

APPENDIX B: ACKNOWLEDGING PAST RESEARCH AND INITIATIVES

INTRODUCTION

The following provides a brief overview of past research and initiatives on MMIWG. While we attempt to summarize the many historic and ongoing initiatives, we acknowledge that our efforts may inadvertently exclude a number of important activities.

Grassroots Initiatives

Across Canada, individuals and communities have organized at the grassroots to call for action, to look for loved ones and to honour the memory of MMIWG.

Many persons and organizations have mobilized to demand government action. On August 25, 2014 a group of concerned individuals camped in Winnipeg's Memorial Park calling on national leaders for an inquiry into MMIWG. On several occasions, peaceful protestors have blocked traffic on busy Winnipeg intersections in an effort to raise awareness and call for an inquiry into MMIWG.¹

Individuals have also found creative ways to search for their loved ones who are missing or whose remains have not been found, and also come together to honour the MMIWG. In Winnipeg, a volunteer-based initiative named "Drag the Red" emerged after 15 year old Tina Fontaine's body was found in the Red River. Many have taken to social media to share pictures and stories of their loved ones to help find those who are missing and honour those who have been murdered. A hand-drawn map purportedly showing where the remains of Tamra Keepness might be found was posted anonymously on Reddit in November 2014 and is now getting the attention of Regina Police.²

Individuals at the grassroots level have also come together to honour the MMIWG. One such example is "The Walking with Our Sisters" travelling art installation which includes hundreds of beaded vamps, representing the unfinished lives of the Indigenous women and girls who are missing or who have been murdered.³

Community Organizations

Many non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations have been doing valuable work on a daily basis with individuals at the grassroots. The following is a very brief overview of some of the organizations involved in this important work, and only lists some of the programs offered by each.

Ka Ni Kanichihk

Ka Ni Kanichihk is a community-based organization that provides culturally-based education,

1 See: Megan Roberts, "Protestors block traffic on Portage to raise awareness over murdered, missing indigenous women" (September 2 2014) CTV News.

2 "Tamra Keepness map on Reddit gets attention of Regina Police:" CBC News (November 3 2014).

3 "Walking with our Sisters Installation 'more than beautiful artwork'" (October 10 2014) CBC News.

leadership and community development, healing and wellness programs and services rooted in the restoration and reclamation of Indigenous cultures. In 2012, Ka Ni Kanichichk Inc prepared a toolkit for the families of MMIWG. The toolkit includes:

- a 24 hour and 48 hour checklist designed to support families who become aware a relative or friend is missing;
- a checklist for hospitals and rehabilitation centres;
- a sample community log;
- a sample family and friend contact list;
- prevention and safety tips for families;
- guides for self care and for working with social media, media and the police; and,
- a Medicine Bear Resource Guide with emergency contacts, a description and contact information for community organizations in Manitoba.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Inc.

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. has a wide range of programs and services that are aimed at empowering individuals and families to better care for themselves and each other. They provide culturally-relevant preventive support programs and services for Aboriginal families. Ma Mawi responds to identified needs through: a community drop-in program, home-based crisis intervention, a parent support program, and the Spirit of Peace program which helps families heal from the effects of violence.⁴

Ndinawewaaganag Endaawaad Inc. (Ndinawe)

Ndinawe offers accessible 24-hour safe-houses, supports and basic necessities for children and youth that are at risk of being abused and exploited, as well as a variety of community based programming and resources for youth ages 11-25.⁵

The Native Women's Transition Centre

The Native Women's Transition Centre provides temporary residence for Aboriginal women and their children, as well as support groups for skills development and independent living, counselling, child care services and women's sharing circles.⁶

Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre of Winnipeg, Inc.

The Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre is a community and culturally-based centre providing holistic services to the Indigenous community of Winnipeg. Some of the Centre's programs include: Head Start, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Effects/Education Program, Abinotci Mino-Ayawin (children's healing), Men's Healing Wellness Program, Indian Residential School-Alternative Dispute Resolution, and access to Traditional Healers, Physicians and Nurses.⁷

Wahbung Abinoonjiiag, Inc.

Wahbung Abinoonjiiag was established to empower children and their families to break the cycle of

4 Online: www.mamawi.com

5 Online: www.ndinawe.ca

6 Online: www.nativewomens.mb.ca

7 Online: www.ahwc.ca

violence, by providing opportunities for holistic healing through culturally-appropriate teachings and activities in a safe and nurturing environment. At Wahbung there is a women's circle, a parenting program, moms and tots playgroups, a girls mentorship group, a co-ed junior youth group, as well as counselling and cultural services, and domestic violence prevention workshops.⁸

North Point Douglas Women's Centre

The North Point Douglas Women's Centre offers a drop-in centre, counselling services, safety programming, The Red Road to Healing which is a program, guided by traditional teachings, for women who have experienced domestic violence and are ready to move forward on their healing journey, and the Community Oven which is a way of engaging the community in various conversations.⁹

Spence Neighbourhood Association

The Spence Neighbourhood Association runs a number of community-based programs, such as a youth drop-in centre, the Holistic Housing program which seeks to assist individuals in finding housing, maintaining it and becoming a part of the community, and a Skills Bank program which seeks to connect people with jobs or training opportunities.¹⁰

Provincial Indigenous Organizations

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), Southern Chiefs Organization (SCO) and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO)

The AMC is a non-governmental organization advocating on issues commonly affecting all Manitoba First Nations. The AMC has responded to the MMIWG crisis in a number of ways. It has brought forward a number of resolutions supporting MMIWG and their families and has met with police agencies to follow up on specific investigations and to seek systemic solutions.

In 2012, the AMC Secretariat was involved in a number of community mobilization efforts responding to the murders of Lorna Blacksmith, Tanya J Nepinak and Carolyn Sinclair. In June 2012, following the sentencing of an accused for the murders of Ms. Sinclair (25 years old) and Ms. Blacksmith (18 years old), AMC Grand Chief Derek Nepinak, SCO Grand Chief Morris Swan Shannaccappo and MKO Grand Chief David Harper signed a letter to Manitoba Deputy Premier and Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Eric Robinson and another letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper calling for a provincial and national inquiry into MMIWG. These requests were both subsequently denied.

The AMC played a central role in the development of a coalition of individuals and community service organizations focused on developing an action plan on MMIWG. The Coalition met a number of times and developed a Technical Working Group to develop a Terms of Reference, a work plan and research.

In November 2012, the AMC, SCO and MKO co-hosted the Sounding Our Voices National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS) III Shadow Event in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This event was planned with the MMIWG Coalition. Its purpose was to identify key actions on the issue of MMIWG.

8 Online: www.wahbung.org

9 Online: www.northpointdouglaswomenscentre.org

10 Online: www.spenceneighbourhood.org

In October 2013, the AMC submitted a report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In its report, AMC pointed out that it had been five years since CEDAW's period review and the Government of Canada continued to dismiss calls for a national public inquiry into MMIWG. AMC's position in this report is that "substantive measures are needed" as the "disadvantaged conditions of our Indigenous women and girls have not been adequately or concertedly addressed by governments in Canada."¹¹

Federal Institutions

The issue of MMIWG is not new to the Government of Canada.

In 2009, provincial and territorial Aboriginal Affairs Ministers and the leaders of five National Organizations¹² established an Aboriginal Affairs Working Group to develop recommendations and identify actions to improve education and economic development for, and to reduce violence against Aboriginal women and girls.¹³

In 2010, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women passed a motion to undertake a study on violence against Indigenous women. Following consultation with more than 150 witnesses across Canada, the Report, which outlines a number of root causes of violence against Indigenous women, was released in 2011.¹⁴

In 2014, the Canadian House of Commons unanimously passed a Motion recognizing that a number of Indigenous women and girls have gone missing or have been murdered and that the federal government has a responsibility to provide justice for the victims and healing to the families.

As a result, the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women was appointed to propose solutions to address the root causes of violence against Indigenous women. Through the assistance of NWAC, the Committee was able to hold consultations and produced a report entitled - "Invisible Women: A Call to Action; Report of the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women"- which recommended a national inquiry. The Report was criticized by NWAC for seemingly placing "the onus and blame on Aboriginal people alone".¹⁵

Despite this Report, the Federal Government continues to reject the need for an inquiry. Instead, it announced it would devote more funds to alleviate poverty among Indigenous populations. It has released a five year Action Plan focusing on three pillars: Preventing Violence, Supporting Aboriginal Victims, Protecting Aboriginal Women and Girls. The Plan acknowledges that "this is a serious issue that requires coordination and multi-faceted action."¹⁶

11 Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, "Written Submission on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls" (October 15 2013).

12 Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the Metis National Council (MNC) and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC).

13 Aboriginal Affairs Working Group "A Framework for Action in Education, Economic Development and Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls" (2010).

14 Standing Committee on the Status of Women, "Interim Report: Call into the Night: An overview of violence against Aboriginal Women" (March 2011) 40th Parliament, 3rd Session. Also see: Standing Committee on the Status of Women "Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls: Empowerment – a New Beginning" (2011).

15 NWAC, "More than Invisible, Invisible to Real Action: NWAC's Response to the Special Committee on Violence Against Indigenous Women" March 2014.

16 "Action Plan to Address Family Violence and Violent Crimes Against Aboriginal Women and Girls" (2014). The Plan focuses on the following three pillars: Preventing Violence, Supporting Aboriginal Victims and Protecting Aboriginal

Most recently, Senator Serge Joyal wrote a legal brief calling for a legal proceeding in a Federal Court initiated by “a victim(s) and/or concerned party to obtain a declaration ordering the Canadian Government to establish a National Inquiry to investigate the plight of missing and murdered aboriginal women”.¹⁷ Senator Joyal’s legal arguments are rooted in the Charter and in international human rights.

RCMP

The RCMP issued a report in 2014 entitled “Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview”. After reviewing 1,181 police-reported incidents of homicides and unresolved investigations, the RCMP concluded that there is a disproportionate number of Indigenous women and girls who are murdered, sexually exploited, and who have been missing for more than 30 days.¹⁸

In 2015 the RCMP released an “Update to the National Operational Overview” which provided updated statistics and analysis on cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women that occurred since the 2014 report. The report indicated that Aboriginal women continued to be over-represented among Canada’s murdered and missing women.¹⁹

Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP)

On September 30, 2014 the CACP and the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) agreed to partner to create an action plan on MMIWG.

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)

NWAC launched its Sisters In Spirit Campaign in 2004. In 2005, it secured funding for a five year research, education and policy initiative supported by Status of Women Canada aimed at addressing the root causes and circumstances of MMIWG. In 2009, as part of its research, NWAC released a Report entitled “Voices of Our Sisters in Spirit: A Report to Families and Communities”. NWAC released another report addressing the issue of MMIWG in 2010.²⁰

NWAC has since released a number of other Reports including a literature review on “Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls” which includes a number of recommendations and information from key informant interviews. The Sisters in Spirit Initiative has also organized vigils in honour of MMIWG in a number of Canadian cities from coast-to-coast.

Since 2007, NWAC has hosted a series of National Aboriginal Women’s Summit (NAWS) addressing the issue of MMIWG.²¹ The most recent NAWS was held in Nova Scotia in October 2014.

Women and Girls.

17 Senator Serge Joyal, “Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women in Canada: What to Do?” (2014) at p 7.

18 Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview, (2014) online: <<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/mmaw-faapd-eng.htm>> [“Operational Overview”].

19 Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: 2015 Update to the National Operational Overview (2015) online: <<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pubs/abo-aut/mmaw-fada-eng.htm>> [“2015 Update”].

20 The Report examines three fundamental questions: What are the circumstances, root causes and trends leading to violence against Indigenous women in Canada? How many Indigenous women and girls have gone missing or have been found murdered in Canada? And, why has this violence led to such disturbingly high numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada without connection by police or justice authorities?: NWAC, “Sisters in Spirit 2010 Research Findings”

21 In June 2007, the first National Aboriginal Women's Summit (NAWS I) was held in Corner Brook, NL to call for action on MMIWG. It was co-hosted by the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador with the NWAC President

Assembly of First Nations (AFN)

In 2012, the AFN created a “Coordinated and Urgent Action to End Violence Against Indigenous Women & Girls – Towards a Nation Action Plan”.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)

In 2015, following more than six years of testimonials from residential school survivors in Canada, the TRC released the Executive Summary of its final report “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future.” In that report the commission indicated that:

the available information suggests a devastating link between the large numbers of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and the many harmful background factors in their lives. These include: over-representation of Aboriginal children in child-welfare care; domestic and sexual violence; racism, poverty, and poor educational and health opportunities in Aboriginal communities; discriminatory practices against women related to band membership and Indian status; and inadequate supports for Aboriginal people in cities. This complex interplay of factors - many of which are part of the legacy of residential schools - needs to be examined, as does the lack of success of police forces in solving these crimes against Aboriginal women.

The commission called upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations, to appoint a public inquiry into the causes of, and remedies for, the disproportionate victimization of Aboriginal women and girls. The inquiry’s mandate would include:

- Investigation into missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls; and
- Links to the inter-generational legacy of residential schools.²²

International

A wide range of international organizations and bodies are calling on the Canadian government for urgent action given the scale and scope of ongoing violence against Indigenous women and girls.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International has been vocal in its call to Canada for action on MMIWG. In 2004, it released “A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada”. In 2009, Amnesty International published a report entitled “No More Stolen Sisters: The Need for a Comprehensive Response to Discrimination and Violence Against Indigenous Women in Canada”.

More recently, in February 2014, Amnesty International released another report urging Canada to make clear commitments to Indigenous women and girls to address the tragedy. The Report begins by stating that the “scale and severity of violence faced by Indigenous women and girls in Canada – First Nations,

Jacobs. In July 2008, NWAC and the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) co- hosted the second National Aboriginal Women’s Summit (NAWS II) in Yellowknife. NAWS II was co-hosted by Premier Floyd Roland of the NWT and NWAC President Jacobs. Held in Manitoba in 2012, NAWS III focused on honouring murdered and missing Aboriginal women. In October 2014, NWAS IV was held in the Yukon under the theme : “Promoting Equity, Empowerment and Leadership of Aboriginal Women – focused on action, solutions, and moving forward collectively.”

22 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada” online:

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf>.

Inuit and Métis – constitutes a national human rights crisis.”²³

Human Rights Watch

In February 2013, Human Rights Watch published a report which presented qualitative data about police abuse in 10 towns in northern British Columbia.²⁴ The report recommends the establishment of an inclusive national public commission of inquiry into the murders and disappearances of Indigenous women and girls.

United Nations Treaty Monitoring Bodies

Many international conventions and implementation committees have called on the Canadian government to combat high violence against Indigenous women and girls.²⁵

Provincial and Territorial Responses

Yukon Territory

In 2010, the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Council created a Yukon Sisters in Spirit Initiative as part of the Yukon Aboriginal Women's Summit Implementation Projects. The Yukon Sisters in Spirit Initiative is closely linked to NWAC's initiative and was designed to include the voices of the MMIWG's families and communities. In 2012, the Yukon Sisters in Spirit Initiative focused on healing for the families of MMIWG.

British Columbia

Over the years, many government and non-governmental organizations in BC have conducted research and published reports on the issue of MMIWG.²⁶

In 2005, the Pacific Association of First Nations Women, Ending Violence Association of BC and the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre prepared a Report entitled “Researched to Death: B.C. Aboriginal Women and Violence”.

In 2006, the Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, Carrier Sekani Families Services, Carrier Sekani Tribal

23 Amnesty International, “Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada” at p 2.

24 Human Rights Watch, “Those who Take us Away: Abusive Policing and Failures in Protecting of Indigenous Women and Girls in Northern British Colombia, Canada”

25 Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - Committee against Torture, June 2012 at para 20 ; Convention on the Rights of the Child – Committee on the Rights of the Child , October 2012 at para 46; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination-Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, May 2006 at para 29 ; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights May 2006 at paras 11 (d), 15, 26; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women – Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, November 2008; Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous People, James Anaya – July 2014 at paras 35 and 89; Human Rights Council, Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review , June 2009 at para 49; International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination – Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, May 2007.

26 AMR Planning and Consulting “We are courageous and we are healing ourselves: Collaboration to End Violence: National Aboriginal Women's Forum” (2011). Also in 2011, the Community Coordination for Women's Safety and the Ending Violence Association of BC released “Increasing Safety for Aboriginal Women: Key Themes and Resources”.

Council, Prince George Native Friendship Centre, and Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment & Training Association hosted a Highway of Tears Symposium and released a report with recommendations.²⁷

In 2011, the B.C. Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (BC MARR) and the Native Women's Association of Canada co-hosted the “Collaboration to End Violence National Aboriginal Women's Forum” and subsequently released a Report.

In 2011, the BC Lieutenant Governor in Council called the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry. The Terms of Reference of this Inquiry stated that the Commission was to inquire into the women reported missing from the Downtown Eastside of the city of Vancouver as well as make findings and recommendations on the issue. It should be noted that fifteen organizations issued a letter to Commissioner Wally Oppal confirming that they would not be participating in the Second Phase of the BC Inquiry due to concerns about “discrimination and the conduct of the Commission to date.”²⁸

On September 17, 2014 the Alberta chiefs joined their voices to the call for a national inquiry into MMIWG. Their Resolution was unanimously supported by all 48 Alberta Chiefs at their Assembly of Treaty Chiefs.

Saskatchewan

In 2007, a number of organizations and government departments in Saskatchewan released the “Final Report of the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons”.

Ontario

In 2007, the Ontario Native Women’s Association released a “Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women”.

In 2009, a Summit was held in Hamilton, Ontario on Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women. A Report was later produced entitled “Final Report: Strengthening the Circle to End Violence Against Aboriginal Women”.

Québec

Quebec Native Women Inc (QNW) has been very vocal on the issue of MMIWG and has called for a national inquiry.²⁹ In its Press Release, QNW indicate that although the official count of MMIWG in Canada has continued to rise, the federal government firmly refuses to establish a national public inquiry. The Press Release also indicates that there is a “great lack of information pertaining to missing and murdered Indigenous women in the province of Québec” and that QNW is conducting its own study “with the hopes of achieving both a tally of cases in Quebec, and a portrait of the risk factors and vulnerabilities.”³⁰

27 “Highway of Tears Symposium Recommendations Report: A collective voice for the victims who have been silenced” (2006).

28 http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/News_Releases/UBCICNews04101201.html#axzz3JXiO1Vji; For more information see: BC Civil Liberties Association, “Blueprint for an Inquiry: Learning from the Failures of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry” (2012).

29 See their Press Release from May 7 2014.

30 “A call for national inquiry on the 1186 reported cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women” (2014): http://www.faq-qnw.org/press_media/press_release/call-national-inquiry-11

Nova Scotia

The grassroots community in Halifax, Nova Scotia gathered at the beginning of October 2014 to make a 10 foot dream catcher made up of 1,187 small dream catchers to hang off one large dream catcher, each dream catcher representing one of the Indigenous women currently missing in Canada.

Manitoba: A Leader on the Issue of MMIWG

As a result of the push from the grassroots and Indigenous leadership, Manitoba has become a leader on the issue of MMIWG. A brief overview of some of the initiatives funded by the Manitoba provincial government is provided.

Helen Betty Osborne Foundation

In December 2000, the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation was established through legislation entitled *The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Act*. The Foundation provides financial assistance to Indigenous persons enrolled in post-secondary studies in Manitoba. It also recognizes deserving students who are making a difference in eliminating barriers of racism, sexism and indifference in our society.³¹

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs

Manitoba's Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister, Eric Robinson has been very active on the issue of MMIWG. Since 2010, Minister Eric Robinson has worked closely with Nahanni Fontaine, the Special Advisor on Aboriginal Women's Issues to assist the families of MMIWG. As a direct result the following programs are funded by the province and available to the families of MMIWG:

Wiping Away the Tears

"Wiping away the Tears," is an annual meeting where families of MMIWG gather to support each other in their healing journeys. It is based on a traditional ceremony of "wiping and letting go."

Manitoba Action Group on Exploited and Vulnerable Women

The Manitoba Action Group on Exploited and Vulnerable Women was created in 2009 to provide strategic advice to the province on the development of new policies aimed at reducing the crisis of abused and exploited women in Manitoba.³² In 2011, the organization launched a public awareness campaign aimed at helping the public empathize with families of missing and murdered women and girls, in partnership with Crime Stoppers and families of MMIWG.

Tracia's Trust: Manitoba's Sexual Exploitation Strategy

The first phase of Manitoba's sexual exploitation efforts focused on prevention, and specifically on Tracia's Trust, which is named in honour of the memory of Tracia Owen, who died in 2005 at age 14 in

³¹ See <www.helenbetty.ca/home/organization>.

³² "Manitoba action group on exploited and vulnerable women launches public awareness campaign" (2011): <http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=11056>

Winnipeg. She had been repeatedly sexually exploited. Tracia's Trust is based on the need to build upon phase one by:

- implementing more prevention initiatives;
- developing a fuller continuum of services for victims;
- increasing public awareness; and
- making offenders more accountable.

The second phase of Manitoba's strategy to address the issue of sexual exploitation focused on intervention and was expanded beyond the scope of Tracia's Trust to include the full spectrum of ages, including children, youth and adults, and the five most common forms of sexual exploitation:

- prostitution;
- sex trafficking;
- child pornography;
- internet luring; and
- child sex tourism.

Phase three of Manitoba's strategy includes a multi-year plan which involves many new components with a greater focus on human trafficking, offender accountability and protection for victims. This multi-sector strategy currently invests over \$10 million annually for initiatives to prevent and intervene with the sexual exploitation of children, youth and adults in Manitoba. The continued development and implementation of the strategy is ongoing and several additional initiatives have been launched including:

- The designation of two specialized Crown attorneys to coordinate and prosecute cases of sexual exploitation/sex trafficking;
- The broadening of the Criminal Property Forfeiture unit's mandate to consider seeking forfeiture of property where exploitation occurs;
- The expansion of The Victims' Bill of Rights to give victims of trafficking offences the right to case information including negotiations, and the right to present victim impact statements;
- The expansion of the Prosecution policy as it applies to children exploited through prostitution. The policy was expanded to consider human trafficking charges to ensure that offenders be dealt with severely by the courts;
- The extension of social services and health care to ensure emergency or primary care to persons who are trafficked and are in Canada, but outside of immigration and domestic laws;
- Continued training and awareness on sexual exploitation and human trafficking including:
 - stakeholder awareness presentations across the province;
 - updates in the Sexually Exploited Youth training to include human trafficking;
 - work underway to identify specialists within the Authorities; and
 - revisions to the Child and Family Services Standards.
- The Commit to Kids child abuse prevention program (offered through the Canadian Centre for Child Protection) for child serving organizations has been expanded to Residential Care and Foster Care programs within Manitoba;
- The StreetReach programs in Winnipeg and Thompson provide a rapid coordinated response by child welfare, police, and community outreach agencies to high-risk child victims who are the most at risk of sexual exploitation;
- The establishment of a six-bed rural healing lodge for sexually exploited youth that utilizes a blend of Aboriginal traditional healing approaches and clinical therapeutic services;
- The establishment of placement resources for sexually exploited children who are ageing out of care;

- Eight residential care beds through the Transition, Education and Resources for Females (TERF) program and three specialized foster care beds through Ka Ni Kanichihk;
- The mobilization of 12 multi-sector regional teams around the province to address sexual exploitation locally and the hosting of an annual community forum in Winnipeg with 300 to 400 stakeholders in attendance each year;
- Province-wide public awareness initiatives, such as stopsexwithkids.ca and mandatory reporting of child pornography; and
- The establishment of working partnerships with the business sector, such as the Manitoba Hotel Association, to train their workers on how to spot and report suspected exploitation.

Manitoba has also established policies to address the issue of child sexual exploitation, such as:

- identification of the issue as a form of child abuse and the establishment of Child and Family Services standards to inform the work of Child and Family Services agencies with respect to this matter;
- the utilization of experiential workers (those with lived experience); and,
- capacity building with Aboriginal organizations and the guiding principle that programs and services should be culturally appropriate, include a holistic perspective, and be lead by Aboriginal leaders and communities in their development.

Other

Other projects supported by the province include:

- In 2014 a Memorial Quilt project was initiated between the province and the Winnipeg Art Gallery wherein family members designed their own patches that were made into a quilt which was then displayed at the Winnipeg Art Gallery to honour victims and help their families heal;
- A monument honouring Manitoba's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was funded by the province and unveiled at The Forks on August 12, 2014;
- Provincial funding is provided for:
 - the Aurora Family Therapy Centre's 'Unresolved Loss' program which enhances supports and long-term counselling for the families of missing persons;
 - Ka Ni Kanichihk to expand and enhance the work of the Medicine Bear Project, specifically to increase partnerships and resources in rural and northern communities;
 - Eyaa-Keen's Ni Mino Biimatiziiwin Project (My Good Life) to address the grief and loss experienced by families of MMAWG.
- The hiring of a Family Liaison Contact Worker by Victim Services to provide support to families of missing persons on behalf of Project Devote;
- Victim Services also coordinates an inter-agency working group of the agencies/individuals dedicated to the issue of missing persons, specifically MMIWG, to ensure that all involved are aware of the current services provided by each agency and to create a link between them so that the affected families, along with the agencies will have an easier time navigating the system and accessing services;
- In 2012 Manitoba Justice and partnering law enforcement agencies announced that Facebook would be added as a method of public broadcast in Amber Alert situations for faster notification of missing children;
- Effective May 29, 2013, *The Missing Persons Act* was proclaimed in Manitoba. This legislation gives police tools to enable them to access critical personal information, such as cell phone records, bank information and closed circuit surveillance footage, to assist police in more

quickly locating a missing person. It includes provisions for accessing information about a third party who may be in the company of a missing minor or vulnerable person.

Project Devote -The Manitoba Integrated Task Force for Missing and Murdered Women

Project Devote began on May 27, 2011 and was established by the RCMP and Winnipeg Police Service following the findings of a task force the purpose of which was identifying possible linkages between homicides involving victims who were women or incidents of missing women where foul play is suspected, with a view of identifying potential suspect(s) and determining appropriate avenues for follow up investigations.³³

Project Devote is a two-pronged approach aimed at addressing unsolved homicides and missing person cases involving “exploited and at risk persons,” and is based out of the RCMP “D” Division Headquarters. It consists of RCMP and WPS police officers and RCMP civilian analysts. The focus of Project Devote is investigative, based on the review and recommendations made by the Task Force. In addition to the investigations, a proactive team was established to further enhance the on-going efforts of dealing with exploited and at risk persons.³⁴

In July 2012, Project Devote provided detailed briefings to victims’ families following the arrest of a person charged with second degree murder in connection with the deaths of three Aboriginal women in Winnipeg. Subsequent briefings were held with Aboriginal leaders prior to a news conference, at which time information was made available to the public regarding Project Devote’s investigative mandate.

Five criteria are considered before a case becomes a part of Project Devote:

- substance abuse;
- transient lifestyle;
- hitchhiking;
- mental health issues; and
- involvement in the sex trade.

Manitoba Participation in the Aboriginal Affairs Working Group (AAWG)

The AAWG is composed of Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs from all provinces and territories and the Leaders from the five National Aboriginal Organizations (Assembly of First Nations, Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Métis National Council, and Native Women's Association of Canada). They continue to call on the federal government to join the AAWG as a partner to advance these priorities.

The AAWG is intended to coordinate government actions that address challenges and opportunities of First Nations regardless of status or residency, Inuit and Métis Peoples. It brings federal and provincial governments together on three priority areas:

- closing the graduation gap;
- closing the income gap; and,
- ending violence against Aboriginal women and girls.³⁵

33 “Next phase for Manitoba Integrated Task Force for Missing and Murdered Women” (2011):

<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/mb/news-nouvelles/2011/2011-05-27-devote-eng.htm>

34 “Next phase for Manitoba Integrated Task Force for Missing and Murdered Women” (2011):

<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/mb/news-nouvelles/2011/2011-05-27-devote-eng.htm>

35 “Working together to improve opportunities for Aboriginal Peoples across Canada” (2013)

Winnipeg

On September 23, 2014 the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba announced a combined support of \$300,000 to expand access to a drop-in centre at Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc.

On September 24, 2014, Winnipeg City Council adopted a motion moved by Councillors Vandal and Gerbasi calling for a national inquiry or national roundtable.³⁶ Councillor Vandal said “A national inquiry will offer an honest, difficult dialogue. It will give a voice to those that are now voiceless.”³⁷ The Resolution also called on the Winnipeg Police Board to task the Winnipeg Police Service to do all things necessary to provide a proactive approach to prevent, investigate and solve the plight of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Winnipeg.” It further committed the City of Winnipeg to fund Ndinawe annually for \$150,000 to ensure its long term viability.

Winnipeg mayor Brian Bowman has stated the following:

We have to recognize that this is not just a criminal matter. This is a sociological issue. We need to provide supports for law enforcement to protect our most vulnerable in our community. We need to look at where the supports within the community are that can allow a place of sanctuary and support for those affected by violence and other crimes.

A disproportionate number of those people are aboriginal women and girls... Statistically, they are more vulnerable. We need to work with the federal and provincial governments, and community groups like Ka ni Kanichik to address the problem in a meaningful way.³⁸

http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/news/news_releases/april17.html

36 At p 8:<http://www.winnipeg.ca/clkdms/ViewDoc.asp?DocId=13884&SectionId=&InitUrl=>

37 Aldo Santin, “City backs inquiry after impassioned debate” (2014):

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/city-backs-inquiry-after-impassioned-debate-277037771.html>

38 Sheldon Birnie, “Here’s How Winnipeg’s Mayoral Candidates Feel about Aboriginal Issues” (September 10 2014)