

City for All Women Initiative ***Initiative; une ville pour toutes les femmes***

HRSS April 7, 2005

Priorities for the 2005 Community Project Funding Program

Good morning, my name is Sandy Onyalo and I am joined today by Fran Klodawsky, Associate professor at Carleton University. We are both members of the Steering Committee of the City for All Women Initiative/*Initiative; une ville pour toutes les femmes*. *We are* a formal partnership between the City of Ottawa and diverse women representing women's organizations and equity-seeking groups.

Federally funded by Status of Women Canada. We seek to:

Strengthen the capacity of the full-diversity of women and the City of Ottawa to work in partnership so as to create a more inclusive city and promote gender equality.

First of all, we are here today to thank you for having re-instated the Community Project Funding Programme. You may remember that diverse women involved in our network identified this as a key concern for their organizations and communities and called for its reinstatement throughout the budget process. Women met with Councillors, sent messages, were interviewed in the media and spoke at budget consultations across the city on this issue.

And when it was reinstated, we celebrated. As one immigrant woman declared triumphantly,

"We won! We won! They listened and responded to what we had to say!"

We come to speak to you today because we believe that setting good priorities is key to making best use of these limited funds. Our concern is that if the funds are to be used to really address emerging needs, then promoting equity must be an integral part of the criteria.

Basing the priorities on the Ottawa 20/20 Guiding Principles and the strategic directions of the Health Services, Arts and Heritage Plan is an important step toward increasing the possibility that the fund will contribute to a "caring and inclusive city", "with equal access to services". We are also pleased to see that in page 2 of Document 3, the list of priorities includes the criteria:

Provides services to low income families, aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

The inclusion of these equity-seeking groups, and in particular, the inclusion of aboriginal people who have not been included to date, is of great importance. Many of the women in our network represent these very groups and know how important this is.

However, we are concerned that women are not among the designated groups. This concerns us particularly at this time in which the social programs that lightened women's workload and addressed violence against women have been significantly reduced in recent years as a result of cuts and downloading. We know that in the current context, it is women who are most likely to assume extra work on the home front, to volunteer more in the community and be stretched as front line workers in the social services. We have seen what these trends have meant in our community and its impact on diverse women and their organizations.

Many women's groups exist in the city, however they are severely under funded and need funds if they are to address emerging issues. In addition, there are many grassroots women's organizations of new Canadians who are doing amazing work on total volunteer labour. For these reasons, it is essential that women be one of the designated groups.

Second, we propose, that in order to really address emerging needs, the criteria must include a focus on changing the playing field - creating conditions of equality for the groups marginalized in our city. For this reason, we recommend, an additional criteria:

Promote conditions of equality on the basis of race, ethnicity, income, gender and ability.

You may ask, why women or gender need to be mentioned, if in fact, both women and men make up the other target groups. Our point here is that gender is a cross-cutting issue. There are differences between women and men in each of these equity groups. If we are to create conditions of equality, we must look at the ways in which women and men are differently affected by an emerging issue and what is needed to create conditions of gender equality.

To achieve this, we recommend that the funding proposal, as well as the monitoring and evaluation forms, include two questions:

- Which equity groups, if any, are being served?
- How does the project contribute to equity?

In summary, we make three recommendations:

1. The last criteria be amended to include women, so as to read:
Provides services to low income families, aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, members of visible minorities and women.
2. An additional criteria be added:
Promote conditions of equality on the basis of race, ethnicity, income, gender and ability.
3. Questions to monitor inclusion of equity groups and the aims or achievement of equity be included in the funding proposal, as well as the monitoring and evaluation.

Thank you for hearing us here today.

Presented by:
Steering Committee members
Fran Klodawsky and Sandy Onyalo

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