

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	3
What is SisterWatch?	3
History of SisterWatch	3
Purpose and Mandate of SisterWatch	3
Purpose of SisterWatch Committee	4
SisterWatch Mandate	4
Specific Goals and Objectives	4
Selected SisterWatch Initiatives	4
Evaluation of SisterWatch	5
Evaluation Report Overview	5
Investigative Outcomes	5
Project Tyrant	6
Project Rescue	6
The Martin Tremblay Case (Project Rubicon)	6
Key Findings: Is SisterWatch Working?	7
Implications for Other Agencies: Lessons Learned	7
Appendix A: SisterWatch Evaluation Report	9

Introduction

The goal of this report is to provide a summary of an evaluation that was conducted on SisterWatch—a collaborative police-community project that is designed to combat violence against women in the DTES, and to make the community safer for everyone who lives and works there. A secondary goal is to share best practices with other police agencies for the development of effective and police-community partnerships.

What is SisterWatch?

History of SisterWatch

SisterWatch was born out of a confrontation between members of the DTES community – particularly the broad coalition of individuals and organizations that make up the Feb 14th Women’s Memorial March Committee – and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD).

On October 4th, 2010, community members were participating in a memorial service for Ashley Machiskinic, a woman who was a part of the DTES community and died when she fell out of her window; many in the community believed she had been pushed although there was no evidence of this. In their frustration at the VPD’s response and public statements about Ashley and her death, community members marched to the VPD police station to start a demonstration. The group of women demanded Ashley’s case be reopened and approached as a murder, not a suicide. They also demanded an immediate meeting with VPD Chief Constable Jim Chu. The Chief was not able to come down as he was in a meeting, but the women protesting refused to leave the police station so they were ultimately arrested.

However, the very next day, Chief Constable Jim Chu invited the Women’s Memorial March Committee to meet with him; at this meeting the community members presented the VPD with a letter outlining their concerns, demanding that charges against the protesters be dropped, and asking about other cases and issues that the DTES community had concerns about. They met a second time to continue the conversation. Chief Constable Chu recognized the value of the meetings; he invited the group to form a committee consisting of senior police leaders and community representatives to continue regular meetings.

Members of the DTES community and the police agreed to continue meeting at a joint table to discuss issues relevant to the safety of women – to this day, this committee meets every six weeks.

Purpose and Mandate of SisterWatch

Globally, SisterWatch committee members would agree that the shared goal is to end violence against women. However, they would also agree that this is a very long term goal; as such specific Terms of Reference were developed to provide focus for the SisterWatch meetings and guide expected outcomes. According to the SisterWatch Terms of Reference:

Purpose of SisterWatch Committee:

- *Information sharing*
- *Problem solving*
- *Posting of information*
- *Community consultation*
- *Transparency*

SisterWatch Mandate:

SisterWatch is a multifaceted initiative designed to eliminate violence against self-identified women and girls in the Downtown Eastside. An aspirational goal is that SisterWatch's work will make the community safer for everyone who lives and works in Vancouver. This means that other types of victimization may be brought on occasion to the SisterWatch committee to facilitate an appropriate response.

Specific Goals and Objectives:

- *Eliminating violence against women and girls*
- *Relationship building/trust building with DTES residents and community and the Vancouver Police Department*
- *Eliminating barriers between police and DTES residents and community*
- *Education, cultural awareness and other events to further build trusting relationships between residents, the community and the Vancouver Police Department*
- *A method and system for providing violence against women statistics and information and other health and safety information*
- *A procedure for sharing information on current investigations into violence against women, including type and severity of violence to be investigated. (When is the public notified of high risk offender in the community?)*

Selected SisterWatch Initiatives

Many strategies are required to address the above-mentioned mandate and goals of the SisterWatch committee. How do we enable community consultation and eliminate barriers? How do we enhance transparency and share information between the DTES community and the VPD? And, importantly what initiatives has SisterWatch worked on towards the elimination of violence against women in the DTES?

There have been many initiatives since the inception of SisterWatch. For example, a 24-hour telephone hotline was established so women living in the DTES can anonymously report violence. At the community's request, the line is staffed by civilian women at ECOMM who are trained professionals in assisting callers who may be distraught, nervous or afraid. Anyone with information about crimes against women, or any other matter affecting one's own or others' safety, is encouraged to call the SisterWatch Tip Line. The VPD's goal is to use the information received as the building blocks to deal with violence against women in the DTES. In addition, several ruggedized 911 call boxes were installed in the DTES to enable women without phones to safely and privately call for emergency assistance.

In addition, SisterWatch set up community gatherings where DTES residents are encouraged to share their concerns and residents are kept informed about police progress in the investigation of crimes and advances in community safety. These meetings are now led by the SisterWatch Committee utilizing Aboriginal Talking Circle principles. Another component of SisterWatch is the Speakers' Bureau, comprising several female police officers, who are available to speak to groups and organizations about personal safety. In order to facilitate information sharing, news and updates on SisterWatch, along with other helpful information, is posted on the VPD and SisterWatch websites.

Evaluation of SisterWatch

The evaluation of SisterWatch was a recommendation of the Missing and Murdered Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) and was funded by the Provincial Government as a result of that recommendation. Specifically, the recommendation was

That SisterWatch be evaluated to provide a basis for further refinements and with a view to establishing best practices for meaningful police-community partnerships; and that these best practices be shared with other police forces to encourage them to develop and maintain ongoing, collaborative community forums (p.163)

Community members on the SisterWatch committee, with agreement by the VPD, selected Ms. Alison Brewin to prepare an evaluation report. The full evaluation report is attached as Appendix A.

Evaluation Report Overview

The evaluation process entailed a review of all documentation related to SisterWatch and consultations with SisterWatch committee members. From these discussions key evaluation questions were developed and key themes emerged which guided data collection. In order to understand the impact of SisterWatch on the community and the VPD, committee members and senior police staff members were interviewed. An important theme was the impact of SisterWatch on the frontline officers and the women in the community – this was answered by matching surveys with police officers and women's services in the DTES and compared with existing research. Finally quantitative data was also examined regarding the SisterWatch tip line and crime statistics.

Investigative Outcomes

The evaluation report completed a review of selected investigative outcomes that occurred only because of SisterWatch. Below is a summary of three of these case studies:

Project Tyrant

Immediately after the implementation of SisterWatch, the VPD Gangs and Drugs Section and the Beat Enforcement Teams (BET) in the DTES embarked on investigating three particular individuals. The information about the criminal activities these individuals were involved in was obtained directly from the community who participated in SisterWatch; that is, information from the Community Members of SisterWatch sparked the investigation and led to the arrest of all three individuals. These individuals were among the many who were contributing to the drug supply in the DTES. This investigation, named Project Tyrant led to countless charges against these individuals. One search warrant alone produced approximately 132 grams of cocaine, 5.16 grams of heroin, 41 grams of marijuana, a handgun, and approximately \$30,000.

Project Rescue

The origination and success of another project resulted from the willingness of community members to provide information as a result of SisterWatch. Specifically, through SisterWatch community meetings and town halls, the community brought forward information about violent drug dealers who were victimizing women in the DTES. The VPD responded by leading an investigation into these sophisticated, violent, and predatory drug dealers. In January of 2011, a total of five individuals were arrested and charged with multiple drug and weapons charges. The results of the search warrants resulted in the seizure of: three handguns, a large quantity of drugs, cash, a luxury SUV, a \$30,000 watch, and drug paraphernalia.

The direct results of this investigation reduced violence against women and not only reflected the better relationships between Community members and the VPD as a result of SisterWatch, but also strengthened those relationships by taking predators out of the community. Furthermore, Project Rescue marked a significant accomplishment for the VPD in that for the first time in the VPD's history 'Criminal Organization' charges were laid and these individuals were subsequently found guilty.

The Martin Tremblay Case (Project Rubicon)

Shortly after Projects Tyrant and Rescue, the VPD arrested more individuals that were connected to victimizing women in the DTES. Project Rubicon had a simple mandate: find the criminals who were preying on the most vulnerable people in that community and put them out of business. For six months starting in December 2010, an investigative team identified, arrested and prosecuted 24 suspects for 52 criminal charges. Project Rubicon also resulted in the seizure of significant amounts of drugs, numerous firearms and tainted heroin that was believed to be responsible for several overdoses in the area. Two of the offenders were sexual predators who were preying on women battling drug addiction and mental illness. In one case a man was drugging women and videotaping his sexual assaults. The other individual arrested was Martin Tremblay. Tremblay was brought to the attention of the VPD through SisterWatch meetings. Tremblay, a convicted sex offender, has since been charged with four counts of trafficking cocaine and one count of possessing cocaine. Tremblay has a lengthy criminal record. In 2002, he was convicted of five counts of sexual assault involving underage Aboriginal girls.

Additionally, along with Tremblay, nine other men and one woman were arrested. Approximately seven months later Martin Tremblay was released from jail. Based on the evidence collected from young women and supported by SisterWatch Committee members, the VPD was able to immediately arrest him again after his release. Tremblay was charged with

seven new sex offences involving four women. Resulting from this arrest, Tremblay faced multiple charges of sexual assault, administering a noxious substance, and obtaining sexual services for money from a person under the age of 18 years. In addition, Tremblay was charged and convicted in the deaths of Kayla Lalonde and Martha Jackson Hernandez.

Currently, a dangerous offender hearing is being conducted with Tremblay in relation to these convictions from 2013. SisterWatch relationships are helping engage women in the community to ensure this hearing is successful. Being designated a dangerous offender helps keep Tremblay in prison indefinitely and, if he is released sometime in the future, allows corrections and police across the country to track him closely.

Key Findings: Is SisterWatch Working?

Overall, the evaluation report indicates that SisterWatch has had a significant positive impact – on the VPD, the women and Aboriginal organizations in the DTES, and their relationships with each other. As stated in the independent evaluation: “Is it worth the work involved? There is clear evidence that SisterWatch is worth it.” Further, the few case studies outlined show that the enhanced relationships and developing communication and trust has contributed to important investigations and judicially successful cases; importantly, these cases would not have occurred without SisterWatch. As outlined in the evaluation, “The capacity of women’s advocates to connect with the VPD senior leadership has had a positive impact on the way in which conflict is addressed between those involved in the committee and therefore how conflict is resolved. This, in turn, has opened the door to collaboration and mutual support...” (p. 3)

An important component of the evaluation was to provide recommendations for refinements to the program. The evaluation report makes 17 recommendations; some of these may be implemented quite straightforwardly. For example, one of the recommendations is to have the SisterWatch website updated more often and share the core values of SisterWatch on the website; another recommendation is to expand the SisterWatch Speakers Bureau. This may entail a request for speakers that are interested in participating and information on the SisterWatch website. The list of full recommendations can be found on pages four and five of the report (see Appendix A).

Implications for Other Police Agencies: *Lessons Learned*

As outlined in the evaluation report, independent of the MWCI, the VPD was interested in assessing the success and challenges of SisterWatch and encouraged other police agencies to consider continuous police-community partnerships. Despite all of the initiatives that SisterWatch has produced, the act of having a dialogue at a shared table is fundamental to opening lines of communication, building trust, and obtaining information that may be of investigative significance.

The evaluation also identified how a program like SisterWatch can be applied elsewhere by asking interviewees what advice they would have for other police agencies if they were to set up a program similar to SisterWatch. While SisterWatch is a unique initiative because of the DTES, it is a model that can be applied elsewhere through key themes identified. These themes

include the importance of having the community lead the agenda – the community members must be as involved as the police; having a democratic committee was suggested as an important theme. It is also important to define clear terms of reference and the goal and outcomes of the project and the committee. What is the primary goal? What are the strategies to reach the goal? What are the responsibilities of the members?

SisterWatch has been successful within the DTES, a community with many overlapping needs, but it is a model that can be replicated in any community that is confronted with its own unique issues. The success of this program rests within its structure, which begins with a foundation designed to connect the community with senior police leaders and decision makers, encourages open dialogue and communication that transcends traditional institutional hierarchy.

From this foundation of communication, issues are identified, strategies are developed and resources are applied towards addressing pressing community issues. This results in a cycle of consultation, action, and meaningful outcomes.

SisterWatch Evaluation Report

June 2015

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Experience.
Results.

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Table of Contents

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND FINDINGS.....	11
RECOMMENDATIONS	12
B. NOTE ON LANGUAGE USAGE.....	13
C. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH.....	15
D. THE GOALS OF SISTERWATCH.....	18
THE BIRTH OF SISTERWATCH.....	18
THE IDENTITY OF SISTERWATCH.....	19
THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF SISTERWATCH:.....	20
E. KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS.....	22
1. TRUST.....	23
2. EDUCATION OF THE VPD.....	32
3. EDUCATION OF THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE VPD.....	36
F. A CASE STUDIES: PROJECTS TYRANT & RESCUE.....	39
PROJECT TYRANT.....	39
PROJECT RESCUE.....	40
G. A CASE STUDY: MARTIN TREMBLAY/PROJECT RUBICON.....	41
H. A CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY TOWN HALL MEETINGS.....	42
I. CASE STUDY: THE MURDER OF CHELSEA HOLDEN.....	42
J. A CASE STUDY: FIRST UNITED CHURCH.....	43
K. THE ‘TIP’ LINE.....	44
L. FUTURE OF SISTERWATCH.....	48
M. APPENDICES.....	50
A. INTERVIEWS.....	50
B. SURVEYS AND RESULTS.....	54
a) <i>District 2 - BET Officers Survey</i>	54
b) <i>Women-serving agencies</i>	58
c) <i>Survey of women in the DTES</i>	61
C. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED.....	64
D. EVALUATION PLAN.....	65

A. Executive Summary and Findings

Evaluating SisterWatch is a challenging task because it has had multiple objectives and has never articulated concise, achievable goals. Traditional evaluation takes a program plan and breaks it down, assessing each part to answer whether or not the program has been successful. SisterWatch has evolved in a complex environment as a response to complex issues. The history of the relationships between the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) and women and the organizations serving women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES) is a negative and often confrontational one. This is the result of an integration of historic patterns of colonialism in Canada, poverty in BC and the tragic impact of police responses to missing and murdered women in the past. When Ashley Machiskinic died as a result of a fall from a DTES window, the police response triggered a confrontation that led to the arrest of three women leaders of organizations in the community. SisterWatch was born from the meetings that were held to discuss the situation.

The findings of this evaluation, therefore, are based on some initial assumptions about the overall goals of SisterWatch. They are based almost entirely on qualitative data from interviews with key members of the SisterWatch Committee, documents including meeting minutes, and surveys and discussions with VPD officers and women in the community.

Overall, SisterWatch has had a large impact on the VPD and their relationships with women-serving and Aboriginal/First Nations organizations in the DTES. There is evidence showing that the improved relationships have contributed to some important investigations and judicially successful cases that could not have occurred without SisterWatch. The capacity of women's advocates to connect with the VPD senior leadership has had a positive impact on the way in which conflict is addressed between those involved in the committee and therefore how conflict is resolved. This, in turn, has opened the door to collaboration and mutual support was illustrated in the First United Church sexual assault cases.

The challenges SisterWatch has had and continues to have relate to the cultural and organizational differences between the VPD as an institution and the loose network of advocates, organizations and individuals that represent the community at the SisterWatch table. Without some kind of community-based support, SisterWatch will probably always struggle with the relationship between meeting discussions and active initiatives flowing from those meetings. Who should be at the table is, itself, a reflection of this problem. The DTES community is not one organization with one mandate and therefore it is difficult for individuals to accept leadership roles and exclude others. Personality conflicts interact with an imbalance of

resources to make the administration of SisterWatch very challenging.

A phone line and 911 phones – recommendations made by community members and initiated by the VPD – have had mixed success, but further and focused evaluation of these phone programs would help clarify what quality of service they are, in fact, providing. The VPD feel it illustrates their willingness to act on community recommendations, but community members question the quality and impact of the phone programs. However, there is some suggestion in the evidence that when the phone line was being actively promoted there were more investigations of cases involving violence against women.

Recommendations:

1. SisterWatch engage in a facilitated process to solidify the Committee's initiative and the goals and activity expectations of SisterWatch overall.
2. Secure funding for a SisterWatch coordinator to work out of a community organization, someone who can support the participation of Community members through facilitation, drafting materials and coordinating their decision-making processes. This position could work in partnership with a VPD administrator, both supporting the co-chairs and ensuring smooth running of meetings and information exchange.
3. Utilize the SisterWatch website to reflect the Community/VPD partnership: share news about cases, and articulate the core values of SisterWatch for current and potential VPD members and DTES residents, including next Town Hall meetings, community events and opportunities to participate.
4. VPD should make the SisterWatch message clearer and more concise for frontline constables, concretely identifying what it means in terms of their behavior and relationships in the community, particularly with Aboriginal and First Nations Elders;
5. The VPD should enhance positive policing practices, not rely on internal messaging or traditional training methods, but integrate the positive approaches used by Cst. Linda Malcolm and others – projecting a willingness to talk, listen and discuss issues women face in the community experience;
6. Women's organizations need to enhance the of communication to others about the value of their participation in SisterWatch to help the broader community feel involved, opening up opportunities to communicate their experiences more directly to the committee and find ways to engage women in the learning and relationships that are they are building. One example might be holding a community meeting with women in the community a few days before a Sisterwatch meeting to get advice and direction prior to meeting.
7. VPD is required by the *Police Act* to post individual officer's badge number in a visible place (right chest) on their uniform to allow individuals to identify badge numbers of officers without having to ask for it, but it appears this isn't universally understood in the community or how this might help clarify police action and hold officers accountable should they act

inappropriately. It would be a strong statement about the VPD commitment to transparency if they actively publicized this along with a process for communicating and reporting. This would give confidence to individuals who witness aggressive behavior and help the VPD identify the kind of interactions they choose to support in the DTES.

8. Community members engage the community in large discussions to identify the knowledge they want VPD members to have in relation to the DTES.
9. VPD present an overview of existing education and training programs for VPD members to SisterWatch Committee and engage in a facilitated discussion about opportunities for inserting community-based expertise into formal structures and systems.
10. Develop and implement a plan for small group, facilitated discussions between VPD members and women in the community beginning with volunteers already committed to relationship-building in the community.
11. Expand programs like the Sex Worker Liaison – broaden it to support women in the DTES.
12. Expand and publicize the SisterWatch Speakers Bureau.
13. Map out strategic ways to educate VPD members about Aboriginal communities, history and cultural practices utilizing formal and informal methods, and implement the plan.
14. Determine the clear goals of the phone line, 911 phones and any cellphone distribution and communicate those throughout the DTES. Evaluate the phone lines annually and adjust the programs accordingly.
15. Improve the phone line with special training of ECOMM responders and the provision of SisterWatch approved referral lists.
16. Create a new and ongoing public campaign regarding the phonenumber to clarify its existence and the use it exists to serve (aka allowing women to report/call in and get specialized attention and/or report predatory behavior in the community without the risk of warrants being executed etc.).
17. Improve quality-control of the phone line, the 911 and any cell phone distribution to closely monitor the success, quality and impact of the phone services on women's safety.

B. Note on language usage

In discussing the safety of women from violence, especially violence against women living and working in the Downtown Eastside, it is important to be clear about the use of language. Language has the power to exclude, undermine and control people. It also has the power to give strength, inspire and welcome. In this evaluation report, we endeavor to use language in ways that will accomplish the latter. We acknowledge the cultural and experiential ignorance of the authors if we exclude anyone as a result of language usage choices we have made.

SisterWatch participants have differing opinions about the use of Aboriginal, First Nations and/or Indigenous to describe individuals whose heritage flows primarily from a Nation resident in North America prior to the arrival of European settlers. In this report we use the phrase Aboriginal and First Nations because it is the language used by those who are of those Nations in the course of this evaluation.

Some of the members of the SisterWatch Committee are individuals who have been appointed by the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) to participate as a result of their position, while others were specifically asked to participate because of their interests, life experience or specialized knowledge. Regardless of position or person, their involvement is approved by the VPD's Chief Constable. They are all referred to in this report as 'VPD members'.

The members representing the community, however, are not centrally appointed in the same way; the community is not one cohesive institution like the VPD. Members of this group are referred to in this report as 'community members' but it is important to note that some represent organizations working in the DTES, and some represent particular interests in the issues at stake. Overall, the community members flow from the same fluid democracy of the founding organization, the collaborative collective work of the Women's Memorial March Committee. This is one of the themes identified in the evaluation as a challenge for SisterWatch and is discussed below.

While Committee members felt very strongly that describing the two entities – the VPD and the Community members – as two 'sides' was inaccurate, it is difficult to discuss the Committee and its activities without sometimes identifying them this way. Regardless of the very sincere intentions of the group to treat all the Committee members who are a part of one group named SisterWatch as equals, in reality it is the coming together of two positions, two interests, two 'sides' of an issue. Framing it this way also has a danger of suggesting they are two similarly situated organizations, which they are most definitely not.

Focus group discussions with women in the DTES:

11 women - WOW group at DEWC

8 women – Aboriginal Front Door Street Smarts Program

So in this report, as much as possible, we do not identify the two positional entities as 'sides' except where it is necessary to do so for clarity. This is particularly important in describing the challenges the group has faced and the ones it will face going forward as it is this underlying reality of two positions that obfuscates the power imbalances that lead to some of the confusions and frustrations in SisterWatch's operations. This is discussed further below in the Trust section of Section E. Key Evaluation Questions.

Past and present SisterWatch Committee members interviewed:

1. Alice Kendall, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
2. Angela MacDougal, Battered Women's Support Services
3. Carla Ariale, VPD Detective Constable, Domestic Violence and Criminal Harassment Unit
4. Carol Martin, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
5. Chelsea Girard, VPD civilian employee
6. Cita Airth, VPD Inspector, Special Investigation Section
7. Cori Kelly, Community Member (also The Vivian, Raincity Housing)
8. Doug LePard, VPD Deputy Chief
9. Elieen Volpalti, VPD Sergeant, Beat Enforcement Team
10. Jim Chu, VPD Chief Constable and Co-Chair of Sisterwatch
11. Kate Gibson, Executive Director, WISH
12. Kelly White, Community Member
13. Linda Malcolm, VPD, Sex Industry Liaison
14. Lisa Yellow-Quill, Carnegie Centre
15. Marcie Flamand, South Command Duty Officer, Operations Division
16. Mario Giardini, VPD Inspector, Diversity and Aboriginal Policing Section
17. Michelle Davey, VPD Superintendent, North Command
18. Michelle, Community Member
19. Mona Woodward, Aboriginal Front Door (Co-Chair of SisterWatch)
20. Marlene George, (former Co-Chair of SisterWatch)

Finally, there is no clear consensus as to *what* SisterWatch is; stakeholders have called it a program, initiative, committee, a phone line, a campaign, a series of town halls and other gatherings. The challenge this presents to the evaluation is discussed in Part 4: The Goals of SisterWatch, and is a theme throughout the process, but for the purposes of this report we have used 'SisterWatch Committee' when talking about the group of people who meet every six weeks, and 'initiative' generally when discussing the activities that relate to the Committee.

C. Methodology and Approach

A full Evaluation Plan and the tools developed appear as part of the appendix of this report. In this section we outline the basic information about the evaluation approach and methodology to give context to the findings. Overall, the evaluation took an 'Appreciative Inquiry' approach, asking about what has worked and exploring with stakeholders what could be done to sustain that kind of positive work.

The evaluation of SisterWatch was a recommendation of the Missing and Murdered Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCII) and was funded by the provincial government as a result of that recommendation. Specifically, the recommendation was

That SisterWatch be evaluated to provide a basis for further refinements and with a view to establishing best practices for meaningful police-community partnerships; and that these best practices be shared with other police forces to encourage them to develop and maintain ongoing, collaborative community forums.

The funding was put toward hiring an independent outside evaluator to work with an internal VPD Research Advisor. This recommendation sets one of the key goals of this evaluation: to identify the key elements of success of SisterWatch and its potential application elsewhere. One of the questions asked in interviews was

If another community or police force in another city was interested in starting a Sisterwatch program, what advice would you have for them in terms of setting it up?

In other words, if you could go back to the beginning, what do you think you did right and how might you do it differently to support avoid some of the stumbling blocks?

The results of that question are discussed in Section L: The Future and Potential of SisterWatch.

Independent of the Inquiry however, the SisterWatch Committee is interested in assessing its success and impact to date, and is seeking recommendations for addressing challenges in achieving its goals. Despite the funding being provided by the province and administered by the VPD, the independent evaluator reported to the SisterWatch Committee as a whole and not to the VPD.

There is an anecdotal sense that SisterWatch has had a positive impact on the DTES and VPD relationships with the community that it has helped prosecute certain predators in the community and, while not solving violence against women in the community, may be contributing to a higher level of safety for women. Having said that, there has been no evidence to prove or disprove any positive or negative assertions about the Committee and its impact. This evaluation was designed to capture some of that evidence.

So is SisterWatch working? What evidence exists to answer in the affirmative or not? These appear to be simple questions, but because SisterWatch began with little planning or clarity of purpose – for example there was no initial program plan or logic model created to establish the Committee’s goals – what would ‘working’ look like? How can an initiative be said to be working if the goal the initiative is created to accomplish isn’t concretely defined or mutually understood?

Surveys Conducted (see Appendix for questions and results):

83 District 2 BET Officers

15 Staff Members of Women’s Services

Traditional program *evaluation* is predicated on traditional program *development*. Most theories of evaluation are based on an assumption that a program or initiative has clearly articulated goals – a statement of expected outcomes and clarity about its inputs (resources) and outputs (deliverables). This allows the evaluator to collect data that answers the question “did the program successfully accomplish its goals? If not, why not?” Whether effective or not, SisterWatch is a very innovative approach to community/police conflict and as such has evolved in both its goals and its self-identified role. The evaluation had to be participatory and non-traditional while still being reliable.

The first step of conducting the evaluation, therefore, was to establish a sense of what the initiative was trying to accomplish to begin with, and to explore whether this has changed over time. This entailed a review of the documentation related to SisterWatch and initial consultation

with committee members. Section D: The Goals of SisterWatch, outlines the result of that exploration.

In the beginning, SisterWatch was very focused on lack of interest of police or public in murdered women. Very hard, remember calling about a woman missing, and person at end of police phone on phone asked 'is she a 'chronic missing'?' Police would run their name, ask 'do you have a warrant' so were afraid to call. Tremendous trust, lack of confidence because of stories of abuse of police, dates with women, threatening them...as an advocate I didn't want to be seen talking to the police, because it would undermine trust of my clients.

Community Member of Committee

The key evaluation questions in the Evaluation Plan were developed to guide any evaluation tools utilized and keep the exploration of data somewhat focused. Key themes emerged in the exploration of goals, which also helped frame the approach to data collection. The question of the impact of SisterWatch on Committee members was not challenging to identify – interviews could suffice to answer it. Impact on VPD in a broad sense could be explored with VPD leadership. And the impact of SisterWatch on some high profile cases became clear as the evaluation progressed.

However, one theme that emerged in the initial discussions about the goals of SisterWatch can be summarized as: SisterWatch may have affected relationships between Committee members, but has it had much of an impact on the 'frontlines', between VPD members on the ground in the DTES and women in the community?

This question was put aside at first in order to explore with Committee members the options for answering it effectively. In the process of interviewing, key stakeholders were asked for suggestions about the best way to uncover the answer. As a result, late in the process, matching surveys were implemented with District 2 officers (including BET teams) and women's services in the DTES. As an over-researched community, the evaluation also chose to rely on pre-existing research. In particular, a study conducted by a coalition of organizations that are members of the SisterWatch Committee entitled "Getting to the Roots: Exploring the Systemic Violence Against Women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver." It was published in the fall of 2014 and represents extensive interviews with 157 women and a series of focus groups – reaching more women in the community than this evaluation had the resources to reach.

Another challenging aspect of this evaluation has been the ability to make causal connections between the existence of the SisterWatch Committee and changes in the VPD and the community. Are women in the DTES safer as a result of SisterWatch? Is the spike in reported violent crimes against women in 2011 related to the launching of SisterWatch? These connections thread through the evaluation and may or may not be answered to the satisfaction of the reader.

The best we, the evaluators, could do was collect as much available data as possible and *suggest* possible causal linkages. The report should be taken as a picture of SisterWatch based on existing information as of spring 2015. As much as possible, the evaluation tools asked

stakeholders what impact they felt SisterWatch was having and reports on those opinions. Where possible, we have tried to articulate where the evidence strongly suggests a causal connection where the stakeholders may not see connections given their internal relationship with the initiative.

D. The Goals of SisterWatch

The first step of the evaluation has been to clarify the goals of SisterWatch as much as possible given its ad hoc development. Clarifying the goals helps identify the initiative's successes and challenges.

The Birth of SisterWatch

SisterWatch was born out of a confrontation between members of the DTES community - particularly the broad coalition of individuals and organizations that make up the Feb 14th Women's Memorial March Committee - and the VPD. On October 4th, 2010, community members were participating in a memorial service for Ashley Machiskinic, a young woman who was a part of the community and died when she fell or was pushed out of her window. In their frustration at the VPD's response and public statements about Ashley and her death, community members marched to the Main street offices of the VPD and began an impromptu demonstration – demanding Ashley's case be reopened and approached as a murder, not a suicide. They demanded a meeting with senior VPD members and specifically the Chief. Refusing to leave the office after it was closed, three women – leaders of DTES organizations – were arrested.

In interviews, Community members described the frustration experienced when, after a public apology from the Deputy Chief about the Pickton cases only weeks earlier (August 20th, 2010), Ashley's death was treated cavalierly from their perspective. The VPD characterized Ashley in terms that offended her relatives and friends in the community. Community and family members of Ashley's still feel as though evidence was ignored in Ashley's case and that the facts they understood weren't reflected in the VPD response. The VPD continue to hold firm that the facts they have access to suggest suicide. Despite offering rewards for evidence that leads to an arrest in the case, witnesses have not come forward with new information.

The day after the demonstration, Chief Jim Chu invited the Memorial March Committee to meet, which they did on the following day. The community members presented the VPD with a letter outlining their concerns, demanding that charges against the protesters be dropped, and asking about other cases the community felt angry about. They met a second time to continue

the conversation. Chief Chu recognized the value of the meetings to the VPD and invited the group to form a committee and continue meeting.

It is important to outline this conflict because it reflects the historical relationships in the community, but the response of Chief Chu wasn't part of that pattern at the end of the day. SisterWatch, with no clear goals in this early meeting, evolved from the hurt of the community, the perceived indifference of the VPD to that hurt and a decision by the Chief to act differently than his predecessors.

The Identity of SisterWatch

The ongoing challenges SisterWatch continues to struggle with emerged early. The VPD, being an action-oriented organization with clear resources and lines of authority, quickly sought to name, structure and move on discussions at the meetings. They presented the name Project Guardian to the group, it seemed to have approval, and VPD members directed the presentation of prepared communications materials and a plan for rolling out this new 'program'.

Community members, a coalition of organizations and individuals active in stopping violence against women in the Downtown Eastside, were eager to continue meeting with the VPD. They saw an opportunity, after decades of perceived police indifference and ill treatment from some VPD members, to share their expertise and experience and make a difference. Between meetings, they continued in their different organizations and jobs.

At some point, close to launching Project Guardian, a Community member said 'That's an awful name.' Others in the community agreed. To them the police had not been acting as guardians historically, and the name reflected a patronizing approach to a community that had been taking care of itself for decades. It also was too close to the 'guardianship' language of the Indian Act. VPD members were frustrated; they had done a lot of work and spent communications dollars from their budget in response to a decision they felt the group had made. Minutes of a SisterWatch Committee meeting on October 28th, 2010 show that Community members expressed concern about the name, but the launch of Project Guardian went ahead on November 1st.

However, the responding criticism once launched resulted in Chief Chu directing the staff of VPD to drop the name despite the launch and materials. A Community Member suggested the name SisterWatch. It was accepted.

This incident reflects the lack of clarity of SisterWatch on what they are – program? committee? initiative? And also the tendency of the VPD to action, when the cultural norms and resources of the community are geared toward extensive dialogue and exchange; the community is also used to lacking enough resources to act quickly on anything. Slowing the VPD down and asking them to listen and hear has been all that most Community members were seeking then, and all many continue to seek.

Part of this lack of clarity about SisterWatch has led to conflicts about who should participate. Those participating in most meetings have moved forward in their thinking and relationships, building trust that allows them to move onto new topics and collaboration. But individuals in the community want their own opportunity to come and talk about past (and even current) experiences with senior VPD members. It is seen in the community as highly privileged to be a part of SisterWatch and some Community members are struggling to justify excluding others in this unique dialogue.

The development of a Terms of Reference document helped, but even this took two years to clarify. Along with challenges getting Community members to work on it outside of SisterWatch meetings, it was hard for Committee members to agree on membership and even mandate.

Asking the Committee to separate Aboriginal and First Nations issues from women's issues is difficult for some; separating women's issues in the DTES from experiences of women involved in sex-work is difficult for some; and separating men's experience of a use of force (VPD language) or violence (community language) at the hands of police from women's experience of violence is difficult for some. People who live and seek community in the DTES have complex lives and complex intersections of victimization. Their representatives at the SisterWatch table reflect and try to communicate that complexity.

For the purposes of the evaluation, finding the answer to 'what is SisterWatch' is somewhat necessary. Without glossing over the lack of simplicity, for the purposes of the evaluation we considered SisterWatch *an initiative of the VPD and the DTES Community that brings representation to the table for dialogue and action on women's safety in the community.*

The Goals and Objectives of SisterWatch:

Evaluating whether or not SisterWatch has been successful can only be done if there is language

to define what it is that SisterWatch is trying to accomplish.

According to Committee members, the goal can be broadly articulated as: *To end violence against women*. But most individuals involved agree that even if that is the ultimate goal of SisterWatch, not only is it too long term to serve as a premise for this evaluation, there exist multiple factors feeding violence against women that SisterWatch is not in a position to affect. Even adding “*to end violence against women in the DTES*”, while resonating with most stakeholders, was seen as something this particular initiative is only one contributor to, not as the central solution to ending violence against women in the community.

Terms of Reference for the initiative have been – all at the same time - a symptom of the challenges, a source of conflict, and an illustration of the successes of SisterWatch. Not everyone involved even knows a Terms of Reference exists for the Committee. However, the Terms of Reference, passed at a Committee meeting on June 20th, 2013 states the purpose and mandate of the SisterWatch Committee as:

Purpose of the group:

- *Information sharing*
- *Problem solving*
- *Posting of information*
- *Community consultation*
- *Transparency*

What is the Group’s Mandate?

SisterWatch is a multifaceted initiative designed to eliminate violence against self-identified women and girls in the Downtown Eastside. An aspirational goal is that SisterWatch’s work will make the community safer for everyone who lives and works in Vancouver. This may mean that other types of victimization may be brought on occasion to the SisterWatch committee which may facilitate an appropriate response.

For the purposes of outlining the evaluation process and in consultation with Committee members, the Evaluation Plan identified the goals this way:

Chart #1: Goals and outcomes of SisterWatch or purposes of the evaluation:

	Short	Medium	Long
1. Trust	(a) Build positive communication between members of senior VPD staff and Feb 14 th Memorial March Committee.	(b) Build trust between women-serving organizations and VPD	(c) Build trust between VPD and residents
2. Education of VPD	(a) Keep senior VPD staff informed about the experience of women and their service providers in the DTES.	(b) Develop a fulsome understanding of women's experience of violence in the VPD.	(c) Change historical patterns of discrimination against women and people marginalized by poverty in Vancouver.
3. Education of Community	(a) Develop understanding of VPD processes and systems among women and Indigenous-serving organizations in the DTES.	(b) Share knowledge of VPD role, systems and processes with residents of the DTES, particularly women and Indigenous communities.	(c) Ensure effective protection of residents in the DTES by the VPD in ways that illustrate a high and dedicated quality of service.

After compiling the data and reviewing it, the goal of the SisterWatch initiative could be best stated more simply as:

To build relationships between the VPD and women in the DTES that will lead to better systems of women's protection and safety in the community.

Recommendation:

1. SisterWatch engage in a facilitated process to solidify the Committee's initiative, clarify membership and identify the goals and activity expectations of SisterWatch overall.

E. Key Evaluation Questions

1. Trust

The evaluation explored the question of ‘building trust’ between the VPD and the community, but not all stakeholders agree that this is an accurate question to ask and challenged whether trust was even possible in this context.

Interview and survey respondents pointed out that trust is impossible in this situation because of the competing goals – police are accountable to their role and position in the hierarchy of the VPD, women in the community are interacting with ‘criminal behaviour’ on a daily basis, whether they themselves are engaged in anything deemed criminal or not. Historical realities of colonialism and the treatment of women, particularly Aboriginal women, by police in Canada directly and indirectly informs women in the community about what to expect if they communicate with police.

...it would be better to put the possibility of trust aside and instead talk about how police and the community need to build ways to navigate our history together to solve the complex reality of women’s experience of violence.

Community Member of the

Some SisterWatch Committee members suggested it would be better to put the possibility of trust aside and instead talk about how police and the community need to build ways to ‘navigate our history together to solve the complex reality of women’s experience of violence’.

Having said that, it is helpful to explore the evaluation results in the context of its initial premise – that building trust was and is a goal of SisterWatch – until such time as those involved can explore their mutual goals more concretely.

a) Has SisterWatch been successful in achieving the short-term goal of building positive communication between members of senior VPD staff and Feb 14th Memorial March Committee?

Yes. The evidence shows that the relationship between organizations and leading individuals involved in the February 14th Memorial March Committee and the VPD has improved substantially. One of the main indicators of this change is in how the VPD participates in the Memorial March. One stakeholder described the state of this important community event and the role of the VPD prior to SisterWatch this way:

“I took some time off going to the March, was managing my emotional energies, then I went again – probably 2005 or 6 – and I was stunned to see two cops in uniform walking up on roofs. It just shows what toxic levels everything had reached.”

The VPD acknowledge a very different approach now, though they don't have a record of putting officers on rooftops.

But whatever the memories and formal records tell about the experiences in the past, SisterWatch has transformed this relationship at the Memorial March. Now the VPD are invited to participate in the March as private individuals. Many do, without uniforms, and the entire department is encouraged to do so every year.

Other demonstrations and marches are also treated differently by the VPD. Another community activist interviewed described the approach the VPD took a few years after Ashley's death when some of the same SisterWatch Committee members participated in demonstrations during the Murdered and Missing Women Inquiry:

"We wanted to demonstrate, they (the VPD) sent people over and we all set up for the day – they didn't try to distance themselves from us, we were all there to do a job."

The initial meetings were about defusing the conflict at the time, the conflict around Ashley's death, but that was accomplished within the first few meetings. After that it was about building something new.

VPD Member of the Committee

VPD members interviewed expressed a sense of gratitude that they were now invited to participate in the Memorial March, that they were honoured to be a part of it as individuals. Interviewees did report that some people in the VPD don't 'get it', that other VPD officers may say things like 'I'm proud of my uniform so why should I not wear it', but those directly involved in the SisterWatch Committee are unquestionably happy and honoured to be participating in this different way.

Members of the Memorial Committee have also reached out to individual VPD members in other ways to illustrate the healthier relationships that exist: "I was invited to the CRAB park memorial a few weeks ago – that's huge. I've never been invited before." Another VPD member raised the same event, saying how much it meant to her to be invited to drum with the other women when she arrived.

b) Has SisterWatch been successful in building trust between women-serving organizations and the

Police have been focused on keeping the focus of SisterWatch really tight. Want there to be a task, see success and document it, where we (Community) have been more flexible about that. Sometimes frustrated by that, some of the issues we want to talk about may not be focused strictly on women or on what police think it should be focused on, they don't want to include it, but when they want to stretch the focus, they want to go after a drug dealer, they make it about protecting women. 24

Community Member of the Committee

VPD?

Yes, for the most part, but they are still tentative and fragile relationships. The organizations that have been participating regularly have more confidence in the leadership of the VPD, but have differing ideas about how deep the feelings of respect for them go in the department.

One of the challenges SisterWatch has had, and continues to struggle with, is the very different operational systems that exist for each of the 'sides' of the SisterWatch table. The VPD side is one institution with very strict hierarchy based on a long-standing culture of military-like structure. On the other are a messy collaboration of dedicated and passionate advocates. On the one side are a group of people with secure jobs, good health benefits and 'career paths'. On the other are a handful of under-resourced community services in a constant struggle for stability and individuals in precarious employment. On one side is an institution in which success is defined by following the rules and seeking the approval of one's superiors. On the other is a loose group of activists with differing ideologies, perspectives and personal relationships working to end violence against women.

We are an institution of A-type personalities. The VPD culture is to manage, control, lead, drive something. The Committee, on the other hand, is made up of diverse groups with different motivations and organizational cultures. It's hard to get anything done.

VPD Committee Member

This picture – one that emerges from the interviews – should help clarify why SisterWatch struggles. A critique shared across the Committee, but confusing to some VPD members, is the frustration with a lack of follow-through from some Community members. The countering perspective is the frustration of Community members in the quickness with which the VPD acts.

For most Community members, focused on explaining to the VPD what women's realities look like, the SisterWatch meetings are mostly seen as an opportunity to talk about and explore issues. Few of them have resources or even time to engage in new programs or activities. All of them are struggling daily to meet the needs of the women (and in some cases men) who are coming through their doors. Helping the police launch a bumper sticker campaign, or stopping to explain why 'Project Guardian' is not a good name for the initiative, is in fact very challenging for DTES organizations.

The VPD, eager to change the historical relationships and deeply committed to reaching out to women, jump to act on the discussion at SisterWatch meetings, only to find members reacting negatively to that action. The VPD's well-meaning actions, applying their own resources to make things happen, end up looking like an effort to take control of the agenda. Given the institution's limited understanding of the dynamic at play on the other side of the table – where organizations are coming together around the promise of real change, but otherwise work hard

to maintain and protect their complex relationships – the VPD is doing its best at learning and adapting to the criticisms leveled at them, and not take control of the agenda. (In fact, this giving up of control seems to be the one big lesson the VPD has learned as a result of their involvement in SisterWatch – see ‘Impact on VPD’ below.)

As one VPD member put it: “We are an institution of A-type personalities. The VPD culture is to manage, control, lead, drive something. The Committee, on the other hand, is made up of diverse groups with different motivations and organizational cultures. It’s hard to get anything done.”

A Community member described this as: “Aboriginal history and police, to working in collaboration with them in this way? It’s hard to be there sometimes. Add on SisterWatch work to all I do already helping women who have experienced violence at the hands of police in the past? That’s hard. If it hasn’t succeeded it’s because it’s off the side of our desks.”

Aboriginal history and police, to working in collaboration with them in this way? It’s hard to be there sometimes. I used to be so scared of the cops...Add on SisterWatch work to all I do already helping women who have experienced violence of police in the past? That’s hard. If it hasn’t succeeded its because it’s off the side of our desks and some of us don’t get paid at all.

Community Member of the Committee

VPD staff are very loyal to the institution. Community members often distrust that loyalty and see central, key messages flowing from the individual VPD members rather than individual opinions. Community members, on the other hand, are not in a position to control or manage each other as a group – nor would they want to. There is a democratic and collaborative coalition on one ‘side’ and a conservative, hierarchical system on the other. Trust in this context would be challenging even without the history of women in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside.

Ultimately, community organizations are seeking information and transparency from the VPD, as well as respectful treatment on the frontlines. For those they serve, they are seeking less aggressive responses and respect for the dignity of each individual. Some VPD members provide this, but not all.

Recommendations:

2. Secure funding for a SisterWatch coordinator to work out of a community organization, someone who can support the participation of Community members through facilitation, drafting materials and coordinating their decision-making processes. This position could

work in partnership with a VPD administrator, both supporting the co-chairs and ensuring smooth running of meetings and information exchange.

3. Utilize the SisterWatch website to reflect the Community/VPD partnership: share news about cases, and articulate the core values of SisterWatch for current and potential VPD members and DTES residents, including next Town Hall meetings, community events and opportunities to participate.

c) Has SisterWatch been successful in building trust between the VPD and residents in the DTES?

No. Though there are some trust relationships building, they seem to relate more to individual VPD members regardless of their connection to SisterWatch.

In 2008 the VPD formalized the position of Sex Industry Liaison Officer and assigned the role to Constable Linda Malcolm. It seems that her work has had a bigger impact on trust between women in the DTES and the VPD than SisterWatch. However, her work is only with women working in the sex-trade and, while survival sex work may not be unusual for women living in the community, it is not universal. Nor do women involved in sex work identify themselves as part of the 'industry' so Linda Malcolm's relationship development is narrower than the community as a whole.

In interviews, surveys with District 2 officers, women and women-serving agencies, and in focus groups Cst. Malcolm's name is raised consistently as the one member of the VPD many women trust.

There is a gap in the awareness and knowledge of VPD members and the experience and knowledge of women in the DTES. In survey responses, District 2 officers are mixed in their ideas of how much trust exists between the VPD and women. Some of the eighty-two respondents (15%) felt there is a very high or high level of trust between women in the community and the VPD. Another 45% felt there is a moderate level of trust, and the remaining felt there was some trust (36%) or none at all (4%).

Women on the other hand, express a much lower idea of how much trust currently exists. In the evaluation survey of women and women's services, women service providers were asked what level of trust they felt women they served had in the VPD, and women themselves were asked about women generally (not what level of trust do they themselves have). As a group, women and service providers describe much lower confidence in trust than VPD members do (see Table#2). Service providers were slightly less confident than women themselves.

Table #2: How would you describe the level of trust between the VPD and women in the DTES?

	VPD	Women	Women Service Providers
Very High Level of Trust	2%	0	6%
High level of trust	14%	7%	3%
Moderate level of trust	45%	7%	6%
Some trust	35%	57%	41%
No trust at all	4%	29%	44%

Women who responded with a high level of trust also named Linda Malcolm in their comments.

These surveys, particularly the women-serving and women’s surveys, are limited in their reliability as they were a small sample group (46 women in total, whereas the District 2 survey included 82 respondents). The evaluation was unable to reach a large number of women as the resources were focused on SisterWatch Committee members and meetings. However, the organizations represented in SisterWatch also conducted extensive research on women’s feeling of safety in the DTES and their report “Getting to the Roots: Exploring Systemic Violence Against Women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver”¹ was released during the period of this evaluation. Since it reached a much larger number of women and involved much more detailed interviews, the results may be more reliable.

In the above-noted report, women were asked who they would approach if they felt unsafe. Of the 157 respondents who were interviewed, only 15% said they would go to the police. The same number of women said they would go to a stranger. The most likely response of women was to say they wouldn’t go to anyone, they would try and deal with it themselves.

¹ “Getting to the Roots: Exploring Systemic Violence Against Women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver” Women’s Coalition (Nov 2014) available as at March 20th, 2015 at <http://wish-vancouver.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Getting-to-the-Roots-final-Nov-2-2014.pdf>

So trust remains a challenge between VPD members generally and women in the DTES generally despite the existence of SisterWatch. In discussion groups at the DTES Women's Centre, Lookout Women's Drop-in and Aboriginal Front Door, women talked about why they didn't trust VPD members. Some women said they did trust some individual VPD members, especially women members, but where women said they didn't trust VPD members they most often talked about what they saw, not what they experienced. Most women shared stories of seeing multiple officers act against one individual, or frightening, aggressive and even violent behavior by VPD members against their friends, neighbours and fellow community members.

Participants were asked why they didn't speak up, or try and identify the individual officers whose behavior they were frightened by and complain later. No one felt this was a reasonable expectation. "Why would I ask a cop for his badge number when he is acting that way, when he is so angry?" said one woman.

One woman described the disrespect and aggression with which the VPD always treated her, despite her being a respected elder in the community. She described an incident in which she was walking in the community when a police car drove onto the sidewalk in front of her, then accused her, very aggressively, of stealing. The woman was a small, Aboriginal elder over sixty.

Another woman described phoning an individual to report a bag with computer equipment someone left in a coffee shop. She found the person's information in the wallet. The person asked her to meet him in a public place, and instead of the man, VPD members arrived and arrested her, treating her very roughly and detaining her in a jail cell until releasing her with no explanation. She too is an Aboriginal elder. Again, when asked why she didn't report it, she said it was all too confusing, frightening and embarrassing. The evaluator was the first person she shared the story with at all, even then she wouldn't share it with the whole group.

When asked why they were afraid of the police, women at a focus group described these incidents:

- Watching men and women being arrested very aggressively in the community;
- At Carnegie, six police cars and multiple officers converging and descending on, handcuffing, a small Aboriginal woman who had no weapons;
- Elderly Aboriginal men handcuffed and treated aggressively by police;
- Male police officers entering the Women's Centre talking loudly and aggressively during drop-in,
- One Elder described walking home one evening and a police car pulled up in front of her on the sidewalk, the male officer yelled at her to come to the car, aggressively asking her if she was the woman who had pushed a man over, what had she seen etc. Scared her very much (she was visibly upset describing it.)
- Police watching drug deals and doing nothing about them,
- A police officer approached someone who had been video taping an interaction, took the person's phone and erased the video,

VPD members interviewed acknowledged that not all officers approach the community in the same way. However, they also point to the constant video-recording of their actions that forms a record of many interactions. They also state that many of these stories are found to be untrue when explored closely – sometimes they turn out to be historical and not recent, or from non-VPD jurisdictions like Burnaby or Surrey.

District 2 survey respondents shared very different views of why distrust might exist and how to address it. Most felt the distrust existed because of a personal reality of the woman herself – drug addiction, criminal behavior, mental health issues – or because of the history in the community. Some VPD members felt the community organizations were causing the distrust. And a few felt the behavior of some of their colleagues was the issue. (see survey results in the Appendices).

The truth of these incidents seems hard for everyone to establish – Community members believe the people they are serving and struggle to communicate that to VPD members. VPD members are struggling to provide policing services in complex situations. This is, in fact, the central conflict SisterWatch struggles with and flows from.

Sisterwatch is a success because it is trying to confront this central conflict. And it is profoundly challenging for the same reason.

All of these issues:

- the aggressive actions by VPD members observed and experienced in the community,
- realities and challenges women have in terms of fear and confusion,
- the history in the community both recently in relation to Robert Pickton and other predators, and
- historical patterns of police behavior toward Aboriginal and First Nations communities in Canada.

are not going to be resolved by SisterWatch. Even if they could, four years is not enough time to see that kind of impact on such complexity. However, the effort and change it has created speaks to the communication goals of SisterWatch, and will have a broader impact on the VPD and DTES community if it continues with the same level of leadership and commitment.

Having said that, the trust relationships that have developed between the VPD SisterWatch Committee members and the Community organizations involved, fragile as they are, have not been effectively communicated to VPD members as is evidenced by the respondents of the District 2 survey - some of whom continue to feel that Community organizations are the source of distrust in the community. Community organizations reflect and magnify the experiences and voices of those they serve, but they are not, despite how it may be experienced by some VPD members, designed to undermine the police.

On the other hand, the organizations involved do not seem to be communicating their new relationships and information in a way that might change the direct experience of women in the community. They are using SisterWatch to help women they serve but the relationship-building opportunities for women in the community are not actively pursued by Community members of the Committee.

An example of the way the relationships are helping organizations provide their services was outlined by one non-profit leader. She described a VPD member visibly changing from aggressive to responsive when she mentioned the SisterWatch Committee members she was prepared to contact to discuss the altercation he was having with one of their clients. There is a desire to protect in women-serving organizations, so this lack of communication to 'clients' of SisterWatch may reflect the fact that SisterWatch relationships are still shallow, that Community members have not in fact established a deep trust of the VPD. This in turn underlies some of the organizational and administrative challenges the Committee has experienced.

In conclusion, while trust relationships are building among the VPD and members of the Memorial March Committee, and fragile but strengthening trust relationships are growing between Committee members, trust relationships between women themselves and VPD constables are not. This may be impossible, ultimately, given the historical realities and the very nature of the role the VPD plays in applying criminal laws, and the criminalization of low income women by society as a whole. However, the opportunities to enhance and expand the positive impact of SisterWatch have not been fully realized.

Recommendations:

4. VPD should make the SisterWatch message clearer and more concise for frontline constables, concretely identifying what it means in terms of their behavior and relationships in the community, particularly with Aboriginal and First Nations Elders;

5. The VPD should enhance positive policing practices, not rely on internal messaging or traditional training methods, but integrate the positive approaches used by Cst. Linda Malcolm and others – projecting a willingness to talk, listen and discuss issues women face in the community experience;
6. Women’s organizations need to enhance the of communication to others about the value of their participation in SisterWatch to help the broader community feel involved, opening up opportunities to communicate their experiences more directly to the committee and find ways to engage women in the learning and relationships that are they are building. One example might be holding a community meeting with women in the community a few days before a Sisterwatch meeting to get advice and direction prior to meeting.
7. The VPD is required by the *Police Act* to post individual officers’ badge numbers in a visible place (right chest) on their uniform to allow individuals to identify badge numbers of officers without having to ask for it, but it appears this isn’t universally understood in the community or how this might help clarify police action and hold officers accountable should they act inappropriately. It would be a strong statement about the VPD commitment to transparency if they actively publicized this along with a process for communicating and reporting. This would give confidence to individuals who witness aggressive behavior and help the VPD identify the kind of interactions they choose to support in the DTES.

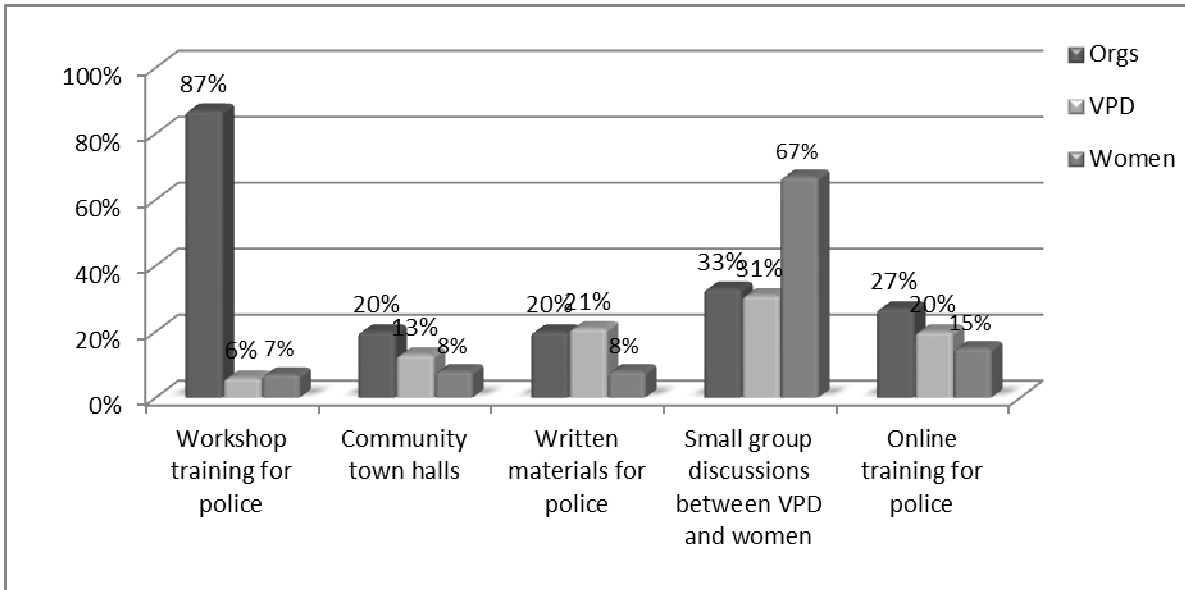
2. Education of the VPD

In addition to the goal of building better relationships between the community and the VPD, SisterWatch also began as a way for each to educate the other.

For the VPD, the working assumption prior to the creation of SisterWatch seemed to be that community members in the DTES simply didn’t understand police processes, systems and mandate. It was felt by many in the department – and according to the survey results and interviews, continues to inform some VPD members – that sitting down with community members to explain how the police conduct an investigation would solve the anger with which the Department is met by service-providers in the community. This process, according to those expressing it, helps to end the community rumours that feed any conflicts.

For community members, educating the VPD about historical patterns, cultural norms and the experience of violence against women, will result in better relationships and more effective policing in the community. While there are differences of opinion about how that educating ought to be done (some want formal training, where others feel direct dialogue will help) they continue to participate in SisterWatch in hopes that the experience of women will be better understood by the VPD.

Chart #3: Recommendations from VPD officers and women in DTES for trust building.



a) Has SisterWatch kept senior VPD staff informed about the experience of women and their service providers in the DTES?

Yes. SisterWatch has had a meaningful impact on the knowledge and awareness senior VPD members have of the experience of women and their service providers in the community. One VPD member described hearing the stories of the Community members of SisterWatch as having ‘lit a fire’ under her work:

I now have a huge awareness of what’s actually going on down there. What I thought was important, gangs and related drug activity, is now 2nd fiddle, hearing what has happened to women and their daily struggles – it has lit a fire like no other in me. We have been pushed to do some really great stuff. We always look for predatory types in the files now, there are huge expectation on folks in this office to work on them and find answers. We can’t share detail of our investigations but we are all hugely motivated to identify predators, to find them – on one file, a sex worker tied up, people here were working around the clock...SisterWatch has completely shifted my view of policing and what matters.

- VPD investigator.

Others describe seeking out opportunities to work in the DTES or staying in the community because of their new appreciation and understanding of the community. One VPD member says she purposefully requested assignment to the DTES:

The VPD was doing an internal shuffle and I was supposed to go to Human Resources. But I asked to be assigned to the DTES instead because of SisterWatch...there has been a real shift in any case involving a woman, I get to have a hand in helping it go well.

- VPD officer

b) Has SisterWatch developed a fulsome understanding in the VPD of women's experience of violence?

Somewhat. As described above, SisterWatch has had a very real and profound impact on some members of the VPD and changed their understanding of women's experience. However, this new understanding hasn't filtered throughout the VPD. In some instances the impact on the VPD Committee member has affected his/her direction of the work s/he is involved in leading. As well, individuals already exist within the VPD who are working on issues of violence with a gender and racial analysis (the Domestic Violence Unit for example; some VPD staff and officers of non-European descent; those involved in the Aboriginal Committee). Whether that analysis meets the

expectations, degree of analysis or needs of Community members working with women in the DTES is beyond the scope of this evaluation, but it is important to acknowledge that those individuals are in the VPD, and that SisterWatch has helped them advance the perspective of gender and race as something people in leadership positions take seriously as a strength. Instead of gender issues being marginalized – testimony at the MWCI describes a number of situations in which the behaviour of leading members of the Department impacted the investigation into missing women - SisterWatch and the work of the Community members has altered the VPD's leadership response internally. However, the culture of the VPD continues to value stereotypically masculine gender norms; while SisterWatch is having an impact, it is not designed to change that culture. What it seems to have done is to give voice and support to those VPD members who value shifting away from that cultural pattern to embrace a more gender-balanced approach to their mandate.

SisterWatch isn't just about sex-workers, but SisterWatch could do more to train VPD members on it – face to face training – I could do it. It doesn't have to be complicated.

*Community Member of
Committee*

The demand about education, however, from most Community members, is for formal training of VPD officers on gendered violence, Aboriginal and First Nations history and culture, the nature and impact of poverty and mental health and substance abuse. As well, evidence of training on the new Sex-Trade guidelines would build trust for Community members.

The interviews suggest that the issue is about transparency in relation to training. The VPD has a budget for training that seems very large to the under-resourced organizations on the other 'side' of the table – approximately \$600,000 per year – but is under the pressure of training over 1800 employees. One proposed training program to advance VPD knowledge of violence against

women and Aboriginal communities suggested a price tag of as much as \$250,000. The budget for the year is for every learning need in the Department, including technical things such as safety, driving, database and research tools etc. So the issue of training remains relatively unresolved.

In terms of possible solutions, one of the most consistent messages from the three frontline surveys (District 2 officers, women in the community and women-serving agency staff) was that small group discussions between women and VPD members was the most popular approach to breaking down barriers and building trust. Community town halls have had a positive impact, especially since the format and structure of those sessions changed (see Section H - A Case Study: Community Town Halls). Small group discussions could be considered training by the VPD and at low cost, help VPD members in District 2 develop the kind of relationships SisterWatch has supported at the leadership level.

Recommendations:

8. Community members engage the community in large discussions to identify the knowledge they want VPD members to have in relation to the DTES.
9. VPD present an overview of existing education and training programs for VPD members to SisterWatch Committee and engage in a facilitated discussion about opportunities for inserting community-based expertise into formal structures and systems.
10. Develop and implement a plan for small group, facilitated discussions between VPD members and women in the community beginning with volunteers already committed to relationship-building in the community.

c) Has SisterWatch changed historical patterns of discrimination against women and people marginalized by poverty in Vancouver?

No. All the Committee members agreed that this goal is one that is beyond the scope of SisterWatch alone, and it is unrealistic to expect the Committee to drive that level of change. The group hopes to contribute to change, but to have that kind of impact, there needs to be agreement about what discrimination against those in poverty is, and how it manifests. Twenty percent of the District 2 officers who responded to the survey and provided comments, felt that barriers to building trust between women and the VPD were the personal circumstances of the individual woman. Only twelve percent suggested the barrier related to behavior of police themselves. While these survey results can't be taken to represent the entire VPD, it does suggest that a large number of those working in District 2 may not understand how discrimination and assumptions about community members plays out.

Ultimately, SisterWatch is contributing to changing relationships. Given time and support to

sustain it, the SisterWatch Committee has the potential to be an important tool in contributing to a transformation of the kind of discrimination people in poverty experience.

3. Education of the community about the VPD

a) Has SisterWatch developed an understanding of VPD processes and systems among women and Indigenous-serving serving organizations in the DTES?

Yes, somewhat. One of the challenges SisterWatch has had is in identifying clearly who the members of the Committee actually are. In part, this reflects the democratic nature of the DTES Community and the challenges the community always has defining its own leadership to those external to it. The expectation of hierarchies like the VPD is that organizations are able to clearly identify their own leader and present them, as an equal, to other organizations.

But the DTES, like any group of community services and non-profits, does not have one clear process for determining who should and can speak for others. While some organizations have an Executive Director who has clear authority to speak for her organization and its mandate (such as WISH, Aboriginal Front Door or BWSS), others, like the Feb 14th Women's Memorial March Committee, maintain a more fluid form of leadership.

Aboriginal leadership structures also contribute to the culture of the DTES community, and while the authors are not experts on that topic, members of the SisterWatch Committee certainly are. One example of clashing cultures at the SisterWatch table involved the invitation of an Elder to participate in the SisterWatch Committee. Because there had been an effort to define and limit membership, some Committee members felt concerned that the Elder was treated with disrespect.

Because of this lack of clarity outside the Committee about who is a member of the SisterWatch Committee and why they are, it is challenging to determine what impact it has had on Community members. Those who have consistently participated seem to have overcome their personal distrust and even anger at the VPD sufficiently to participate and remain open to discussions. But it is still challenging for them. Most of the Committee members have friends and relatives who have been killed, died or are missing from the community, and almost all – no matter how fluid the membership of the committee is – were active in the community when the murdered and missing women cases were mishandled by the VPD and RCMP. And some of the VPD members involved were in the VPD at the time – though none were in leadership roles.

This is not a scenario well-suited to teaching Community members about the internal processes of the VPD. At best, the results so far – the willingness to continue the dialogue, engage others in the discussion through town halls, work together to identify and prosecute predators in the community – are a success. The Committee has successfully engaged Community members in supporting VPD processes, which is different than developing an understanding, but maybe more important to both ‘sides’ at the end of the day.

Having said that, it is clear that there has been some success for the VPD in clarifying what happens in cases. More successful has been the ways in which Community members have been able to develop an understanding of who to go to in the Department when they are worried for women’s or a woman’s safety, and what barriers may exist internally for the VPD in their work (see the Martin Tremblay case study below).

Despite this success, however, some members of the Committee continue to purposefully or mistakenly ignore internal VPD hierarchy, creating some frustration for VPD members. VPD members describe Community members contacting one individual, then, without waiting for that individual to act on the issue, contact other individuals within the Department. This suggests that either the Committee hasn’t truly clarified internal processes for the Community members, or there is an unwillingness to follow those hierarchical systems.

Community members came to the table with very distinct goals in the initial letter they presented to the VPD. In that letter they identified five missing and murdered women’s cases that the community wanted answers about. In interviews, people were asked about those cases and their resolution.

For those most involved in SisterWatch meetings and discussion it has provided women-serving organizations with a better sense of how it works. But some continue to treat all VPD members the same, regardless of their position or authority, which is ongoing and reflects the changing membership among community members. An illustration of this is in questions that arose in interviews about whether or not individual VPD members fully understood the VPD Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines some members of SisterWatch were involved in developing.

Many stakeholders felt that, while the SisterWatch Committee was not responsible for the creation of the *Sex Work Enforcement Guidelines* accepted by the Vancouver Police Board in

March 2013, Committee members and other organizations in the DTES actively contributed to the resulting guidelines. However, not all Community members are clear that individual VPD officers are applying the guidelines effectively; anecdotally, some community members report VPD officers expressing no knowledge of the guidelines. The Special Investigation Section, however, did brief every frontline officer as a part of a systematic rollout of the new approach.

It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to assess the internal systems of the VPD in relation to the Guidelines, but the fact that Community members don't know, means the Community has not heard, understood or been provided with an explanation of how these Guidelines are being applied internally.

b) Has SisterWatch shared knowledge of the VPD role, systems and processes with residents of the DTES, particularly women and Indigenous communities?

No. But given the goal of educating Community members about the internal systems of the VPD has not been achieved, sharing that with others is unlikely to have been accomplished. The evidence from women in the community shows that there has been little or no communication about police systems to women themselves.

When SisterWatch began, a number of women VPD members volunteered to be a part of a Speaker's Bureau outside of their regular work. Groups were able to ask for someone to come and talk about police and their work. Some groups took this up, but evidence suggests it has faded and that women in the DTES don't know it is an option. In one group, women talked about how intimidating and disrespectful it feels when VPD officers come into their community service in uniform. They didn't know about the Speakers Bureau, or that they could ask an un-uniformed female officer to come and talk to them.

The Speakers Bureau may be a better approach to achieving this goal: having Community Members of SisterWatch share information with clients, women and drop in groups about the Speakers Bureau, rather than educating women about police systems themselves.

c) Has SisterWatch ensured effective protection of residents in the DTES by the VPD in ways that illustrate a high and dedicated quality of service?

Unable to evaluate. This long-term goal is difficult to judge without a clear indicator as to what constitutes high and dedicated quality of service in the DTES. Overall, it is beyond the scope of this evaluation to determine if the VPD offers high quality service. The data suggests this: what constitutes a police officer that DTES residents feel is good at providing protection remains

highly dependent on the individual VPD member and how they behave in the community. What may be quality services in another part of Vancouver likely would need to look different in the DTES, and it would be hard to attach a relationship between SisterWatch and high-quality services in this early stage of the initiative.

VPD members themselves were mixed about this question. Some feel this has always been true – that the VPD always provide high quality service – whereas others see that quality as situational and perhaps the police haven't got it entirely right in the DTES. Cst. Linda Malcolm and her role in providing services women is identified across the board as an important, high impact program. But overall, any change that may be true can't be seen to connect directly to SisterWatch at this stage.

Recommendations:

11. Expand programs like the Sex Worker Liaison – broaden it to support women in the DTES;
12. Expand and publicize the SisterWatch Speakers Bureau
13. Map out strategic ways to educate VPD members about Aboriginal communities, history and cultural practices utilizing formal and informal methods, and implement the plan.

F. A Case Studies: Projects Tyrant & Rescue

Project Tyrant

Immediately after the implementation of SisterWatch, the VPD Gangs and Drugs section and the Beat Enforcement Teams (BET) in the DTES embarked on investigating three particular individuals. The information about the criminal activities these individuals were involved in was obtained directly from the community who participated in SisterWatch; that is, information from the Community Members of SisterWatch sparked the investigation and led to the arrest of all three individuals. These individuals were among the many who were contributing to the drug supply in the DTES. Two were providing drugs to the third, who then distributed the drugs throughout the community.

In January 2011, two men, residing in Burnaby, were each charged with:

- possession for the purposes of trafficking (cocaine)
- possession for the purpose of trafficking (heroin)
- possession for the purpose of trafficking (ketamine)

The third, residing in Vancouver, was charged with:

- possession for the purpose of trafficking in cocaine,
- possession for the purpose of trafficking in heroin
- possession for the purpose of trafficking in marijuana,
- possession of a prohibited or restricted weapon
- unauthorized possession of a firearm.

Additionally a search warrant in connection with the three men executed under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* resulted in significant seizures. The first warrant was executed in Burnaby resulted in a seizure of \$45,000 in cash. Additionally, a storage locker was searched and resulted in approximately 740 grams of cocaine, 139 grams of heroin, and 1.021 kilograms of ketamine being seized. A second search warrant was executed in Vancouver on Regiment Square and produced approximately 132 grams of cocaine, 5.16 grams of heroin, 41.12 grams of marijuana, a handgun, and approximately \$30,000.

Project Rescue

In conjunction with displaying the results from Project Tyrant, the VPD also announced the results from Project Rescue. The origination and success of this project resulted from the willingness of community members to provide information as a result of SisterWatch. The community brought forward information to the VPD through community meetings and town halls. This information showed that violent drug dealers were victimizing women in the DTES. The VPD responded by leading an investigation into these sophisticated, violent, and predatory drug dealers.

In January of 2011, a total of five individuals were arrested and charged. The first man is being charged with conspiracy to traffic in a controlled substance, instructing commission of an offence for a criminal organization, and two counts for possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition. A second is being charged with conspiracy to traffic in a controlled substance and instructing commission of an offence for a criminal organization. Another is being charged with trafficking in a controlled substance for the benefit of a criminal organization and conspiracy to traffic in a controlled substance. The fourth man is being charged with conspiracy to traffic in a controlled substance and trafficking in a controlled substance for the benefit of a criminal organization. And the fifth man is being charged with conspiracy to traffic in a controlled substance, trafficking in a controlled substance for the benefit of a criminal organization, and possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition. The project was included with a series of *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act* search warrants in Vancouver, New Westminister, and Surrey. The results of the search warrants resulted in the seizure of: three handguns, a large quantity of drugs, cash, a luxury SUV, a \$30,000 watch, and drug paraphernalia.

VPD members feel that the results reduced violence against women and not only reflected the better relationships between Community members and the Police as a result of SisterWatch, but also strengthened those relationships by taking predators out of the community. Furthermore, Project Rescue marked a significant accomplishment for the VPD in that for the first time in the VPD's history 'Criminal Organization' charges were laid and these individuals were subsequently found guilty.

G. A Case Study: Martin Tremblay/Project Rubicon

Shortly after Projects Tyrant and Rescue, in the month of February 2011 the VPD arrested more individuals that were connected to victimizing women in the DTES. Project Rubicon had a simple mandate: find the criminals who were preying on the most vulnerable people in that community and put them out of business. For six months starting in December 2010 an investigative team incorporating Major Case Management principles, used traditional and innovative techniques to identify, arrest and prosecute 24 suspects for 52 criminal charges. Project Rubicon also resulted in the seizure of significant amounts of drugs, numerous firearms and tainted heroin that was believed to be responsible for several overdoses in the area. Two of the offenders were sexual predators who were preying on women battling drug addiction and mental illness. In one case a man was drugging women and videotaping his sexual assaults.

The other individual arrested was Martin Tremblay. Tremblay was brought to the attention of the VPD through SisterWatch meetings. Tremblay, a convicted sex offender, has since been charged with four counts of trafficking cocaine and one count of possessing cocaine. Tremblay has a lengthy criminal record. In 2002, he was convicted of five counts of sexual assault involving underage Aboriginal girls.

In Tremblay's case, the VPD took the unusual step of releasing Tremblay's photo and information about his criminal record publicly because of his history. An appeal was made for anyone who had been a victimized by Martin Tremblay to come forward with more information. Additionally, along with Tremblay, nine other men and one woman were arrested.

Approximately seven months later Martin Tremblay was released from jail on drug related charges. Based on the evidence collected from young women in the Lower Mainland, supported by SisterWatch Committee members, the VPD was able to immediately arrest him again after his release. Tremblay was charged with seven new sex offences involving four women aged 14 to 19, in Burnaby and Vancouver locations between 2005 and 2007. VPD Inspector Brad

Desmarais says that the appeal made after Tremblay's initial arrest in February of 2011 through SisterWatch helped the VPD investigate and charge Tremblay on these new offences. He points to the strength and conviction of young and vulnerable victims who found the courage to come forward that made it possible for the police to arrest Tremblay.

Resulting from this arrest, Tremblay faced multiple charges of sexual assault, administering a noxious substance, and obtaining sexual services for money from a person under the age of 18 years. In addition, Tremblay was charged and convicted in the deaths of Kayla Lalonde, 16, and Martha Jackson Hernandez, 17. Currently, a dangerous offender hearing is being conducted with Tremblay in relation to these convictions of 2013. SisterWatch relationships are helping engage women in the community to ensure this hearing is successful. Being labeled a dangerous offender helps keep Tremblay in prison indefinitely and, if he is released sometime in the future, allows Corrections and Police departments across the country to track and control him closely.

H. A Case Study: Community Town Hall Meetings

On October 8th, 2010, only days after the first SisterWatch meeting, the VPD organized the first Town Hall meeting at the Carnegie Community Centre (Carnegie). The VPD's goal was to provide information about the work the Department is doing in relation to Ashley's case and other issues raised at that first SisterWatch meeting. This was an open forum where community members could ask the Chief Constable questions around the issue of violence against women. It was very well attended by both DTES community members and the news media, but most Committee members describe it as unsuccessful, messy and highly stressful.

Two SisterWatch Committee members took matters in hand – one woman from the VPD and another from the community. They redesigned the Town Hall to be a listening exercise, with small table discussions where VPD members could hear from the community about issues related to women's safety in the community. Since 2010, additional Town Hall meetings have been held; while the focus of the meetings in general is violence against women, a number of topics are raised. For example, community residents expressed reluctance to report crimes to police, and a need for a women's only shelter.

I. Case Study: the Murder of Chelsea Holden

As described above, the death of Ashley Machiskinic and the investigation of her death has been the spark that lit SisterWatch. This evaluation is not a review of that investigation, but it did ask – have investigations changed as a result of SisterWatch? There was no conclusive answer provided. In part this is because there is no clear consensus on whether or not the investigation

was run ineffectively, though there is no disagreement that the communications around the investigation may have been mishandled.

In terms of how investigations are conducted, the interviews and surveys were not able to identify whether or not change has occurred. However, when those interviewed discussed successes since SisterWatch began, many raised the case of Chelsea Holden. Everyone interviewed agreed that the case was handled differently, but VPD members expressed strong conviction that they didn't change *how* they investigated the case in comparison to Ashley's. It is unclear from the evaluation results whether or not the success (in the sense that a suspect was arrested quickly and eventually pled guilty) of the Chelsea Holden case was a result of the VPD learning about the community, or the community learning about the VPD.

Whichever is true, the evidence shows that the SisterWatch Committee contributed to a judicially successful resolution of Chelsea Holden's murder. An example of why the community sees it as a good investigation is the way in which the VPD responded to community interests. One Community member describes the quick response of the VPD when they were told that those displaced by the investigation, residents of the Cobalt Hotel, needed help. The VPD used their own resources to find places for tenants to stay overnight.

J. A Case Study: First United Church

In 2011, First United Church at Hastings and Gore decided to open their doors 24/7 for anyone who needed a place to sleep. They received funding from the government to provide a 24-hour emergency shelter. It was not long before one of the frontline agencies serving women in the community heard about sexual assaults occurring at this shelter. A conflict arose between organizations, the funder and the leadership at First United. The Church refused to act. The funder refused to pull the funding. Women's organizations were angry.

The SisterWatch Committee might be said to have been the body that forced change. One of the organizations involved in SisterWatch and a VPD officer toured the shelter. Reports from women were made. An investigation ensued and charges were laid against four men. The topic came up

at multiple meetings of SisterWatch from early 2011 until it was resolved almost a year later.

It was the existence of these charges that finally forced First United to change. They led to the firing of the Executive Director, the closing of the 24-hour shelter and the separation of women’s and men’s shelter space at First United. Many people were involved in forcing the Church to act, but the presence of unity between women’s services and the VPD made it happen much more quickly than it might have. It also led to the development of women-only shelter space in the DTES.

K. The ‘Tip’ Line

In the initial letter from the Memorial March Committee to the VPD in the first meeting of SisterWatch, the community requested that:

The VPD must establish a tip line specifically dedicated to the DTES as well as facilitate 3rd party reporting.

This was a request that the VPD was quick to respond to. After discussion it was agreed that only women should answer the line. Through ECOMM, the body that runs 911 and all police calls, the VPD developed a special line answered only by women. This line has been in place ever since.

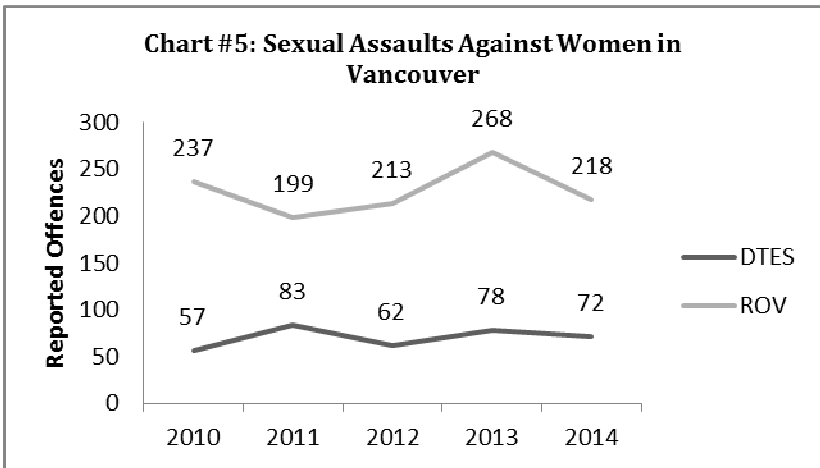
However, there was clear evidence that, while the line was utilized in the first year when it was actively promoted, it has not really been used as a ‘tip’ line and few stakeholders seem clear about its main purpose. Some have been treating it as a crisis line for women in the community and some staff at women-serving agencies call it to get specific help for women involved in sex work who need help. There is one caller who repeatedly uses it as a counseling line.

Table #4: Tipline calls and resulting dispatches.

	2011	2012	2013
AB911	1	1	0
ANIMAL	1	0	0
ASLT	9	10	2
ASLTI	0	3	0
ASLTSX	6	1	1
ASSGP	87	30	20
ASSMHA	0	1	0
ASSOA	0	1	0
CHECK	1	4	1
DISTB	4	3	2
DOMRPT	2	0	0
DRUGS	1	0	0
HARASS	2	4	1
IMPAIR	1	0	0
INDEC	3	0	0
INTELL	76	94	73
MISCH	1	0	0
MISSIP	2	0	2
SCREAM	0	1	0

As the statistics in Table #4 illustrate, the total number of calls hasn't changed much in three years, but the number of officers actually dispatched has decreased substantially, going from about 24% of the calls to only 6%.

There is a lack of clarity among VPD members as to whether or not tipline activity has led to investigations and successfully making women safer. Inspector Cita Airth, Manager of Special Investigations, reports that no investigations in her department have been sparked because of calls into the SisterWatch lines. But a homicide investigator consulted said he was part of responding to a tipline call from a woman assaulted by a 'date'; the call was investigated and the investigators were able to apply a no go order. The woman reported that she felt safer because the VPD listened AND took action.



Inspector Mario Girardini, in charge of Diversity and Aboriginal Policing, and a central person to SisterWatch from the beginning, reports that he reviews the nights' calls to see if there is anything SisterWatch members might be interested in, but he does the same with other phone information as well. Some calls go to Cst. Linda Malcolm for follow up, but mostly any calls the ECOMM staff person

judges requiring dispatch will be referred to the BET officers and it becomes part of the regular reporting system.

In reviewing charges in the DTES, a pattern seemed to emerge. There was a spike in 2011 of reported crimes against women. One year into SisterWatch, the number of DTES female victims of sexual assault increased by 45.6% between 2010-11. This is compared to the rest of Vancouver (ROV) which saw a 16.0% decrease. That is what happened one year into SisterWatch. 2-4 years after SisterWatch (2011-14) DTES female victims of sexual assault decreased by 9.1%, and this was similar to the decreases seen in the ROV (9.5%). While we can't make a direct causal connection, it may be that the heightened promotion of SisterWatch in 2011 did, in fact, result in more reporting of sexualized violence in the DTES.

Most felt the line wasn't effectively accomplishing what members hoped it might. But there was a sense that part of the issue was a lack of public awareness. There are two main reasons people support the special SisterWatch 'tip' line:

1. It lets women report without worrying about warrants/getting arrested; and
2. It lets women report without being seen as a 'rat' (reporting on men and other women in their community).

Few people interviewed or surveyed in focus groups expressed interest in the police running a crisis line. In fact, one of the repeated criticisms from Community members is that the phone line doesn't provide referrals to existing crisis lines and community services already run by existing agencies. The minutes of the Committee show that this has come up multiple times, that the VPD members have asked Community members to provide an approved list, but no one has yet provided them with it. This reflects some of the challenges the VPD often have with the SisterWatch Committee – that they receive criticism but it is difficult to offer criticism the other way.

The dynamic goes beyond the issue of providing referral lists for the 'tip' line, but it is a good example of a key challenge of SisterWatch. Community members ask for and even demand things. Whatever they did in the past, the VPD are trying to act on those requests. The VPD may not be getting the same effort from Community members. This feels frustrating to some VPD members.

Potential improvements to the SisterWatch 'tip' line are difficult in this context but no one feels enthusiastic about how it currently works and is used (or not used). To add to the confusion, in response to Community concerns that payphones had been removed from the DTES at SisterWatch meetings, the VPD installed special phones around the community. The VPD have been circulating donated phones to women in the community for years on the basis that even without a plan, a cell phone has access to 911 and there are other specialized lines like 911 and Crime Stoppers. Some criticisms emerged about the installed 911 phones – people are seen using them, which can put the caller in more danger as a 'rat'.

The phones – the tipline, installed phones and cell phones – illustrate one of the key challenges of SisterWatch and the evaluation of it as a program. The Community members are not always

in agreement about the solutions to the issues they see and experience. Many experience a profound lack of power in society to change the problems they see in the world and therefore rarely have the power or resources to implementing solutions in a systematic way. The VPD are all about solutions and have trouble not acting on a problem they have identified or accepted as such, and when they act, they are used to acting quickly and with force.

As a result, when a Community member of the Committee makes a suggestion in a meeting and there appears to be support for the idea from other Community members, the VPD act on it. It has been very real struggle for many VPD members to understand that the appearance of agreement does not always reflect the best solution to a problem.

So the question raised by this evaluation (not the answer to 'is the SisterWatch tipline working?') is actually 'What is the problem the phones are trying to solve?' One Community member explained in her interview that there...

has been a focus (with SisterWatch) on women not reporting, but that was not the issue. People were reporting but they were ignored, so making it easier for people to report is not the issue - it wouldn't change anything. When they set up a task force around missing women, they made an arrest in a short time frame (in a few months) but people had been reporting all along, but when they actually sat down and looked at information they had, it was obvious who had done it.

The VPD are now clear internally and externally that they want to hear the reports and stories and want to do what they can to accommodate women's ability to report. Whether it is about reporting or not, the bigger issue is trust or, as one interviewee put it 'navigating our shared history'.

However the ability to report is framed (as a result of VPD behavior or issue of community access), the phones have provided *some* tools for individuals and organizations to report. As such, the evidence suggests they are much more effective with promotion and branding. They have also acted to illustrate the VPD's desire to act on SisterWatch discussions and willingness to listen.

With a clearer mandate and broader community clarity about that mandate, combined with an

active effort at quality control (i.e., ensuring ECOMM has the right women and the right training to answer the phones and Community members providing appropriate resources) the phones would have a bigger impact on women's safety. As it is, there is internal VPD information that at least one woman was made safer as a result of the tipline and that should be enough to keep it open if it might help even one woman more.

Recommendations:

14. Determine the clear goals of the phone line, 911 phones and any cellphone distribution and communicate those throughout the DTES. Evaluate the phone lines annually and adjust the programs accordingly;
15. Improve the phone line with special training of ECOMM responders and the provision of SisterWatch approved referral lists;
16. Create a new and ongoing public campaign to clarify its existence and the use it exists to serve (aka allowing women to report/call in and get specialized attention and/or report predatory behavior in the community without the risk of warrants being executed etc.);
17. Improve quality-control of the phone line, the 911 and any cell phone distribution to closely monitor the success, quality and impact of the phone services on women's safety.

L. Future of SisterWatch

Some members of the Committee, both VPD and Community, questioned the continued need for SisterWatch. Not all, even those who raised the question, were quick to answer it themselves in the affirmative, but it is worth asking in reviewing the evidence collected for this evaluation.

Is it still relevant? Is it accomplishing anything? Is it worth the hard work SisterWatch is for both 'sides'? Is it causing more anger in the community because it isn't open, than it is building stronger relationships that keep women safer? And, given the interests expressed in the MWCI recommendation, is it something other communities should use?

The answer given the evaluation data is: yes it is still relevant. SisterWatch continues to play a very important role for the VPD and Community Members, though its role seems to be having a bigger impact on the VPD than the community. But, again, because the VPD is one monolithic organization, the impact of Committee meetings, Town Halls and investigating new and different kinds of cases is going to be felt sooner by the VPD. The DTES community has multiple forces at play, internal and external, and the way in which the VPD acts out its role in the

community is only one way the community experiences the negative impact of the state OR the positive impact of support.

Is it worth the work involved? There is clear evidence that SisterWatch is worth it. At minimum, the issues raised at Committee meetings would not go away if SisterWatch rolled up its proverbial mat and went home, even if those issues seem ill-informed to one 'side' or the other. The two 'sides' are speaking different languages that sound similar enough that everyone thinks they are understanding each other; but the same anger, hurt feelings and lack of cultural touchstones that exist throughout the minutes and dialogue observed in the evaluation would continue to feed anger and disrespect for each other if SisterWatch didn't exist.

Is its impact worth the bad feelings created among those who feel they are 'excluded'? Yes. While keeping the membership limited is challenging, the value of the relationships being created and maintained are making change.

And there are bigger, more pressing reasons the impact of SisterWatch suggests a continued effort. Women are not safe in the DTES and sexual predators continue to see the community as a place to go to find vulnerable women, girls, and boys (including transsexual women, girls and boys). And this is an Aboriginal/First Nations issue because the colonial history of Canada has made First Nations women and girls the most consistent victim of sexual predators in the nation. Women in the DTES continue to have complex relationships with VPD members – mostly fear-based no matter how much anger with which an individual woman may treat VPD members. And VPD members in the frontlines have inconsistent responses to women and their safety in the community.

Advice from committee members for other communities:

- 'Some parameters and TOR that are clear and established from day one.'
- 'Every municipality should assess themselves on these things (violence against women) and identify which could involve a committee'
- 'Just listen, have to be willing to talk to anyone, park your biases and listen.'
- 'Let it be community led. When you set up meetings, think about how they are set up...are you on a stage or sitting in a circle – always use a circle.'

SisterWatch has had very important successes – Tremblay, First United Church, Project Rescue, the Town Hall meetings, support to the Sex-work Liaison Officer – And the new approach to VPD involvement in the Memorial March illustrates very different relationships in the community.

The recommendations in this evaluation report are designed to support future activity of the SisterWatch Committee, even where the recommendation is for more dialogue of Committee members. The sustainability of SisterWatch will depend on the ongoing support of senior leadership in the VPD, and the ways in which DTES community members and organizations are included in the work – whether as participants in meetings, in Town Halls, as part of the VPD Speaker’s Bureau, or in new ways like small group discussions.

Can Sisterwatch be adapted to other communities? Yes, though the uniqueness of the DTES means it certainly isn’t a model that can be applied exactly. Interviewees were asked to provide their thoughts about what advice they would give others interested in starting a similar initiative. What emerged were the key elements that have made Sisterwatch successful:

1. It must be community-led, not police-led – this means relying on the community skills in facilitation and ensuring community members are defining the agenda
2. Define a terms of reference for the group early – what are you there to accomplish, who are the members, what are the responsibilities of members?
3. Define the outcomes and goals of the group with as much clarity as possible, but be flexible and ready to change the goals as the relationships evolve.
4. No ‘us and them’ – the committee must be democratic.
5. Don’t rush to solutions - members, particularly the police, need to be prepared to listen and hear.
6. It has to be face-to-face, with consistent and regular meetings.
7. The police members involved must be in leadership positions – the hierarchy in police departments is such that community members need to know the leadership is listening.
8. Meet in community spaces where community members feel safe and comfortable – police stations are intimidating spaces for lots of people.
9. The grassroots organizations involved need to be strong ones, firm in their mandate and not afraid to speak their minds.
10. Get other related police jurisdictions involved early if they have an impact on the community the Committee is established to serve.

While there are continuing challenges, and Sisterwatch has not accomplished everything some members felt it might, it is proving itself to be a central element in transforming relationships between the VPD and women’s services in the DTES.

M. Appendices

A. Interviews

The following people were interviewed, some multiple times to reflect schedules:

1. Alice Kendall, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
2. Angela MacDougal, Battered Women's Support Services
3. Carla Ariala, VPD Constable, Domestic Violence Unit
4. Carol Martin, Downtown Eastside Women's Centre
5. Chelsea Girard, VPD
6. Cita Airth, VPD Inspector, Special Investigations
7. Cori Kelly, Community Member (also The Vivian, Raincity Housing)
8. Doug LePard, VPD Deputy Chief (Co-Chair of SisterWatch)
9. Elieen Volpalti, VPD Sergeant DTES
10. Jim Chu, VPD Chief Constable
11. Kate Gibson, WISH
12. Kelly White, Community Member
13. Linda Malcolm, VPD, Sex-work Liaison
14. Lisa Yellow-Quill, Carnegie Centre
15. Mario Giardini, VPD Inspector, Diversity and Aboriginal Policing
16. Michelle Davey, VPD Inspector
17. Michelle, Community Member
18. Mona Woodward, Aboriginal Front Door (Co-Chair of SisterWatch)

Contacted but unavailable for interviews:

1. Marlene George (Marlene participated in the initial discussion about the goals of SisterWatch)
2. Jessica Wood
3. Chief Stewart Phillip

Interview Questions:

1. If you were a part of the SisterWatch from the beginning, please take me back to those first meetings and describe what you hoped the Committee might accomplish? Why were you willing to be involved?
2. If you weren't there from the beginning, please describe what you knew about SisterWatch, particularly the goals and objectives of the Committee? How was that explained to you and who explained it?

3. How have its goals changed over the years? Are there different goals now?
4. Tell me about the highlights? What are some examples of how SisterWatch has been successful in accomplishing those initial goals?
5. Can you describe how SisterWatch contributed to that success? What might have happened in those situations if SisterWatch had never existed?
6. What have been some of the challenges of SisterWatch? What stumbling blocks have interfered with possible success?
7. Do you think SisterWatch has been successful in making women in the DTES safer? (Looking for opinion as it is a long term goal) Do you have any suggestions about how SisterWatch might monitor an increase or decrease in feelings of safety among women going forward?
8. Please share some examples of how the relationship between the VPD and women in the community has changed since SisterWatch began.
9. At the very first meeting of what became the SisterWatch Committee, community members presented a letter to the VPD listing 5 cases in which women died or were missing. (Ashley Machiskinic, Judy Simpson, Desiree Demas, Violet Delores Herman, Virginia Sam) Can you tell me what happened with those 5 cases?
10. Do you know of any cases of murdered or missing women you think were dealt with well by the VPD since SisterWatch began? Have you seen a difference? Generally, how would you describe the impact SisterWatch has had on VPD cases related to murdered, missing and/or deaths of women in DTES?
11. Going back over the time SisterWatch has been in place, what ways has your involvement in the Committee had an impact on your work? What are some surprising things that came out of the creation and continuation of SisterWatch?
12. How has SisterWatch changed your organization, if at all? In what ways has it had an impact on women's organizations working in the DTES?

13. If another community or police force in another city was interested in starting a SisterWatch program, what advice would you have for them in terms of setting it up? In other words, if you could go back to the beginning, what do you think you did right and how might you do it differently to support avoid some of the stumbling blocks?

14. In the beginning the community asked for a tipline – what thoughts can you share about the value of the tipline now, four years later?

15. How would you describe the challenges with the tipline? What would you do to overcome those?

16. Going forward, what do you think should change to make SisterWatch better, more effective, stronger in accomplishing its goals?

17. Other comments you would like to share?

Also invited interviewed stakeholders to provide anonymous rating of the impact they believed SisterWatch was having on key goals. Eleven of eighteen interviewees completed it. The results show a common belief among Committee members that that SisterWatch is having a medium impact in areas and that there is room to grow that impact.

	Low impact	Med impact	High impact
1. Creating safe space for conversations about violence against women in DTES	1	6	4
2. Improving relationships between VPD and women-serving organizations in DTES?	0	6	5
3. Improving relationships between VPD and Indigenous/Aboriginal communities in Vancouver.	2	6	3
4. Improving day-to-day interactions between women living and working in the DTES and VPD members working in the DTES.	2	8	1
5. Training of VPD on issues related to women's experience of violence in DTES.	2	9	0
6. Knowledge of women –serving organizations of VPD processes and procedures.	1	9	2

7. Knowledge of VPD of women-serving organizations in DTES.	0	7	3
8. Community access to information about cases related members of DTES community.	1	7	3
9. Trust in the DTES of VPD	2	7	2

B. Surveys and results

a) District 2 - BET Officers Survey

Distributed to District 2 officers by the District 2 Supervisors at every pre-shift parade. Encouraged to complete and return in sealed envelope provided. Passed to Internal Research Analyst, then to independent evaluator for compiling.

Total surveys completed: 84.

1. Are you a

Constable	92.9%
Sergeant	7.1%

2. How many years have you served in District 2 or BET?

0-1 year	9.5%
1-3 years	33.3%
4-9 years	28.6%
10+ years	28.6%

3. Have you received information or training about SisterWatch from the VPD?

Yes	61.9%
No	38.1%
49 respondents identified source:	
VPD Intranet	19
Written Materials including Bulletin	13
Committee member	2

Other senior officers	6
Parade briefing or other regular training	12

4. How would you describe your knowledge of the purposes and goals of SisterWatch?

Very knowledgeable	6.0%
Moderate knowledge	24.1%
Knowledgeable	18.1%
Some knowledge	44.6%
No knowledge at all	7.2%

5. How would you describe the level of trust women in the DTES have in the police?

Very high level of trust	2.4%
High level of trust	13.4%
Moderate level of trust	45.1%
Some trust	35.4%
No trust at all	3.7%

33 respondents shared comments. The themes and the number of comments following that theme were:

Depends on the individual and their circumstances	17
DTES demographic/Community specific	8
Everything is fine	4
Individual officer behaviour	3
Police policy too lenient	1

6. Do you feel that the women in the DTES feel comfortable going to the police for help?

Yes	31.7%
No	13.4%

Somewhat	54.9%
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34 respondents provided comments:

Personal or case by case	14
Some women trust Police	7
Fear of being a 'rat'	6
Others tell them not to trust	5
They trust specific officer	3

7. Has the SisterWatch initiative affected the relationship between the community and the police?

Yes	34.3%
No	23.9%
Somewhat	41.8%

Why or why not? 33 provided comments:

Don't know	17
Relationships are improving	8
Has made things worse	5
Positive but needs more communication	2
Not much	1

8. What barriers exist to fostering a high level of trust between women of the DTES and police?

58 responses:

History and circumstances of individual woman (mental health, drug use, poverty)	10
History of DTES and First Nations/Aboriginal communities	9
Police policy or behaviour	8
Drug Dealers/Drug involvement	7
Existence of crime/Police job	6

Community Organizations	5
Retaliation	5
Court system/Laws	3
Don't know	3
Lack of education (police and/or community)	1
Really?	1

9. Please share an example of a successful strategy you have used to build positive relationships with women in the DTES
51 responses (some offered multiple strategies):

Talking to women	19
Good professional police work (especially follow-up)	12
Don't know	8
Free cigarettes	4
Community support (like donations)	3
Talking to community organizations	3
Higher visibility	2
Treat them like men	2

10. What are the tools you would find most helpful in building trust between police and the women of the DTES?

Workshop training	2.7%
Community town halls	4.0%
Written materials	18.7%
Small group discussions between VPD and women in the DTES	22.7%
Online training	17.3%

Other suggestions:

- One-to-one with support workers
- Arresting criminals
- Scatter SROs outside DTES; not a police problems, needs civic leadership

- Small group discussions. Allows both sides to speak and the other to gain understanding of the other.
- Needs to start at a young age, same with males hatred distrust of police is taught by family and relations need to go to schools and MCFD
- Stickers
- Good police work with solid investigations. Hence put police officers in the area that want to do police work and help people.
- Bulletin (3 X)

b) Women-serving agencies

Invited all community organizations represented at SisterWatch to distribute online link to their staff. Provided hard copies to WISH MAP Van staff.

Total completed: 14

1. Which neighbourhood do you work in? (pick the one that is the main area)

Downtown East Side	73.3%
Kingsway corridor	0.0%
Other (please specify):	26.7%

Other: all some version of 'Vancouver generally, but mostly DTES'

2. How would you describe your knowledge of the purposes and goals of SisterWatch?

Very knowledgeable	6.7%
Moderate knowledge	46.7%
Knowledgeable	20.0%
Some knowledge	26.7%
No knowledge at all	0.0%

3. How would you describe the level of trust women you work with have in the police?

Very high level of trust	0.0%
High level of trust	7.1%
Moderate level of trust	7.1%

Some trust	57.1%
No trust at all	28.6%

4. Have you ever contacted SisterWatch yourself?

Yes	28.6%
No	71.4%

If so, what happened:

- for a friend in a SRO she was being abused and made to work
- very helpful agent, needed resource info and she was able to help
- A woman on SisterWatch advocated successfully so that VPD was held accountable and corrected an error.
- It is different each time. Recently, the operators have been rude and unhelpful but I have had some good experiences in the past

5. Has a woman you work with contacted SisterWatch?

Yes	21.4%
No	42.9%

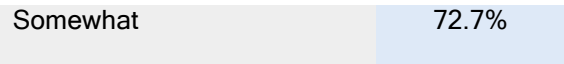
- for a cell
- was able to be referred to appropriate worker, listened empathetically, was supportive and validating
- The tip line is a joke. Often when women call tip line they don't get adequate response and don't get referral to community-based program that can help them.
- I haven't been directly involved, but I've had women ask for their card.

6. Do you feel that the women you work with feel comfortable going to the police for help?

Yes	7.7%
No	46.2%
Sometimes	46.2%

7. Has the SisterWatch initiative affected the relationship between the community and the police?

Yes	0.0%
No	27.3%



8. What barriers exist to fostering a high level of trust between women of the DTES and police?

Police policy or behaviour	5
History and circumstances of individual woman (mental health, drug use, poverty)	3
Court system/Laws	2
History of DTES and First Nations/Aboriginal communities	1
Community Organizations	1
Lack of education (police and/or community)	1
Drug Dealers/Drug involvement	0
Existence of crime/Police job	0
Retaliation	0
Don't know	0

9. What are the tools do you think would be most helpful in building trust between police and the women you work with?

Workshop training for police	87.0%
Community town halls	20.0%
Written materials for police	20.0%
Small group discussions between VPD and women	15.4%
Online training for police	27.0%

Others:

- including assistance for non profits and community partners to help too
- along with continued community development approaches to policing
- MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING, empathy training, etc.
- I have been told that mental health training is increasing with VPD but don't have a basis of comparison. I think it would also be helpful for them to have training about anti-oppressive practice and the intersectionality of marginalization. It's a pretty deeply-rooted problem, but I think the core is either their beliefs or experience having dehumanized marginalized people in the eyes of police.
- A shift in perspective is an ongoing process and requires a host of tools. Also,

- people have different learning styles
- workshop training done by organizations that work from an anti-oppressive, decolonizing perspective

10. Please share an example (or more) of positive or negative experiences you have had with SisterWatch and/or the VPD in supporting the safety needs of the women you work with:

Categories of responses:

Witnessed violence and harassment	20%
Police have negative attitude/insensitivity	40%
SisterWatch call line not helpful, but other VPD are	20%
No answer	20%

Example:

- referred women to SisterWatch, but they weren't referred on in a productive way they said, and there was no way to follow up, while they felt frustrated calling back to SisterWatch, perhaps community agencies need to be linked for the follow up piece? or transportation? or... thanks

c) Survey of women in the DTES

Invited Community organizations to distribute the surveys. Provided hard copies to BWSS and WISH. Independent evaluator attended 2 drop in nights at WISH (Dec 28th and 29th) and helped women completed them. WISH asked that we include women who work in the Kingsway corridor.

Total surveys completed: 33

1. Which neighbourhood do you work/live in most of the time? (all were in DTWS when they completed a survey)

Downtown East Side	78.1%
Kingsway corridor	3.1%
Other:	18.8%

Other included: Burnaby, Oakridge

2. Have you ever heard of SisterWatch?

Yes	64.5%
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No	35.5%
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3. Have you ever contacted SisterWatch yourself?

Yes	6.1%
No	93.9%

4. How would you describe the level of trust women have in the police?

Very high level of trust	6.3%
High level of trust	3.1%
Moderate level of trust	6.3%
Some trust	40.6%
No trust at all	43.8%

Examples illustrating the kinds of comments shared:

- Many have had bad experiences with the police from disrespect to apathy. do not believe police have our best interests at heart.
- I wish they would be more supportive.
- We are scared to call them. Maybe they will make fun of us, not believe me, or arrest me.
- You let them know - some say she's a "rat"

5. Do you feel that women are comfortable going to the police for help?

Yes	10.0%
No	53.3%
Somewhat	36.7%

Examples illustrating responses:

- If they do, they ousted by being a "rat", and police offer no protection to them whatsoever. They also get beaten and killed for being a "rat".
- When police have been called when my boyfriend and I fight he hits me, bangs me over the head with a metal pipe and I defend myself I get arrested every time. They never protect me.
- I seen on tv where they pushed a disabled woman down, probably thought she was tweaking. Women downtown, eastside are not safe, period.
- They look down at you!
- Generally no, except that Linda Malcolm has a lot of trust from women here.

6. What could police do differently to build trust with women in the community?

Examples illustrating responses:

- Have compassion, listen to women, take them seriously, learn from the women, they know more than you know.
- Keep in touch, provide a safe space for women to talk, treat them like their mothers and sisters.
- Remove the ability to carry firearms unless in severe circumstances. We as women fear men enough without them carrying guns.
- Believe me when I say I am being beaten and abused.
- Higher the women to do the work
- For all girls a mobile recording device - little recording nut. (she explained verbally she meant if they had a way to record the interactions with police.)
- Have more community engagements to build trust and repair
- show some respect
- Establish their identities more as community/safety builders rather than simply punitive roles. How? by interacting as equals.

7. What are the tools you would find most helpful in building trust between police and the women in the community? (Could pick more than one)

Workshop training for police	21.2%
Written materials for police	24.2%
Online training for police	15.2%
Community town halls	24.2%
Small group discussions between VPD and women	69.7%

Others suggested:

- I think that a larger police presence would be good to keep women safe.
- All except town halls. Outreach! community-building events. monthly training! (underlined) anti-oppression training. (also wrote 'if they actually engage with it' next to written materials and online training.)
- All. Potluck, share food, feast, see that we are all human beings. Have a Linda Malcolm-team of women trained by Linda Malcolm, and/or by her role model as example.
- It has to be face to face.
- All except community town halls. Respect every aspect of the trials of women experience in the DTES. Help in all situations rather than a selective situation
- create a course - a 4 year course in humanity
- Picked all - more positive presence to help build trust
- Training with services supporting women. Self reflection about their personal experiences and how just because they never had to navigate what women did does not excuse their lack of women centered support.
- The best way to build trust between authority figures and civilians (i think) is hands-on and interactive, i.e. biz as usual @ street level

- because they need to see and feel like we do in bad spots

C. Documents Reviewed

1. Minutes of SisterWatch Committee Meetings, October 14th, 2010 to December 12, 2013
2. SisterWatch promotional materials
 - Event photos from Town halls
 - Pamphlets
 - Items such as lighters
3. *Getting to the Roots: Exploring Systemic Violence Against Women in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver*, Women's Coalition – Women-serving agencies in the DTES. 2014 Report. Accessed April 13th, 2015 at <http://wish-vancouver.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Getting-to-the-Roots-final-Nov-2-2014.pdf>
4. Media reports related to SisterWatch
 - Media and newspaper clippings
5. Murdered and Missing Women Inquiry Reports generally. Available at www.missingwomeninquiry.ca. In particular:
 - Hon. Wally Oppal, Q.C. *Forsaken: The Report of the Missing Women Inquiry* Executive Summary and Vol III.
 - Steven Sweeney. *Municipal Policing in the Lower Mainland District of BC*. October 2011.
 - Dr. Melina Buckley. *Police Protection of Vulnerable and Marginalized Women: A Policy Discussion Report Prepared For The Missing Women Commission Of Inquiry*. February 2012
 - Dr. Melina Buckley. *From Report To Substantive Change – Healing, Reconciliation And Implementation: A Policy Discussion Report Prepared For The Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*. April 2012
6. Town Hall minutes January 14th, 2011 and video file from January 2014.
7. Various memos, emails and other correspondence between members of the SisterWatch Committee.
8. VPD and Women's Memorial March Committee. *The Tragedy of Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women in Canada: We Can Do Better. A Position Paper by the SisterWatch Project of the VPD and the Women's Memorial March Committee*. June 2011.

D. Evaluation Plan

A. What is SisterWatch?

An understanding of the context in which SisterWatch began is very important in laying out a plan to evaluate its success. In traditional evaluation one begins with clearly stated program goals, a statement of some kind (like a program logic model or outcome framework) that articulates what the program was designed to accomplish. The evaluation then tests the success of the program in accomplishing those goals, explaining why that success occurred or didn't occur.

In this case, SisterWatch began as a result of highly politicized clashes between community members and the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) on the perceived response of the VPD to the death of a young woman named Ashley Machiskinic. After a community memorial and celebration of Ashley's life, frustrated community members demonstrated outside and inside the Main Street police station. It ended in the arrest of three activists, senior staff members in three long-standing women's service and advocacy organizations, for refusing to leave the building after closing hours.

In the end, VPD Chief Jim Chu invited representatives of the community to meet, asking the group to present their concerns again in writing for the purposes of discussion. One outcome of this meeting was an agreement to continue meeting on a monthly basis. This was the creation of SisterWatch.

In the absence of a clear program plan, it is appropriate to base the evaluation on the list of concerns raised at that initial meeting, combined with in-person consultations undertaken with key Committee members.²

SisterWatch is fundamentally a committee rather than a project or program. It is made up of representatives of the VPD and individuals able to give voice to women's experience of violence in DTES communities. Most of the community members of the Committee are in leadership roles in women- and Indigenous-serving organizations in the DTES and are participants in the community collaboration named the February 14th Women's Memorial March Committee.

² Alison Brewin and Jennie Gill consulted with Committee members Deputy Chief Doug LePard, Inspector Mario Giardini, Kate Gibson, Carol Martin, Angela Marie MacDougall, Alice Kendall, Marlene George, Mona Woodward and Cori Kelly.

Having defined it as a committee, however, it is fair to say that for the VPD it is a 'program' in the sense that for the institution of the VPD, SisterWatch encompasses a number of initiatives and activities aimed at building stronger relationships with women and community services in the DTES. For the VPD, mostly because of their systematic and institutional structures, SisterWatch is a program.

On the other hand, for community members it represents an opportunity for dialogue, clarity and leadership on issues impacting women in the DTES. Community members of the Committee may have important shared goals of changing the ways in which police respond to violence against women in the DTES community, but they are not one singular institution with one process for decision-making. They come together at the SisterWatch table to hold VPD accountable to their policies and practices, to advocate for an effective police response for individual women and related cases, and to work collaboratively with the VPD to reduce such violence. The democratic nature of Community processes and decision-making requires more time to consider, develop and implement collaborative initiatives, and each of the organization's involved has a diverse range of resources (financial, staff, time, capacity...) to apply to the 'initiative'. It is important for this evaluation to explore how the community members of SisterWatch are able (or unable) to influence the initiatives the VPD adopts as part of answering the questions about the successes and challenges of the Committee.

B. SisterWatch Committee Goals

The concerns raised by the community that led to the creation of SisterWatch were:

1. The VPD must immediately open an investigation into the deaths of women, including Ashley Machiskinic, Julie Sampson, and others.
2. Any untimely deaths of a woman need to be deemed suspicious by the VPD until proven otherwise. The lives of these women deserve the same due diligence, dignity, and respect as the women outside of this community.
3. The VPD must establish a Tip line specifically dedicated to the DTES as well as facilitate 3rd party reporting.
4. The Independent Investigative Office (IIO) must be comprised of 52% women and include Aboriginal and DTES representation.
5. An independent body must be immediately established to review decisions of the VPD when you have decided not to investigate an untimely death of a woman.

6. Charges against the 3 women arrested on Monday October 4th, 2010 must be dropped. These women were waiting only for a response from you to the Memorial March Committee correspondence of the same date.³

In the letter, the community explicitly states these purposes are the stepping stones to building a better relationship of trust between the VPD and the community in addressing issues of violence against women.

Committee members agreed in consultation that a central goal of SisterWatch is to build better relationships. The long-term goal is to change patterns of violence against women in the DTES. The table below breaks out the short, medium and long-term goals of SisterWatch:

Short	Medium	Long
Build positive communication between members of senior VPD staff and Feb 14 th Memorial March Committee.	Build trust between women-serving organizations and VPD	Build trust between VPD and residents
Keep senior VPD staff informed about the experience of women and their service providers in the DTES.	Develop a fulsome understanding of women's experience of violence in the VPD.	Change historical patterns of discrimination against women and people marginalized by poverty in Vancouver.
Develop understanding of VPD processes and systems among women and Indigenous-serving organizations in the DTES.	Share knowledge of VPD role, systems and processes with residents of the DTES, particularly women and Indigenous communities.	Ensure effective protection of residents in the DTES by the VPD in ways that illustrate a high and dedicated quality of service.

It is very important to understand that the long term goals – and to some extent even the short-term goals – of SisterWatch are very difficult to evaluate. There are a multitude of historical and current contributing factors to women's experience of violence and

³ From Letter to Chief Jim Chu from the Feb 14th Women's Memorial March Committee June 7th, 2010.

discrimination, a lack of trust of police by Indigenous communities, and the quality of service of the VPD.

C. SisterWatch Evaluation Goals

SisterWatch was not designed with concrete program goals therefore this first evaluation of SisterWatch will focus on evaluating the short-term goals only. The evaluation will also seek out and make recommendations as to the best ways to monitor the medium and long-term goals going forward for two reasons:

1. To support the long-term success of SisterWatch by helping develop the capacity to monitor those medium and long-term goals; and,
2. To support the goal of the VPD to share SisterWatch with other police forces in BC and Canada.

By identifying key indicators in this evaluation, any other community interested in developing a similar initiative will be better able to effectively monitor the long-term impact of the initiative at ending violence against women.

The deliverable for the project, to be presented to the SisterWatch Committee, is a report. The framework of that report is described below in Section H below.

D. Stakeholder Analysis

This list of stakeholders below are groups with a specific set of interests in, as well as specific contributions to, SisterWatch. There are overlaps between the groups, but each is listed separately to clarify the role they play as a source of information and/or the role they play as an audience for the results of the evaluation.

SisterWatch Committee Members – These are the individuals who have participated actively in SisterWatch meetings on a regular basis throughout the period. This also includes individuals who may have participated in only a few meetings, or have moved on to other roles and responsibilities, but current participants feel are key to the establishment and success of the Committee.

Senior VPD Staff – These are members of the SisterWatch Committee who play a leadership role in the VPD. They have interests and knowledge that is different than other members of the Committee and therefore are a unique stakeholder on their own. As leaders in the VPD, they have both been uniquely influenced by SisterWatch, but also are responsible for unique successes of the project.

February 14th Women’s Memorial March Committee (WMMC) – The WMMC was and is the central body for collaboration of honouring women murdered and missing from the DTES (see Appendix One: History of WMMC). It has developed as the key organizing and collaboration space for women’s organizations, Indigenous organizations and individuals concerned about the response to violence against women in the DTES. It is not a formal organization, but a voice for the experience. As such, they are an important community space for sharing the results of this evaluation, and also hold knowledge about the experience of women in the community.

Women-serving organizations – There are a number of women-serving organizations in Vancouver with a mandate to end violence against women, and some with a particular mandate to serve women in the DTES. Those that have been active in the WMMC are important members of the SisterWatch Committee. As service providers, they do not represent all women, but they have extensive, consistent and expert knowledge of the experience of Vancouver’s most vulnerable, racialized and marginalized women.

Women working and living in the DTES – This is the main group of people SisterWatch has come together to serve. Their experience of SisterWatch itself is limited to the phone line and, like members of the VPD, any change in historical patterns experienced in their day-to-day lives. Ultimately it is hoped they will feel and, more importantly, actually be safer as a result of the work of SisterWatch. Testing this is very challenging, however, given the reality of women’s lives in the DTES. In this evaluation we will try respectful ways to seek out women’s real, lived experience in relation to the VPD, trust and safety issues. But given SisterWatch is only a few years old, and the goal is one that will take time to achieve, the SisterWatch Committee will be better served if the evaluation focuses on developing strategic measures for long-term community impact.

VPD members generally – Like women in the DTES, the frontline member of the VPD is distant from the impact of the SisterWatch Committee activities. There are over 1300 police members plus another 350+ civilians. One of the goals of SisterWatch is to change historical patterns of police understanding of - and approach to - marginalized and vulnerable women. Discrimination by its very nature is experienced as *behaviour* of one person or group of people toward another. Opening lines of communication between

community representatives and senior VPD is a starting point, but ultimately the impact on the day-to-day behaviour of frontline staff and members of the VPD is where the residents of the DTES experience any change in the Department's policy shifts. This evaluation will explore and try to identify ways to monitor the impact of SisterWatch on this group.

Families of Murdered and Missing Women – Any discussion of murdered and missing women must consider the families of those women. Public discussion of current cases has an impact of families of women murdered by Robert Pickton as well as every family member of a woman still missing, was killed in the DTES, or whose death has been unsolved. While some family members may not choose to seek out information about initiatives like SisterWatch, it is important to ensure families are considered in any public documents and activities that relate to their experience.

Indigenous communities of Vancouver and BC – Indigenous women are at much higher risk of violence and poverty and the intersections of both. They are disproportionately represented among murdered and missing women from the DTES than non-indigenous women. Discrimination against women in the DTES is fundamentally a story about discrimination against Indigenous women. Indigenous communities, service providers, First Nations communities throughout Canada – all have an interest in the success of any initiative created to end violence against women in the DTES.

Vancouver Police Board – Under the Police Act, the Police Board is the employer, governance and policy body, and financial manager of the VPD. The Board has an interest in the success of any VPD initiative and is responsible for insuring the community is well-served by any such initiative.

City of Vancouver – The City of Vancouver has an interest in the success of SisterWatch as a funder of organizations and programs in the DTES, an urban planner, and the body required to fund the VPD.

BC Government – Ministry of Justice – The Provincial Government has funded this evaluation because of its intention to act on the recommendation of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (MWCI) to do so. Their interest is in seeing it is done. All public bodies have an obligation to consider the equality rights of women in Vancouver under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms by ensuring that their legislation, by-laws and decisions aren't negatively impacting equality rights in BC.

E. Collection Plan and Key Questions

Step One – Desk Review

This step (completed May 2014) is a fulsome review of all the written materials and records that clarify the goals and expectations of SisterWatch participants, and tracks the activities and impact of the project.

Step Two – Key Interviews

Based on the records, the Evaluators will develop key questions and conduct a series of 20-30 interviews with current and past members of the SisterWatch Committee (June 2014). This will begin with those most consistent in their participation, reaching out to others, and include consultations on any other special interviews that should be conducted to identify the successes and challenges of SisterWatch.

Step Three – Focus Group and surveys

Along with any special interviews identified and on the advice of those interviewed in Step Two, the Evaluators will design and implement any focus groups or surveys to engage and explore the impact of SisterWatch on the VPD and DTES Community outside of those participating actively in the Committee. This stage will also include a review of ECOMM records and one or two key interviews with ECOMM representation.

Step Four – Data Analysis

In this step the Evaluators will review the findings with the SisterWatch Research Subcommittee first, then the Committee as a whole for discussion and analysis. If possible this would best be done in a half or full day session to allow for extensive discussion and review.

Step Five – Reporting of Findings

Based on the results and analysis, a report will be drafted outlining the findings and making recommendations going forward.

Key evaluation questions	Source	Evaluation Tool
What did SisterWatch hope to accomplish? How has that changed in the 4 years? What could it accomplish going forward?	Committee members	Interviews
What have been the most successful elements and impacts of SisterWatch?	Committee members Document Review	Interviews
Has SisterWatch made women working and living in the DTES safer?	Women in DTES Women-serving orgs Document Review	Community Engagement Interviews
Has SisterWatch made positive changes to the relationship VPD members have with DTES communities?	Document Review	
Has SisterWatch positively impacted work and missions of women-serving agencies in the DTES?	Women's Orgs Women in DTES	Interviews
What examples are there that illustrate positive or negative changes in the relationship between the VPD and women and women-serving organizations in the DTES?	Committee members Document Review	Interviews
What has been challenging about SisterWatch and what can be done by participants to overcome those challenges?	Committee members Document Review	Interviews
What impact did SisterWatch have on the 5 cases that led to its creation? (Ashley Machiskinic, Judy Simpson, Desiree Demas, Violet Delores Herman, Virginia Sam)	All	All
What successful investigations focused on reducing violence against marginalized women in the DTES have resulted from the SisterWatch initiative?	VPD	Interviews Document Review
What impact has SisterWatch had on cases of missing and murdered women in the DTES	All	All

since its inception? (including investigations into women's deaths not found to be murder.)		
What have been some of the unintended impacts of SisterWatch on VPD and/or community?	All	All
What are the key successes of SisterWatch in terms of administration and coordinating? What have been the challenges?	Committee Members Document Review	Interviews
Has the Tipline been a successful initiative in supporting a positive impact on the goals of the SisterWatch Committee?	Committee Members Women in DTES	Interviews ECOMM tipline review Document Review Community Engagement BET Survey

F. Evaluation Tools

The following outlines the tools to be developed and describes the strategies for implementing them effectively.

Tool	Description	Implementation strategy	Challenges and possible solutions
Document Review	Various documents and statistics generated as a result of SisterWatch including: Committee minutes, reports, notes, email exchanges, ECOMM records etc.	Review materials as available and identified.	Volume and time available. Focusing on key records. Solution: Clarify what needs to be known, look at summaries already produced.
Interviews	Interview 20 key individuals about impact of SisterWatch. Compile notes.	Alison will conduct all the interviews to avoid any conflict, bias or reticence to talk openly to VPD staff member.	Scheduling. Have to be flexible.
Community	Possibly a short 5 question survey starting	Key orgs like DEWC and WISH (Atira, Carnegie?)	Resources of orgs and staff capacity. Keeping

Engagement	with ‘have you called SisterWatch?’ if they haven’t that is recorded. If they have, four simple questions, three multiple choice, one open-ended.	First United? Bloom Group?) will be asked to conduct the survey over a weekend or two day period. They will be invited to Community forum.	track of surveys out and in. Data entry. Solution? Provide support and/or resources to orgs who participate.
	OR: Based on the results of the interviews with members of the SisterWatch Committee, we will develop a tool for giving voice to women’s experience of the impact of SisterWatch.	To be defined	Women living in the DTES have complex daily lives and health issues. Engaging with them for research purposes can be more disruptive than helpful. Giving them voice in the evaluation will need to be developed in close consultation with their allies, women and Indigenous serving organizations.
Focus Groups	1 or 2 with VPD members involved in speakers bureau and other SisterWatch activities to explore the successes and challenges	If schedules allow, gather any VPD members active with SisterWatch related activities to discuss, especially focused on those not interviewed.	Scheduling challenges, so may need to do two to accommodate everyone. May have to utilize a regular scheduled meeting, or may have to let it go.
Survey of BET constables	If possible in consultation with VPD senior staff, a short survey to test awareness of constables of SisterWatch and its goals/expectations.	Online (?) survey, short, distributed to constables through (?)	Challenge in distributing it and getting it out there to them.
ECOMM Tipline review	A series of questions to consider in reviewing calls and ecomm stats from chosen periods.	In consultation with Committee, choose one month and review tipline records for that month each year 2011-2014. Record differences.	Time consuming. Context in community will affect calling including advertising, incidences of community violence, individual calling repeatedly.

			Solution: Gather info about context of each of four periods.
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G. Timeline

- May: Document Review; Evaluation Planning
- June: Finalize Evaluation Plan; Design tools; Interviews;
- July: ECOMM Review; Community Engagement; interviews continued
- August: Community Engagement; BET survey
- September: Community Engagement; BET Survey; Compile results
- October: In-person Session; Writing
- November: Final Report

H. Reporting on the Evaluation

- a) Report monthly to the SisterWatch Committee.
- b) Jennie Gill will to report regularly to VPD according to existing internal reporting structures.
- c) Draft Report to Committee, 2 weeks to review and provide feedback in writing and in-person discussion.
- d) Possibly a facilitated Townhall Meeting for discussion of results (depending on decision of SisterWatch Committee).
- e) Final Report to Committee with recommendations for ongoing evaluation and monitoring.
- f) VPD will report to the funder of the evaluation according to their contractual arrangement.

The Final report will include:

- a narrative of the qualitative findings of the Key Questions outlined above;
- quantitative information (statistics) about SisterWatch and its impact;
- case examples that illustrate the impact of SisterWatch;
- outline of the challenges SisterWatch has had and some of the ways they have been resolved;
- recommendations for addressing challenges or unsuccessful aspects of SisterWatch; and,
- recommendations for ongoing monitoring and impact assessment of SisterWatch.

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Appendix One: History of Feb 14th Women's Memorial March Committee

“Their Spirits Live Within Us”: Annual Women's Memorial March for Murdered and Missing Women

In January 1991 a woman was murdered on Powell Street. Her name is not spoken today out of respect for the wishes of her family. This woman's murder in particular was the catalyst that moved women into action. Out of this sense of hopelessness and anger came an annual march on Valentine's Day to express compassion, community, and caring for all women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Coast Salish Territories.

Decades later, the march continues to honour the lives of missing and murdered women. This event is organized and led by women in the DTES because women, especially Indigenous women, face physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual violence on a daily basis. The heinous and unimaginable violence that have taken the lives of so many has left a deep void in our hearts. We gather each year to mourn and remember our sisters by listening to their family members, by taking over the streets, and through spiritual ceremonies.

Increasing deaths of many vulnerable women from the DTES still leaves family, friends, loved ones, and community members with an overwhelming sense of grief and loss. Every year the list of women going missing also increases. Over 3000 women are known to have gone missing or been murdered in Canada since the 1970s. Last year, the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women issued this statement: “Hundreds of cases involving Indigenous women who have gone missing or been murdered in the past two decades have neither been fully investigated nor attracted priority attention.”

The February 14th Women's Memorial March is an opportunity to come together to grieve the loss of our beloved sisters, remember the women who are still missing, and to dedicate ourselves to justice. Please join us