

The emergency crisis telephone line normally receives 500 telephone calls per month. Last year a media campaign on violence against women was struck by the provincial government of Manitoba. At that point, 1300 calls per month were coming from women reaching out for the first time. (4:65)

The Committee agrees with the assessment that there is a national blind spot with respect to violence against women which must be immediately addressed. A national public education campaign would be a mechanism for denouncing violence against women, raising awareness of and sensitivity to the personal safety and security of women, dispelling myths, and involving different sectors of our society, beginning at the national level with legislators, in its prevention. The Committee is convinced that funding for community resources must accompany such an initiative. And it concurs with the proposal put forward by Gene Krawetz, Chair of the Provincial Association of Transition Houses of Saskatchewan, that a public education campaign should not focus solely on the victims of violence. She cautioned the Committee:

"...Any public education campaign that is done needs to be very carefully designed so that we are not appealing to people to have pity for "these poor women" and "those poor children"... It has to be designed in such a way that it is all of society that is held accountable, because of course, the roots of violence against women are embedded in our society in our societal institutions. So it has to be very clearly not them and us but all of us. (5:42)

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Committee recommends that the federal government exercise its leadership role to ensure security of the person for all Canadian women by mounting a national, multi-media education campaign on violence against women. The campaign should expressly denounce violence against women as criminal behaviour and emphasize societal responsibility for its prevention.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Committee recommends that the federal government initiate discussions with provincial and territorial governments to ensure that the community has adequate resources to accommodate the demand for services that will emanate from the multi-media campaign on violence against women.