: to involve on a consistent and continuous basis Royal Newfoundland Constabulary officers in community based anti-violence/equality seeking work.
- & Atlantic Roundtable on Legal Aid ~ The Advisory Council President facilitated two days of meetings in Moncton, New Brunswick where the issues of Legal Aid, Custody and Access and Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms were discussed with representatives of Advisory Council's, women's shelters, Newfoundland and Labrador National Association of Women and the Law representative, Women's Centres / Coalitions and Status of Women Canada.

Funding for this consultation was provided to the Gender Women's Council through Status of Women Canada's Women's Program. The Gender women requested the Advisory Council play a lead role in chairing and facilitating these meetings. This was a great opportunity for the Council to keep a strong provincial focus on these justice concerns. The result of this consultation was the formation of the "Atlantic Women's Justice Caucus" set up to continue sharing critical feminist analysis and strategies on Custody and Access, Legal Aid and Alternative Dispute Resolution.

& Health Forums ~ The Advisory Council provided names to the Department of Health and Community Services of women involved in gender issues who could bring a strong gender inclusive critique to the Regional Health Forums. The President of the Advisory Council attended a two day meeting which brought together politicians, health care providers, and advocates to respond to the results and recommendations of the Regional Health Forums.

& Custody and Access Consultations ~ The Advisory Council President and Board members participated in several of the five regional consultations conducted by the provincial Justice Department. The provincial Justice Department contracted independent consultants to solicit feedback on changes to the Federal Divorce Legislation. Women in Newfoundland and Labrador have serious concerns that the new Act may move to a presumption of shared parenting,

mandated mediation or tying access and custody to payment of child support. These concerns are not new and were addressed in the Advisory Council's 1998 Brief to the Special Joint Committee on Custody and Access. The Advisory Council facilitated a committee consisting of feminist lawyers, representatives from the National Association of Women and the Law Newfoundland Chapter, Iris Kirby Transition House, Provincial Association Against Family Violence and the Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence Eastern Avalon to track this work and to advocate a strong critique of the new Divorce Legislation to ensure that it is grounded in the experience and expertise of women and feminist organizations.

& Charities and Advocacy Organizations~ The Advisory Council Community Liaison participated in a consultation process regarding the legalities of advocacy work provided by organizations with designated charitable status. The Advisory Council is concerned with this issue as many feminist groups provide both services and advocacy. If our organizations are designated as charities they are silenced in their efforts to advocate on the root causes of inequality, violence and poverty. This is a difficult issue when we are aware that large corporate entities are given tax breaks and are able to hire professional lobbyists. The public policy discourse is missing the expertise and experience of women if we accept charitable status in order to survive financially.

XI Media

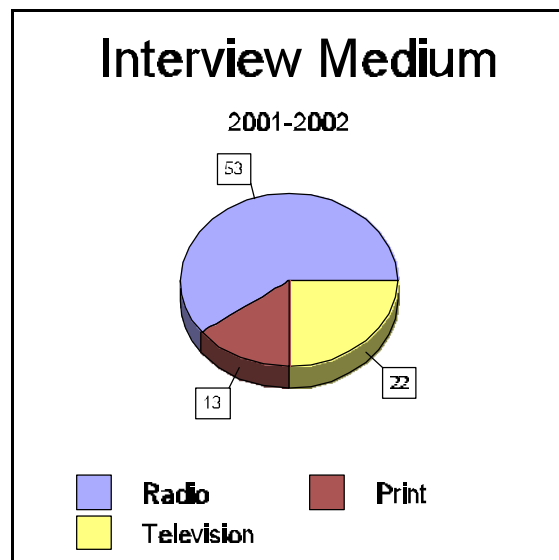
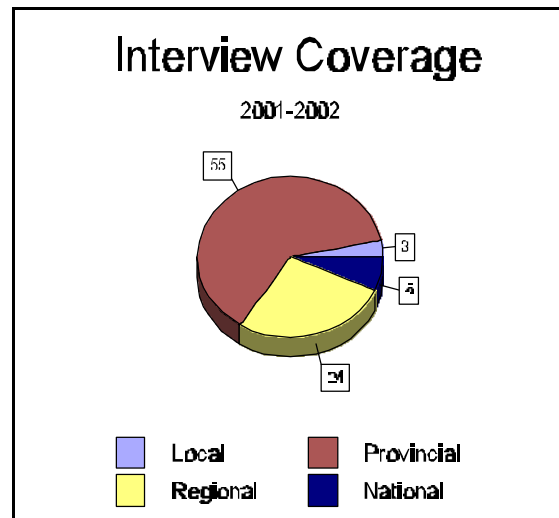
The Provincial Advisory Council has a mandate to provide public education on issues which affect the social, economic and legal equality of women. With limited resources there are few opportunities to undertake direct education campaigns. Therefore, working with the media allows the Council to put forward a strong feminist message and gender critique vital to educating the public on matters relating to equality and equity. It is difficult to capture the quantity of time spent in this work. The President as the public face of the Advisory Council is responsible for the proactive and reactive media work. Considerable time is spent researching issues, providing background information to the reporters and actually doing the face-to-face or telephone interviews.

The Advisory Council has developed relationships with all of the major media outlets. Through these connections, issues important to the women's community, but not always deemed relevant by some media, can receive a profile through the interest of a local reporter. The Council President continues to encourage media to connect with local women or women's organizations in more rural regions. This allows a local or regional perspective on an issue and provides an opportunity for the Advisory Council to place the local issue into a provincial or national context.

The office of the Provincial Advisory Council continues to collect statistical and informational data on the media work undertaken. This work is time consuming yet invaluable. The President of the Council responds to the media. The Community Liaison/Communications Director is required to undertake research to provide information on past positions taken by the Advisory Council or other local, provincial or national

feminist organizations. The Advisory Council Secretary is involved with writing press releases, fielding media calls and providing information to the press as to the appropriate group or individual working on a particular issue.

There were a total of eighty-eight media interviews by the Advisory Council President in the 2001-2002 period. These interviews included radio, television and print and were covered by local, regional, provincial and national media.



**Media Time Commitment
2001-2002**

Preparation: 9.08 hrs
Research: 5.42 hrs
Consultations: 6.25 hrs
Interviews: 20.33 hrs

Total time commitment recorded: 41.08 hrs

Examples of issues and concerns addressed by the Provincial Advisory Council through media in the year ending March 31, 2002:

< ***The government's Violence Prevention Initiative funding Regional Coalitions to undertake school and community projects.***

The Advisory Council's response noted the increasing complaints of violence and harassment. The need to see an integration of anti-violence programs in school curricula, as well as the need for a stronger interdepartmental approach to violence prevention, policies and programs was also named.

< ***Announcement of increased funding for service delivery work at seven local Women's Centers.***

The Advisory Council expressed gratitude at the small increase provided to Women's Centres and Transition Houses, as well as noting the need for adequate funding for the advocacy, lobbying and public education work provided by organizations like the Provincial Association Against Family violence and the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

< ***Federal Employment Insurance regulations harmful to women.***

The Advisory Council responded by noting the number of women in low paying seasonal employment who lack sufficient qualifying hours for Employment Insurance. As well when training is tied to Employment Insurance eligibility, women have few training options.

< ***Decision taken by Gander organizing committee to exclude girls' hockey from the Newfoundland and Labrador Winter Games.***

The Advisory Council challenged the organizers to think in terms of equity of participation in sports rather than equality of overall numbers of female participants. As well, the Council President requested that the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Culture undertake writing structured equity guidelines in funding committees to organize future Winter Games.

< ***Dangerous Offenders granted access to early release program.***

The Advisory Council President noted the following in her response:

The Corrections Services early release programs do not adequately consider the seriousness of offences directed at women and children.

The risk factor to women and children should be considered when a repeat sex offender is granted a temporary absence from prison.

The present eligibility criteria for early release programs are not imbedded in the analysis and expertise of victims and advocacy groups.

There are insufficient programs for offenders while they are incarcerated or during their parole or probation period.

< ***Newfoundland woman cannot afford to attend Parole Hearing of ex-offender who has vowed to kill her.***

The Advisory Council challenged the federal Justice Department to resource a program of travel for victims who cannot afford to attend parole hearings. In addition, the Council President questioned the wisdom of the Parole Board making decisions on the release of an offender based on behavior in the artificial prison environment.

< ***Announcement of oil exploration and development on the Port aux Port Peninsula.***

The Advisory Council challenged developers to consider the employment and training needs of women and girls in resource based development. As well, the Council noted social and environmental concerns, especially as related to the Francophone communities in Port au Port.

< ***Nova Scotia government moves to allow the registration of same sex couples.***

The Advisory Council feels that this is a progressive move and the Newfoundland and Labrador government should do this as well.

< ***Women's Organizations attempt to get more women to run in municipal and school board elections.***

The Advisory Council is involved in this action and feels that school boards and municipal governments need the perspective and experience of women and men to effectively address issues. The Council President challenged the Federation of Municipalities to become more pro-active in working to attract more women to this area of government and governance.

< ***High risk offender released to home community; residents upset and angry.***

The Advisory Council President challenged any move to force offenders to leave their communities noting that they will merely resurface in unsuspecting communities elsewhere. As well, the Council's response noted that the pitting of ex-offenders and concerned citizens against one another does not deal with the unmet need for long term parole/probationary period and programs for offenders.

< ***Central Newfoundland women discuss women's participation in municipal election.***

The Council President noted the inadequate resources available to women who wish to undertake leadership roles in municipalities. In October 2000, more than four hundred and fifty women identified a need for the increased participation of women in municipal, provincial and federal politics.

< ***New committee formed to examine the Department of Human Resources and Employment and its response to Victims of Violence.***

The income support programs of Human Resources and Employment need a more holistic approach to dealing with women and families who depend on this service. The Advisory Council President challenged this departments' business approach to dealing with women and families in very vulnerable times.

< ***Women In Resource Development Committee submit brief to White Rose Development Project.***

The Advisory Council President encouraged the White Rose developers to undertake specific targets to ensure gender diversity in all phases of the project work. The federal government's gender equity guidelines could be a tool to assist the developers in pursuit of this goal.

< ***Women in Municipal and School Board politics.***

The Advisory Council President noted that the inclusion of women strengthens the quality of decision making and that provincial parties should begin outlining their plans for the inclusion of women. Provincial parties and the Federation of Municipalities should begin recruiting women to run long before elections are announced.

< ***Women in public service get only six months maternity leave.***

The provincial legislation should be in line with that of the federal government. Women in the federal public service can take one year of

leave with Employment Insurance benefits. Equally important is the need for a strong federal lobby to increase maternity benefits to encourage and allow parents to choose to stay at home with new children.

< ***Direction of federal government on Divorce Legislation is troublesome to women's organizations.***

The Council's response emphasized the national scope of this issue including the long standing concerns of women's equality organizations who worry about legislation which might encourage a presumption of joint custody, mandatory mediation in conflicted divorce or tying child support to access and custody arrangements.

< ***Sexual Violence Awareness Week and Take Back the Night March***

The Advisory Council's response included:

- Congratulations to the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre for the scope of activities planned to bring awareness to the issues of sexual abuse and violence.
- The bold political statement implicit in women marching alone at night without men.
- The invisible nature of sexual violence in homes and relationships and that police deal with very little of the sexual abuse which actually occurs.
- The leadership shown by women who organize these marches and violence awareness activities, especially in rural communities.

- A challenge to men who claim to feel “left out” to come to the rally and public discussions and to organize more male specific activism to discuss men’s roles in addressing violence.
- < ***Disappointment over the low numbers of women elected to serve on municipal governments or on school boards.***
The election of the first woman Mayor of Corner Brook was ground-breaking. A challenge was issued to women to recognize their personal knowledge and experience as necessary to community decision making, and to men in positions of power to recognize the essential and critical analysis missing when women are not represented in governance structures.
- < ***Announcement of new Provincial Court Judge.***
The Advisory Council challenged the Justice Minister who has publicly claimed that judges who are sensitive to and knowledgeable about culture and language need to be appointed to the judiciary. The Advisory Council noted the importance of gender as a consideration in choosing judges.
- < ***Gender equity part of Human Resources Plan for Abitibi Mill.***
The Council raised concerns regarding accountability and monitoring of this announced equity plan. In addition, the concern with the environment as well as employment was seen as crucial in involving women in future human resource plans.
- < ***Supreme Court upholds parents/teachers right to spank.***
The Council expressed concerns with the abuse of power by adults noting the Mount Cashel experience. As well, the choices of world leaders to initiate war was noted as poor role modeling for children.
- < ***Gender equity plan for White Rose Development***
The Advisory Council President raised the following points:
 - Plans on paper need to be complemented with plans with targets, monitoring, and repercussions when targets are not achieved.
 - Government needs to hold industry accountable when equity targets are not attained.
 - Education institutions must begin gender awareness training for faculty and staff to encourage a more sensitive environment for women entering training which is male dominated.
 - Young girls need courses at a very early age so they begin to see trades and technology training as relevant choices for their gender.
- < ***Reaction to Pre-budget Consultations.***
The Council President, who is also on the Premier’s Council and works to promote the province’s Strategic Social Plan (SSP), challenged the Finance Minister to use these regional SSP structures for financial consultation rather than the traditional once a year exercise about which the public has become quite skeptical.

< ***Provincial Advisory Council and Torngiat Innuat Anniat visit women in North Coast Labrador Communities.***

The Advisory Council President noted the numbers of Inuit women who are feeling disconnected from provincial women's groups. The Advisory Council has been challenged to bring the concerns of Aboriginal women to their advocacy, lobby and public education work.

< ***Senator introduces bill to change the National Anthem to be more inclusive of women.***

The Advisory Council President is pleased to see that this bill originated in the Senate where older Canadians are taking a lead role in promoting gender inclusion. In addition, the Council noted that honouring women should not be seen as dishonouring men.

< ***Coalition of Provincial and Territorial Advisory Councils meet in Ottawa.***

The Advisory Council President, as the Co-chair of this national coalition, expressed concerns with the lack of mechanisms available to the new Federal Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to hear the concerns of grassroots women's equality seeking groups. The Coalition's Co-chair also noted that too many provinces no longer have resourced independent organizations to bring forward issues of women's social, legal and economic equality.

XII Information / Crisis Referral

Although the Provincial Advisory Council is not mandated to provide support, information and referral services, this is an everyday reality at the Advisory Council office in St. John's. These calls are generally from women who are experiencing personal crisis and are looking for an "attentive ear" and a referral to a "women-friendly service" where their issue will be validated and addressed. The location of the Advisory Council home on LeMarchant Road means that women who are passing by feel free to call in to seek information or a referral to an appropriate service. The Advisory Council staff all participate in providing this service.

Many of the calls and visits focus around violence, health, harassment, lack of income to meet basic needs, custody and access issues, inadequate housing, mental health issues and the need for affordable legal advice. When the Advisory Council staff note a pattern in the concerns brought forward by individual women, the issue may become one of advocacy whereby the President and Board will take it up with a particular bureaucracy, business, or government department. In responding to the calls, staff work from a personal empowerment model, where the woman's experience is validated, and she is referred to the appropriate service. The following are examples of issues brought to the attention of the Advisory Council during this period.

& A woman wishing to attend the Parole Hearing of her ex-husband, who is incarcerated for attempting to kill her, requested the Advisory Council's assistance in gaining financial assistance and making the issue public and political.

& A woman requested the assistance of the Advisory Council staff in her attempts to reunite with her baby daughter. The child was in the custody of the father and although the mother had access, she had no resources to travel to visit with the child for the twice monthly visits awarded by the court order.

& A woman called looking for support, as her sister had been murdered and she could not get counselling for an extended period. She was unable to afford mental health services from a private counselor.

& A social worker employed with the Department of Health and Community Services informed the Advisory Council that she was greatly concerned with the plight of older women who wished to leave abusive relationships. She asked that the Council investigate the housing situation for single older women.

& A woman living in a remote community was unable to pay her electrical bill and was living for three weeks without heat or lights in the fear that the Department of Human Resources and Employment would report her to Child Protection Services.

& A group of women requested support in their attempt to get a water and sewage system extended to their region of the community. These women had young children and felt that their need was a priority health issue.

& A woman called seeking support for her decision to challenge the sexist behavior of a member of a government funded committee.

& A woman requested assistance in accessing financial resources to provide a pregnancy termination procedure for her teenage daughter. The pregnancy was in the second trimester and she needed to travel outside the province.

& A number of women lawyers approached the Advisory Council President to discuss the need for a stronger lobby for the appointment of more women judges.

Information / Crisis / Referral Calls 2001-2002	
Health:	41
Legal:	81
Violence:	60
Information/Referral:	194
Advocacy:	52
Use of Library:	20
Total number of calls recorded: 448	
Time commitment recorded: 76.06	

XIII Community Involvement/Outreach Activities

Although the Provincial Advisory Council is a relatively small organization with only three permanent staff including the President, every attempt is made to work with women and women's organizations throughout the province. Much of this work is accomplished through presentations, speaking, facilitation and participation in activities undertaken by women's organizations with whom we share a common feminist agenda.

- ***Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence (RCCAV) Eastern Region*** ~ The Community Liaison / Communications Director is on the Executive of this anti-violence coalition and the Provincial Advisory Council, through the work of the President and the Community Liaison, plays an important role in maintaining the lobbying/advocacy profile of the RCCAV.

Support to the work of this organization includes executive meetings, secretarial/bookkeeping assistance, chairing meetings, serving on the conference committee and presenting workshops at the September 2001 conference.

- ***Community Alliance for Better Solution (CABS)*** ~ This organization is a loosely structured network of organizations concerned with issues of social justice and inclusion. The group comes together to discuss common concerns with government direction and/or policies. CABS has long standing concerns with the redesign of Human Resources and Employment and its business approach to human services. Members of CABS met with the Minister and senior bureaucrats with the Department of Human Resources and Employment as the department launched its legislative review consultations. The Minister promised to meet again with CABS when the provincial consultation is complete.
- ***Provincial Association Against Family Violence (PAAFV)*** ~ The PAAFV is an umbrella organization for the Transition Houses and Shelters throughout the province. This association exists from project to project and although it provides advice

to the Departments of Human Resources and Employment, Health and Community Services, and the Department of Justice, it has never received resourcing toward its infrastructure. The Provincial Advisory Council considers itself a sister organization to the PAAFV and uses our common agenda of equality/equity and anti-violence to assist this group in its work. Throughout the year the Association's Coordinator attends the quarterly Advisory Council Board meetings to share information on the state of family violence prevention and intervention work. The Advisory Council President and Community Liaison/Communications Director and the Provincial Association's Coordinator are in constant contact to enable an equity/equality analysis to be incorporated in the work of both organizations.

- ***Women In Resource Development Committee (WRDC)*** ~ The President of the Provincial Advisory Council co-chairs this organization which was established in 1999 to foster an environment in this province which will encourage the participation of more women in the trades and technology field. One of the more successful undertakings of this organization is the Orientation to Trades and Technology (OTT) program offered in conjunction with the College of the North Atlantic. Since October 1999, this twenty-four week program has prepared 138 women for courses or further study in trades and technology or careers within the natural resource sector. In addition, WRDC advocates a strong equality/equity position with government and industry for the inclusion of women and girls in

training and/or employment in resource based development and industry.

- ***Women in Leadership and Decision Making*** ~ The President of the Advisory Council has been involved in speaking and facilitating, as a panelist and organizer, in activities to encourage women to offer themselves as candidates in the September 2001 municipal and school board elections. These events took place in Harbor Grace, Carbonear, Gander, Corner Brook and Happy Valley-Goose Bay and provided opportunities for elected municipal and provincial counselors and Members of the House of Assembly to speak about their experience. It was also a time for the Advisory Council to offer challenges to women regarding the need to include more social and environmental concerns as issues that women should profile in their attempts to influence a more integrated approach to social and economic decision making.
- ***Provincial Women's Conference Video and Report*** ~ In October 2000, four hundred and fifty eight women from seventy communities participated in the *Exploring Common Ground Provincial Women's Conference*. It was the wish of the conference participants that a connection as women and communities continue. To assist with that the Advisory Council has distributed more than eight hundred conference reports and seventy five videos of the conference activities. These videos are on women and decision making, women and leadership and a general reflection on the Women's World March Against Poverty and Violence.

This work has been strategic in that it is maintaining a connection with many women who had never participated in organized feminist activities. It has greatly assisted the Provincial Advisory Council in continuing to assist women in different communities and regions to consider their place in leadership and decision making. In an organization like the Advisory Council with limited staff and time to be present with women in their communities, these videos and report have created opportunities for women to begin in a more focused manner to involve their issues in public policies and consultation processes.

- ***Visit to North Coast Communities*** ~ The Provincial Advisory Council and Torngiat Innuat undertook a visit and meetings with women in the communities of Nain, Hopedale and Makkovik. The challenge to do this came from women in Nain who expressed a need to have the Advisory Council become more pro-active in advocating on issues of concern to Aboriginal women living in Labrador. The five day visit included sessions on organizing a healthy women's group, discussions on leadership and an examination of concerns facing women in these northern Labrador communities. In the community of Nain women took a decision to form an ad hoc committee: the Nain Women's Action Committee. They intend to work toward involving more women and to become a voice for women on social and economic issues. The Coordinator of Torngiat Innuat is intending to move that organization toward becoming a Status of Women Council to link more actively with the equality seeking organizations in other parts of Labrador and Newfoundland.

Additional Involvements / Outreach

- Provincial Government Consultations~ The Advisory Council President participated in the Premier's Council as well as the Strategic Social Plan Sub-committee on the Social Audit, social and economic inclusion projects, Human Resources and Employment Legislative Review Consultations and the Volunteer Sector Committee.
- Women Interested in Successful Employment ~ The Community Liaison / Communications Director sits on the Board of Directors for this program whose mandate is to assist women in making the transition to training or employment by providing a holistic approach to skills and personal development.
- December 6th Vigil ~ To commemorate the lives of the fourteen women students at Ecole Polytechnic at the University of Montreal who were killed on December 6, 1989, the Advisory Council joined with other community organizations in dedicating work to the memory of these young women.
- Ad Hoc Committee on Custody and Access ~ the Advisory Council put together a St. John's based committee to track the issues related to the proposed changes to the Federal Divorce Legislation.
- St. Anthony Women's Group ~ A number of meetings and conference calls with women from St. Anthony who are attempting to organize a women's equality group in that region of the province.
- Discussion group consisting of Muslim women and a number of women involved in social justice issues. This group was brought together to foster stronger communications on equality issues within religion and cultural differences.
- National Action Committee on the Status of Women Annual General Meeting ~ The Community Liaison attended both of these activities in our efforts to maintain a strong provincial-national link on provincial issues with national implications.
- Sexual Violence Awareness Week. ~ The Advisory Council, working with the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, as a part of a committee coordinated a week of activities to bring awareness to the issues of sexual violence.
- Attendance at the National Association of Women and the Law Ottawa Conference ~ The Advisory Council's Community Liaison / Communications Director attended this national conference where issues of income security and custody and access were discussed and a national response was coordinated.
- Central Newfoundland Women's Council ~ The Advisory Council assisted the Central Newfoundland women in their work to facilitate and present a retreat for women to complete the organizing of their Status of Women Council for the Central Newfoundland region.

- Alternative Dispute Resolution Committee ~ This is a working committee under the leadership of the Provincial Association Against Family Violence which works to bring a strong gender inclusive analysis to restorative justice practices such as mediation. It is presently working on a third phase with funding from the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada
- Public Education Presentations ~ Presentations at high schools, College of the North Atlantic, Marine Institute and Memorial University. These are provided by the President and Community Liaison and cover topics related to feminism, discrimination, violence and the history and involvements of the women's movement locally, provincially, nationally, and globally.
- In Kind Support to Community Groups ~ The Advisory Council Secretary provides ongoing support to community organizations throughout the province by assisting with bookkeeping, computer training and the development of public relations material. The LeMarchant Road office of the Advisory Council is used by many organization in St. John's who require space for meetings and secretarial assistance.

XIV Communications

The Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council is constantly challenged to be a provincial voice for equality issues. Organizations which provide advocacy and services to women and families throughout the province expect the Council to assist them in this aspect of work. Following our successful Provincial Women's Conference in

late 2000, we had hoped to accomplish much more with our outreach to women and women's organizations outside the Avalon Peninsula.

The disappointment with the lack of new resources soon gave way to a determination to demonstrate to women desiring a stronger connection to the Advisory Council that we would endeavor to do so.

We undertook to improve our ability to communicate, as well upgraded all of our computer equipment, installed highspeed internet and networked the office computers. Then we contracted work on compiling an effective and efficient database. The Advisory Council contact information has been revised and names and addresses of individual women, women's organizations, government agencies and contacts throughout the province have been entered into our database system. The concentrated work of the Council to reach out to women beyond the organized feminist community is enhanced by our ability to send information and seek their input on issues which surface in the different regions.

The Advisory Council Community Liaison / Communications Director compiled complete information on existing and emerging women's equality seeking organizations. She has undertaken a survey to ascertain the needs of women's organizations. The Council Secretary has undertaken training which has improved her ability to provide maintenance and upkeep to our computer equipment. She is now able, through additional training, to maintain and add to the Council's web site. This web site work is proving effective as the Advisory Council is receiving dozens of "hits" demonstrating to us that women are very interested in equality issues.

