

# entwine

:feminist organizing

Vancouver Status of Women

2652 East Hastings Street

Vancouver BC V5K 1Z6

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Website: [www.vsw.ca](http://www.vsw.ca)  
E-mail: [womencentre@vsw.ca](mailto:womencentre@vsw.ca)

☎ Business: 604-255-6554  
Fax: 604-255-7508

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## VSW Annual Report

April 2004 - March 2005

**Vancouver Status of Women (VSW)** is a strong, dynamic organization dedicated to ensuring our full participation in our social, political and economic life. Founded in 1971, VSW stands firmly as one of the oldest and most respected feminist organizations in British Columbia. Our fundamental commitment to justice for women has earned the support from numerous sectors of the community for 34 years. The work of VSW could not be accomplished without the support of hundreds of volunteers, members, donors, and funders. We thank and acknowledge them for their contribution of time, skills, energy, and money to the organization over the last fiscal year.

### Year in Review

Since the loss of core funding from the Ministry of Communities, Aboriginal and Women Services on April 1, 2004, VSW staff, volunteers and the Coordinating Collective have spent much time organizing, restructuring, and preparing for the loss of our operational funding. We managed to continue our volunteer program, anti-oppression committee, produce and distribute thousands of copies of the *Welfare Resource Guide for Women* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) and provide referrals and resources for women in our communities.

In August of 2004, VSW moved into a place of her own. With the purchase of a space at Nanaimo and Hastings, VSW has seen herself transform into a more sustainable organization with a vision towards feminist values and social change. We welcomed new staff and new Coordinating Collective members during year. The 7<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Single Mother's Resource Guide became a priority for VSW and a collective decision was made that by the end of 2005, the new edition would be ready for the thousands of single mothers who contact us yearly to request this valuable resource. The Women and Welfare Project's Feminist Working Group of VSW focused most of its time and energy on lobbying both at the federal and provincial levels on issues of immigration, welfare, funding, sex-trade, and social service for women.

We continue our commitment towards a feminist, safe, healthy, and sustainable centre while participating in coalition work, fundraising, research, lobbying, volunteer coordination, media relations, programming, publications development, and referral services. We look forward to a continued vision of hope and excitement as we continue to build and transform our physical and political spaces. With a changing political climate at government levels, as well as within the women's movements and other social justice movements, VSW takes pride in being a part of such movements as she strives to build a strong women's centre.

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**Vision:** Freedom and self-determination for all through responsible, socially just, healthy and joyful communities both locally and globally.

**Mission:** Vancouver Status of Women works with women to ensure our full participation in the social, economic, and political life of our communities, in the profound belief that women's self-determination is a crucial step towards a just and responsible society.

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### *Women and Welfare Project*

The Women and Welfare Project of VSW focused on an in-depth analysis of the BC welfare system within the current colonial, poor-bashing, and globalization context. The devastating impacts of British Columbia's welfare policies on marginalized women demonstrate women's reality of social and economic insecurity. Marginalized women affected by the 2004 welfare changes continue to face compounded state oppression and legislated barriers at multiple fronts, including: custody and access, child apprehension, housing, employment, childcare, education, immigration, legal aid, violence, health, family maintenance, and much more.

The Vancouver Status of Women's 3-year Women & Welfare Project concluded in March this year. The Project's main goals was to: examine the impact of welfare changes on marginalized women in BC; raise awareness, educate, and mobilize the general public; and lobby the provincial government to restore funding and improve programs.

In the last 3 years, the Feminist Working Group of the Project completed many initiatives. We developed and published, *A New Era: The Deepening of Women's Poverty*, a feminist framework that reflects the colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist roots of poverty in Canada and the restructuring of the BC welfare legislation. This year we published the second edition of the *Welfare Resource Guide for Women*, a resource guide for women who navigate the welfare system in BC. Other project publications include *Facing the New Era of Cuts: Voices of BC Advocates & Service Providers Working with Women on Welfare & Poverty*. This report was developed from welfare advocates across the province whose feedback helped provide tools and resources to better support their work and the women they work with.



The Feminist Working Group has been busy, not only compiling survey results of Welfare advocates across BC to help guide the project and produce resource tools for women but also facilitating media relations surveys and providing tools and workshops to social justice organizations.

With support from the community, the project provided information sessions and programs to help women engage with the welfare system while launching, concurrently, a Public Education and Media Campaign to debunk myths about welfare and challenge mainstream ideas of poor-bashing.

The Women & Welfare Project wraps up this year with lobby strategies to change welfare and immigration policies that continue to induce poverty on marginalized women. We thank all volunteers involved with this 3-year project and kindly acknowledge the amazing contribution of the Feminist Working Group: Cecily Nicholson, Jeannie Morgan, Whitney Borowko, Melanie Christian, Heather Millar, Nancy Drewitt, Nadia Hedar, Nathalie Léveillé, Julie Ham, Sally Rudolf, Sharmeen Khan, Dana Oshiro, Nicole Latham, Harsha Walia, Vero Methot, Junie Désil, Ada Chan, Jeanette Ashe, Naomi North, Sonal Manchanda, Nina Shahinpoori, Nadine Wu, and Lisa Bonardelli. VSW honours your time, skills, and perseverance while engaging with feminist, collective, anti-oppression ways of working.

*For more information regarding the Women and Welfare Project, please contact the Project Coordinator via email: [femantipov@vsw.ca](mailto:femantipov@vsw.ca)*



## ***Racialization of Poverty Project***

Our latest multi-year project initiative examines and evaluates the deepening of poverty experienced by racialized women (Aboriginal women & women of colour) due to historical and current social and economic policies, including the reduction of government social programs provincially and nationally. In addition, the project aims to bring forth the complexity of the impact on racialized women facing multiple oppressions including barriers related to ability, language, immigration, childcare, education, labour, employment and family status.

The Project aims to: examine and analyze the historical and current impacts of poverty on racialized women, that are due to discriminatory policies, acts, regulations, and laws; raise awareness, educate, and mobilize the general public, media, social justice groups, and policy-makers regarding the impact of poverty on marginalized women; and lobby governments and institutions to promote policies that impede the feminization and racialization of poverty in Canada.



Vancouver Status of Women courageously envisions and ethically embarks on this project with your support and that of the Status of Women Canada. For more information, please contact *The Project Coordinator* at 604-255-6554 or at [femantipov@vsw.ca](mailto:femantipov@vsw.ca)

### **Principles of Anti-Oppression**

Power and privilege play out in our group dynamics and we must continually struggle with how we challenge power and privilege.

We can only identify how power and privilege play out when we are conscious and committed to understanding how racism, sexism, homophobia, and all other forms of oppression affect each one of us.

Until we are clearly committed to anti-oppression practice all forms of oppression will continue to divide our movements and weaken our power.

Developing an anti-oppressive practice is life long work and requires a life long commitment. We are all vulnerable to being oppressive and we need to continuously struggle with these issues.

Dialogue and discussion are necessary and we need to learn how to listen non-defensively and communicate respectfully if we are going to have effective anti-oppression practice. Challenge yourself to be honest and open and take risks to address oppression head on.

### ***Anti-Oppression at VSW***

An anti-oppression roundtable was held in March. VSW invited trusted facilitators, who use an anti-oppression framework in their facilitator role. The roundtable was an opportunity to talk about best practices, how to strengthen our anti-oppression strategy, assess what the community wants and what VSW can provide. It also provided an opportunity to talk about how we do anti-oppression work, focusing more on how all of our work weaves in feminist, anti-oppression framework, how we design workshops, plan rallies, or work in coalition.

On April 11<sup>th</sup>, VSW presented a brief to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. VSW began a discussion about immigration policies and how they affect the different classes of people (i.e. migrant workers, refugees, etc) arriving to Canada.

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, May 1<sup>st</sup>, and May 8<sup>th</sup>, a four-part training workshop was offered to new incoming volunteers. New volunteers received an introduction to VSW, and an introduction to anti-oppressive practices within the context of our women's centre.

*Photo courtesy of  
Marlene Trick –  
Memorial March 2005*



***Downtown Eastside Women's Centre:*** VSW has been responsible for coordinating and administering a restructuring grant for the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre from September 2004 to June 2005. This grant has been applied to five different areas at the Centre including: women who access the Centre, volunteers, staff, board, and elders council. Funding has been used to support costs of facilitation, accessibility expenses (i.e. food, childcare and transportation) and room rentals. Community facilitator support has come from Charlene Wee, Junie Désil, Julia Woo, Rain Daniels, and Cecily Nicholson.

Work with women at the centre has included: the facilitation of "women's voice" sessions, support groups, workshops, community meetings, staff consultations, hiring, training, organizational development, and the planning and support of various aspects of Centre operations as well as community events. VSW is honoured to be able to support this important resource for women in the Downtown Eastside and we respect the community of workers that keep it viable.

***BC Coalition of Women Centres:*** Vancouver Status of Women continued to support the work of the BC Coalition of Women Centres. This coalition came together to address the provincial funding cuts through media work, lobbying, actions, rallies, and fundraising. Another priority included working with allies to pressure the BC government to reinstate core funding to the Coalition. VSW has also given workshops for the BC Coalition of Women Centres and continues to work with them on policy, fundraising, and staff development.

***End Legislated Poverty:*** VSW worked closely with ELP on activities including finding resources for ELP to continue operating and building organizational capacity.

***South Coast Women's Centres:*** VSW continued to meet and discuss fundraising options with other women's centres in the south coast region.

***Feminist Alliance for International Action:*** VSW attended a historical meeting in Ottawa on developing a stronger national organization. The Feminist Alliance for International Action seeks to lobby the federal government to implement UN agreements that fight discrimination against women.



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**No One is Illegal (NOII):** VSW continued to support the work of NOII regarding the systemic racist barriers that immigrants, refugees, and non-status residents experience in Canada. In particular, VSW participated in the Refugee Camp Campaign exposing the Canadian state's immigration policies that legislate discriminatory practices.

**Working Group on Poverty:** VSW regularly contributed a feminist, anti-poverty analysis to the dialogue regarding immigrant women and poverty.

**VCASSA:** VSW participated as a Board Member regarding issues of custody and access.

**We continued to building community with the following organizations:**

Palestine Community Centre, BC Teachers Federation, BC Government and Services Employees Union, Lower Mainland Coalition for Social Justice, We Act, Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users, Tenants Rights Action Coalition, Hospital Employees Union, United Native Nations Local 111, No One is Illegal, Palestine Community Centre, Sex Workers Action Network, Bus Riders' Union, The Welfare & Disabilities Peoples Union, the Seniors Network BC, WestCoast Leaf, Vernon Women Centre, PovNet, FLAW, PACE, North Shore Women's Centre, Kamloops Women's Centre, SFU Women's Studies Department, UBC Women's Studies Programme, Immigrating Women in Science, and BC Coalition of People with Disabilities.

VSW's Project Coordinator also worked with a number of national women's organizations: Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, LEAF National, NAWL, Native Women's Association of Canada, and Coalition for Women's Equality.





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## Organizational Development, Planning & Fundraising

### *Our One Year Old Space*

Thanks to a large donation from a VSW member, we were able to find and purchase new premises for the centre.

Dedicated volunteers in a Moving Committee, donors and supporters, all lent support in helping us reach a new level of self-determination.

In 2004, we purchased and spruced up our current centre space at 2652 E. Hastings Street in Vancouver. We are located in the heart of a diverse and thriving community, more accessible to women.

Come on over and help us celebrate our one-year birthday by checking out the centre and resources!

Bus routes to the centre are:

#10, #16, #7, #135, #160, #190

We are located near the Hastings Public Library, at the intersection of Slocan and Hastings Street.



### *Volunteering at VSW*

Volunteers are integral to our centre and our ability to function. They help us achieve our goals and mission and provide enduring support in all our endeavors. VSW would like to welcome her new volunteers and practicum students – Melanie Christian, Nicole Fulton, Nadia Hedar, Sarah Rudrum, Magnolia Villalobos, and Harsha Walia.



These volunteers have contributed their time and energy to the following projects at VSW: Feminist Working Group (FWG), Volunteer Development Committee, Single Mother's Resource Guide (SMRG), and our resource centre. We thank our new volunteers and those who have left us this year (Parivash Seyed Madani, Joanna Mikkelsen) for their effort and support.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank Nathalie Léveill , our Fall Practicum student from UBC's School of Social Work who has completed her practicum at VSW. Natalie leaves us with the following experience:

" In my work at VSW, I have become more sensitized to the feminization and racialization of poverty, [and]...with the Vancouver...resources to assist women living in poverty and women who are racialized...My experience has been a positive one whereby I've been welcomed as staff, given...learning opportunities...and had the pleasure of engaging on several projects with other volunteers."

Nathalie, VSW wishes you all the best in your pursuit of your educational and life goals.

*To find out more about volunteer opportunities, please contact Junie D sil, Volunteer & Resource Coordinator, at 604-255-6554 or [volunteer@vsw.ca](mailto:volunteer@vsw.ca)*



## Funding and Planning

The Vancouver Status of Women has felt a tremendous difference since the purchase of a new space on Hastings.

We are still looking and researching fundraising opportunities to help sustain ongoing projects and programs, but are happy to report that VSW is very excited about the possibilities this new space brings.

### Funders This Year:

City of Vancouver, Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch – Direct Access Program, Status of Women Canada

Vancouver Status of Women kindly acknowledges the members and donors support during the year. Your support not only maintains our survival in the community but also further acknowledges and appreciates VSW's work, voice, and presence in our community.



## 2004-2005 Financial Overview

### Operating Budget

#### Revenue

VSW Grants	\$123,068
Fundraising (incl. Gaming)	68,461
Earned Revenue	845
Administered Grants*	10,458
Other**	1,131

**Total** **\$203,993**

\*Grants administered by VSW for other organizations

\*\*Includes administered Grant fees

VSW Grants	60%
Fundraising	34%
Earned Revenue	0.4%
Administered Grants	5%
Other	0.6%

#### Expenditures

Salaries & Benefits*	\$105,419
Operations & programs*	81,552

**Total** **\$186,971**

\*Includes other groups' funds administered by VSW

Salaries and Benefits	56%
Operations	44%

**Revenue Over Expenditures \$17,022**

**AUDITED STATEMENTS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST**



# THANK YOU!!

## Vancouver Status of Women Donors

### Special thanks to our sustaining donors:

Joyce Arthur ♦ Sherry Baker ♦ Maxine Borowko ♦ Barbara Curran ♦ Sharon Costello ♦ Nicola Hill ♦ Stephanie Kellington ♦ Anita Fortney ♦ Lynda Griffiths ♦ Aleta Kovach ♦ Deirdre Kelly ♦ Margot Louis ♦ Ursula Litzcke ♦ Gladis Lemus ♦ Monique Midgley ♦ D. Millar ♦ Sarah Menzel ♦ P. McNicholl ♦ Margaret Newton ♦ Barb Parrott ♦ Marilyn Pomfret ♦ Catherine Russell ♦ Edith Thomas ♦ Gisela Theurer ♦ Judith Berk ♦ Mary Frey ♦ Adrienne Ross ♦ Maureen Macdonald ♦ Margaret Mitchell ♦ A. Macpherson ♦ Veronica Delorme ♦ Catherine Revell ♦ Benita Bunjun ♦ Susan Boyd ♦ Susan Stout ♦ Robin & J. Millar ♦ Mary Schendlinger ♦ Marie Dussault ♦ Naomi Katz ♦ Joan Robillard ♦ Jane Rule ♦ Susan Wendell ♦ Shauna Butterwick ♦ Maureen Childs ♦ Maeve Moran ♦ Arlene McLaren ♦ Ali Grant ♦ Elizabeth Gautschi ♦ Michelle Dodds ♦ Valerie Raoul ♦ Skye Stuart ♦ Christine Harris ♦ Marion Pollack ♦ Kelly Gordon ♦ Cheryl Covey ♦ Rebecca Burton ♦ Sonal Manchanda ♦ Dana Oshiro ♦ Charlene Wee ♦ Fiona York ♦ Nathalie Léveillé ♦ Terry Bishop ♦ Laurie Kohl ♦ G.B. Khoo ♦ Jessica Campbell ♦ Micheline Barrette ♦ Elizabeth Benette ♦ Lynell Anderson ♦ G. Flett ♦ Nermin Helal ♦ Jill Stainsby ♦ Jessica Peart ♦ Emily Aspinwall ♦ S. Hollick-Kenyon ♦ Pamela Withers ♦ Verna Turner ♦ Alicen Keamarden ♦ Anne Miles ♦ Patricia Dubberley ♦ Margaret McCoy ♦ Leona Gom ♦ Judith Hall ♦ Janet Fraser ♦ Nancy Edwards ♦ Clare Young ♦ Maryann Abbs ♦ W.A. Braha ♦ Judith Walker ♦ Janet Vesterback ♦ Ann Mary Doyle ♦ Barbara J. May ♦ N. Jensen ♦ I. Kiborn ♦ Alison L. Hopwood ♦ Madeleine Gilchrist ♦ Susan Scott ♦ BCNU Shaughnessy Heights Region ♦ Judith Harper

We acknowledge the following agencies that funded VSW projects and programs in 2004/2005. Their support enables us to employ staff to conduct research, answer the phones, provide services and programs to women in the community, and to publish and distribute our publications such as the *entwine* newsletter and resource guides.

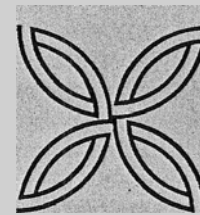
### Thanks to:

- ♦ Status of Women Canada
- ♦ The City of Vancouver
- ♦ Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch
  - Direct Access Program

## VSW Volunteers

♦ Aisha Syed ♦ Cecily Nicholson ♦ Charlene Wee ♦ Chelsea Peddle ♦ Cherlyn McKay ♦ Dana Oshiro ♦ Fiona York ♦ Gladis Lemus ♦ Heather Millar ♦ Jeanette Ashe ♦ Joanna Mikkelsen ♦ Julie Shurgarman ♦ Kathryn Campbell ♦ Magnolia Villalobos ♦ Merryn Edwards ♦ Melanie Christian ♦ Nadia Hedar ♦ Nadine Chambers ♦ Nicole Fulton ♦ Nicole Latham ♦ Parivash Seyed Madani ♦ Whitney Borowko ♦ Nathalie Léveillé ♦ Harsha Walia ♦ Sally Rudolf ♦ Sharmeen Khan ♦

**VSW expresses a heart-felt thanks to all those individuals, organizations, institutions and businesses that contributed to our ongoing presence, work and voice through your financial and in-kind support during 2004/2005.**



## VSW Coordinating Collective and Staff (2004-2005)

### Coordinating Collective

Jeanette Ashe ♦ Whitney Borowko ♦ Kathryn Campbell ♦ Julie Shurgarman ♦ Nadine Chambers ♦ Cherlyn McKay ♦ Chelsea Peddle ♦ Rachel Rees ♦ Aisha Syed

### Full-Time Staff

Benita Bunjun – Project Coordinator  
Junie Désil – Volunteer & Resource Coordinator  
Julie Ham – Administrative & Fundraising Coordinator  
Sharmeen Khan – Women's Centre Coordinator

### Part-Time & Contract Staff

Cecily Nicholson – Program Coordinator  
Jeannie Morgan – Programmer  
Jessica Peart – Move Coordinator  
Nicole Latham – Resource Centre Assistant  
Cheryl Ross – Financial Administrator  
Miranda Jiang – Bookkeeper  
Nighat Gondal – Child Care Provider