



ENGAGE and INFORM GOVERNMENT: STRATEGY & PROPOSED ACTION

41 women and girls, 8 men and boys were killed in Ontario in the first six months of 2018 - all as a result of gender-based violence.¹

The Southwest Region VAW Coordinating Committee (SWRCC) has developed an 'action-in-a-box' regional strategy to engage and inform the new government.² Participating Violence Against Women Coordinating Committees (VAWCCs) will gather local stats that create a 'snapshot' for local politicians of the overlapping realities of VAW and related issues in their home community. We want our elected officials to be well informed about their constituents as decisions are being made about how best to help Ontario thrive.

Build a bigger wave of public attention to the epidemic of gender-based violence in Ontario

The Snapshot 2018 infographic (see [sample](#)) will show the real world collision of violence, trauma, oppression, health, mental health and addictions in your community. Communities across Ontario experience increasing pressures in a 'do more with less' society where so many people have to struggle to survive, even with full-time jobs. As incredible wealth flows up to the very few – 87 families in Canada to be precise - the struggle to survive presses down on more and more people.³ Deeply embedded gender inequities serve to keep women and children at the bottom of the social pile.

Measure success, not by the wealthy, but by the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable people.

Snapshot 2018 is designed to bring together different and co-occurring local issues into a bigger shared picture that can help us recognize and respect the complexity of people's lives. We can't talk about solutions to end violence against women without understanding there is a relationship between individuals who struggle to survive and the larger social system of organizations, policies, attitudes and beliefs. A bigger picture can help to bring people together in local places to shift the status quo toward more

¹The number of deaths has been compiled through available media and is likely conservative. Sources include The [Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability](#). And University of Guelph, Centre for the Study of Social and Legal Responses to Violence.

² The Southwest Region VAW Coordinating Committee (SWRCC) is a regional table of nine VAW Coordinating Committees in the southwest of Ontario that have been meeting since 2005.

³ The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives [reports](#) that 87 wealthiest Canadians own as much wealth as 12 Million lowest earning Canadians put together.

sustainable and healthy communities and society. A community is only as strong as its most vulnerable people. What can we do with the resources we have to support more holistic outcomes? We have to be willing and able to come together to wrestle with the wicked questions. Snapshot 2018 can provide a place to start the conversation.

Snapshot tools have been developed and are available for any coordinating committee that wants to gather and share local information. Committees can customize the tools to reflect their community.

The tools:

- [Email communications](#) with VAWCC members to introduce Snapshot
- [Template](#) to gather data for SNAPSHOT 2018
- [Infographic](#) that rolls the data up for meetings with politicians (sample)
- [Sample letters](#) to request meetings with politicians
- [Ideas](#) about how to use Snapshot
- Press release (coming in Sept)

The strategy is for VAWCCs to request meetings with local MPPs of all parties. It was suggested that each committee take a small delegation to the meeting(s) and provide the snapshot of local stats. When meeting with politicians, make the stats alive by telling stories about people. Talk about the many ways we work together in community to address the real world problems that so many Ontarians are experiencing. Ask them to help us.

Premier Doug Ford has said "Help is Here" for the lower-middle class members of society. This means many people working in the VAW field as well as many of the folks served by VAWCC member agencies.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS A NON-PARTISAN ISSUE – engage all political parties at all levels of government

Talk to your committee about using your Snapshot to expand beyond meeting with the provincial government. Meet with your MPs and municipal politicians. All parties and levels of government have a stake in the health and wellbeing of our citizens. **Gender-based violence is a non-partisan issue with high costs that cascade across communities, sectors and generations.** Municipalities in Ottawa and Toronto actually contribute funds to their VAWCCs. This is the case to be made in every community.

LEADERSHIP

We need politicians of all parties and bureaucrats at all levels of the system **to work together and to partner with local community leaders under the big VAW tent.** We all have a role to play. How can we realize the best possible social return on

our taxpayer investments? By thinking and working together for the common good. It is in all of our interests to pull in the same direction.

JOIN US!

If your committee decides to participate, send the completed Snapshot data template to Margaret at m.macpherson@execulink.com. There is no deadline – the infographic can be assembled when your information is ready. Your information will be customized on the infographic that you can take to your meetings. No costs are involved other than the time for your members to collect the information.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

If enough committees participate – we will develop a regional and provincial infographic.