

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Committee recommends that the federal government work with the provinces, the territories and relevant professions to promote strong and consistent violence-prevention education in schools across the country. The federal government should attempt to ensure that such education expressly addresses gender-equality issues and is a mandatory part of the school curriculum in all elementary, junior and high schools.

The Committee heard that the societal beliefs, attitudes and practices which have fostered inequities between men and women are reflected in school curricula and extra curricula programmes for boys and girls sponsored by educational institutions, municipal parks and recreation departments and organizations which are frequently in receipt of public funding.

The Committee believes that every effort must be made to eliminate sexism and socially constructed gender limitations that restrict opportunities for girls and women and, by extension, limit their potential.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Committee recommends that the federal government work with the provinces to promote policies governing educational institutions, parks and recreation departments and amateur sport organizations to eliminate practices which are barriers to the full participation of girls and to ensure that all individuals have equal access and equal opportunity to develop to their maximum potential.

Some of the witnesses who appeared before the Committee expressed concern about the powerful role of the media in socializing young people. They recommended that a component of high school curriculum for young men and women should include study of media representations of violence and their effect on behaviour. Judith Posner, of the Association for Media Literacy, informed the Committee that violent imagery is portrayed by a variety of media, most of which is mainstream, such as popular films, fashion advertisements, rock videos and pornography. The common themes or depictions in violent media images typically show an imbalance of power between men and women and the presence of coercion. They intimate that women enjoy pain, violence and subjugation. In certain popular "slasher films," girls and women who are independent are the victims; they pay a price for their autonomy. According to Ms. Posner:

The media serve as agents for reinforcing the status quo and legitimizing...activities in which women are constructed as necessary victims. (5:66)