

Women's Equality and Security Coalition (WESC)

Selected publications, appearances and other activities of WESC Members

The Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres – CASAC

www.casac.ca

Conferences/Consultations

A Day of Feminist Dialogue hosted by CASAC with a broad spectrum of 100 Canadian women's equality experts beyond including prostituted women and Aboriginal women leaders, Work Center for Dialogue, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver 2005.

From Victimization to Criminalization, international conference hosted by CASAC and The Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, exploring the social policy implications of sexual violence, poverty and racism previously endured by women prisoners and the failure of the criminal justice system to successfully criminalize violence against all women, Ottawa 2001.

At the invitation of consecutive Justice Ministers beginning with the Honourable Kim Campbell, and including Blais, Rock and McLellan, CASAC hosted and coordinated annual three day consultations (1993 – 1998) on the issue of Violence Against Women as a matter of women's equality.

Presentations/Appointments

Presentation on the issues of prostitution and trafficking before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which resulted in the Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women: "Turning Outrage into Action to Address Trafficking for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation in Canada", 2007.

Presentation on the issues of prostitution before the Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws, the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, which resulted in the Report of the Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws: "The Challenge of Change: A Study of Canada's Criminal Prostitution Laws", 2006.

Consultation as a member of the National Reference Group on Women's Issues established by the Solicitor General, Andy Scott, 1998.

Consultation with the Chief Crown Attorney in the federal Ministry of the Attorney General regarding misuse of conditional sentencing, 1997.

Consultation with the federal Justice Department regarding the evaluation of (and in particular the failures of) conditional sentencing, 1995.

Presentation to the Subcommittee on the Status of Women of the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, Social Affairs, Seniors and the Status of Women, which resulted in the Report of the Subcommittee on the Status of Women: *War against Women*, 1991.

Participant in Justice Minister Kim Campbell's symposium, Women Law and The Administration of Justice, Vancouver, 1991.

Appointed to the Advisory Committee to the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, 1990.

Research

CASAC LINKS - CASAC research and development project funded by Justice Canada at ten Canadian sites to examine the inadequacy of criminal justice responses to violence against women. 1998-2003

Interventions

CASAC was an intervenor in the following cases:

R. v. Seaboyer; R. v. Gayme, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 577 (re constitutionality of "rape-shield" provisions in the *Criminal Code*);

O'Connor v. The Queen, [1995] 4 S.C.R. 411 (re sexual assault and access to complainant's medical, counselling and school records);

A. (L.L.) v. Baharri, [1995] 4 S.C.R. 536 (re sexual assault and access to complainant's medical records); and

R. v. Darrach, [2000] 2 S.C.R. 443 (re sexual assault and evidence of a complainant's sexual history).

Articles

Lee Lakeman, "Ending Rape: the Canadian State Responsibility", forthcoming in *International Approaches to Rape*, (London, UK: Policy Press, 2011).

Lee Lakeman, "Abolishing prostitution through economic, physical and political security for women" in *Public Policy for Women State Income, Security and Labour Market Issues*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

Lee Lakeman, "Feminist Alliances in the Face of Law", in *Calling for Change: Women, Law and the Legal Profession*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2006).

Lee Lakeman, “The Relevance of Rights for Systemic Change for Women”, *Diminishing Returns: Inequality and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, (Vancouver: LexisNexis Canada, 2006).

Lee Lakeman, *Canada’s Promises to Keep: The Charter and Violence Against Women*, (2003) also published as *Obsession, With Intent: Violence Against Women*, (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2005).

Lee Lakeman, “A Feminist View of the Supreme Court from the Anti-Rape Frontline”, in *Adding Feminism to Law: the Contributions of Justice Claire L’Heureux-Dube*, (Irwin Law, 2004).

Lee Lakeman, “Why ‘Law and Order’ Cannot End Violence Against Women; and Why the Development of Women’s (Social, Economic and Political and Civil) Rights Might”, *Canadian Woman Studies*, Vol 20, No 3, 2000. Online at: <http://www.casac.ca/content/why-law-and-order-cannot-end-violence-against-women-and-why-development-womens-social-econo-0>

The Aboriginal Women’s Action Network - AWAN www.awanbc.ca

The Aboriginal Women’s Action Network (AWAN) was established in 1995 in response to a pressing need for an Aboriginal women’s group to provide a much needed voice for Aboriginal women’s concerns regarding governance, policy making, women’s rights, employment rights, violence against women, Indian Act membership and status, and many other issues affecting Aboriginal women in contemporary society. The founding members of AWAN conceived of themselves as salmon swimming upstream with determined vision to create new life, and therefore, renewed hope and possibilities for our children. For members of AWAN the Salmon Nation’s legacy of survival depends on an unwavering commitment to future generations, a commitment which serves to guide AWAN in our political involvement and quest for social justice for Aboriginal women and children.

Currently, AWAN is focusing on the complex issues of male violence and prostitution and their profound impacts on the lives of Aboriginal women and girls. Specifically, we are examining how and to what extent male violence and prostitution are related to issues of poverty, inadequate housing, child apprehension, and the history of colonization, which continue to undermine the well-being of Aboriginal women and girls and hinder our full participation in social, economic, and political life in Canada.

Research/Projects/Articles/Presentations

AWAN, Presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) on Violence against Aboriginal Women, January 18, 2011, Vancouver, BC.

AWAN, "Presentation at One is Too Many Summit" (2009). Online at: AWAN website.

AWAN, "Bad Dates, Campus Creepers, & Drug Rapes", Violence against Women Prevention Week, (2009). Online at: AWAN website.

AWAN, "Statement for Walk 4 Justice Parliament Hill Rally" (2008). Online at: AWAN website.

AWAN, "Statement Opposing Legalized Prostitution and Total Decriminalization of Prostitution" (2007). Online at: AWAN website.

Fay Blaney, "Voices of 'Missing Women' and Those Women Still at Risk Need to be Heard!", (2005). Online at: AWAN website.

Audrey Huntley, *Report on Bill C-31* (2000). Online at: <http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/learn/resources/aboriginal-womens-action-network-releases-report-bill-c-31>

AWAN, "The Implications of Restorative Justice in Cases of Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Children" (2000). Online at: <http://www.casac.ca/content/aboriginal-womens-action-network-restorative-justice-policy-awan>

In 2000, AWAN undertook the Fraser River Journey for Justice. 16 Aboriginal women journeyed down the Fraser River by raft, visiting Aboriginal communities along the way to consult with women about violence against Aboriginal women, its history and current realities. See: The Aboriginal Women's "Journey For Justice", 2000. Online at: AWAN website. See also Fay Blaney, "Aboriginal women on a Fraser River Journey" (2005). Online at: AWAN website.

The Asian Women Coalition Ending Prostitution – AWCEP

AWCP activities include research and providing information to the public about Asian women in prostitution, particularly about those women trafficked into and through Vancouver, and the violence and violations of rights they experience; as well as outreach and information sharing with elected officials at all three levels of government.

Consultations/Presentations

Consultations and presentations during the 2008-2010 period include:

Consultation with RCMP Human Trafficking Office regarding development of agenda for Human Trafficking Conference, upcoming, Ottawa, March 2011.

AWCP, Presentation in The Citizens Summit Against Human Trafficking (Vancouver, 2010).

AWCP, Presentation to Emancipation Now Conference on Human Trafficking and Prostitution (Vancouver, 2010).

Presentations on: human trafficking to Member of Parliament, Libby Davies; US consulate regarding Trafficking in Persons report; S.U.C.C.E.S.S.; Vancouver City Councilors Kerry Jang, Geoff Meggs, and George Chow; Vancouver Police Board; City of Vancouver staff re: City policies on prostitution and trafficking.

Participant in “Flesh Mapping: An International Dialogue on Prostitution and Human Trafficking”, with leaders and human rights experts from Australia, India, the Philippines, and Japan, Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008.

Coalition of Child Care Advocates of British Columbia – CCCABC

www.cccabc.bc.ca

Since formation in 1982, CCCABC has been providing expert testimony to provincial, national and international committees demonstrating that systemic supports, such as affordable, universal child care, are necessary in order to advance women’s equality in Canada.

Submissions

Submissions to the BC Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services September 2010, October 2008, September 2007, September 2006, October 2005, September 2004, October 2003, September 2002.

Pre-Budget submissions to the Federal Standing Committee on Finance, August 2010, August 2009, August 2007, September 2006 October 2005.

Reports

CCABC, *Our Emerging Plan for an Integrated System of Care and Learning in BC*, November 2010.

CCABC, *Environmental Scan for the Integrated System of Early Care and Learning Project*, July 2010.

CCABC, *Literature Review: Governance of Integrated Early Care and Learning Systems*, 2010.

CCABC, *Child Care is a Women's Issue: International Women's Day*, March 2009.

CCABC, *A Costing and Accountability Model for a BC Child Care System*, November 2007.

CCABC, *The Evolution of Community Controlled Child Care in BC*, November 2007.

Joint Work with Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada (CCAAC)

For over 25 years, CCCABC Board members have provided national leadership most notably with the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada.

CCABC with CCAAC, *What does the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women mean for child care in Canada?* February 2009.

CCABC, with CCAAC and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA), presentation at the 52nd session of the United Nations Commission of the Status of Women, "A Taxing Issue: Tax Policies and Women in Canada's Modern Economy", February 2008, New York.

CCABC with CCAAC, *Child Care Policy: Making the Connections Project Report*, analyzing federal, provincial and territorial public reporting on child care, October 2007.

CCABC with CCAAC, *From Patchwork to Framework: A Child Care Strategy for Canada*, September 2004 (detailed blueprint outlining the funding and policy components essential to developing a pan-Canadian accessible, effective and accountable child care system).

Provincial Council of Women of British Columbia

The Council's organized work includes women's concerns in education, social reform, civil law, government, and industry. Policy is developed through a resolution process in which all levels of the organization participate. The Provincial Council is a part of the National Council of Women, whose history, policy and briefs can be found at www.ncwc.ca. Over the years, the Provincial Council, on behalf of women in British Columbia and in concert with its counterparts in other provinces, has urged the Government of Canada to take the following actions:

- 2007 Establish an independent external accountability mechanism for federal women's prisons
- 2006 Identify women as an identifiable group in the Criminal Code
- 2004 Prevent abuse of women and girls in polygamous communities
- 2002 Raise the age of protection for children and youth from sexual exploitation

- 1998 Institute a zero tolerance policy towards violence against women
- 1992 Review the judicial appointment procedure and establish a system to ensure that 50% of all newly appointed judges are women
- 1982 Increase the promotion and accessibility of instruction for immigrant women especially in language, citizenship, and social integration
- 1981 Improve education, rehabilitation and recreation programs for female prisoners; and construction for regional prisons for women
- 1980 Appoint women in proportionate numbers to federal decision-making bodies
- 1979 Enforce the equal pay of work of equal value legislation
- 1974 Restore the status of women married to non-Indians.
- 1974 Change the law to provide for equal division of property acquired during years of marriage partnership
- 1973 Establish an affirmative action program to improve the economic opportunities of women in Canada
- 1973 Amend the Canada Pension Plan so that homemakers can participate in their own right
- 1967 Establish a Royal Commission of the Status of Women.

EVE – (formerly Exploited Voices now Educating)

Composed of former sex-industry women, EVE is dedicated to public education on prostitution and to advocating for its abolition through political action, and awareness raising that focuses on ending the demand for paid sexual access to women and children's bodies.

Presentations

Presentation to the Board of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, 2011.

Presentation to the RCMP (Prince Rupert) conference “Out of the Shadows”, 2010.

Presentations, associated with the campaign “Buying Sex is NOT A Sport” at: University of British Columbia, Alberta Coalition Against Human Trafficking (ACT) (Edmonton), Simon

Fraser University, Grandview Calvary Baptist Church, SURREY Relate Church, Vancouver First Baptist Church, Walmer Road Baptist Church (Toronto), University of Toronto, 2009-2010

Presentation to the Women's Economic Summit hosted by Antigone Magazine, University of British Columbia, 2008. Online at: <http://www.archive.org/details/TheFWordNov2208>

Participant in "Flesh-Mapping: 16 days of Dialogue on Prostitution and Violence Against Women", Vancouver Art Gallery, 2008.

Articles/Media

Trisha Baptie, Orato Online News Magazine, www.orato.com, coverage of the Robert Pickton trial (2007).

Trisha Baptie, "Sex Worker? Never Met One", Sisyphus, (2009). Online at: <http://sisyphe.org/spip.php?article3290>

Trisha Baptie, "Buying Sex is Not a Sport", Metro News, May 21, 2009. Online at: <http://www.metronews.ca/vancouver/local/article/232622--buying-sex-not-a-sport-sex-work-activists>

Trisha Baptie, "Why Prostitution, The World's Oldest Oppression, Must Be Stamped Out" George Straight, June 12, 2009. Online at: <http://www.straight.com/article-232404/trisha-baptie-why-prostitution-worlds-oldest-oppression-must-be-stamped-out>

Justice for Girls

www.justiceforgirls.org

Justice for Girls has appeared before provincial, federal, and international public bodies to address poverty and male violence against teenage girls. Justice For Girls made written and oral submissions to the following (written submissions can be found at www.justiceforgirls.org)

Presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women on Violence against Aboriginal Women, Vancouver January, 2011.

Presentation to the House of Commons Finance Committee, Pre-Budget Consultations, Langley 2010.

Presentations to B.C. Ministry of Attorney General, B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development, B.C. Ministry of Solicitor General, on a regular basis.

Presentation to the Senate Committee on Human Rights, Vancouver 2006.

Presentation to the Honourable Landon Pearson, Senator, Parliament of Canada, regarding the age of consent to sexual activity, 2002.

Presentation to Status of Women Canada, 2000.

Member of the Canadian NGO delegation to the United Nations to prepare state parties for Canada's first Universal Periodic Review, Geneva 2009.

Member of the Canadian NGO delegation to the United Nations Committee on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Geneva 2008.

Presentation to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Washington DC 2005.

Presentation to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, Vancouver, 2007.

Member of the Canadian NGO delegation to the United Nations Committee on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Geneva 2005.

Reports

Asia Czapska, Annabel Webb and Nura Taefi, *More Than Bricks & Mortar: A Rights-Based Strategy to Prevent Girl Homelessness in Canada*, (2008).

Justice for Girls, *Girl Homelessness in Canada*, prepared for Parity Magazine, Australia, (2007)

Kelly A. MacDonald for Justice for Girls, *Justice System's Response: Violence against Aboriginal Girls*, Submitted to the Honourable Wally Oppal, Attorney General of British Columbia, September 2005

Jaskiran Dhillon with Justice for Girls, *Struggles for Access: Examining the Educational Experiences of Homeless Young Women and Girls in Canada*, (2005).

Amber Richelle Dean for Justice for Girls, *Locking Them Up to Keep Them "Safe": Criminalized Girls in British Columbia* (2005).

Poverty and Human Rights Centre

<http://www.povertyandhumanrights.org>

Reports

The Vicious Circle: Poverty and Violence in the Lives of Women in British Columbia (2010).
Authors: Gwen Brodsky, Melina Buckley, Shelagh Day, Sharon McIvor, Pamela A. Murray.

Shelagh Day and Gwen Brodsky, *Women and the Canada Social Transfer: Securing the Social Union*, (Ottawa: Status of Women Canada, 2007). Online at: http://dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/collection_2007/swc-cfc/SW21-159-2007E.pdf

Human Rights Denied: Single Mothers on Social Assistance (2005). Authors: Melina Buckley, Gwen Brodsky, Shelagh Day, Margot Young. Online: PHRC website.

Submissions/Presentations/Consultations

Poverty and Human Rights Centre/B.C. CEDAW Group, Submission to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, Parliament of Canada, on violence against Aboriginal women and girls, January 19, 2011.

The Poverty and Human Rights Centre, in its own name, or on behalf of other organizations, has made submissions to, and appearances before, United Nations treaty bodies, specifically about Canada's and British Columbia's failures to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of women. Violence against women and girls, and against Aboriginal women and girls in particular, was reported on in each of these submissions, which include:

B.C. CEDAW Group, *Nothing to Report*, Submission to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on the implementation of the Committee's priority recommendations concerning missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls and inadequate social assistance (2010). Online: PHRC website.

Poverty and Human Rights Centre, *Neglect and Disregard: Canada's Human Rights Record*, Submission to the UN Human Rights Council regarding the Universal Periodic Review of Canada (2008).

B.C. CEDAW Group, *Inaction and Non-Compliance: British Columbia's Approach to Women's Equality*, Submission to the United Nations CEDAW Committee (2008). Online: PHRC website.

Poverty and Human Rights Centre, *Women in British Columbia: Human Rights Under Attack*, Submission to the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2006).

Poverty and Human Rights Centre, *Civil and Political Rights in British Columbia*, Submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee (2005).

B.C. CEDAW Group, *British Columbia Moves Backwards on Women's Equality* Submission to the United Nations CEDAW Committee (2002). Online: PHRC website.

The Directors of the Poverty and Human Rights Centre were involved with other Canadian and international human rights experts in the development of a *Draft General Comment on Article 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* at the request of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Committee adopted General Comment 16, *The equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights*, E/C.12/2005/4, in August 2005.

The Directors are authors, with other experts, of the “Montreal Principles on Women's Economic, Social and Cultural Rights” published in (2004) 26 *Human Rights Quarterly* 760-780. Poverty and Human Rights Centre, “A Framework to Improve the Social Union For Canadians”, Submission to the Joint Ministerial Council on Social Policy Renewal on the occasion of the review of the Social Union Framework Agreement (2002).

Interventions

The Poverty and Human Rights Centre intervened in:

Alberta v. Caron, Supreme Court of Canada, S.C.C. File No. 33092, (2010), decision on reserve, with Council of Canadians with Disabilities, Charter Committee on Poverty Issues and the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund (criteria for the exercise of judicial discretion to award advance costs in constitutional litigation);

Victoria (City) v. Adams, 2009 B.C.C.A. 563, (right of homeless people to erect overhead shelter in public places).

Articles

Shelagh Day, “Minding the Gap: Human Rights Commitments and Compliance” in M. Young, S. Boyd, G. Brodsky and S. Day, eds., *Poverty: Rights, Social Citizenship and Legal Activism* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

Gwen Brodsky, “Governmental Subversion of Rights: The Jealousy Factor,” in M. Young, S. Boyd, G. Brodsky and S. Day, eds., *Poverty: Rights, Social Citizenship and Legal Activism* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

Gwen Brodsky and Shelagh Day, “Poverty as an Equality Rights Violation,” in Fay Faraday, Margaret Denike & M. Kate Stephenson, eds., *Making Equality Rights Real: Securing Substantive Equality Under the Charter* (Toronto: Irwin Law, 2006).

Gwen Brodsky and Shelagh Day, “Denial of the Means of Subsistence as an Equality Violation,” in F. du Bois, A. Fagan, C. Murray and M. Sullivan eds., *Advancing Women’s Rights: The First Decade of Democracy*, Equality Law: Reflections from South Africa and Elsewhere (Cape Town: JUTA Law, 2005).

Gwen Brodsky and Shelagh Day, “Beyond the Social and Economic Rights Debate: Substantive Equality Speaks to Poverty,” *Women and Poverty: The Challenge for Social and Economic Rights*, (2002) 14(1) *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law/Revue Femmes et Droit* 185. Online: PHRC website.

Shelagh Day, “The Indivisibility of Women’s Human Rights” *Women 2000: Eradicating Poverty and Violence in the 21st Century*, (2000) 20 *Canadian Woman Studies*.

Gwen Brodsky and Shelagh Day, *Women and the Equality Deficit: The Impact of Restructuring Social Programs in Canada* (Ottawa, Status of Women Canada, 1998).

Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter

www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca

Presentations

Presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) on Violence against Aboriginal Women, January 18, 2011, Vancouver, BC

Presentation to the House of Commons Finance Committee, Langley 2010.

Presentation to the BC Ministry of Attorney General on the Violence against Women in Relationship (VAWIR) draft policy, July 2010, Vancouver BC

Presentation to the Citizens Summit Against Human Trafficking - Emancipation Now, March 2009, Vancouver, BC. Online at:

<http://www.emancipationnow.com/founding-plenary.html>

Presentation to the Oppal Commission on Policing, "To Whom do the Police Answer?" (1993). Online at:

http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/To%20Whom%20Do%20Police%20Answer_G%20Brodsky%2C%20D%20Read%20%26%20P%20Mucklow_Jun%201993_Oppal%20Commission.pdf

Conferences/Symposia

Vancouver Rape Relief convened an international symposium on *Policing Male Violence Against Women* that was attended by advocates and experts on civilian oversight of police from common law countries (Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand and Scotland), Vancouver, 2008.

Vancouver Rape Relief hosted *Flesh Mapping: Vancouver Markets Pacific Women* at the Vancouver Art Gallery in conjunction with the show *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*. 15 women from Pacific Rim countries (including Australia, Japan, India, and the Philippines) gathered daily for two hours of discussion on the conditions of women, the marketing of women, and the connections between prostitution in Vancouver and international trafficking in girls and women.

Since 2005, Vancouver Rape Relief has convened an annual Symposium on Violence against Women on December 6th to mark the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. These events are held at the Vancouver Public Library, and include speakers, roundtables, and films. Speakers in 2010 included: Jeanette Corbiere Lavell, President of the Native Women's Association of

Canada; Bonnie Klein, filmmaker and feminist activist who created “This Is Not A Love Story”; Ginny NiCarthy, author of “Getting Free”, a handbook for battered women; Asta Haland, a Norwegian expert on prostitution laws and the promise of the “Nordic Model”.

Interventions

Vancouver Rape Relief intervened in *Bonnie Mooney v. RCMP and Canada*. The factum is online at:

http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/Factum_Intervener5%5B1%5D.pdf

Articles and Reports

Lee Lakeman, *99 Federal Steps... Towards an End to Violence against Women* (1993). Online at: http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/99_Federal_Steps_Whole_Document.pdf

Louisa Russell, “What Women Need Now from Police and Prosecutors: 35 Years of Working to Improve Police Response to Male Violence Against Women”, in *Women Resisting Rape: Feminist Law, Practice and Activism*, Canadian Woman Studies, Volume 28, Number No 1, 2010. Online at: <http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/28-36%20Russell%5B1%5D.pdf>

Suzanne Jay, “British Columbia Anti Violence Workers Recommendations for Change”, Canadian Woman Studies, *Eradicating Poverty and Violence in the 21st Century*. Volume 20, No 3, 2000. Online at: http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/sites/default/files/imce/Suzanne_Jay_Canadian_women_studies.pdf

University Women’s Club of Vancouver

<http://www.uwcvancouver.ca>

The University Women’s Club of Vancouver (UWCV) was established in 1907 with the objectives to stimulate intellectual activity and to encourage the study of social and economic conditions. These objectives have evolved over time and today they are augmented by the added purposes of promoting an interest in public affairs and facilitating social responsibility. The UWCV has a membership of approximately 400 women. UWCV is a member of the Canadian Federation of Women (est. 1919) with a membership of approximately 10,000 women across Canada. The Canadian Federation is in turn a member of the International Federation of University Women, present in 80 countries.

History

The UWCV has always advocated and worked towards the improvement in women’s condition and status; from law reform work to establish post-Victorian laws affecting women, property and

children to the famous struggle for women's suffrage. The UWCV had a significant part in the enactment of the Suffrage Amendment Act of 1917. After the first World War, the UWCV undertook a strong campaign for improvements and law reform around the provincial public schools and the intolerable working conditions for women and children. Many of these campaigns and projects have been repeated over the decades as working, housing, education conditions for women have been chronically neglected.

In the latter half of the 20th century the UWCV renewed its commitment to women's rights at a major conference it hosted on the Royal Commission Report on the Status of Women. The UWCV made submissions to the Commission as well. This conference, held on January 30, 1971, was the catalyst for the establishment of several Vancouver women's organizations and the launch of activist and political careers of many well known Vancouver women. Since that time the UWCV has continued its tradition of addressing women's challenges through public education and advocacy and support for other women's organizations and initiatives. Recent areas of attention have been the Charter and equality rights through association with the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and later, through collaboration and support of the Womens' Legal Education and Action Fund.

The UWCV has done considerable work on women and pensions in response to the federal government's Green Paper on Pension Reform; on pornography through reports to the Fraser Committee on Prostitution and Pornography and the Special Parliamentary Committee on Pornography. In short, the UWCV has participated through submissions, letters and appearances in coalition or on its own, to almost all commissions and inquiries in BC since 1907 wherever the opportunities or dangers for women and children were seen to be affected.

Current Work

The UWCV is a co-founder and host of the Bountiful Roundtable, consisting of a diversity of organizations concerned and advocating about polygamy and its consequences in the BC community of Bountiful. The Roundtable is presently monitoring the Supreme Court case and continuing to engage with former members of Bountiful and to advocate with elected officials regarding outstanding education, child welfare and other challenges.

The UWCV is an active participant in the Citizen's Summit Against Human Trafficking. As well, ongoing consultation and advice is continuing with the City of Vancouver regarding its potential responses to the multiplicity of problems endured by prostituted women and children within the city.

The UWCV hosts many conferences, workshops and public lectures in order to contribute meaningfully to public education and community engagement on critical issues pertaining, in particular, to women and children. Some topics covered recently have been women and economic security, women and politics, violence against women, prostitution, pornography, women's equality, women and education, pension rights and reform, women and criminal justice and the prison system, immigrant women's challenges.

The UWCV studies important issues and submits reports and resolutions to the national organization for adoption. Resolutions which are adopted are addressed in a written brief and discussed with the relevant federal ministers in Ottawa each year. And those that are applicable are raised by the Canadian Federation NGO delegation each year at the United Nations. The Canadian Federation was an active and early participant in the international women's organizations successful efforts to establish UN Women, the new UN agency devoted to women's concerns, endorsed by the General Assembly in 2010.

Through study, collaboration, public events, letter writing, briefs and meetings with elected representatives and submissions to public commissions the University Women's Club of Vancouver has an accomplished record of understanding and advocating for women in our city and in our province for the past 104 years.