



EX29.12.17

140 ISLINGTON AVENUE
ETOBICOKE, ON M8V 3B6
TELEPHONE 416 252 7949
FAX 416 252 1520

www.womens-habitat.ca

EX29.12

TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy 2017 Report and 2018 Workplan

Leila Sarangi, Women's Habitat of Etobicoke

Good afternoon. My name is Leila Sarangi and I work with Women's Habitat of Etobicoke. We providing emergency shelter and community support services to women and their children fleeing violence. I've been invested in this strategy, organizing and facilitating community conversations with diverse women on poverty reduction, participating in your Advisory Committee, consulting with staff on the development of LEAG and I thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

Unfortunately, Julie and Debbie, the next two speakers are unable to attend today. What they did want to say, however, is that since the development and adoption of this strategy, nothing has changed for them significantly in their daily experiences of poverty. The same is said for the women who they are peer leaders to, and others who we work with on a daily basis, who come from all over the city.

Women are still struggling to meet their most basic needs: finding and maintaining adequate housing, paying for transit to get to medical appointments, affording healthy meals, utilities, childcare. It is getting worse in our communities and worse for women.

We want the city to fully fund the 2018 workplan.

Along with this, we want to see clear indicators and measurements for each initiative of the strategy, in the same manner as what has been done here for childcare and Housing Opportunities Toronto. For example, initiative 2.3 New Portable Housing, the VAW sector, just went through a process for the Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit, which was supposed to alleviate some of the pressure points in the women's shelter system but did not. From what we understand, it has worked well for low-income women already living in the community, but even that number of women reached was well below target. The evaluation process for this and every other initiative must set out clear targets, indicators and measurements against which to evaluate, and must be included in these report backs to Council and to communities. And this process must include the Lived Experience Advisory Group in a meaningful way.

Mr. Mayor, you have said many times that inequality is the biggest challenge facing our city. And we agree. Inequality and segregation are increasing in Toronto and some are facing deep disparities in their quality of life and life-chances. We know that our city's growing inequalities are based on income – but they are also based on gender, as well as Indigenous identity, race, immigrant status, disability, age and other factors and recent data and reports continue to support this.



140 ISLINGTON AVENUE
ETOBICOKE, ON M8V 3B6
TELEPHONE 416 252 7949
FAX 416 252 1520

www.womens-habitat.ca

The city must use an intersectional gender equity lens not only in the budgeting process but also in policy development and decision-making processes. It must be developed and used alongside the disaggregated data collection strategy, so that decisions are evidence-based and initiatives are reaching all those who are in need. We want to see the development of an Intersectional Gender Equity Strategy and all of this, we believe, will provide City decision makers with the tools they need to ensure that policies, programs and budget are targeted to redress systemic barriers diverse women and Torontonians face to achieving wellbeing.

And finally, we want to see in 2018 the finalization of the long-term fiscal plan and within that dedicated ongoing funding for the poverty reduction strategy, along with funding for all other related city strategies.

Thank you and we look forward to our continued partnership in this work.