

Summary of Work-To-Date on Violence/Justice Issues (August 2001)

Since 1984 and Pauktuutit's inception, violence has been identified as a major issue. In this regard, Pauktuutit has done groundbreaking work. An example would be the publication *No More Secrets*, which was its first publication that addressed child sexual abuse. The book is very popular and Pauktuutit still receives requests for this publication.

Pauktuutit did early work on the residential schools issue in the form of a newsletter called "*More Than Words*" which printed stories and interviews concerning former students of Joseph Bernier Residential School and Turquetil Hall. This work was carried out long before the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) came into existence.

In June 2001, funding was received from AHF to conduct a research project that will result in an annotated directory of services for Inuit survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA). Pauktuutit hopes to include all Inuit communities in the North and on-site research will be conducted in approximately four communities where services are more developed. The project hopes to document Inuit-specific approaches for the purposes of sharing this and other information with communities at earlier stages in dealing with CSA issues. Pauktuutit is also seeking funding to dub, copy and distribute a video on child abuse prepared by the Child Care Project from its Traditional Parenting Practices Conference held in 1998.

Another Pauktuutit publication, *Does your Husband or Boyfriend Beat You*, is an adaptation of a book produced by First Nations Women. The book helps identify situations of violence against women and provides basic legal and safety information. This booklet is another example of a publication that has been seen in communities up north. The Nunavut Government's Dept. of Justice is preparing to redistribute copies of this publication and *No More Secrets* to Nunavut communities. Pauktuutit also produced a publication featuring artwork by Inuit women that expresses their feelings about violence against women.

The housing crisis in the north is another more specific issue that Pauktuutit has dealt with. Funds were received to produce a report on the housing crisis and its affect on women (*Inuit Women: The Housing Crisis and Violence*). If there is nowhere else to go, women have to stay in an abusive or violent situation. Pauktuutit's current President, Veronica Dewar, presented on this very issue at Inuit Tapirisat of Canada's meeting the week following Pauktuutit's October 2000 AGM and to a panel organized by the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation in 2001.

An important study, *More Than They Say*, coordinated by Pauktuutit involved three Labrador communities that had no policing services. The police had reported very low crime rates in the communities that suggested no need for individual police services.

Pauktuutit developed a research project in these communities. The women reported that they felt that because there were no police, they wouldn't even bother reporting violent crimes or abuse. Pauktuutit's research did indeed indicate that there were a lot more instances of crime than were reported. Two of the communities concerned have since received policing services and plans are underway for a third community. Pauktuutit's report *Inuit Women and Justice: Progress Report Number One* contains information on this project. This publication included two other reports: a report on the NWT Victim Impact Statements pilot project which suggests ways that victims of violent crimes can be better served by the criminal justice system; and a report on the first sentencing circle held in Nunavik — at the time, circle sentencing was becoming a popular "alternative" in a number of locations throughout Canada and Pauktuutit wanted to encourage a thoughtful debate on how and when circles are used and whether they are an appropriate way of dealing with crimes of sexual assault and wife assault.

Pauktuutit has worked with various other organizations where it advocates against violence on behalf of women and children. There is a fair amount of frustration associated with bringing up the issue at various meetings and numerous consultations. There was a task force *The Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women* created by the federal government in the 1990s which recognized that something needed to be done about violence against women in Canada. Pauktuutit played an important role in this task force. Women from all groups and regions of Canada participated. The task force produced a book *Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence~Achieving Equality* with a specific chapter on Inuit women's concerns and issues. This chapter is very moving, very comprehensive and still relevant today. Most of the recommendations in this chapter have still not been implemented.

Pauktuutit is consulted, provides briefings and gives speeches to many national organizations in order to raise the issue of violence against women. Pauktuutit also works on the international scene. In 1995, Mary Sillett, previous President at Pauktuutit, attended a conference in Beijing, China to raise Inuit women's issues. Many countries, including Canada, have signed amnesties and agreements relating to violence against women and children. The Canadian Government has adopted the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, ratified the *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, the *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*, the *Convention on the Elimination of Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, as well as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Canada voted in favour of the United Nations *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*. Canada has committed to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action and the subsequent Further Actions document.

Pauktuutit continues to publish regularly on the issue of violence in various formats such as newsletters, articles and through radio and television interviews. One example is a paper entitled *Inuit Women's Health: Overview and Policy Issues* which Pauktuutit prepared in March of 2000. It includes a case study on violence which discusses the cost of not investing in violence prevention work. Also, in the fall of 2000 Veronica Dewar wrote to Nunatsiaq News and was interviewed on CBC's *Igalaaq* to address violence

against women as perpetrated by high level government officials in Nunavut. Veronica also wrote to the Nunavut Legislature requesting an invitation to make a presentation on violence against women to the Members (MLAs). She never received an invitation.

In 2000, Pauktuutit produced *What to do if you are abused and/or battered*, a safety plan for women fleeing violent domestic situations. This booklet provides lots of basic and very helpful information for women in the north and was sent to every Inuit community. Nunavut Justice has since planned an additional distribution of the booklet along with the two publications mentioned earlier.

Pauktuutit recently assisted Justice Canada in producing an adaptation of a booklet entitled *"Abuse is wrong in any language"*. Pauktuutit made small revisions to the booklet, including changing the name to *"Abuse is wrong in any culture"* and coordinated Inuktitut translations. The booklet should now be available.

In October 2000, the World March of Women was held. The Canadian Women's March Committee drafted a list of 13 demands, which included input from two national aboriginal women's organizations, as well as input from Pauktuutit. After 15,000 women from all over Canada marched on Parliament Hill, a small group then met with the Prime Minister and presented the list of demands. Disappointingly, the PM didn't seem to quite understand.

In addressing the 2000 AGM delegates, Tracy O'Hearn, Executive Director of Pauktuutit, stressed the importance of the National Violence Consultation Workshop held during the AGM — at every past AGM, violence has been raised as a major issue. Violence is a real issue for Inuit women, and ensuring that this is recognized is very important to Pauktuutit. The most significant outcome of the workshop is the clear need for national coordination by those experienced with the myriad issues related to family violence in Inuit communities. A nationally funded steering committee composed of primarily Inuit working in the field must be established to review initiatives, promote best practices, maintain public awareness activities and continue the development of information tools and programs to prevent family violence.

Pauktuutit recently assisted the Pularvik Friendship Centre in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, in the collaboration of the Kivalliq Legal Aid Centre and the Crown Prosecutors Office of the Government of Nunavut to develop a proposal for a pilot abusers' counselling program. A report of the first phase of the project includes a description of the community consultation, research activities, staff planning, consulting with others in the field and development of supportive local partners. The proposal and report indicate that Pauktuutit will participate on the steering committee which is to oversee the counselling program selection, its adaptation, the community outreach program, project services for victims, the communications plan, the evaluation framework and discussions concerning the program's future replication if successful, etc.

In addition to the Rankin project and in response to a number of resolutions by Inuit women at past AGMs to promote the healing of Inuit men who are violent, there has

recently been some progress. A number of discussions have been held during 2000-2001 between Pauktuutit, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and Correctional Services of Canada (CSC). The Department has a five-year initiative to improve its collaboration with Aboriginal communities and organizations, to implement greater Aboriginal participation within CSC and its institutions and to improve the release outcomes of Aboriginal inmates. An Aboriginal roundtable process has been established and will be on-going over the five-year period. Funding has been allocated for a staff position to be shared between Pauktuutit and ITC for an Inuit Correctional Policy Facilitator. This position will be responsible for coordinating work with the Aboriginal Roundtable and development of correctional-related policy and initiatives for Inuit.

Discussions with CSC have also involved the planning of an Inuit Forum on Corrections. The long-term goals of this initiative are to improve Inuit inmates' access to and success with correctional programs; to increase their opportunities for parole; to improve their release outcomes; and, to build services in the communities to support them and prevent recidivism.

In March 2001, a meeting was held to discuss Aboriginal correctional research issues. The major focus of this meeting was to review current or recently completed Aboriginal research projects within the Correctional Service. No Inuit-specific research was presented. While several of the research projects focused on family violence issues or issues related to violence against women/children and were termed Aboriginal research projects, the research, methodology and findings were exclusively First Nations and subsequently biased when viewed in a larger, more global Aboriginal context. Of particular concern was the tendency of CSC staff to assume that such research both met their obligation to and was sufficiently culturally valid to form the basis of intervention programs designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal inmates in general.

Overall, this meeting highlighted the urgent need for Inuit-specific research in the areas of family violence intervention, treatment and the potential impact of the release of untreated sex offenders on small isolated communities. Additionally, the need for Inuit community involvement in discussions related to the release act and immediate, cultural awareness training for CSC staff that clearly highlights the differences between the First Peoples of Canada are necessary. These actions will begin to address the needs of Inuit affected by the lack of culturally-specific treatments and programs within corrections.

Pauktuutit has also been advocating that CSC fund the implementation of the *Tupiq Program* at Fenbrooke Medium Institution, the prison where the majority of Inuit federal inmates are housed near Gravenhurst, Ontario. A pilot of the *Tupiq Program* has just been completed and two *Tupiq* programs will run in the fall. The pilot consisted of an intensive 16-week program designed specifically for Inuit inmates. It incorporated aspects of a number of other well-known national Correctional programs focussing on family violence issues and sexual offending as well as many Inuit-specific components including healing. The Inuit inmates at Fenbrooke are almost entirely sentenced for crimes associated with family violence. Few have had adequate access to suitable programming and once enrolled in available Aboriginal or mainstream programs, few

have successfully completed them. As a result, they are not eligible for parole and serve their complete sentence with little to no rehabilitation and with no supervision or reintegration support upon release. The *Tupiq Program* was developed to begin to address these issues. It employs a number of Inuit experts as staff and visiting consultants.

Pauktuutit has consulted with the *Tupiq* Coordinator and hopes to be involved in furthering the implementation of this work and in developing community capacity to provide relapse prevention services and support for released offenders.

Another initiative currently underway is the holding of the first *Aboriginal Women's Justice Consultation*. Justice Canada collaborated with Pauktuutit, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and the Métis National Council of Women (MNCW) to prepare a proposal to the federal Voluntary Sector Initiative. The focus of this initiative is to increase the capacity of the voluntary sector to influence the development of federal policies. Funding was approved for the project and plans are proceeding for a four-day consultation to be held in September 2001 in Ottawa. A delegation of twenty Inuit women from across the North will attend. Justice Canada has agreed to coordinate the compilation of pertinent justice-related recommendations of concern to Aboriginal women from major reports such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples among others. Correctional Services of Canada is planning to assist financially as well as with planning one of the four days.

Pauktuutit continues, in spite of very sparse financial resources, to seek out opportunities to increase awareness of violence against Inuit women, to find the best approaches to addressing the underlying causes and to continue to support victims' need for safety and assistance.

Copies of publications are available from:

Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association
131 Bank Street, 3rd Floor
Ottawa ON K1P 5N7
Tel. (613) 238-3977 Fax (613) 238-1787