

# UNDERSTANDING THE LIVES OF WOMEN WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED VIOLENCE

A case study of a vertical farm social enterprise  
in Midland, Ontario for women with a lived  
experience of violence

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## ABSTRACT

Violence against women is prevalent across Canada. Governments and organizations, work to support women who have survived violence, but are these efforts effective? Are they addressing the root causes of violence? Often programs mandated to support women who have survived violence tend to focus on addressing immediate needs through emergency shelters, and supportive counselling. Despite the importance of such programming, they are reactive instead of preventative.

Using a case study of a social enterprise (Operation Grow) in Midland Ontario that was designed to reduce poverty, food scarcity, and isolation for women who have survived sexual and/or intimate partner violence. This research takes an in-depth look at the unique needs of women who have experienced intimate partner violence and/or sexual violence, then uses these findings to articulate their unique needs, and examine how social enterprises can be designed to meet these needs. The research identified six key design elements critical for social enterprises to best support women with a lived experience of violence. These critical components include: a holistic design which supports each asset area of a woman's life, an intersectional feminist lens and gender-based analysis, an active valuation of women's unpaid labour, flexible programming, supports to access material resources, space for women to have and use their voices. Social enterprises must also be designed to challenge the current economic and social order and their systems that produce and uphold oppression. They ultimately must work to empower women, inclusive of their unique identities and experiences.

**Keywords:** Violence against women, sexual violence, social reproduction theory, sustainable livelihoods framework, social individual approach, social enterprise, vertical

farming, community development, patriarchy, capitalism, intimate partner violence, trauma informed research, action participatory research, Ontario, rural communities, rural women, women in poverty, poverty reduction, interdisciplinary research, impacts of trauma, social reproduction

## **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This research was conducted on the stolen land of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Wendat, and Mississaugas, bound by both the Dish with One Spoon Treaty and Treaty 16. These treaties were created to bind communities together to share the territory and protect the land. As a non-indigenous person, I and my ancestors were invited into these treaties in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. The spirit of these treaties was not respected, and instead Indigenous communities across Turtle Island were subjected to genocide. During this genocide there was a loss of traditional Indigenous values and a devaluation of the role of women reflected in the ongoing rape and murder of Indigenous women and girls.

In conducting this research, I reflect on the ongoing systemic violence faced by Indigenous communities across Turtle Island, particularly that faced by Indigenous women and girls. As an ally, I commit to continuing to work on increasing my knowledge of Indigenous communities past and present and towards the indigenization of spaces.

This land acknowledgement is meant to create a moment to reflect on the colonial history of this nation, and a moment to think on the impacts of colonialism across Turtle Island.

This land acknowledgement is not action, as for reconciliation to happen action must be taken based on recommendations from Indigenous leadership, including but not limited to the implementation of the 94 calls-to-action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report, and the 231 calls-for-justice in the action plan from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the feminists who forged the way...

...who advocated for women's shelters and rape crisis centers.

... who told women they were enough.

... who celebrated each other.

...who protested silently or in the streets.

...who challenged the status quo publicly or privately.

... who did so much unpaid work and raised each generation.

... who expressed gratitude for women's unpaid and underpaid labour.

... who danced, wrote, sang, and found joy in the struggle.

It is because of their work that research like this to be conducted, why programs like Operation Grow exist and why the feminist movement continues.

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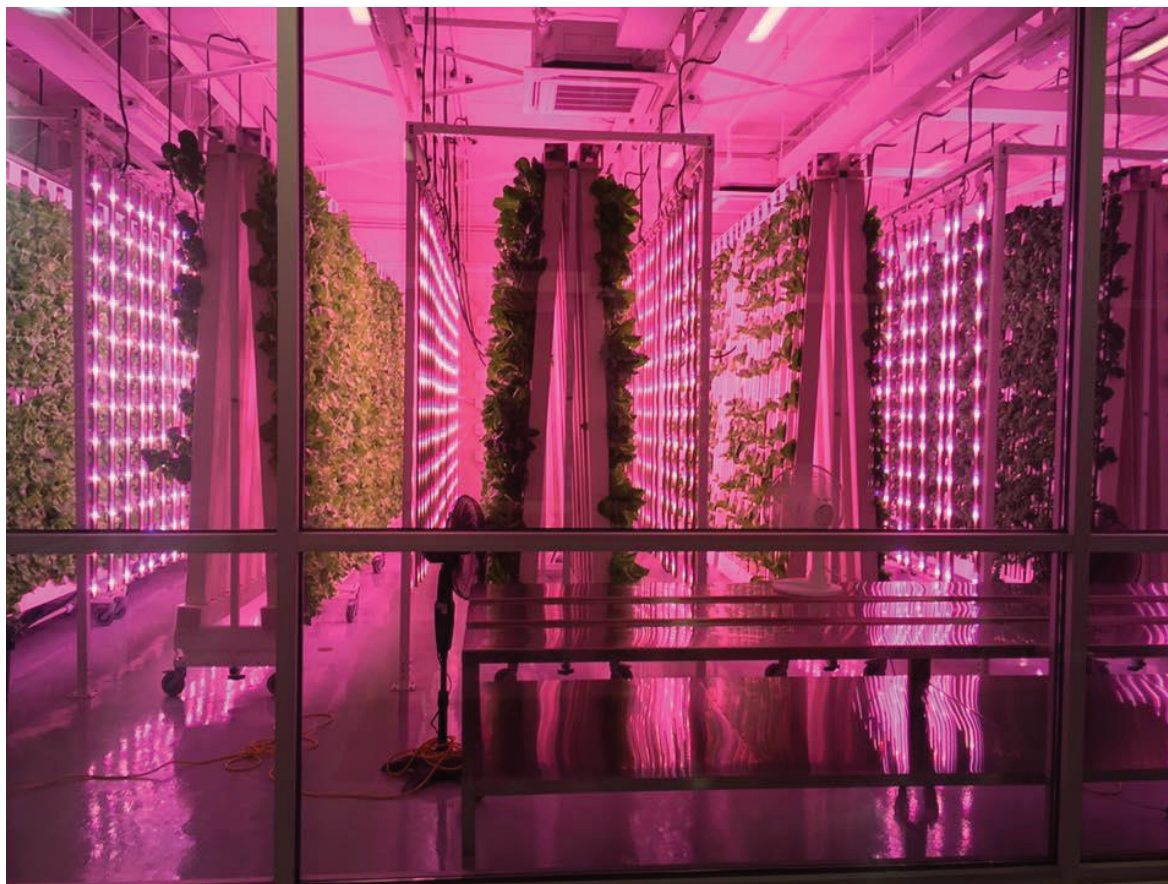
## GLOSSARY

### **Vertical farm**

A vertical farm is an indoor agricultural system that uses state-of-the-art greenhouse technologies to produce food in vertically or horizontally stacked towers. The idea of vertical farming was first written about in 2010 by American microbiologist Dickson Despommier (2010), who suggested that by growing food in a controlled indoor environment (a vertical farm), the negative ecological and health consequences of climate changes could be mitigated.

At Operation Grow specifically the vertical farm is a 1200 square foot indoor growing space, that uses hydroponics to produce plants. All plants start from seeds in plugs which are very tiny vessels made of peat moss. Once the seeds are planted in plugs, they are placed in seeding racks where the plugs are kept moist and warm and receive 12-18 hours of light daily. LED lights are used to economize on electricity. Seeds begin growth in seedling stations until they have grown their first set of true leaves at which point they are transplanted into growing racks; each rack is double sided and hold between eight-fifteen 8ft tall towers (depending on the crop).

Rather than soil, the plants grow in a “matrix media” made from recycled plastic. To plant the towers, the matrix media are lined with cotton wicking strips which help convey water and nutrients to the plants. The plugs are sandwiched in the fold of the matrix media using appropriate spacing and then pulled or “zipped” into the tower. The towers are placed in rows and are spaced 16” from each other. The rows of towers are placed 20” apart and are on racks with wheels enabling easy movement. They are designed to last and are guaranteed for 20 years.



**Figure 1: Operation Grow Vertical Farm, Source: Operation Grow Facebook Page**

The growing space can produce plants that do not have a large root mass, such as leafy greens and herbs. The range of plants is selected based on species with relatively close light, temperature, pH, electrical conductivity, and humidity needs.

### **Person Centered Language**

Language is power, and it has significant impact on the ways that individuals experience the world. This research uses person-centered language that promotes the empowerment of women and refuses to define women based on their experiences or situations. For example, women who have experienced violence are often referred to as *victims* or

*survivors*, this holds their identity to the violence they have experienced ultimately disempowering women, instead of these terms this research paper will use *woman with a lived experience of violence*. Using the same rationale, the following terms will be used throughout this research paper:

- Woman living in poverty or woman experiencing poverty in place of poor woman
- Woman experiencing homelessness, in place of homeless woman
- Woman dependent on substances, in place of addict.

## INTRODUCTION

The Ontario Association for Interval & Transition Houses (OAITH) annually releases a list of the femicides that occur in the province. The list contains women and girls who were killed by men who are either their current or former intimate partner, a family member, someone known to them, or in some cases unknown but still targeted due to gender. The list is based on media reports and other information available to the public, as such the list is only partial and represents a conservative estimate of actual femicides in the province.

- 2019-2020, 34 women and 3 children murdered (Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses, 2020)
- 2018-2019, 34 women and 3 children murdered (Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses, 2019).
- 2017-2018, 45 women and 3 children murdered (Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses, 2018)
- 2016-2017, 32 women murdered (Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses, 2017)
- 2015-2016, 29 women murdered (Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses, 2016)

Undeniably, a characteristic embedded in our societal fabric is violence against women, particularly Indigenous women. Annually on December 6<sup>th</sup>, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, Canadians come together to mourn the murder of fourteen women at l'École polytechnique in 1989, and the femicides that happen annually across our country. Women, and at times their children, are murdered just because they are women. The gendered Toronto van attack on April 23, 2018, which killed ten people and injured 16, 19 years after the Montreal Massacre is

another reminder of just how far our nation has to go to truly eradicate gender-based violence. Just in June 2022, the coroner's jury that investigated the femicides of three women murdered by the same perpetrator in 2015, recommended that the government of Ontario "formally declare intimate partner violence as an epidemic (Jury serving into the inquest of the deaths of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam, 2022, p. 1)".

Too many women continue to experience violence. In Canada, on average, every second day a woman or girl is killed (Aujla, Dawson, Giesbrecht, MacGregor, & Nourpanah, 2023). In 2018, 44% of women who had ever been in an intimate partner relationship self-reported to have experienced violence in their relationship (Statistics Canada, 2022). Too many women have their lives dramatically impacted by violence. These impacts continue for generations and can include poorer physical health outcomes and increased health issues particularly cardiovascular disease, endocrine dysfunction and neurological symptoms, poorer mental health inclusive of likelihood of depression, lowered self-esteem, anxiety and isolation, (Oram, Khalifeh, & Howard, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2021; van der Kolk, et al., 2014; Chivers-Wilson, 2006; Martin, Macy, & Young, 2011; Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002) and increased poverty (Fredman, 2014). Grandmothers experience violence, then their daughters experience violence, then their granddaughters experience violence. The individual pain experienced by one woman, extends to her family and community, which then also bear the burden of the violence. Yet research related to the impacts of violence against women is often limited to the individual mental and physical health impacts of abuse.



After decades of governmental responses to violence against women, its prevalence in our society is proof that these responses have been inadequate. The research presents a unique opportunity to develop an understanding of a segment of the population that is often misunderstood and underrepresented; women who have experienced violence. Women's experiences of violence will be used to inform what constitutes appropriate supports to address both their immediate needs, as understood by them, and the root causes of violence as addressed by them. The research is an attempt to meaningfully value impacts of women who have experienced violence.

This research will specifically use data from in-depth interviews with woman with a lived experience of violence engaged in Operation Grow (OG), a hydroponic farming social enterprise in Midland, Ontario. The sustainable livelihoods framework, social reproduction theory, and the social individual approach will be used to frame the research. Combining these three methodologies creates a holistic conceptualization for a more in-depth analysis of the data; the strength of one methodology often addresses/rectifies the weakness of another. A core argument of this thesis will be that these three methodologies are necessary to facilitate the most in-depth understanding of the data, to best analyze the lives of women who have experienced violence. The in-depth analysis of the experiences of women engaged at OG will be used to answer the research question: **What are the unique needs of women with a lived experience of violence?** And consequently, from this will be able to further examine the following two questions; Do programs/services outside of crisis services need to be specifically tailored to meet the needs of women who have experienced violence? and what role can social enterprise play in supporting women with lived experience of violence and what are the limitations?

## Overview of the chapters

Chapter one is *Methodologies and Theoretical Approaches*: it provides an overview of the three theoretical approaches and the methodology used to complete the research, and the data collection process. The chapter begins with an overview of case study methodology, then provides an overview of Operation Grow (OG), the case study for the research. Then, the three theoretical approaches used to analyze the data are explained, beginning with the sustainable livelihoods framework, then social reproduction theory. This is followed by an exploration of the intersection between these two theoretical approaches. Then an explanation of the social individual approach is provided, which is the third and final theoretical framework used to analyze the data. The use of three theoretical approaches might initially be perceived as confusing, as such the chapter examines the linkages between all three theoretical approaches, and how their correlations provide important considerations for the overall research question. The chapter ends with an overview of the data collection method followed by an in-depth description of the participants based in the data collected.

Chapter two contains *Data Analysis*; it organizes the data using each of the three theoretical frameworks to see patterns and themes emerging from the data. First, the data is organized using social reproduction theory, which highlights the correlation between violence and social reproduction labour. Next, the data is organized using the sustainable livelihoods framework, which understands women's experiences through five asset areas. Organizing the data in this way presents an opportunity to examine how violence has intersected with each area of a woman's life. Using the sustainable livelihoods framework, the current vulnerability context is defined through capitalism,

patriarchy, and colonialism. Then, the data is presented through the lens of the vulnerability context to articulate the external factors that women at OG identified as having an impact on their lives. In order to demonstrate the intersection between the sustainable livelihoods framework and social reproduction theory, the data is then organized into a chart to identify social reproduction labour within each of the asset areas. Finally, the data is organized using the social individual approach which ensures that women's experiences and needs are centric to analysis.

Chapter three, *Findings*, provides an in-depth discussion of the data. As the findings are discussed, consideration is given as to how they inform the overall research question of *What role can social enterprise play in supporting women with a lived experience of violence and what are the limitations?*

Chapter four is *Conclusions*. Here, research conclusions are articulated, specifically through the presentation of six key design elements for social enterprises to best support women with a lived experience of violence. OG is discussed in relation to the six key design elements identified. In this chapter, the role and limitations of social enterprise are examined, and recommendations are made to address limitations. Finally, Chapter five explains the relevance of this research in academia and makes suggestions for future research.

## **My Positionality**

I am employed as the Acting Executive Director for Huronia Transition Homes, the charitable organization whose social enterprise acts as the case study in this research. I am also one of the founders of the social enterprise, and have worked to envision, develop, fundraise for, implement, and operate the program. I am personally invested in the success of the program and the vision of the organization which is to end all violence against all women. At the time of the research, I was employed as the organization's director of operations. In this role I helped design the evaluation tools used to collect data on the social enterprise and trained staff on how to use the tools.

I am also a woman who has survived violence. Much like many women who have experienced violence, it was not an isolated event.

- I survived childhood sexual abuse (first abuser).
- I survived a violent home, where both my sisters and I bore witness to abuse against our mom, and at times each other (second abuser).
- I survived digital abuse when I was in high school (third abuser).
- I survived sexual violence when I was in university (fourth abuser).
- I survived sexual violence at my summer job (fifth abuser).

I understand firsthand how violence impacts all areas of your life. This is especially true for mothers. Growing up, I witnessed my mom's level of resourcefulness that would be unfathomable to many. She had to steer three children through abuse, the financial hardship it created, the resulting physical and mental health implications, and navigate

social services for assistance. This is the foundation of the passion that drives my research and my work.

It has been my experience that organizations such as mine are criticized for not including more voices of women who have experienced violence on their teams. Yet so many workers in the sector, like me have survived violence, and have found our voices to speak on issues of violence against women, not from personal pain but from resilience, and not from fetishizing the story but from understanding violence in both a personal, societal, and institutional context.

I understand that my experience of violence and life has been characterized by my social location as a white, middle-class (from lower-class), able-bodied, heterosexual, Canadian-born, urban-dwelling, cis-gendered, woman. The resources accessed to conduct research, and the opinions presented here are formed from the lived experience of these social locations. I am aware that the intersection of these social locations impacts the framework I use to ask questions, the audience I reach, and the solutions I am able to generate.

## **Social Enterprise**

Social enterprise is a term that is becoming more commonly used, however it does not have a definition that is consistently applied. Young and Lecy (2013) argue that social enterprise exists at the center of a Venn diagram where commercial activity intersects with a social mission and an environmental mission. They explain that at this intersection social enterprise can take one of six main forms (definitions), however variations exist within each form: for profit business corporations, social business, social cooperatives, commercial non-profit organizations, private-public partnerships, and hybrids. Based on their definitions, Operation Grow would be defined as commercial non-profit organization “organized specifically to address some explicit social mission. Commercial goals are instrumental to the success of these organizations” (Young & Lecy, 2013, p. 1320), “which seek to engage in commercial activities that simultaneously address mission-related activities” (Young & Lecy, 2013, p. 1321).

According to Miles, Verreynne and Luke (2013), social enterprise generates revenues from socially and/or environmentally conscious business activities and uses profits to create positive social and/or environmental impacts. They identify three critical components to social enterprise, first it must have economic, social and environmental sustainability as its core objectives, second it must understand that impact is a long-term process, and third it must focus on the needs of its stakeholders over the needs for self-promotion (Miles, Verreynne, & Luke, 2013). In 2013 the province of Ontario launched its first ever social enterprise strategy, Impact- A Social Enterprise Strategy for Ontario (2015). This strategy, and the updated strategy in 2016, both defined social enterprises as “an organization that uses business strategies to maximize its social or environmental

impact” (Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, 2015). The issue with this broad definition is that positive social and environmental impact are not required to be embedded into the core of the business, but instead are a peripheral goal. For example, using this definition potentially large corporations could argue it is a social enterprise as its corporate social responsibility programming contributes to positive social impact.

The commonality of these definitions, and arguably the most used definition of social enterprise, is that it is a hybrid operation that uses business activities as a means to support positive change either environmentally or socially. However, without a standardized definition, there is an enormous risk that the important work of social enterprises is diluted and minimized by companies promoting their goods and services as having social and environmental impacts, without any measurement of said impact.

Social enterprise presents a unique opportunity for making positive social and environmental change. As a practitioner in a registered charity, my organization recognized the multiple opportunities that social enterprise presented for the organization. Social enterprise offered the ability to generate revenues to support the offset of annual funding deficits of existing programs (in 2021-2022, the funding deficit was approximately (\$250,000). It also gives agencies full flexibility and autonomy over revenues generated, as they have no contractual obligation and can be used more freely to meet the needs of women in service.

Social enterprises are also better able to support the diverse needs of participants as they do not conform to existing labour-market conditions that promote and encourage individualism, competition, and profit (Ferguson K. , 2012). Instead, they attempt to

neutralize these labour-market values by challenging conformity to a particular job description, and instead providing tailored wrap-around supports to individuals (Ferguson K. , 2012). This arguably allows social enterprises to overcome or at least challenge systemic barriers that keep the labour-market restricted to folks who can embody its characteristics of individualism, competition, and profit; often excluding folks with mental health needs (Akingbola, Phaetthayanan, & Brown, 2015). In this way, social enterprises are able to provide very tailored opportunities that are specific to the stakeholders the social enterprise is looking to support. For example, as a social enterprise Operation Grow was able to structure all its programming to meet the direct needs and wants of women with a lived experience of violence. It is the underlying philosophy of social enterprise that economic and personal well-being are interrelated (Ferguson K. , 2012). In the same way that social enterprise operates for both business and social impact outcomes, they work to empower their program participants to do the same.

Social enterprise allows organizations or agencies who would not normally be engaged in the market economy to participate and participate in a way that aligns with the social justice values of the organization. Potentially providing an alternative to often exploitative profit-only driven marketplace transactions. In the same vein, social enterprises existing in the market economy, also takes away the monopoly that has been held by for-profit companies on innovation (Picchio, A macroeconomic approach to an extended standard of living, 2003).

Despite the opportunities of social enterprise, they also present some unique considerations, complexities, and challenges. Social enterprises are often used as a way to 'fill the gaps' as government social provisioning declines (Miles, Verreyne, & Luke,



2013). This leads to the question of whether or not social enterprise supports the reduction in government funded social provisioning, by negating government responsibility to adequately fund critical social services. Some academics and researchers believe that social enterprise is contradictory to the demands of feminists and activists arguing it supports the retreat of the state from social provisioning (Bezanson & Carter , 2006). This “retreat” can be understood two-fold; firstly, it puts more responsibility on social services to provide services without increased government spending, and secondly it works very hard to take folks off social assistance through work-integration social enterprises, again reducing state spending on individuals who require additional supports often due to physical and mental health needs. Work-integration social enterprises, despite their ability to support folks with barriers to employment to enter the waged labour-market, also walk the line of becoming a workfare program of the state. Workfare driven social policies focus on pushing folks off social assistance and into waged employment by means of the shortest route possible (Bakker, Neo-Liberal Governance and the Reprivatization of Social Reproduction: Social Provisioning and Shifting Gender Orders, 2003; Mosher, 2011; Bezanson & Carter , 2006; Fudge & Cossman, Conclusion: Privatization, Polarization, and Policy: Feminism and the Future, 2002). When the focus of social enterprise is to shift participants from social assistance to mainstream employment, it risks mirroring these very harmful policies. Highlighting the harms of this, feminist and academic Janet Mosher states “through workfare policies and programs, individuals are reduced to assets- commodified, dehumanized and stripped of context, histories and identities” (Human Capital and the Post-Scripting of Women's Poverty, 2011, p. 171).

Another challenge of social enterprise is that depending on the business activities that the social enterprise engages in, the social enterprise can potentially begin to mirror and support the same systems of oppression that it is looking to interrupt. For example, a social enterprise with a social objective to support the reduction of women's depth of poverty that sells linens purchased from the global south using traditional value chains, is potentially supporting the exploitation of women in the global south, if they are not actively conscious of their procurement.

This research will consider more in-depth how these opportunities and challenges of social enterprise using the case study of a social enterprise in Midland Ontario. Once the data from the participants engaged in the social enterprise is analyzed, the unique needs of women with lived experience of violence can be articulated, then the specific program considerations to meet these unique needs can be identified, which will allow the opportunity for the data to be used to consider the strengths and limitations of social enterprises ability to support women with lived experience of violence.

## METHODOLOGIES AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

### Overview

The principal research question is: **What are the unique needs of women with a lived experience of violence?**

From this research question an answer can then be formed for the following two questions:

- Do programs/services outside of crisis services need to be specifically tailored to meet the needs of women who have experienced violence?
- What role can social enterprise play in supporting women with lived experience of violence and what are the limitations?

### Case Study Methodology

This research project used a single case study approach for a multitude of reasons. Specifically, case study methodology allows for the in-depth analysis of a subject (for example a project, decision, person, or policy) that is multi-faceted and complex. The subject of a case study is selected because it is unique and presents an opportunity to illuminate or explicate a particular phenomenon (Thomas, 2011).

Case study methodology uses a subject that exists within the real-life context and presents an opportunity to explore all of that subject's dimensions. In this regard, the framework can support practitioners to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Smith-Maddox & Solórzano, 2002). Case studies begin with an interest in a particular phenomenon that is best understood narratively, through the perspectives of participants (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Understanding violence against women cannot effectively be done

through theoretical assumptions, it can only be understood through the experiences of the individuals impacted. The case study through these real-life narrative's presents practical observations and conclusions of effective interventions for social issues.

The case study of Operation Grow is an instrumental case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). It is instrumental as the case helps to build a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of violence in the lives of women and offer critical insights as to how programs can specifically address these impacts. In this context there is no single set of outcomes.

The case study presents the opportunity to conduct an in-depth analysis of the unique needs of women with a lived experience of violence, as such it directly answers the research question. Once an in-depth understanding of the unique needs of women with a lived experience of violence is established, the case study subsequently allows for the examination of the two other research questions; Do programs/services outside of crisis services need to be specifically tailored to meet the needs of women who have experienced violence? And What role can social enterprise play in supporting women with lived experience of violence and what are the limitations? This is possible because once a clear understanding of women's needs is established, the opportunity is presented to understand if programs need to be further tailored to meet these unique needs. Then through the case study of Operation Grow, these findings allow an examination of the strengths and limitations of social enterprise in meeting the unique needs of women who have experienced violence.

## **The Case Study: Operation Grow**

Huronion Transition Homes (HTH) is a charitable organization in Simcoe County, Ontario working to end all violence against all women. The organization began in 1984 as an emergency shelter for women and their children fleeing violence in rural Midland, Ontario (Huronion Transition Homes, 2021). Since then, HTH has significantly expanded and now operates multiple programs, some with a county-wide service provision. In addition to the emergency shelter, which now also has additional beds for women experiencing homelessness, HTH operates the following programs:

- A county-wide anglophone sexual assault centre providing counselling supports for women who have experienced sexual abuse and/or intimate partner violence.
- A county-wide psychoeducational group program for women and their children who have been exposed to violence against their moms/woman guardian.
- A county-wide anti-human trafficking program providing case management support and specialized services for women who have been trafficked including a long-term residential program.
- A county-wide public education program, raising awareness on issues related to violence against women.

Until 2009, HTH largely provided crisis services to women, such as individual and group counselling, housing support, emergency accommodation, and legal system navigation support. These services supported women who had experienced violence but did not prevent violence nor address the range of impact violence has on a woman's life. After more than two decades of providing services to women, staff at HTH observed that third

generation women were now accessing the emergency shelter; meaning that women who had fled violence to shelter when the services first became available, whose daughters fled to shelter years later, now had their granddaughters fleeing violence into shelter. HTH recognized that its services although vital to the community, were not supporting women to break inter-generational cycles of violence and poverty.

In 2010, HTH completed a strategic plan to begin to envision the additional supports needed by women. To complete the strategic plan, focus groups were conducted with women in service across the range of programs. HTH reported that during the focus groups women overwhelmingly expressed their want for a place in the community they could come to and gather, non-therapeutic supports, opportunities to reduce poverty and increased access to food. This resulted in the HTH Board of Directors identifying the need to *“Develop a multipurpose centre which offers a wide variety of non-therapeutic supports”* as a strategic priority (Huron Transition Homes, 2010).

In 2017, Operation Grow (OG) was created to address the needs articulated by women in the focus groups and the observations of HTH staff. OG is a social enterprise (see Glossary) holistically designed to address food scarcity, isolation, poverty, and the impacts of trauma in the lives of women who have experienced violence. OG is a community hub in Midland, Ontario combining a state-of-the-art hydroponic vertical farm (see Glossary), a retail store, inspected kitchen, meeting rooms, yoga and meditation studio, and laundry and shower facilities.



**Figure 2: Operation Grow site: Source: OG Facebook**

OG focuses on increasing women’s health and wellbeing, assets, and capabilities to foster economic resiliency. The vertical farm provides women with low-barrier flexible employment to top-up income security and reduce their depth of poverty. In alignment with OG’s commitment to equality, all women are compensated at a rate equivalent to a living wage. Autonomy and choice are embedded in OG. Women determine their participation in all aspects of the social enterprise. Consistent with evidence, the social supports available at OG will effectively support women to sustain and build their assets. At OG, women engaged in services are members, not clients, and this provides them the opportunity to inform utilization of the space and future programming. Membership is



available to women, and the only requirement is that they have had a lived experience of violence in their lifetime.

Specifically, HTH identifies the following outcomes for OG:

- Create opportunities for women to engage in non-therapeutic activities.
- Increase employability skills and decrease poverty risks faced by women with a lived experience of violence.
- Influence food and poverty related policies affecting gender-based violence and other poverty reduction organizations.
- Provide more effective and timely supports to women who have experienced violence.
- Improve outreach to and decrease barriers for service for women who have experienced violence.
- Build capacity of community organizations to better meet the needs of women who have experienced violence (Ferguson, Green, & Kochany, Operation Grow Evaluation Report 2019-2020, 2020).

Moreover, OG identifies the following member specific outcomes:

- Increased knowledge of healthy coping strategies.
- Improved self-awareness.
- Increased social capital.
- Decreased isolation.
- Increased food security and food-related skills.
- Increased self-efficacy.
- Increased housing stability.
- Increased employment stability.
- Increase capacity for empowerment and self-agency (Huron Transition Homes, 2017).

The social enterprise was made possible thanks to a large bequest from business leader and philanthropist Robbert Hartog, a substantial donation from the Weber foundation, significant community support and an Innovation Fund grant provided by the province of



Ontario. In March 2015, the provincial government led by Liberal Leader Premier Kathleen Wynne released the “It’s Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment”. The plan was multi-faceted working to improve laws on workplace harassment and sexual violence, to enhance support for social services helping individuals who have experienced violence, improve education curriculum to address issues related to sexual violence, and attempts to challenge and change the attitudes and behaviors that contribute to sexual violence and harassment (Ontario Ministry of Women's Issues, 2015). The action plan included multiple commitments for a \$3 million dollar grant from the Innovation Fund, “to set up and test new ways to strengthen community supports for survivors of sexual violence and harassment” (Ontario Ministry of Women's Issues, 2016).

## **Sustainable Livelihoods Framework**

Sustainable livelihoods approaches originated in the early 1980s from economic literature on famine (Carney, 2003). However, the sustainable livelihoods framework was first introduced internationally by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development in the early 1990s, and then was expanded on at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, as a strategy to combat poverty (United Nations, 1993; Krantz, 2001). At the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, sustainable livelihoods was introduced not as a framework but as a desired outcome for poverty reduction strategies, and that to achieve these strategies they must simultaneously balance poverty, human development, and environmental conservation (United Nations, 1993).

The sustainable livelihoods framework was developed outside academia, coming directly from non-governmental organizations involved in poverty reduction work. Because of its grassroots knowledge and practical application, the framework is believed to have the ability to handle more complex problems (Knutsson, 2006). As such the framework is a form of intentional (or interventionist) development, “a focused and directed process whereby government and non-government organizations implement development projects and programs (typically a set of related projects) to help the poor” (Morse & McNamara, 2013, p. 15).

The origins of sustainable livelihoods lie in support for individuals living in poverty, specifically those in rural communities, “to get above, not a poverty line defined in terms of consumption, but a sustainable livelihood line which includes the ability to save and accumulate, to adapt to changes, to meet contingencies, and to enhance long-term

productivity” (Chambers, 1987, p. 15). The first definitions of the framework came from development scholars and practitioners Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway (Knutsson, 2006). Conway and Chambers defined a livelihood as being comprised of “the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living” (Morse & McNamara, 2013, p. 22). They further defined a sustainable livelihood as a livelihood that “can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long-term” (Morse & McNamara, 2013).

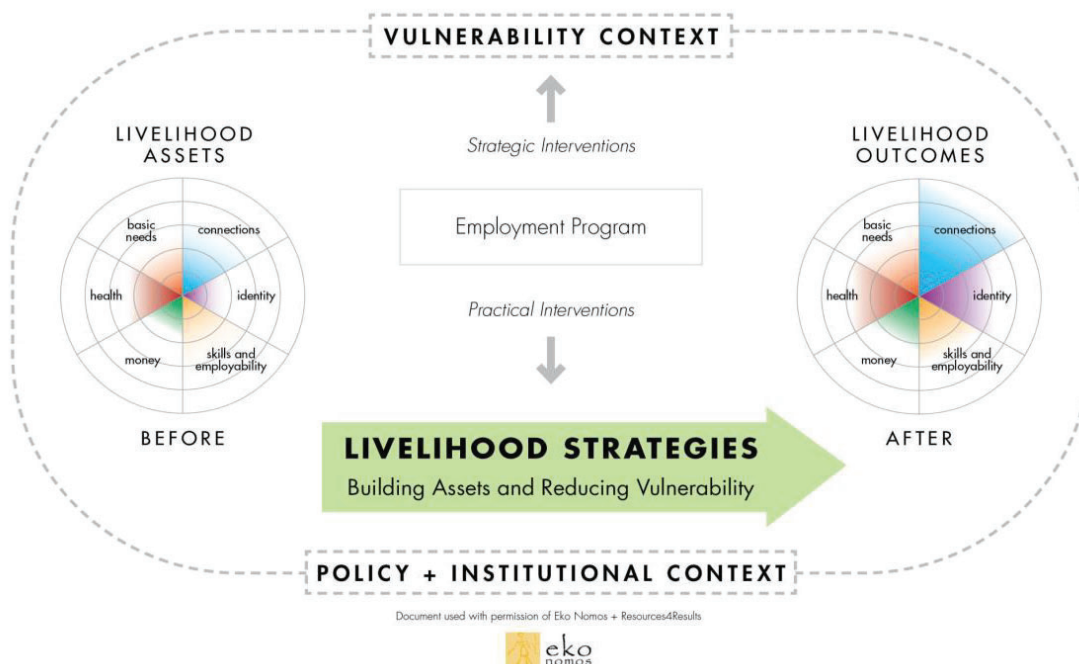
Since its origin, the sustainable livelihoods framework has been adapted and re-defined multiple times to meet specific local contexts. The adaptation of the sustainable livelihoods framework used in this research is that used in the Canadian context by practitioners and evaluators Dr. Mary Ferguson and Janet Murray of Eko Nomos consulting with the Women in Economic Development Consortium (WEDC). In 1996 the WEDC was founded in an attempt to incorporate a gender analysis into community economic development initiatives which are largely gender neutral (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001). Thus, the WEDC was created as a grant making partnership administered by the Canadian Women’s Foundation aiming “to support the development of new ways to help low-income women become more actively involved in the economy (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001, p. 3)”.

The sustainable livelihoods framework in this adaptation is specific to the Canadian context and has increased gender sensitivity, and terminology is simplified from the

original theoretical framework to support its practical application (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001). In this form the sustainable livelihoods framework is defined as a “holistic, asset-based approach to understanding women’s lives” (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001, p. 14), and a sustainable livelihood (still based in the original definition by Chambers and Conway) is defined as “the ability to maintain and cultivate ourselves and our households, to take advantage of opportunities for growth over time, and to remain resistant to shocks and stresses from within and without” (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001, p. 12). As such this adaptation of the sustainable livelihood framework “is based upon the concept that women are vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion when they have a limited range of assets. Assets are the building blocks of a sustainable livelihood. When women are supported to create the conditions for economic participation, they can build their assets and gradually begin to transition out of poverty and towards a sustainable livelihood, which is defined as ‘long-term financial security’” (Eko Nomos , 2010, p. 11).

The sustainable livelihoods framework is a tool for practitioners to explore four contextual dimensions of an individual’s life: The vulnerability context; assets; stages of livelihood development; policy and institutional context (please see glossary for definitions of these terms). Figure 3 illustrates the sustainable livelihoods framework.

## THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FRAMEWORK - v1.2



**Figure 3: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework. Source Eko Nomos 2018 Evaluation Report Addendum for Huronia Transition Homes**

### Vulnerability context

Women's lives are directly impacted by present oppressive capitalist policy and institutional contexts. The vulnerability context informs policies, institutions, and processes that characterize an individual's experience in society, including their access to assets (Brocklesby & Fisher, 2003). The current failures of social provisioning are examples of these oppressive policies and institutions such as: lack of adequate affordable childcare, low rates of social assistance, the extensive barriers to receiving Ontario Disability Support Program funding, lack of affordable housing, and inadequate funding to charitable organizations within the social services sector.

The principal purpose of the vulnerability context is to understand the external factors that create and perpetuate an individual's vulnerability to poverty and social exclusion (Eko Nomos , 2010). This ensures that oppressive capitalist policy and institutional factors are front-and-center to understanding the lives of women, and individuals experiencing poverty. The vulnerability context is created specifically by four categories of external factors:

- ***“Cycles and Patterns*** are long-established repeating patterns connected to the changing stages of women's lives, their reproductive choices, their roles and responsibilities in the family, their relationships and seasonality.
  - ***Trends*** are broader social, economic and political forces and changes that emerge over time. They can have serious impacts on a family's security.
  - ***Systems*** are the formal and informal ways that society functions, including the built-in biases and forms of discrimination, that can enhance or reduce women's opportunities.
  - ***Shocks*** are sudden or catastrophic occurrences that can destroy assets directly and can also force people to draw on their asset reserves. Shocks can be random events such as a fires or floods, but they can also be the culmination of negative effects in cycles, trends and systems. For example, the shock of divorce is the culmination of negative relationship patterns.”
- (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001, p. 27)

A sustainable livelihood is only possible when the vulnerability context and its associated external factors have been considered (Morse & McNamara, 2013).

## Assets

Acting as the foundation of a sustainable livelihood, assets are resources and capabilities that an individual has to sustain their livelihood and enhance their welfare (Moser & Dani, 2008). Assets are also the basis of an individual's autonomy, specifically their "power to act and to reproduce, challenge or change the rules that govern the control, use and transformation of resources" (De Haan & Zoomers, 2003, p. 352). All assets are interconnected and complex, however they get broken into six distinct categories so that women's strengths, challenges, and barriers can be better analyzed and understood (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001). The six asset areas are physical (basic needs), financial (money), human (skills & employability), personal (sense of self), social (connections), and health (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2002; Eko Nomos, 2010). See Figure 4 for an image of the asset areas.

An important distinction between the sustainable livelihood's framework used in this research, and that used in traditional international development work, is this sixth asset area, instead of the standard five. Originally health was included in physical assets, however the work done with grantees of the Canadian Women's Foundation economic development project determined that health had such an impact on the lives of women, it required its own distinct category.

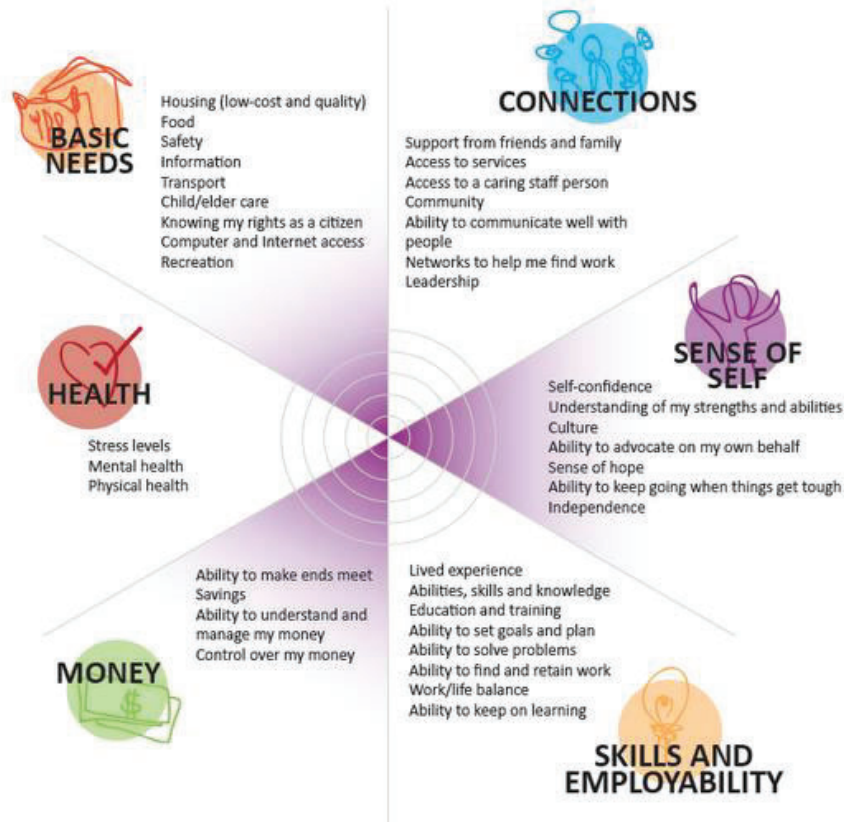


Figure 4: Asset areas. Source Eko Nomos

### Stages of livelihood development

There are six stages in sustainable livelihood development, which is the process by which individuals transition out of poverty and into a sustainable livelihood (Eko Nomos , 2010).

The six stages appear in the following order:

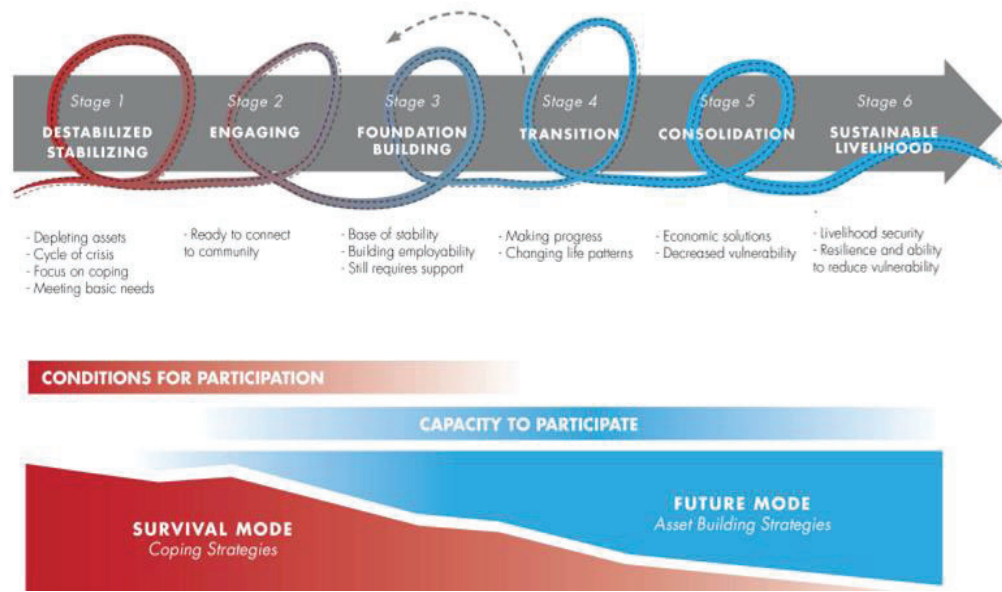
1. Destabilized/stabilizing: The individual is in survival mode, focused on coping from chaotic crises and meeting their basic needs due to depletion of assets.
2. Engaging: The individual is better able to cope and meet basic needs, energy shifts to connecting to community and the economy.



3. Foundation Building: The individual has a base of stability and begins to explore their livelihood options. Individuals still require support: however, this need has lessened.
4. Transition: The individual has increased capacity to participate and begins to make progress and act on their livelihood options.
5. Consolidation: The individual has decreased vulnerability and begins to consolidate their asset gains.
6. Sustainable Livelihood: The individual has established a level of resilience and establishes long-term livelihood security. Vulnerability is significantly reduced.

At each stage, an individual's assets are increased, which leads to greater stability. This creates a shift in an individual's focus from survival mode (coping to meet basic needs) to future mode (ability to further build assets).

The process to a sustainable livelihood is not linear, and dependent on the vulnerability context an individual moves forward and backwards along the stages of sustainability, also certain asset areas for an individual may be at different stages along the livelihood spectrum. Figure 5 illustrates this process, and its dynamic nature. See Appendix A for the stages of sustainability specific to the case study in this research.



**Figure 5: Stages of Livelihood Development. Source Eko Nomos**

## **Social Reproduction Theory**

Social reproduction theory emerged as a coherent strand in feminist thought in the twentieth century (Ferguson S. , *Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction*, 2020). Social reproduction is the social processes, mechanisms, and institutions that form the building blocks of societies, communities, power, and production (Bakker & Gill, *Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction*, 2003). It is widely understood as the daily and generational work of sustaining and nurturing human life (Ferguson S. , 2020; Philipps, 2002; Bezanson & Carter , 2006; Bakker, *Neo-Liberal Governance and the Reprivatization of Social Reproduction: Social Provisioning and Shifting Gender Orders*, 2003). Social reproduction work is predominantly completed by women, and includes activities required in biological reproduction, caring of the next generation of workers, completing the provisioning and caring needs for those who require special support such as individuals who are sick,

elderly, disabled, jobless, and young, and managing consumption (Ferguson S. , 2020; Abramowitz, 2010; Bakker, 2003; Bakker & Gill, Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction, 2003). Social reproduction work also includes the survival strategies that individuals must use to sustain their own and others basic life tasks (Ferguson S. , Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction, 2020). Included in all of these activities, is emotional labour, which provides the mental and emotional support that individuals require for positive mental health (Rousseau, 2016).

This definition demonstrates the two goals of social reproductive labour, one to support life, and two to maintain and restore commodity labour to support capital (Ferguson S. , 2020; Mohandesi & Teitelman, 2017). Vogel argues that women's oppression is sustained and shaped in the systemic logic that supports these two goals, and their inherent contradictions: the contradictory relation of the reproduction of labour power and capital accumulation acts as the material basis for women's oppression (Ferguson S. , Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction, 2020). Social reproduction provides a framework to explore the tensions that these two goals create, and closely examine the logic behind capital's interaction with social power relations (Ferguson S. , Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction, 2020).

Many have argued that the site of social reproduction is the household, which acts as an income-pooling unit, compiling wages to accrue purchasing power for goods and services, and redistribute labour, resources, and survival strategies (Dunaway, 2014, Mohandesi & Teitelman, 2017). Vogel provides a broader definition, explaining that the site of social reproduction is the family, arguing that the basis of social reproduction feminism is located within the interaction between family and the market economy

(Ferguson S. , 2020, p. 112). As such, the only site of social reproduction cannot be the household, as it is all processes of social reproduction, not just those completed in individual households, that are caught in the middle of the contradictory dynamic of capital and life; that is there cannot be labour without life, and in a capitalist society, there cannot be life without labour (Ferguson S. , Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction, 2020). Therefore, for this research the site of social reproduction is any place where social reproduction labour occurs, inclusive of both households and communities (Ferguson S. , 2020; Bakker & Gill, Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction, 2003).

Social reproduction theory moves past acknowledging a relationship between social reproduction labour and the capitalist-based market and works to theorize their relationship (Bhattacharya, 2017). Bhattacharya explains that as a methodology, social reproduction theory presents the opportunity to “explore labour and labour power under capitalism and is best suited to offer a rich and variegated map of capital as a social relation; further, that this is a methodology that privileges process” (2017, p. 4). In conceptualizing and analyzing the process of social reproduction, it allows for a view of the “dense and multidimensional core of the structure of any economic system, where both equity and efficiency are rooted” (Picchio, 2003, pp. 2-3).

### **Intersection of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and Social Reproduction Theory**

As can be seen in the definitions and historical context of the sustainable livelihoods framework and social reproduction theory, both approaches are very distinct. However,

when combining the approaches, it presents an opportunity to better organize and interpret the data.

Social reproductive labour is the often-invisible work that occurs in the private realm that is required for the acquisition and maintenance of assets, which the sustainable livelihood framework considers to be the building blocks of life. Organizing social reproductive labour into the six asset areas as defined by the sustainable livelihood framework creates an opportunity to make visible social reproduction labour thus making it easier to understand the impact of the labour on an individual. Table 1 demonstrates the above by organizing social reproduction labour into the six asset areas:

Combining social reproduction theory and the sustainable livelihoods framework could potentially create an opportunity to understand the correlation between social reproductive labour and poverty. The unit of analysis in social reproduction theory is any location where social reproductive work is occurring, and the unit of analysis in the sustainable livelihoods framework is the individual. The combining of these frameworks presents an opportunity to explore how the two goals of social reproduction (to support life and to maintain and restore commodity labour power to support capital) play out in the lives of individuals (Ferguson S. , 2020; Mohandesi & Teitelman, 2017).

The vulnerability context, articulated in the sustainable livelihoods framework, offers potential to contextualize the internal and external factors that characterize the interrelationship between social reproductive work and capital accumulation. Social reproduction theory also informs and changes the vulnerability context defined in the

sustainable livelihoods framework, it acts as both a “cycle and pattern”, and as a “system”, making visible gendered experiences which are often overlooked or ignored.

**Table 1: Correlation of Asset Areas and Social Reproduction Labour**

<b>Asset Areas</b>	<b>Social Reproduction Labour</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical (basic needs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing consumption</li> <li>Taking care of children</li> <li>Caring for elders</li> <li>Completing chores and household labour</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caring for those who require special support such as individuals who are sick</li> <li>Completing emotional labour</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial (money)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household fiscal responsibilities</li> <li>Survival strategies</li> <li>Pooling of resources</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human (skills &amp; employability)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinating education and training of self and dependents</li> <li>Preparation of lunches for school or work</li> <li>Emotional support from workplace and school stress</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal (sense of self)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordination of cultural activities</li> <li>Coordinator of wellbeing activities</li> <li>Nurturing of self and dependents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social (connections)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nurturing relationships with friends and family</li> <li>Coordinating children’s play dates</li> </ul>

As demonstrated through the above examples applying these two frameworks to the data from OG could enhance the overall knowledge generated from the research, as it could allow for a more in-depth analysis of the data collected, and a more fulsome discussion of how the macro-level (policies, institutions, and structures) impacts the lives of women with a lived experience of violence.

## **Social Individual Approach**

The social individual approach, originally written about as the lifecycle approach, recognizes that to understand an individual, we cannot look solely to their relationship with institutions, society, and power, or through their paid or unpaid work, because this fails to account for an individual's humanity. A key aspect to respecting an individual's humanity in theory is by understanding that all individuals have needs, but also hopes, desires, and dreams.

The social individual approach understands that all individuals have three things in common; "We all need care; we all need material resources; we all need to have a voice in our society" (Winkler, 1998, p. 160). It then insists that these three commonalities require three actions: "If we all need care, someone has to give that care; if we all need material resources, someone has to provide them. If we all need to speak, someone has to listen" (Winkler, 1998, p. 160). In recognition of these commonalities, the social individual locates people within the social matrix of the interconnectedness of care, resources, and voice (Winkler, 1998). Individuals are not alone but are linked to others through relationships (Winkler, 1998). Winkler argues that the more marginalized an individual is (meaning the further away they are from access to centers of power), the more difficult it is for them to express their needs and concerns (1998).

The interconnectedness of this approach also demonstrates how one aspect of an individual's life impacts all other aspects of her life. For example, the stigmatization, isolation, and shame that is created by violence significantly diminishes a woman's voice. This negatively impacts the woman's sense of self, self-esteem, powerlessness, and motivation, which echoes into her ability to secure necessary material resources, as the

woman has internalized shame, blame, and the emotional trauma caused by violence (Oram, Khalifeh, & Howard, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2021). Additionally, as a woman internalizes the emotional trauma caused by violence, her ability to provide care is diminished, and her need for care increases. The impacts of trauma caused by violence limits the ability and desire of women to engage within the social matrix, which is necessary for access to voice, care, and material resources. The social individual approach effectively demonstrates how violence impacts all aspects of the lives of women. Unlike the sustainable livelihoods framework and social reproduction theory, the social individual approach demonstrates the interconnectedness of the impacts of trauma and the domino effect caused by violence.

This methodology creates a space to explore often invisible “but tangible threads connecting each of us” (Winkler, 1998, p. 164). The social individual approach also allows for the examination of what contributes to individual access to care, resources, and voice, and what erodes or makes this access difficult, simultaneously presenting an opportunity to who is being cared for, provided for, and listened to by the power centers in society. One of the strengths of this methodology lies in its person-centered approach, and commitment to theorizing individuals’ experiences with their humanity intact.

### **Why these three methodologies?**

The three methodologies selected for this research have individual strengths and weaknesses. When the methodologies are compared it becomes apparent that the strength of one methodology often addresses/rectifies the weakness of another, which demonstrates their symbiotic relationship. Bringing these methodologies together creates a holistic conceptualization for a more in-depth analysis of the data.



The sustainable livelihoods framework offers an immediate response to reducing the impacts of poverty and supporting individuals to decrease the depth of poverty they experience. The holistic nature of the framework also creates an opportunity for a holistic understanding of an individual, which is essential to understanding the impacts of violence on the lives of women; unlike traditional programming responding to violence against women that primarily focuses on and addresses the health impacts of trauma. Conversely the sustainable livelihoods framework assumes the vulnerability context to be perpetual and concrete. It acknowledges that the vulnerability context changes based on cycles and patterns, trends, systems, and shocks, however the framework does not present an opportunity to challenge the vulnerability context, and to overcome the systemic inequities it creates and upholds. In the assumption that the vulnerability context is perpetual and concrete, the framework instead helps individuals understand how to integrate themselves into the capitalist economy as the means to escape poverty, which ultimately upholds the systems that create and maintain both poverty and violence in the first place (Ferguson S. , Intersectionality and Social-Reproduction Feminisms: Toward an Integrative Ontology, 2016; Bhattacharya, 2017). In this vein, the framework ignores the root causes of violence against women and poverty, which ultimately eliminates any critical envisioning on how to overcome them.

Social reproduction theory's strength addresses the weakness of the sustainable livelihoods framework, in that it is focused on examining the root causes/systemic nature of women's oppression. Social reproduction theory offers an essential analysis of how categories of oppression such as class and gender are produced under the current economic system (capitalism) (Bhattacharya, 2017). Social reproduction theory

challenges the current economic system, arguing that it devalues women, and presents an opportunity to envision an alternative. Conversely social reproduction theory does not provide a pragmatic or practical approach to addressing the immediate needs of women who have experienced violence or are experiencing poverty. The systemic shortcomings and oppressions that social reproduction theory brings to light are issues that must be addressed, however are so embedded in societal structures and ideologies that they require a longer-term strategy. The theory does not present a solution for immediate relief of poverty and of shedding the impacts of violence against women. Social reproduction theory is able to highlight examples of both micro and macro forms of women's oppression, however it does not allow for an in-depth analysis of how this oppression plays out in the lives of an individual.

The social individual approach, similarly to the sustainable livelihoods framework, is centered around the individual; specifically the social individual approach locates persons within a social matrix, at the center of the interrelationship/interwovenness of care, resources and voice (Winkler, 1998, p. 163). Like social reproduction theory, the social individual approach allows for both micro and macro analysis of women's oppression as Winkler explains "just as care, resources, and voice are inextricably intertwined at the level of the individual, so are work, families and communities as institutions" (Winkler, 1998, p. 164). What makes the social individual approach unique from the sustainable livelihoods framework and social reproduction theory, is its explicit focus on voice and the way it creates an opportunity to theorize the critical importance of an individual's experience of voice in society. Interestingly one of the celebrated components of the sustainable livelihood framework was that it shifted the narrative of traditional poverty

reduction work by giving individuals living in poverty voice, by 'handing over the pen'. This was done by having practitioners support individuals living in poverty to create their own poverty reduction strategies based on the participants individual wants and needs, paired with the participants skills and aptitudes (Carney, 2003, Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001). As such the sustainable Livelihoods Framework effectively acknowledges the vulnerability context and works to support individuals to have voice within the current vulnerability context, shaped by oppressive political and institutional systems. The social individual framework demonstrates that women's voices will never be 100% heard and given power, within this current vulnerability context shaped by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. As long as violence against women exist, women's voices will continue to be absent, minimized and muffled. However, we can work within the system, to support women to have more power in society through creating spaces, where women have places to explore voice, be heard, be seen, understand and demonstrate their value and express themselves.

Core components of all three theoretical frameworks are resources and care/care work, however it is the sustainable livelihoods framework that provides a pathway for a more in-depth analysis of resources, and social reproduction theory that provides a pathway for a more in-depth analysis of care/care work. All methods demonstrate a path of analysis at the individual level, with the sustainable livelihoods framework providing immediate solutions for individuals living in poverty. All methods also have a path for analysis and understanding at the macro level, however it is social reproduction theory and the sustainable livelihoods approach that challenge and attempt to disrupt the macro context in order to change the individual experience.

The discussion on the strengths and limitations of the three selected methodologies used in this research, demonstrates an important consideration to answering the principal and secondary questions of this paper. Successful interventions that aim to support women with a lived experience of violence must address both the root causes of violence and poverty as defined through social reproduction theory, and meet the immediate basic needs of women, without supporting the systems that enabled the oppression to exist in the first place.

## Data Collection

The units of analysis used were secondary anonymized data and evaluation reports from Operation Grow. The secondary anonymized data used was gathered between January 1, 2018 and May 31, 2019, from twenty-five (25) *discussion of assets* interviews and eight (8) asset maps conducted with members of Operation Grow; members are women with lived experience of violence engaged at the social enterprise. The evaluation reports from the period of January 2018 to June 2021 were used to substantiate findings in the data.

Operation Grow was such an innovative and unique program that Huronia Transition Homes ensured program evaluation was embedded into the program delivery from its outset. As such, the secondary anonymized data used was originally collected for the purposes of program evaluation allowing Huronia Transition Homes to learn more about the members accessing the social enterprise and understand what services and programs would be useful for members.

Women wanting membership at Operation Grow between January 1, 2018 and May 31, 2019 had to complete an orientation workshop, which provided an overview of Operation Grow, including its service delivery framework, sustainable livelihoods. Upon completion of the orientation workshop members were asked to participate in a *discussion of assets* interview. Participation was voluntary, and members who chose to participate signed a consent to participate (Appendix B), which outlined, among other things, that members could revoke their consent at any time, refuse to answer any question, and were volunteering their participation. A script to introduce the project (Appendix C) was developed to guide staff at Huronia Transition Homes to consistently explain OG and its evaluation project to all members. *Discussion of Assets* interviews (Appendix D) were

conducted in private with one of five program supervisors at Huronia Transition Homes and were scheduled for one hour. The interview engaged members in a conversation about various topics including basic needs, social connections, sense of self, skills and employability, finances, and the woman's community. Upon completion of the interviews staff at Huronia Transition Homes were to input all the data into a Survey Monkey. There was inconsistency in the data input into Survey Monkey, so Huronia Transition Homes staff instead inputted the information into Excel.

The asset map (Appendix E) was a tool to be completed by staff at Huronia Transition Homes two to three weeks after the orientation. The tool is a map composed of four primary sections that looked in-depth at the assets in the member's life through six different categories: basic needs, connections, sense of self, skills and employability, money, and health. The four primary sections were the following: a section to articulate the most important thing in the members life, a section to articulate the assets a member in each asset area, a section for members to scale their main assets in each area between 1-10 and a section for members to articulate their strategy to build on their asset areas (Eko Nomos , 2010; Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001 and Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2002). Upon completion of the asset maps Huronia Transition Homes staff would provide a copy of the member, and immediately input the data from the map into Survey Monkey. The entire process is articulated in OG's process map developed by HTH which can be seen in Appendix F.

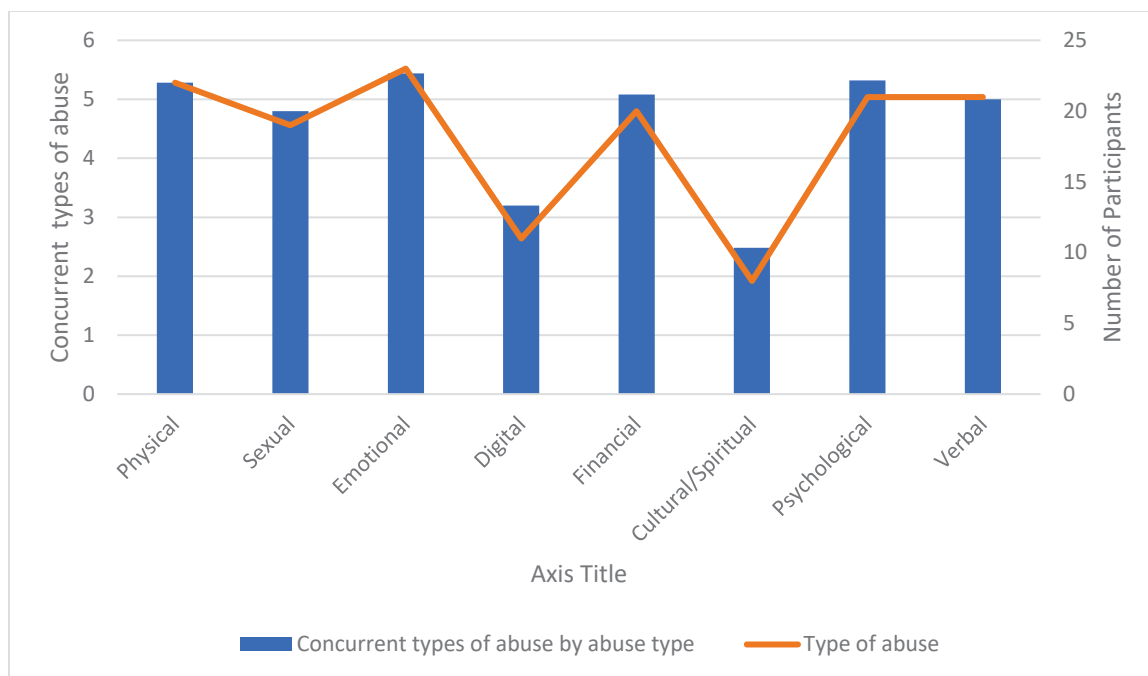
Huronia Transition Homes provided me with a USB that contained the secondary data; the original Excel document with the data from the *discussion of assets* interviews for the

period of January 1, 2018 to May 31, 2019, and a scanned copy of the eight (8) completed asset maps.

### **Participants: The Women**

Twenty-five (25) members of Operation Grow participated in the discussion of assets interview in the data collection period. All participants were women and lived in a remote or rural community. Most of the participants were white (72%), a few were Indigenous (12%), a couple were immigrants (8%), one (4%) was Black and one (4%) was Francophone. Participants ranged in age from 16 to 64, with the vast majority (72%) between the ages 35-64.

All participants had a lived experience of at least three types of violence, specifically women identified experiencing the following abuses (as shown in Figure 6): 92% emotional abuse, 88% physical abuse, 84% psychological abuse, 84% verbal abuse, 80% financial abuse, 76% sexual abuse, 44% digital abuse, and 32% cultural/spiritual abuse. It is important to note that in addition to the aforementioned abuses, 20% of participants also commented that they also experienced domestic violence (which was not a distinct category). Many of the participants (36%) did not feel safe in their home, and just over a quarter of participants (28%) did not feel safe in their community.



**Figure 6: Women's Experiences of Abuse**

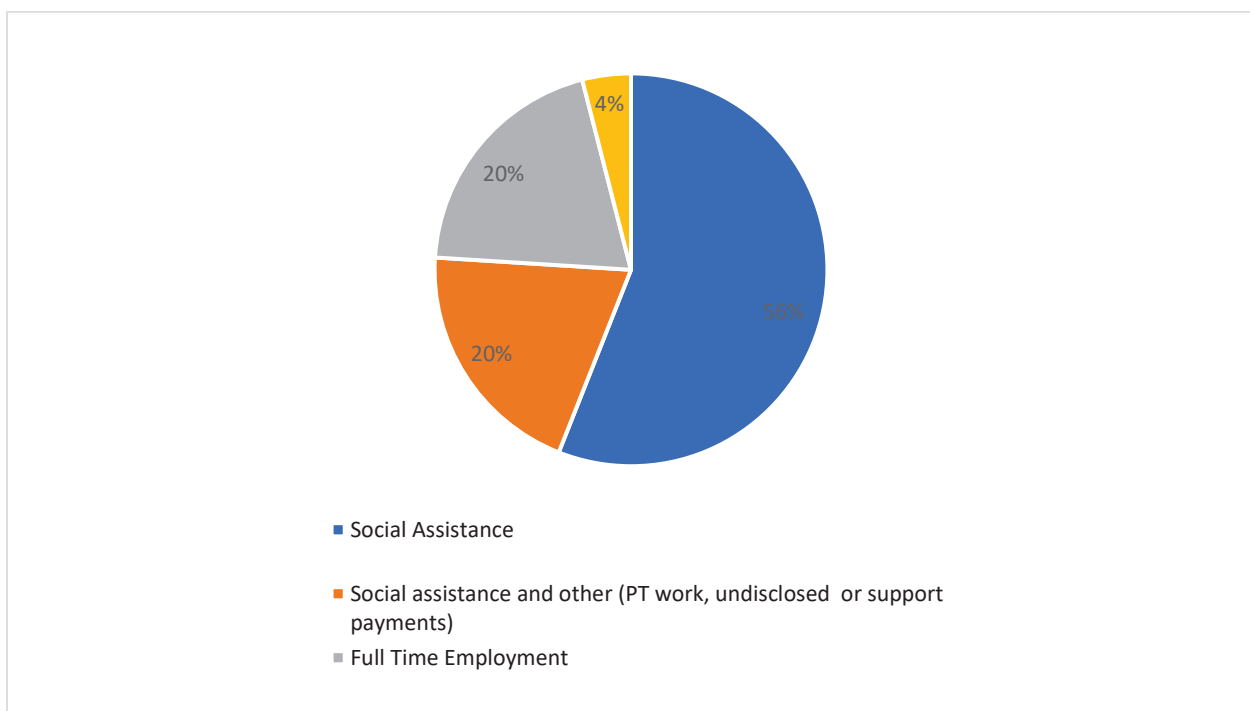
Almost every participant (96%) had accessed at least one of Huronia Transition Homes services prior to their engagement at Operation Grow, and a vast majority (72%) had accessed at least two. Of the services participants had accessed at Huronia Transition Homes, the majority (76%) had accessed La Maison Rosewood Shelter an emergency shelter for women and their children fleeing violence and/or experiencing homelessness; 64% for fleeing abuse and 12% for homelessness. Just over half the participants (52%) had accessed Athena's Sexual Assault Counselling & Advocacy Centre, and 28% had accessed the Choices for Children program, and the program that was accessed the least by women was women's group (20%).

Most participants (76%) primary source of income was social assistance, see Figure 7: Participants Source of Income. Just over half (52%) of participants felt they had sufficient income to make ends meet on a monthly basis, whereas 48% did not. However, when participants were asked if they regularly worried about money 72% answered yes. Also,

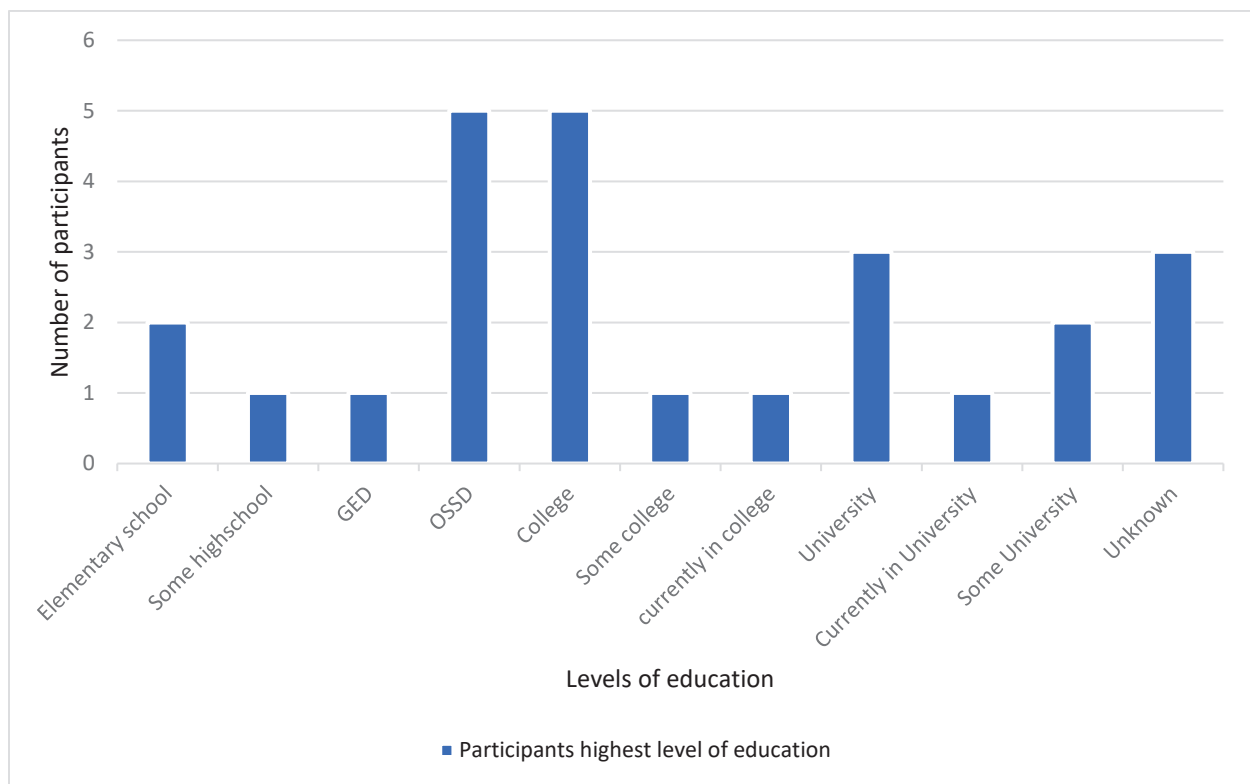


just over half the participants (56%) reported being behind on a bill payment in the last three months. Participant's level of education ranged from elementary school (8%) to the completion of college (20%) or university (12%), see Figure 8: Participants Highest Level of Education. Only 56% of participants reported having access to training and education activities.

Most participants (72%) reported having stable housing, and feeling not in danger of losing their housing, whereas 28% did not. Just under half of the participants (40%) stated they needed help in their homes with chores, tasks and/or caregiving, with only 24% of participants stating they had help. This is significant as 76% of participants reported that they or someone in their household had health concerns that required special attention. Almost every participant (96%) had an operational phone, and 76% of participants had a computer with internet in their home.



**Figure 7: Participants Source of Income**



**Figure 8: Participants Highest Level of Education**

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

The data was received from HTH then immediately transposed into an Excel workbook.

The data was then analyzed through each of the three chosen theoretical frameworks.

First using social reproduction theory, then second using sustainable livelihoods framework inclusive of the vulnerability context. As outlined in the methodologies section, this research offers an opportunity to explore the linkages between social reproduction theory and the sustainable livelihoods framework, two theoretical frameworks that could possibly be complementary. As such, the data was also organized into a table to see how social reproduction labour interacts with the six asset areas of the sustainable livelihoods framework. Then thirdly, the data was organized using the social individual approach.

### **Social Reproduction Theory**

Using the methodology of social reproduction theory, in order to understand women at OG's engagement with social reproduction activities, the data was separated into social reproduction activities that women at OG referenced or were engaged in. It is understood that some of the social reproduction activities overlap, as such the experiences of women at OG were categorized with the most appropriate activity. Table 2: Experiences of Women at OG Organized by Social Reproduction Activities shows the data organization:

**Table 2: Experiences of Women at OG Organized by Social Reproduction Activities**

<b>Social reproduction activity</b>	<b>Experiences of women at OG</b>
Biological reproduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One woman reported she was unable to complete her daily tasks/activities due to her pregnancy.</li> <li>• 60% (16/25) of women engaged were moms<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>
Caring for the next generation of workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women reported working on securing stable housing.</li> <li>• Women reported working on coordinating the following services: autism support, developmental services, technology supports, women's shelters, rent subsidies, housing, physical health and mental health, cultural supports, and children's aid society (child welfare).</li> <li>• In the asset maps, 38% (3/8) women indicated that the most important thing in their lives at the moment was their children.</li> <li>• One woman indicated safety planning with her children for their visits with her abuser (their father).</li> <li>• 28% of women participated in HTH's Choices for Children program, a program for moms to support their children who have witnessed violence in the home.</li> <li>• One woman indicated she could not complete daily chores and tasks due to having four children.</li> </ul>
Completing the provisioning and caring needs for those who require special support such as individuals who are sick, elderly, disabled, jobless and young	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 76% (19/25) require or have someone in their household that requires special attention.</li> <li>• Many women reported multiple health and mental health diagnoses for themselves and their dependents.</li> <li>• One woman completes the building and repairs on her home.</li> <li>• Women are attempting to coordinate their own joblessness and find employment; 60% (15/25) of women were currently looking for work.</li> <li>• 40% (10/25) report needing help at home to complete daily chores and tasks.</li> <li>• One woman stated, "she is the wife, so she has to do all the chores."</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Women were not asked if they were moms, the number of moms was determined by the number of women who referenced their children in their interviews, as such the number of women engaged who are moms could be higher.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three women have paid employment doing care work (cleaning, cooking, and elder support).</li> </ul>
Managing consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One woman reported getting sick from poor nutrition.</li> <li>• Three women reported having to navigate special diets at home.</li> </ul>
Providing mental and emotional support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One woman noted her daughter experienced sexual abuse from an ex-partner who lived with her and is currently navigating the impacts with her daughter.</li> <li>• One woman indicated she could not discuss the violence she had experienced because it “causes her a large amount of stress and affects her mental health.”</li> <li>• One woman indicated needing to work through the trauma of the sexual abuse she experienced from her father and stepfather.</li> </ul>
Engaging in survival strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women are worrying about the financial needs of their households; 72% (18/25) are regularly worried about money and 56% (14/25) have been behind on bills in the last three months</li> <li>• Two women indicated they stayed with an abusive partner for financial reasons. One of these two women is still residing with her abuser for this reason.</li> </ul>

## Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Data was then organized using the sustainable livelihoods framework, to understand women at OG’s engagement with asset areas and the vulnerability context. All assets are interconnected and complex, however they get broken into distinct categories so that women’s strengths, challenges, and barriers can be better analyzed and understood (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001). The data was categorized based on asset areas that women at OG referred to. Some of the data can be categorized into more than one asset area, but for the purposes of this analysis, the data was categorized in the most appropriate asset area. Table 3 shows the data arranged into asset areas. The data was analyzed to locate references or descriptors

women made to describe the vulnerability context (cycles and patterns, trends, systems, and shocks).

**Table 3: Experiences of Women at OG Organized by Asset Area**

<b>Asset Area</b>	<b>Experiences of women at OG</b>
Physical (basic needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All women have a lived experienced of violence.</li> <li>• 72% (18/25) of women reported feeling safe in their community; conversely 28% (7/25) of women did not feel safe in their community.</li> <li>• Two women specifically indicated their lack of safety in the community was due to an abuser.</li> <li>• 64% (16/25) of women reported feeling safe in their home; conversely 36% (9/25) did not feel safe in their home.</li> <li>• Four women specifically stated that the lack of safety in their home was due to proximity of an abuser.</li> <li>• The majority (80%) of the women who reported not feeling safe at home had experienced 8 concurrent types of abuse.</li> <li>• 8% of women reported poor nutrition due to finances.</li> <li>• 76% (19/25) women indicated they had a computer or tablet at home with internet, conversely 24% (6) did not.</li> <li>• One woman indicated she would like to become more culturally efficient.</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 women specifically spoke to an illness that their children had that they are responsible to care for. Health issues listed for a child included: asthma, autism, digestive issues, Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.</li> <li>• 76% (17/25) stated that they or someone in their household have health concerns that require special attention. Health concerns identified by women include the following: eating disorder, anemia, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, cancer, pneumonia and asthma, developmental disability, thyroid, aneurism, fused ankle, chronic illness, lactose intolerant, no energy, nutrition issues, post-surgical care, back issues, and debilitating body pain.</li> <li>• One woman indicated that her medical costs were putting her housing in jeopardy.</li> </ul>
Financial (money)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 52% (13/25) of women feel they have enough to meet ends meet monthly. Conversely 48% (12/25) do not feel they have enough to make ends meet.</li> <li>• Of the 52% of women that stated they had enough to make ends meet, 23% expressed its limitations, for example, one woman stated her sister helps her but the money comes with</li> </ul>

	<p>strings attached and characterized her sister as abusive, another said she had enough but it is tight, and another said she had enough to get by but had no savings which were necessary for her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women are worrying about the financial needs of their households; 72% (18/25) are regularly worried about money and 56% (14/25) have been behind on bills in the last three months.</li> <li>• The women who formed the group who were worried about money were 93% of those solely reliant on social assistance, and 80% of those employed on a full-time basis, not one woman who supplemented her social assistance was worried about money.</li> <li>• Two women referenced the difficulty of reaching a neutral financial state (because of debt); One woman stated that her housing arrears are impacting her housing stability. The other stated she cannot catch up to her bills.</li> <li>• 72% (18/25) of women filed their taxes in the last year, 28% (7/25) had not.</li> <li>• 76% (19/25) of women's source of income was social assistance as their source of income; for 56% (14/25) of women social assistance is their only source of income, and 20% (5/25) of women supplemented their social assistance. The most common form of social assistance is Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) at 36% (9/25), followed by Ontario Works 32% (8/25), followed by Employment Insurance 4% (1/25), and ODSP Canadian Pension Plan 4% (1/25).</li> <li>• 20% (5/25) of women's primary source of income was Full Time Employment and 4% (1 woman) was Ontario Student Assistance Program.</li> <li>• 44% (11/25) are currently employed of which 45% (5/11) are employed in something they want to do.</li> <li>• 100% of women who were not employed were looking for work</li> <li>• Women who completed asset maps rated themselves 46/80 in their financial asset area. Two women rated themselves very high (10/10) which dramatically changed the scale, as the closest to them was 6/10.</li> <li>• 2/8 women who completed an asset map had a goal of saving money.</li> </ul>
Human (skills and employability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women reported that transportation barriers limited their participation in training and education opportunities.</li> <li>• Education levels ranged from completion of grade eight (8%) to completion of university (12%). The most common level of education of women was high school diploma 20% (5/25) and</li> </ul>

	<p>college 20% (5/25), then 12% (3/25) had completed some college or university, and 8% (2/25) were currently in college or university.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One woman stated she did not access training and education because she was physically unable, another stated that she cannot consider employment due to pain.</li> <li>• 56% (14/25) of women indicated they have access to training and employment activities.</li> <li>• Women are engaging with community programs for training and education opportunities. Specifically: OG, Gateway Centre for Learning, and LEAP.</li> <li>• Three women indicated employment at OG.</li> <li>• 3 women mentioned volunteering, 2 women were currently doing it, and one woman was starting.</li> </ul>
Personal (sense of self)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many women indicated that mental health issues limited their ability to participate in everyday activities. Specifically, women listed: post-traumatic stress disorder, eating disorder, bi-polar, psychosis, depression.</li> <li>• One woman stated that it is difficult to get motivated due to her eating disorder and anemia.</li> <li>• One woman stated she can complete most of her tasks between work and healing.</li> </ul>
Social (connections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community organizations listed as supports for many women.</li> <li>• Friends, family, neighbours, children, employer and in one case a boyfriend, all identified as supports.</li> <li>• 72% (18/25) of women indicated having one or more support persons in their lives.</li> <li>• Women indicate that housing workers are important to securing housing and navigating rent geared to income.</li> </ul>

## Vulnerability Context of Women at OG

There are many oppressions that characterize the vulnerability context, including capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism, racism, ableism, heteronormativity, and transphobia. They all act as systems of oppression that characterize policies and institutions, which directly impacts the lives of women. However, the three principal factors that were present from the data are capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism. An examination of these systems of oppression is necessary to understand the vulnerability context of the women



at OG which acts as the context in which they live their daily lives and experience the world.

Capitalism is a mode of production that prioritizes the market and profit over everything else. It insists on the separation of the public where economic production takes place (site of waged work) and private (site of unwaged work) where social reproduction takes place (Bakker & Gill, *Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction*, 2003; Bhattacharya, 2017; Fraser, 2017; Armstrong & Armstrong, 2003; Fudge & Cossman, *Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism*, 2002). Professor of public policy and value chain researcher LeBaron explains that society can be conceived of the product of ongoing relations between realms of social reproduction and capitalist production (*The Political Economy of the Household: Neoliberal restructuring, enclosures and daily life*, 2010).

According to capitalist mentality, the separation of public and private ensures that the workplace remains solely focused on profit and strips any social reproduction labour away from the market and onto the worker. Bhattacharya elaborates on this explaining “at the end of the workday, because the worker is ‘free’ under capitalism, capital must relinquish control over the process of regeneration of the worker and hence the reproduction of the workforce” (*Introduction: Mapping Social Reproduction Theory*, 2017, p. 9). Many argue that social reproduction labour is not integral to capitalism because it doesn’t produce surplus value, however some feminists explain that social reproduction labour is in fact integral to capitalism as it either directly or indirectly creates surplus value (Weeks, 2011). Capitalism is not self-sustaining but instead relies on social reproduction to produce and maintain the waged labourer, and without a waged labourer the production and

accumulation of capital is not possible (Fraser, 2017). Social reproduction labour is often misunderstood as solely labour that upholds the household; however, it is social reproduction labour that actually upholds the market economy, and therefore capitalism (Luxton, 2006). Overlooking how social reproduction labour is embedded into capitalism creates an incomplete understanding of the current economic system (LeBaron, 2010).

Despite capitalism's insistence to delineate the site of social reproduction (household) and the site economic production (market), capitalism cannot have them completely separate. This creates an immense tension within capitalism, as the relationship between social reproduction and capitalist production is contradictory; capitalism's drive for profit over anything else negates the ability to create the conditions for effective and sustainable social reproduction. Feminist Susan Ferguson describes this tension:

*“all processes of social reproduction (not just those in individual households) come up against capital's hostility to life---- if for no greater reason than that the vast majority of the resources essential to reproducing life (the means of subsistence) are owned and controlled by capital and the capitalist state. And all the work that goes into producing this and the next generation of workers (inside and outside of patriarchally organized households) is caught up in specific social relations of oppression that are not directly subject to capitalism's direct control but are nonetheless caught in the crosshairs of this contradictory dynamic. (Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction, 2020, p. 114)*

One of the ways that capitalism is able to continue to exploit women's free social reproduction is through the wage system. The wage system attributes value to work based on its ability to create surplus value; social reproduction labour is unproductive as it does not create surplus value, and labour in the market economy is productive as it creates surplus value (Weeks, 2011). The wage-system determines what constitutes labour by compensating labour that creates surplus value with a wage, and labour that doesn't create surplus value does not receive a wage. This can be surmised as only labour completed within the market-economy receives wage. This capitalist criteria of what constitutes work fails to recognize the importance of women's social reproduction labour (Federici, 2012).

Capitalism informs political and social institutions and systems. In the 1990's, federal and provincial governments in Canada began to adopt market norms and shift any social reproduction responsibilities from the state and onto families (Fraser, 2017). The largest benefactor of this is the market, as the state and civil society debate who should be responsible, the market continues to benefit from women's free social reproductive labour. However, the state also benefits, as privatization and individualism continue to be embedded into societal ideology, the state is able to justify its reduction in social provisioning, and social issues such as lack of housing, poverty, food scarcity and violence are viewed as the failings of individuals and families (Fudge & Cossman, Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, 2002).

These outcomes of capitalism are far from gender neutral, and instead contribute to women's oppression. Firstly, because women's social reproduction work is devalued and secondly because women are disproportionately negatively impacted the by the erosion

of state social provisions. The reduction in social provisioning and increased responsibility on families to complete all social reproduction makes survival largely contingent on the nuclear family, a family structure based on patriarchy and racism (Rousseau, 2016). As the market economy requires women to be responsible for the emotional well-being of men, society creates conditions by which the nuclear family becomes necessary for survival. Feminist and social reproduction theorist Susan Ferguson so importantly articulates that “while capitalism did not ‘create’ women’s oppression, it certainly provides the socio-material conditions and rationale for sustaining it” (Intersectionality and Social-Reproduction Feminisms: Toward an Integrative Ontology, 2016, p. 52).

Capitalism and patriarchy are reciprocal, capitalism is economic, and patriarchy is political. These systems characterize the current political economy. Social reproduction theory emphasizes the importance of understanding patriarchy capitalism as co-constitutive. Ferguson explains “capitalism cannot be fully understood in terms of the production and exchange of commodities alone. Rather, capital draws into its orbit other social relations, with distinct values and logics, shaping them to meet its unquenchable thirst for profit” (Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction, 2020, p. 101).

Violence against women tries to silence women’s voice, and even when women speak often they go unheard. The prerequisites for voice cannot be met while someone is experiencing violence, or the threat of violence. Mosher explains that the prerequisites for voice are “freedom from physical and economic coercion and emotional independence” (Human Capital and the Post-Scripting of Women's Poverty, 2011, p. 161). All women at OG through their experiences of violence had their voice impacted

by violence, and the threat of violence. Some of the women still do not have full access to use their voice, as their sense of safety is diminished; 36% of the women still feel unsafe in their homes, and 28% still feel unsafe in their communities.

However, patriarchal capitalism cannot ignore colonialism, which is the final critical component to understanding the current political economy. Capitalism, patriarchy, and colonialism are systems and structures all rooted in the exploitation of women, Indigenous Peoples, and the environment (Kuokkanen, 2008). Their relationship is one of interdependence, *“If capitalism depends on both colonialism and patriarchy, colonialism also necessitates patriarchy”* (Kuokkanen, 2008, p. 221).

It should be noted here that at La Maison Rosewood Shelter in Midland approximately 35% of the women served annually are Indigenous, yet only 12% of the data sample identify as Indigenous. This could be indicative that Indigenous women in the Midland community face barriers to participation at OG. One of these possible reasons could be geographical, as Beausoleil First Nation, which is the First Nation in the North Simcoe Community, is remote and only accessible by boat. Due to the small sample size of Indigenous women in the data, there was no ability to discuss the correlations between indigeneity and violence against women.

However, it is understood and recognized that Indigenous women face the highest rates of violence against women in the country. This can be evidenced by the disproportionate rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (Reclaiming Power and Place; The Final Report of the National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019). As political anthropologist and

Indigenous feminist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson explains “Indian women “disappear” because they have been deemed killable, rapeable, expendable” (The State is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty, 2016, p. 8). Indigenous women not only face high rates of personal violence, but also represent the poorest and most disenfranchised segment of society, due to structural, political, and economic violence (Kuokkanen, 2008). These high rates of violence are a result of Indigenous women’s social and economic marginalization, which has justified their dispossession, ultimately resulting in further abuse and systemic marginalization (Simpson, 2016; Kuokkanen, 2008).

Capitalism upholds women’s oppression, and therefore normalizes and perpetuates violence against women. Capitalism subjects women to systemic violence, which legitimizes and accepts the physical violence against women. Movements against violence against women have largely been centered around ending the physical violence (rape and intimate partner violence) experienced by women. As Italian feminist Silvia Federici explains, anti-violence movements have “ignored the violence inherent in the process of capital accumulation, the violence of the famines, wars and counterinsurgency programs that, through the ’80s and ’90s, have cleared the way to economic globalization” (Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle, 2012, p. 66).

Capitalism’s dependence on and acceptance of violence against women, can be further evidenced in the fact that violence against women increases during economic downturns (Dunaway, 2014).

To demonstrate how this directly impacts and intersects with the lives of women at OG, Table 4 organizes women’s experiences into the vulnerability context.



**Table 4: Vulnerability Context of Women at OG**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cycles and Patterns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All women had been subjected to gender based violence, and all had an abusive partner at one point in their lives.</li> <li>• Majority of women had a dependent reliant on them.</li> <li>• Majority of women and/or their dependents had significant health problems.</li> <li>• One woman stated that her small town has limited resources (rurality).</li> <li>• Majority of women have a stressful relationship to finances.</li> <li>• Majority of women reliant on social assistance, as such live in poverty.</li> <li>• One woman indicated as the wife she must complete the housework.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Trends</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of transportation</li> <li>• Women on social assistance are frequently worried about money.</li> <li>• Men's violence against women.</li> <li>• Women responsible for coordinating a multitude of services.</li> <li>• Lesser services in a rural community.</li> <li>• Women are living in poverty.</li> <li>• Women are experiencing multiple types of abuse concurrently.</li> <li>• Women are navigating multiple programs.</li> <li>• Women are navigating lack of affordable stable housing.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Systems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One woman described a “twisted ass system”.</li> <li>• Women responsible for majority of family care work.</li> <li>• Staff in social services impact women's access to support. One woman described having a bad housing worker.</li> <li>• Only one woman described child support as a source of income.</li> <li>• One woman stated she feels age discrimination when she applies for work.</li> <li>• One woman stated her lack of Canadian work experience is keeping her underemployed.</li> <li>• Women described a need for more supports. Specifically, a doctor, psychiatrist, disability support, autism support, and support from developmental services.</li> <li>• Two women reported living with an abuser due to finances and lack of affordable housing.</li> <li>• One woman indicated being mandated to live in an affordable housing complex to appease child welfare.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Shocks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All women have a lived experience of concurrently types of violence.</li> <li>• Two women are in temporary housing.</li> <li>• One woman explained during her interview that it had been a very difficult day as her friend had died by suicide the night before, and her granddaughter was apprehended by child welfare in the morning.</li> <li>• One woman's daughter has been sexually assaulted by her ex-partner who was living with her.</li> <li>• One woman reported being stalked by an individual at a treatment facility. Another indicated she is being harassed by a neighbour.</li> <li>• One woman indicated her entire family is still abusive.</li> <li>• One woman indicated she lost her rent geared to income support rendering her homeless.</li> <li>• One woman indicated she is being threatened with eviction.</li> </ul>



## Collision of Sustainable Livelihoods Framework and Social Reproduction Theory

To understand whether more was revealed from the data by combining the sustainable livelihoods framework and social reproduction theory, the data was organized to locate social reproductive labour within each of the asset areas. Please see Table 5.

**Table 5: Social Reproduction Labour of Women at OG Organized by Asset Area**

<b>Asset Areas</b>	<b>Social Reproduction Labour of Women at OG</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical (basic needs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24% have help at home to complete daily chores and tasks</li> <li>72% have stable housing, 28% do not have stable housing</li> <li>36% do not feel safe at home</li> <li>28% do not feel safe in the community</li> <li>Woman stated her daughter experienced sexual abuse from her ex-partner</li> <li>Coordination of housing supports</li> <li>One woman indicated she completes all her building maintenance and repairs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>76% have someone at home who requires special attention</li> <li>100% have accessed services for trauma</li> <li>Many women navigating their own health concerns</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Financial (money)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>80% navigate a form of social assistance</li> <li>52% has enough income on a monthly basis</li> <li>72% filed her taxes in the last year</li> <li>72% worried about money</li> <li>56% behind on a bill payment in the last three months</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human (skills &amp; employability)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>56% are able to access training and education activities</li> <li>100% of unemployed women are looking for work</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal (sense of self)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>100% have a lived experience of violence</li> <li>Woman stated she has not dealt with the sexual assault by her father and stepfather</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social (connections)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>72% have one or more supportive relationship</li> <li>Coordination of child welfare system</li> </ul>

## Social Individual Approach

The data was organized using the social individual approach, which meant sorting the data into three categories: care, material resources, and voice. It is understood that some of the data can be categorized into more than one area, as such the data was categorized in most appropriate. Table 6 demonstrates this data organization.

**Table 6: Experiences of Women at OG Organized by Social Individual Approach**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Experiences of Women at OG</b>
<b>Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 28% of women state they had help at home to complete daily tasks and chores, 72% reported needing more help.</li><li>• 76% stated that they or someone in their household have health concerns that require special attention. Health concerns identified by women include the following: eating disorder, anemia, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, cancer, pneumonia and asthma, developmental disability, thyroid, aneurism, fused ankle, chronic illness, lactose intolerant, no energy, nutrition issues, post-surgical care, back issues, and debilitating body pain.</li></ul>
<b>Material Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Three women are employed in part-time paid care work (cleaning, catering, support, eldercare)</li><li>• Two women stated that someone in the community supported them with their stable housing. For one woman it was her boss and for the other it was her landlord who showed flexibility with late rent.</li><li>• One woman stated her employer is willing to pay for her education.</li><li>• Four women stated that their housing stability or lack thereof was due to rent geared to income, three women had rent geared to income housing, one woman lost her housing and as such was forced to return with an abusive partner for housing.</li><li>• Women are engaging with community programs for training and education opportunities. Specifically: OG, Gateway Centre for Learning, and LEAP.</li><li>• Three women indicated employment at OG.</li><li>• One woman indicated that she is now saving money. The woman's source of income is social assistance and employment at OG. This same woman set up a Tax-Free Savings Account.</li><li>• Women who completed asset maps rated themselves 46/80 for money. Two women rated themselves very high (10/10) which dramatically changed the scale, as the closest to them was 6/10.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72% of women had filed their taxes in the last year, one woman specifically indicated she did it herself, 28% did not file their taxes.</li> <li>• 52% of women had started or completed college or university and 8% had completed elementary school only.</li> <li>• 76% of women had a computer with internet at home, 34% did not.</li> <li>• 96% of women had an operational phone, 4% did not.</li> <li>• One pregnant woman stated she is currently not worried about money; however, she worries about it once the baby arrives.</li> <li>• 28% of women stated that they are in danger of losing their housing, and 28% stated they do not have stable housing. One woman stated she is threatened with eviction. 72% of women have stable housing.</li> <li>• 100% of women who were not employed were looking for work. One woman who was employed was also currently looking for work.</li> <li>• One woman stated she has stable housing but is worried about losing it in the future due to medical expenses.</li> <li>• 2/8 women who completed an asset map has a goal of saving money.</li> <li>• 48% of women do not have enough to make ends meet on a regular basis; of this 48%, 83% of the woman's primary source of income is social assistance; 75% of whom solely rely on social assistance, 8% whom supplement it, and 17% whom supplement with full-time employment.</li> <li>• Of the 52% of women that stated they had enough to make ends meet, 23% expressed its limitations, one woman stated her sister helps her, but the money comes with strings attached and characterized her sister as abusive, another said she had enough but it is tight, and other said she had enough to get by but had no savings which were necessary for her.</li> <li>• One woman indicated she used to work in group homes, however it was too emotionally impactful for her, so she had to leave.</li> <li>• One woman stated that due to her lack of money she often gets sick from poor nutrition.</li> <li>• Four women had unstable housing due to an abuser either living with them or living near them. (For three women the abuser was a partner or ex-partner, for one woman it was a neighbour).</li> <li>• Not one woman received a support payment from an ex-partner. One woman referred to the lack of child support when she was asked if she had enough to make ends meet monthly. Only one woman received support payments and it was from her sister.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One woman, when asked if she had been behind on a bill payment in the last 3 months, stated that yes because she had left a situation and it took time to recover.</li> <li>• One woman stated that her housing instability was because children's aid society was forcing her to stay in shelter now (a transitional housing program) for 6-12 months.</li> <li>• One woman attributed her lack of finances as due to the "twisted ass system".</li> <li>• Two women spoke to transportation barriers.</li> <li>• One woman stated age discrimination was a barrier to her employment.</li> <li>• One woman who is an immigrant to Canada stated that all employment in Canada is precarious and parttime. She explained she is trying to gain Canadian work experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Voice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All women identified the types of violence in their life they had experienced. All women have experienced 3 or more types of violence, and 24% had experienced all 8 types. 88% (22) physical, 76% (19) sexual, 92% (23) emotional, 44% (11) digital, 80% (20) financial, 32% (8) cultural/spiritual, 84% (21) psychological, 84% (21) verbal, not on the list was domestic violence, and 5 women specially mentioned it.</li> <li>• 36% of women do not feel safe at home.</li> <li>• 28% of women do not feel safe in the community.</li> <li>• 3/8 women who completed their asset maps specifically aspired to attend OG programs to increase their social connections/friendships.</li> <li>• 5/8 women who completed their asset maps specially aspired to be in or to continue to engage in support services to increase their sense of self/mental health.</li> <li>• 45% (5) of the women currently employed were working in a field they wanted to be in.</li> <li>• One woman is fighting for custody of her granddaughter.</li> <li>• Rosewood (women's shelter) helped one woman do things on her own, and to be able to set boundaries with others.</li> <li>• 72% of women had at least one person in their life. Of these women, 7 specifically listed a social service agency.</li> <li>• 3 women mentioned volunteering, 2 women were currently doing it, and one woman was starting.</li> <li>• All women who completed an asset map, could identify points on strength and pride in their lives. Specifically: proud of herself for weight loss, good understanding of self-esteem and confident to help others with theirs, good understanding of the transit system, creativity and initiative, can walk a lot, good general health, good at budgeting and saving, Excellent and responsible with money.</li> <li>• 60% of women accessed 2 programs at HTH not including OG.</li> </ul>

## FINDINGS

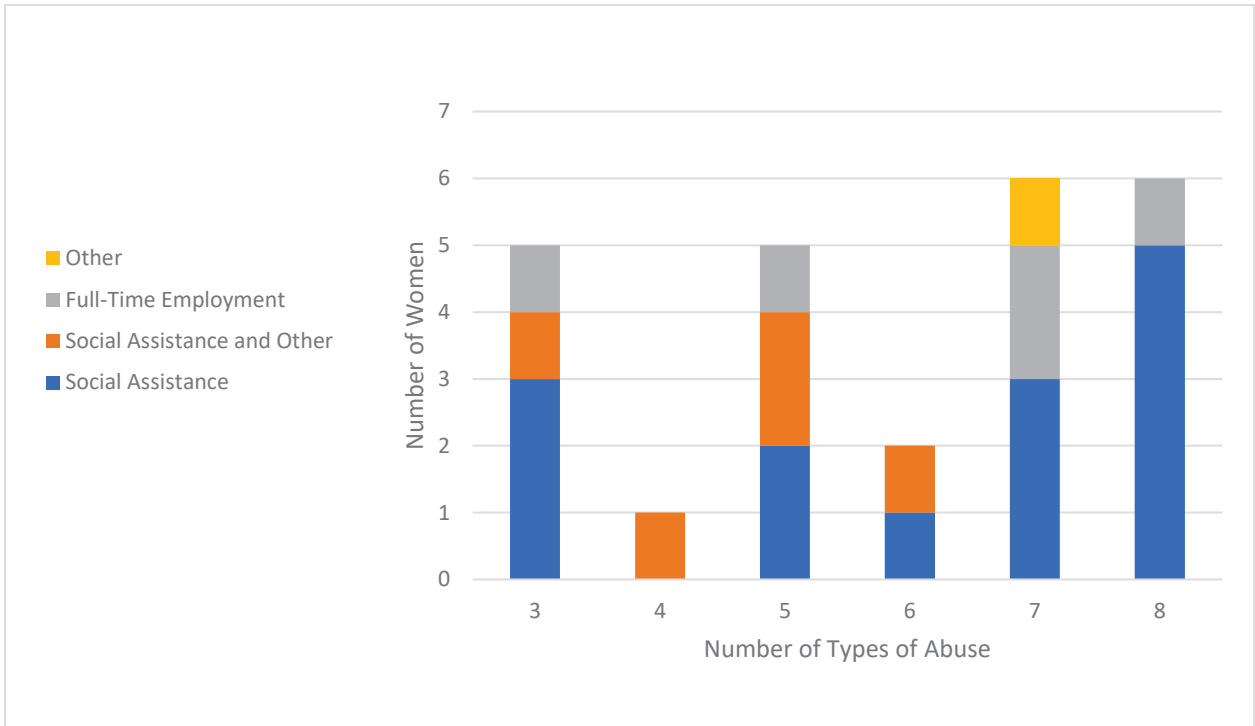
The analyzed data presents many considerations to answer the principal research question of **What are the unique needs of women with a lived experience of violence?** And its secondary research questions of; Do programs/services outside of crisis services need to be specifically tailored to meet the needs of women who have experienced violence? and; What role can social enterprise play in supporting women with lived experience of violence and what are the limitations? Overall, there were five primary findings:

1. All aspects of women's lives are impacted by violence
2. Social reproduction labour is intensified for women who have experienced violence
3. Women who have experienced violence are living in poverty
4. Social provisioning is shaped by the vulnerability context and is insufficient to support women
5. OG has an overall positive impact on women

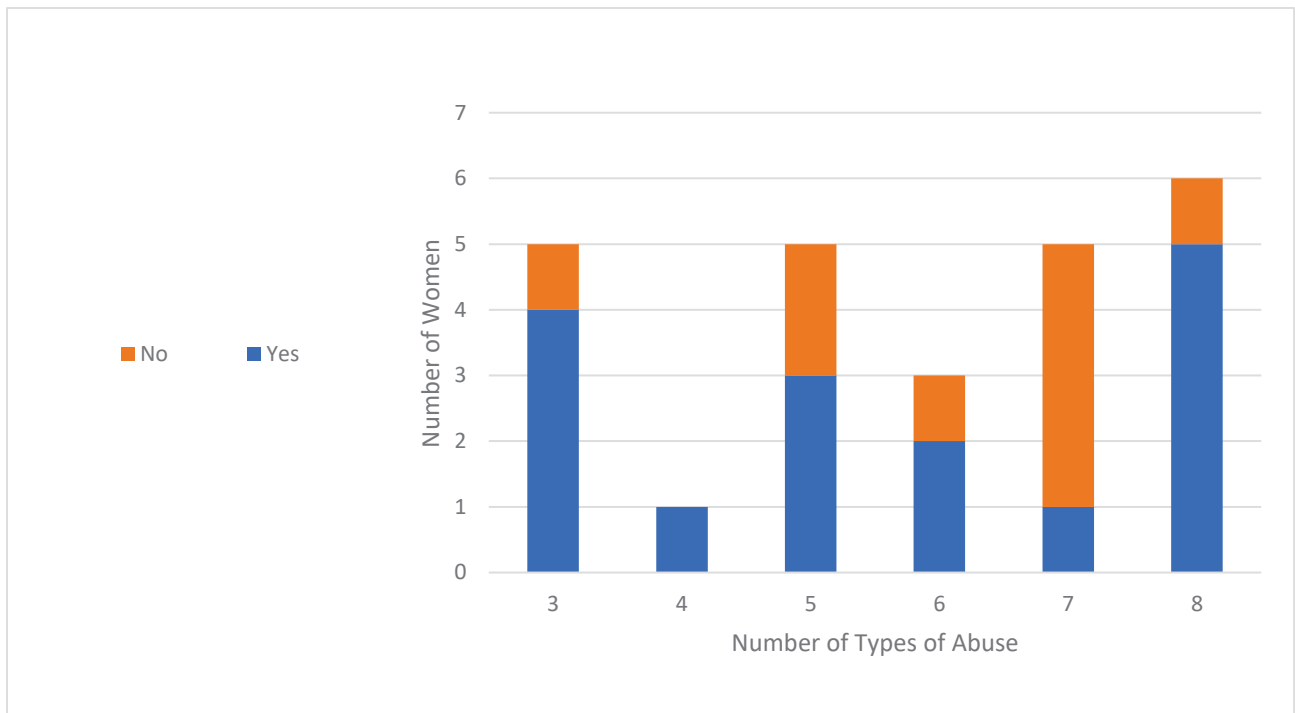
In this section the above primary findings will be discussed in detail.

### **All aspects of women's lives are impacted by violence.**

Figure 10: Concurrent Abuse vs. Source of Income shows that the women who experienced the most types of abuse were most likely to be reliant on social assistance. This could be due to the fact social reproduction labour is increased with violence, a theme that emerged from the data that will be elaborated further on in this section.



**Figure 10: Concurrent Abuse vs. Source of Income**



**Figure 9: Concurrent Types of Abuse vs. Feels Safe at Home**

Figure 9: Concurrent Types of Abuse vs. Feels Safe at Home demonstrates that women who experienced seven types of violence or more, were less likely to feel safe at home. This demonstrates the impact that violence has had on a women's overall sense of safety.

## **Social reproduction labour is intensified for women who have experienced violence**

Women's unpaid social reproduction labour is the backbone of a patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist society, as described in detail in previous sections. All women experience oppression and an unfair disadvantage by having to complete this labour, which results in trade-offs and frustration to juggle all aspects of their lives. For women living in poverty, Indigenous women, women living with disability, and women from the Global South, the impacts of these oppressions are even greater and more all-encompassing.

However, the data demonstrates that violence negatively impacts every area of a woman's life and ultimately, intensifies women's social reproduction labour. The correlation between all aspects of a woman's life (as represented through asset areas) and social reproduction labour is shown in Table 2 on page 46 . The intensification of social reproduction labour can largely be evidenced in Table 5 on page 59, which organizes social reproduction labour from the data into the asset areas.

Women largely absorb this increased social reproduction labour, with 76% of women reporting that they did not have help at home to complete tasks. Women's experiences with this increased labour are dependent on their social locations and access to power, and as this research has shown, women who have experienced violence experience increased oppression and minimal power. All the social reproduction labour that women complete creates a circumstance where women are consumed and used like other commodities to maintain the capitalist system (Bakker, Neo-Liberal Governance and the Reprivatization of Social Reproduction: Social Provisioning and Shifting Gender Orders, 2003).



### *Increased labour for fiscal management/maintenance*

Managing consumption, household fiscal responsibilities, and determining/engaging survival strategies is often made more difficult for women who have experienced violence, as violence often results in poverty or a deepening of poverty. Women's poverty is directly related to their unpaid social reproduction labour in the family, often forcing them to accept precarious under/unpaid employment (Fredman, 2014). The link between women who have experienced violence and poverty will be discussed in greater detail further in the *Women who have experienced violence are living in poverty* section of the findings.

As state social provisioning decreases, women attempt to maintain their families' standard of living, which often results in an increased need to navigate systems for basic necessities to be met, or women taking on additional earning activities (Pyle & Ward, 2003).

### *Increased responsibilities to care for the next generation of workers*

Mothers whose children have also been exposed to/ experienced violence have an even further intensification of social reproduction labour. This is true, as women are not only responsible for themselves and their systems navigation, but also that of their children. Just over a quarter (28%) of the women engaged had participated in HTH's Choices for Children program, which is focused on supporting children who have witness abuse against their moms.

Moms also face increased judgement from social services, primarily child welfare, which can create even more labour. Women who have fled violence, particularly those who have fled to a women's shelter, like the 76% of women from the data, often have involvement

from the child welfare system. This involvement regularly results in criticism of the moms and moms being on the defensive to maintain custody of their children. Criticism and judgement is further amplified for Indigenous women. Two of the women engaged at OG specifically spoke to the challenges of the child welfare system; one because she was being mandated into temporary housing to keep custody of her children, and another as her granddaughter had been apprehended by the child welfare system.

### *Increased mental and physical illness*

Trauma isolates, shames, stigmatizes, degrades, and dehumanizes individuals. Violence is directly associated with increased physical and mental illness; women who have experienced violence are likely to suffer from other mental illness including depression and anxiety (van der Kolk, et al., 2014; Statistics Canada, 2021; Oram, Khalifeh, & Howard, 2017; Chivers-Wilson, 2006). Sexual abuse is the most frequent cause of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in women (Chivers-Wilson, 2006). It also may result in various physical health issues, from gastrointestinal to headaches to physical limitations (Martin, Macy, & Young, 2011). The data shows that 76% of the women at OG reported that they or someone in their household had health concerns that required special attention. Additionally, each woman in the data was engaged with OG, and at a minimum one other specialized service to support them with their trauma symptoms.

For women who have experienced violence, they are having to compensate for the state's inadequate care in addition to managing their increased physical health issues. The household, through predominantly women's unpaid or underpaid work, offsets the responsibility of the state to provide adequate care within the health care system (Bakker & Gill, Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction, 2003; Federici, 2012). There is

an assumption that women have infinite elasticity and can continue to compensate for the state's inadequate health care provisioning (Luxton, 2006; Fudge & Cossman, Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, 2002; Picchio, A macroeconomic approach to an extended standard of living, 2003).

### *Increased systems navigation*

The increased labour of systems navigation is a direct result of the intensification of labour in all other components of social reproduction and of poverty as experienced by many women. Women reported having to coordinate services in relation to physical and health, cultural supports, child welfare, developmental services, technology supports, employment and training programming, food banks, housing, and other services for basic needs. Women identified many gaps in the services they felt either themselves or their family required.

Women who experience violence have a greater need for services, because they are navigating the impacts of violence, whether it be financial, physical, or health; and the services required to support with these impacts. By the number of women navigating multiple services demonstrated in the data, it can be assumed women who have experienced violence are navigating increased services than individuals who have not experienced violence. Due to the erosion of state social provisioning there are significant gaps in services required by women; navigating these gaps to have their needs met requires even further labour.

The finding that social reproduction labour is intensified for women who have experienced violence, provides valuable considerations for answering the research question.

Programming for women with lived experience of violence, inclusive of social enterprises, must address the barriers that social reproduction labour places on women, and demonstrate a valuing for the labour. This finding also demonstrates that social enterprises must incorporate an intersectional feminist framework to ensure their program model never becomes gender neutral.

### **Women who have experienced violence are living in poverty**

Women, particularly racialized and indigenous women, and women living with disability, are at the greatest risks of experiencing poverty (Fudge & Cossman, Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, 2002; LeBaron, 2010; Statistics Canada, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2023). Women are over-represented in low-paying occupations, they are often paid less than men with same qualifications, and traditionally-women occupations have lower average hourly wages than traditionally-male occupations (Fox & Moyser, 2018). The sustainable livelihoods framework presents the data in a way that supports understanding the underlying causes of poverty for individuals; in this analysis, it is clear that violence has impacted women's abilities to access resources, assets, and employment (Krantz, 2001).

Rates of poverty and an increase in the depth of poverty is amplified for women who have experienced violence. In 2007 the province of Ontario struck a committee of cabinet to undertake a project entitled "Take Action" focusing on poverty reduction. The committee identified poverty as the single most pressing issue facing women who have experienced violence (Mosher, 2011). Domestic violence and divorce are two of the biggest factors that push women into poverty (Fredman, 2014). When women separate or divorce, this

is true regardless of the employment status of the woman (Fudge & Cossman, Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, 2002).

According to the data, 72% of women are regularly worried about money, 56% had been behind on bills in the last three months, and 48% felt they did not have enough income to make ends meet on a monthly basis. There are multiple reasons for why experiencing violence pushes women into poverty or deepens their level of poverty, however there are a few primary reasons that are important to discuss. As elaborated on in the above section, women's poverty is often a result of their limited ability to participate in stable well-compensated employment due to the intensification of their social reproduction responsibilities.

Another primary reason is because women who flee from their abusers often become single-parents in single-earner households with no child support payments. Men who subject women to abuse during their relationship, try to maintain any level of power and control even once the relationship has ended. This often looks like subjecting women to financial abuse which results in many single mothers receiving no child support from their ex-abusers. As corroborated in the data, none of the women reported receiving child support payments as a source of income, and some actually spoke directly to the impact of not receiving the payments.

In Canada, lone-parent families headed by mom experience the highest rates of poverty (Statistics Canada, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2023). In the data analyzed, women were not asked to identify if they were moms. The number of moms engaged was determined to be 60% by the number of women who referenced their children in their interviews. However, the number of women engaged who are moms could be higher, as evidenced

in an evaluation conducted by Good Roots Consulting in 2020 of the employment program at OG, 100% of the twelve participant sample reported that that were single parents.

Based on the association of violence against women and poverty, it can be assumed that a significant number of single mothers in poverty have also experienced violence. Yet poverty reduction strategies remain one-size-fits all, and they ignore the additional labour the data demonstrated is required to navigate the stressors of poverty and single parenting. When poverty reduction strategies disregard this labour, they are ignoring the needs of women who have experienced violence and further victimizing them by the system.

As women who have experienced violence endure some of the highest rates of poverty in Canada, there are significant barriers to accessing basic necessities like food, housing, and clothing. In the data, three women explained they were in an unstable housing situation that subjected them to abuse because of economic obligation. Poverty also impacts women's access to food with 8% of women specifically referring to poor nutrition due to finances.

The impact of poverty on women is enormous, as Feminist Dr. Wendy McKeen explains, "women experience the lack of personal income as a lack of dignity" (Solutions for Women-Friendly Social Policy: The Radical Potential of Individualized Entitlement, 2004, p. 10). There is an obvious correlation between violence against women and poverty, yet poverty reduction strategies largely remain gender-neutral, and strategies to end gender-based violence remain rooted in therapy.

Why are so many women, who are working so hard to complete social reproduction labour daily living in poverty? Why is this unpaid labour that upholds the economic system undervalued? Simply put, in a capitalist society income equals value, and without value one can experience a lack of dignity and a lack of worth.

The finding that women who have experienced violence are living in poverty, provides valuable considerations for answering the research questions. The finding demonstrates how programming for women who have experienced violence, inclusive of social enterprises, must respond pragmatically to the immediate material resource needs of women. Social enterprises obviously face limitations here, as they cannot lift women out of poverty, as poverty is systemically produced and upheld; however, social enterprises must consider the ways they can support women to meet their immediate needs and simultaneously challenge the systems and structures of oppression. If social enterprises aren't challenging the system that devalues women's labour, then they ultimately are upholding women's oppression.

### **Social provisioning is shaped by the vulnerability context and is insufficient to support women**

The vulnerability context as described by the women at OG (Table 4 on page 58) is understood within the context of capitalism. Capitalism normalizes individualism and privatization within political, economic, and social structures. This impacts social provisioning as it shifts who the state believes should have access to assistance and what form of assistance, they should have access to. In the province of Ontario, like many provinces and territories across the country, social assistance is now based in workfare mentality; directly tying the worth of an individual and their necessary social provisioning

to waged labour. This shift has been described as creating a new gendered order, which views social problems as individual character defects, rather than political issues (Bakker, Neo-Liberal Governance and the Reprivatization of Social Reproduction: Social Provisioning and Shifting Gender Orders, 2003). In this vein, poverty, violence against women, and illness among other things, are systemically blamed on individuals. This shifts the responsibility of these issues onto individuals and supports a further reduction in social provisioning (Fudge & Cossman, Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, 2002).

Social provisioning is currently structured to motivate people out of poverty, by forcing them into any wage-based employment, without ever challenging the political, economic, and social structures that shifted them into poverty in the first place (Bakker, Neo-Liberal Governance and the Reprivatization of Social Reproduction: Social Provisioning and Shifting Gender Orders, 2003).

Social provisioning characterized by workfare is solely focused on supporting individuals to get waged labour. The state through Ontario Works requires individuals to enter into a participation agreement confirming and outlining all their work and work readiness activities they will participate in, in order to qualify for assistance (Mosher, 2011). This model of assistance problematizes and condemns welfare dependence and not poverty, which ultimately shifts mainstream discourse to view individuals who are welfare dependents as lazy and problematic, instead of a result of the current vulnerability context. With this shift of discourse, recipients of social assistance internalize these negative perceptions, and as a result they lose their dignity, which undermines their ability



to use voice in society. As society doesn't value their voice, the individual also loses value in themselves.

The combination of low rates of social assistance and the workfare requirements for support, places value and belonging only on women's waged labour, and completely devalues women's social reproduction labour (Bakker, Neo-Liberal Governance and the Reprivatization of Social Reproduction: Social Provisioning and Shifting Gender Orders, 2003; Mosher, 2011).

As demonstrated in Figure 14 on page 82 "Source of Income vs. Worried about Money", nearly every woman who reported she was engaged in wage-based employment was regularly worried about money. Yet these women engaged in their wage-based employment are representative of the goal of the provincial social assistance programming, specifically Ontario Works. Figure 12 on page 80 also shows that there is no substantial correlation between paid employment and the ability to make ends meet. This can likely be attributed to the types of jobs that women hold, and the increased feminization of low-paid employment (Fox & Moyser, 2018; LEAP Pecaut Centre for Social Impact, 2022).

As demonstrated in the data, and illustrated in Figure 12 and Figure 14 the women who were able to supplement their social assistance with other sources of income such as part-time employment (possibly at OG), support payments or undisclosed sources were the least worried about money and the most likely to make ends meet.

Social provisioning across the country is based in human capital theory which assumes that the learning capacities of individuals are the foundation to employment (Mosher,

2011). As such, according to human capital theory, there is a correlation between the level of education of an individual and their employment status, that the higher level of education of an individual, the higher their income. As seen in Figure 13 on page 81, the data from women at OG showed no positive correlation between level of education and whether they were worried about money. In fact, in complete opposition to human capital theory, two of the three women with the lowest level of education (completion of elementary school) make up 29% of the women who reported they were not worried about money.

As illustrated in Figure 11 on page 79 the data demonstrated a correlation between reliance on social assistance and level of education. For the five women whose primary source of income was full-time employment, two reported an unknown level of education, and the remaining three all had at a minimum begun post-secondary education. However, it should be noted that the primary source of income for 80% of the women was a form of social assistance, which included women from each level of education.

Workfare policies tend to minimize barriers to employment, of which women who have experienced violence experience many (Bakker, Neo-Liberal Governance and the Reprivatization of Social Reproduction: Social Provisioning and Shifting Gender Orders, 2003). Specifically, in the data women identified having experienced the following barriers to employment: mental health, physical health, low self-confidence, low-income, and lack of family supports. Many of the barriers women experience can be directly related to the violence they have experienced.

Another shortcoming of workfare policies is that they push women into the waged labour without appropriate services in place to complete social reproduction labour (Bakker &

Gill, Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction, 2003). This creates a tremendous stress for women, and particularly those who have experienced violence who already face an intensification of social reproduction labour.

Women who experience violence are at a significantly increased risk of experiencing poverty, yet social provisioning does not sufficiently support women to be lifted out of poverty (Fredman, 2014). Instead, as was demonstrated through the data of the women at OG, social assistance keeps women in poverty, which can often lead to women having to return to an abusive home. Women should not have to make the choice between experiencing violence or the ability to have their basic needs met. This is a primary example of the ways that the current social economic system upholds women's oppression.

The data demonstrated the importance of social services in the lives of women who had experienced violence. Specifically, seven of eighteen of the women who stated they had one or more supportive person in their life indicated a social service, including one of HTH's programs, a social worker, low-barrier employment program, and addiction service.

It cannot be overlooked that when social provisioning is inadequate, social services clearly take on a greater importance in the lives of women. Women's lives exist within the vulnerability context, as such there is much that women do not have control over, engagement in social services provides women with a degree of control over their lives.

Women referenced many gaps in services indicating that some services they required were either difficult to access or non-existent. Table 4: Vulnerability Context of Women at

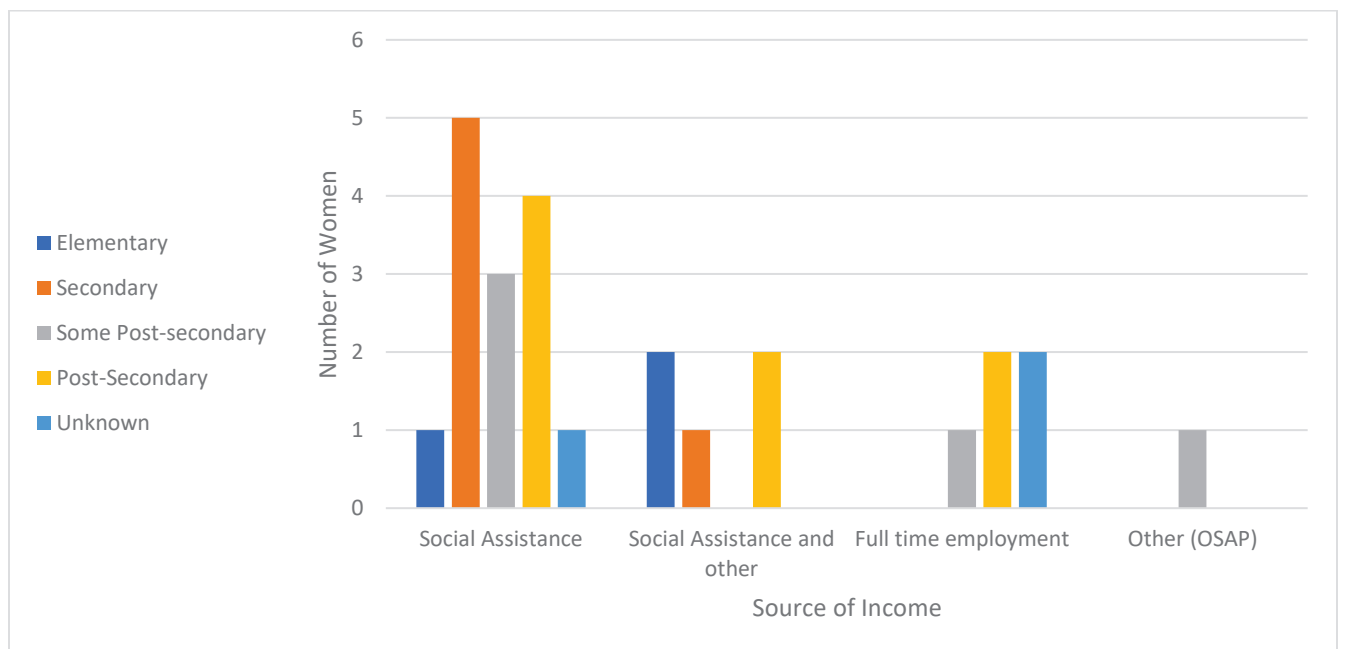
OG on page 58 organizes the data in a way that makes the gaps more apparent. Women commented on the following gaps:

- Sufficient income from social assistance
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of adequate housing
- Lack of permanence of social supports (rent geared to income)
- Lack of adequate physical and mental health supports
- Lack of specialized services specifically autism and developmental services
- Lack of overall resources

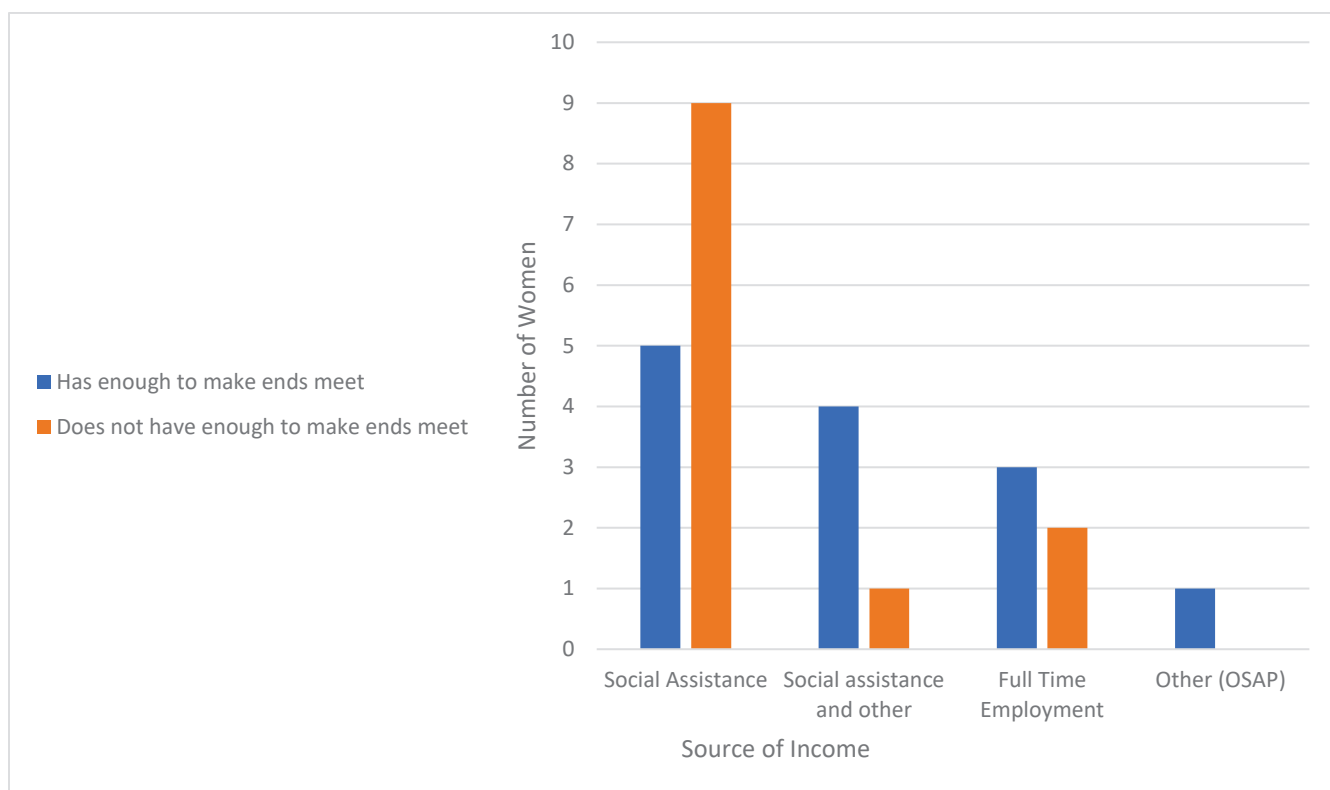
Some of these gaps could be indicative of the regionality of the women, all of whom reside in North Simcoe which is a predominantly rural region of Ontario inclusive of several small towns each with population under 20,000 and no public transportation linking communities. It is certain that the rurality of the women would at a minimum exacerbate these gaps in service. However, many of these gaps directly relate to the lack of adequate state social provisioning.

It is clear that the gender-neutral approach to social provisioning is problematic. The finding that social provisioning is shaped by the vulnerability context and is insufficient to meet the needs of women, particularly those who have experienced violence, is a critical learning to answering the research questions. The finding, similar to the previous finding, demonstrates the limitations the vulnerability context creates for social enterprises to support women with lived experience of violence. This finding again demonstrates the responsibility of social enterprises to challenge the systems that uphold women's

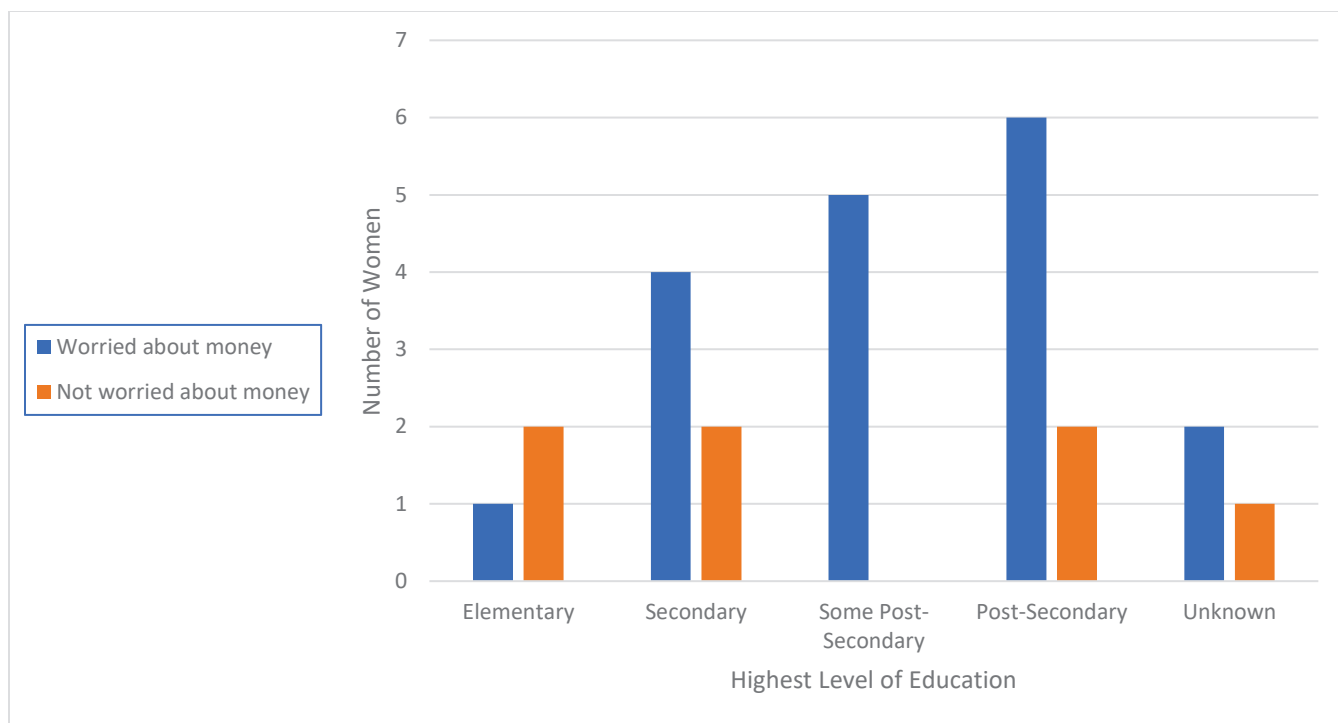
oppression. It also demonstrates how important it is that social enterprises create space for women to have and use their voice. If it wasn't for the data collected by HTH from the women at OG, the organization would have been unaware of the programs that were most supportive to women and the gaps women experience. Social enterprises aimed at supporting women with a lived experience of violence must integrate ongoing opportunities for women to have and use their voices.



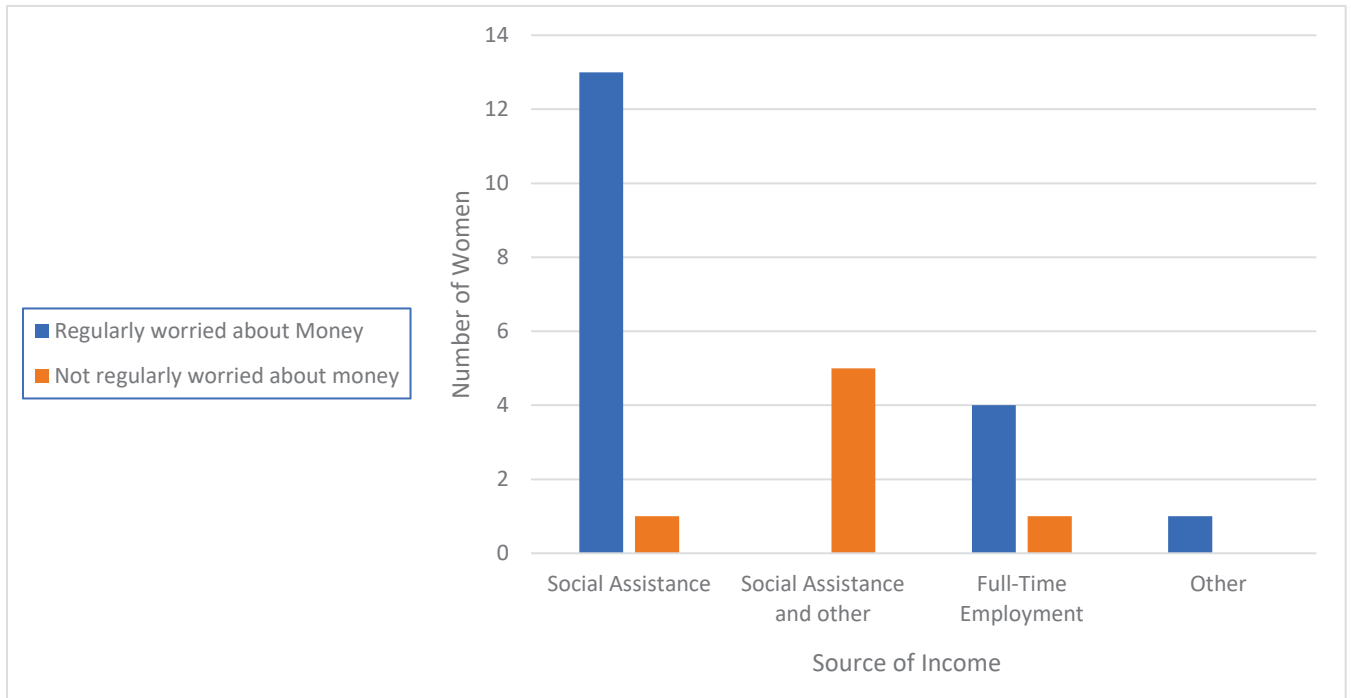
**Figure 11: Source of Income vs Level of Education**



**Figure 12: Source of Income vs Ability to make Ends Meet**



**Figure 13: Level of Education vs. Worried about Money**



**Figure 14: Source of Income vs. Worried about Money**

OG has an overall positive impact on women

Strength-based programs are unique, as they embed the premise of empowering women's voice into their service delivery frameworks. OG, through the integration of the sustainable livelihood framework, builds women's empowerment into the foundation of its program. Through completing asset maps with women, it facilitates a "crucial recognition of their own power that will enable women to begin to cope with the external forces that impinge negatively upon them, so they can also begin to function independently even if they still have gaps and weaknesses in their assets" (Ferguson & Murray, Women in Transition Out of Poverty, 2001, p. 13).

Through the collection of data using the sustainable livelihoods framework, women expressed pride in themselves. They were given the space with OG staff to talk about



things they were proud they had achieved or accomplished. Women explained they were proud of themselves for the following things:

- Proud of myself (for weight loss)
- I have good self-esteem and can help others with theirs
- Good understanding of the transit system
- Their creativity and initiative
- I am good at budgeting and saving
- Excellent and responsible with money
- Can walk a lot
- In good general health

Violence against women programming is often focused on what women need and the gaps in services, rather than supporting women to see their strengths and catalyzing them to achieve their aspirations (Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, 2023). Asset mapping supports women to exercise voice, discuss aspirations, and see the value in themselves. This would explain why, the women who completed asset mapping reported an overall positive impact.

The other findings demonstrate the critical components required to frame a social enterprise to properly support women who have experienced violence, whereas this finding directly addresses the research questions showing how it is possible for a social enterprise to positively support women with a lived experience of violence. This finding also highlights another critical consideration: in order for social enterprises to support women who have experienced violence, they must be structured to empower them.

## CONCLUSIONS

*“Endless critique or despair without exploring alternatives lead nowhere; a sense that ‘another world is possible’ is awakened only through efforts to transform critical analyses into action-no matter how small.” (Barndt, 2002, p. 249)*

### Summary

All aspects of women’s lives are impacted by violence, provides valuable considerations for answering the research questions. Any program, inclusive of social enterprise looking to support women with a lived experience of violence, must be holistically designed. If violence impacts all areas of a woman’s life, support services must support all aspects of a woman’s life. Programs can use the sustainable livelihoods asset areas as a framework to ensure their program touches on all areas in a woman’s life. This should also lead to a reduction in system navigation for women, which as will be elaborated on below, would reduce some of the intensification of social reproduction labour generated by violence.

Trauma is often understood in terms of its psychological impact; however, it is obvious from the experiences of women at OG that it impacts every aspect of their lives. This is most apparent in looking at the data organized using the sustainable livelihoods framework asset areas. Women often could draw links between the violence they experienced and their assets/asset areas.

Each of the five primary findings presented unique considerations to answer the secondary research question: What role can social enterprise play in supporting women with lived experience of violence and what are the limitations? From the findings six key

design elements required for social enterprises to support women with a lived experience of violence can be identified:

1. **Social enterprises must be holistically designed to support women in each of their asset areas.** This is critical because violence impacts all areas of women's lives, therefore solutions must support all areas. The six asset areas are a perfect framework to use to ensure that all areas are sufficiently supported.
2. **Social enterprises must integrate an intersectional feminist lens and cannot be gender neutral.** As demonstrated in the research, life is not gender-neutral, and with the disproportionate rates of violence against women, particularly Indigenous women, an intersectional feminist lens ensures all lived experiences are considered, valued, and integrated to inform programming.
3. **Social enterprises must demonstrate that they value women's unpaid labour, and structure programming flexibly to meet the unique needs of women.** Specifically, social enterprises must equally value the interrelatedness of participants' unpaid labour and other aspects of their lives. As such, social enterprises must incorporate elements that highlight and support individuals such as mental health supports, harm reduction services, child-rearing, and waged labour.
4. **Social enterprises must be pragmatic and support women's access to material resources.** As demonstrated in the stages of transition from the sustainable livelihood framework, women in the survival stage must focus all their time and energies on meeting their basic needs, and thus are unable to imagine engagement in other aspects of their lives, to build other asset areas. As such,

social enterprise must support/refer women to services that can help them meet their basic needs, inclusive of housing, food, and social assistance.

5. **Social enterprises must create spaces that empower all women, with unique identities and experiences, to have and use their voices.** This is essential to understanding gaps that currently exist and the services that are most important to women. This space would act as a conductor for women to develop their voice, practice using their voice, navigate how their identity impacts their voice, celebrate other women's voices, and begin to understand their identity and aspirations.
6. **Social enterprises must challenge the current economic and social order to challenge systems that produce and uphold oppression.** This is arguably one of the most difficult elements to integrate, as it requires a consciousness building throughout the entire infrastructure of the social enterprise. There are core components essential to this, the social enterprise must: not be solely focused on profit, be aware of the value chains they are choosing to support and align procurement with the statement of purpose of the social enterprise, challenge traditional ownership models, measure success differently by examining social returns instead of just revenue generation, and ensure that the knowledge transfer of the social enterprises statement of purpose is shared with customers.

Integrating these six design elements into social enterprises, or social service programming would provide exceptional support to women with a lived experience of violence. Social enterprises that integrate these components would be integrating

women's voices into their core. Social enterprises are also unique in that they exist within both the business and social justice worlds, this means that they have a unique position to integrate the sixth component and challenge the current economic and social systems that produce and uphold oppressions. Together, these six key design elements ensure that each individual's area of needs as per the social individual approach of care, resources, and voice.

The analysis of why all three methodologies presented a critical learning to answer the research question. It showed that interventions that aim to support women with a lived experience of violence must address both the root causes of violence and poverty as defined through social reproduction theory, and meet the immediate basic needs of women, without supporting the systems that enabled the oppression to exist in the first place. Social enterprises have an opportunity to have a significant impact on the lives of women with a lived experience of violence, should they incorporate the six key design elements identified through the findings. It is essential however, that these components be incorporated, otherwise social enterprises run the risk of upholding the systems of oppression that created the circumstances for women's violence in the first place.

However, even in incorporating these six design elements there are limitations to the impact of social enterprise. Social enterprises, even in their ideal formation are only one part of the solution to creating a more just society, and rightfully so, as the state must take responsibility for the welfare of its peoples.

As the state continues to erode social provisioning, the social economy, inclusive of social enterprises, are left to address governmental failures. (Bezanson & Carter , 2006; Miles, Verreyne, & Luke, 2013). As social enterprises address these enormous gaps

left by the states inadequate social provisioning, they take on the role of the state. This places social enterprises at odds with feminists and community development activists who are advocating for the state to be more socially responsive and provide well-paid positions in care work (Bezanson & Carter , 2006). Social enterprises must be careful that they do not stop challenging the state's role and responsibility, while at the same time continuing to support the immediate needs of the most marginalized individuals.

Social enterprises cannot be the response to neo-liberal policies that erode state social provisioning. If they are, then they cannot address the root causes of the social justice issues they set out to support in the first place. Cuts to social provisioning such as adequate social assistance, health care, housing, and opportunities for civic engagement result in increased social reproduction labour.

The capitalist system relies on social reproduction labour to function yet cuts to social provisioning are accepted. This is because it is assumed that women are elastic and can further intensify their social reproduction labour to offset the impact of cuts (Fudge & Cossman, Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, 2002; Luxton, 2006; Picchio, A macroeconomic approach to an extended standard of living, 2003; Federici, 2012). These cuts, as evidenced by the data of women's experiences at OG, ultimately are shifted into the purview of the household. The increased responsibility for social reproduction labour on households creates an increase in oppression based on gender, race, and class (Bakker & Gill, Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction, 2003). These inequalities deepen, as it is the bodies of women in poverty, that are disproportionately racialized bodies, that absorb the brunt of the increased labour created by state failures. As a result, many women who have

experienced violence at the hands of men, continue to be victimized by state inadequacies and systemic violence.

## **Operation Grow**

The data examined in this research demonstrated the unique needs and wants of women with a lived experience of violence engaged. The data further demonstrated that programs and services outside crisis services need to be specifically tailored to meet the needs of women who have experienced violence. These findings from the data, that demonstrate women's unique needs, as well as the larger systemic issues that impact women with a lived experience of violence, accompanied by my own observations as a practitioner at OG, allowed OG as a case study to address the final research question

### **What role can social enterprise play in supporting women with lived experience of violence and what are the limitations?**

As such this section provides an in-depth analysis of the conclusions of the research and combines them with my observations as a practitioner, specifically, by looking at how the six design elements for social enterprise identified in this research, exist (or don't) within Operation Grow.

The following are observations as to how Operation Grow has integrated to some extent all six key design elements, each critical to addressing the unique needs of women with a lived experience of violence.

- 1. Social enterprises must be holistically designed to support women in each of their asset areas.**

OG uses the sustainable livelihood framework as its service delivery model. This guides the social enterprise to stay true to its holistic design, recognizing the need for program offerings to be inclusive of all asset areas. The integration of a sustainable livelihoods framework is also pragmatic, in that it supports women to identify their current assets to reduce their depth of poverty. This again, does not change the systems that create and uphold women's poverty; however, it does support women's immediate needs.

Referrals from OG are made to women on a regular basis to support them with legal system navigation, housing, medical system navigation, mental health supports, and harm reduction supports. OG staff must have the knowledge to make these referrals, as they are essential to supporting women in their asset areas, and to increase overall stability. This is measured annually by OG, in a survey conducted with the women. Between the years 2019-2021, 97% of members surveyed by OG stated the social enterprise led them to feel more connected to services (HTH funding report to the Ministry of Children and Social Services Office of Women's Issues 2019-2020, 2020-2021 fiscal years). Referrals support women in most of their asset areas.

OG supports women to increase their human (training and employability) asset area in multiple ways. OG's paid apprenticeship program provides a twenty-hour training, educating members on the employment standards act, employee rights, accessibility standards, WHIMIS, and information specific to their apprenticeship.



The training is broken into seven different modules, each one incorporating a learning strategy; recognizing that when an individual grows up in chaos, often learning how to learn is replaced by survival strategies. The learning strategies incorporated support members on how to learn the materials as they are doing so. These strategies are transferable to other areas of a member's life.

OG's paid apprenticeship program also supports women to further develop their financial asset area. As mentioned, OG provides women engaged in maintenance or labour in the vertical farm a living wage in the form of an honorarium. This is flexible, in that women set their shifts, and are not penalized for missing a shift. OG understands the complexity of women's lives and attempts to not penalize in any way women for this complexity and their competing demands.

OG has integrated many components to support the development of health and personal asset areas. The social enterprise has many offerings that focus on the mental health of members, such as trauma-informed yoga, weekly walks, and meditation classes. These aspects of the social enterprise are meant to facilitate a mind-body connection within members and provide a safer space for women to just be, which positively impacts women's sense of self, embodiment, and overall wellness. The positive impact to the physical and mental health of members was well articulated in the 2020-2021 OG evaluation report by external consultants at eko nomos: "They (members) described their participation as giving them a 'boost,' staff as being 'supportive,' and themselves as having more confidence and higher

self-esteem” (eko nomos consulting, 2021, p. 21). The report included a quote from a member that emphasizes this. She stated: *“My mental and emotional health has gone up big time. My self-esteem has gone up big time. I feel good about who I am now. With all the counseling I've gone through and being able to participate in an organization like OpGrow, and getting hired at my age, it's all been positive for me”* (eko nomos consulting, 2021, p. 21).

All of OG programming supports social asset development, as women are together engaging in all the activities collectively. Many members build friendships, and I have observed they often begin to engage outside of the social enterprise. Additionally, OG will often partner with other agencies to provide workshops like resume building and employment workshops for members interested in those activities. This further enhances the opportunities for connection between members and for members with other agencies.

## **2. Social enterprises must integrate an intersectional feminist lens and cannot be gender neutral.**

OG uses an intersectional feminist framework to frame all its decision-making processes. HTH has incorporated this lens into its beliefs and aims, therefore it was easy for OG to integrate this lens into its detailed work. This lens has informed all components of OG, from evaluation to partnerships. OG understands that there is no universal membership and works to create

opportunities to understand the unique differences among members, and both the privileges their identities afford and the oppressions they create.

3. **Social enterprises must demonstrate that they value women's unpaid labour, and structure programming flexibly to meet the unique needs of women.**

OG is based in flexibility, and this characterizes all aspects of all programming. Members engaged in the apprenticeship program do not have set-shifts, instead they book their shifts as possible, recognizing the ongoing balancing required in their lives. Members who become incarcerated do not lose their membership, instead upon release OG connects with women to re-engage in services. Additionally, at OG there is no timeline for participation, as OG does not set an end-goal for any members.

Asset mapping is used as a tool to mirror back to women the amount of unpaid labour they engage in regularly. I have completed many of these asset maps with women and have noticed it can be a very empowering activity. Often, women who do not have academic or professional training qualifications would describe their lack of skill. However, engaging women to understand all social reproduction work they regularly engaged in leads to a critical conversation to both the value of that work and the transferability of those skills.

**4. Social enterprises must be pragmatic and support women's access to material resources.**

OG intentionally built its business around food production so that it could support women to gain access to food. As the findings demonstrated, there is a direct correlation between poverty and violence against women, which would impact women's access to food. It was also important that OG have some control over food production, as food, despite being a human right, has never been universally available. As agrobusiness has significant control over food production, the importance of local production is ever growing. Women are responsible for the majority of food work, inclusive of nourishing families, yet they often cannot nourish themselves (Allen & Sachs, 2007).

OG also sells greens to members at a wholesale rate, increasing women's access to healthy food. A weekly cooking workshop is facilitated with members, products are provided to women, and space is held virtually and in-person to cook and eat together. Women with children are given additional food for family participation. Additionally, any special activity at OG, such as trainings and some workshops provide a meal for members.

OG has uniforms and on-site laundry to reduce any barriers to participation for women. This ensures that a sterile environment in the farm can also be maintained. OG staff also wear uniforms in an attempt to break down the power dynamic that

exists between staff and members. The facility also has on-site showers for women, again reducing barriers to participation.

**5. Social enterprises must create spaces that empower all women, with unique identities and experiences, to have and use their voices.**

OG built a hub of multiple programs within the social enterprise; this was meant to empower women to come together and share their voices. At OG, monthly members meetings are held to provide space for members to engage with program staff and each other. Staff begin to observe the transition in members, some members begin to attend these meetings as silent observers then after comfort is built, staff observe these same quiet women using their voice in the space. The member meetings also ensure that members continue to inform all decisions made regarding programming at the social enterprise; no new idea is implemented without first consulting with the members.

Members at OG are also encouraged to share their passions and skills with each other. Program staff do not often build new workshops, instead if a woman has a particular interest, she is supported to facilitate a workshop with other members. For example, there was a member who enjoyed creating leather art, so staff worked with her to arrange a workshop for other members to create leather art together.

OG, by virtue of its various components, brought together multiple sectors and the public to engage on topics related to violence against women. For years, HTH existed without a space to engage with the community, now with a space open to the public, more people are aware and developing an understanding of violence against women. Additionally, OG is invited to speak on these social justice issues in areas and to communities that have largely been absent from the conversation like agriculture, entrepreneurship, social enterprise, and food services. This has provided voice to the agency in areas where it has traditionally been silenced and provides the opportunity for other disciplines to increase their knowledge and contribute to the anti-violence movement in a different capacity.

OG also attempts to do everything in groups and provides space for members to engage in dialogue around the 'personal is the political'. For example, two weeks after orientation, new members are invited to a workshop on the sustainable livelihoods framework, where they discuss the barriers and limitations to current systems and how those systems are impacting their lives.

**6. Social enterprises must challenge the current economic and social order to challenge systems that produce and uphold oppression.**

OG is an agriculturally based social enterprise, owned by a women's registered charitable organization. This shifts the power structure, as most agribusiness is owned by elites. OG puts ownership of an agricultural business into the hands of women. As a registered charity, the business activities at OG are balanced with its

social impact, and social impact outweighs profit. This in itself challenges the capitalist system, as the bottom line is not strictly profit.

However, there must be extreme caution practiced when discussing social enterprise to ensure it is not upholding oppressions. Social enterprises cannot replace government funding of social programs. OG is funded entirely by the County of Simcoe, Province of Ontario Office of Women's Issues, and the Federal Ministry of Women and Gender Equality. None of OG's funding sources have been permanently annualized, which creates a lack of stable funding for the program. Social enterprises should not be an excuse for a further retreat of social provisioning. Social enterprise should be viewed as a model to change business practices, not as a model to replace social services. Additionally, not all social enterprises are registered charities, and often speak about their social impacts without actually demonstrating them. It is very important to be aware of these structural differences within social enterprises, as a social enterprise can quickly begin adopting and upholding the same systems of oppression it is meant to address.

OG is also very conscious of the value chains it supports in operating its activities. Recognizing that OG calls upon the community to make consumer-conscious purchases by buying items in its retail store, OG also attempts to make the same conscious efforts. OG has developed a social procurement policy, with a matrix that works to identify ethically sourced companies, owned by more marginalized

communities. This was something that wasn't originally incorporated into the social enterprise, but living true to its statement of purpose, it has become very important.

### **Relevance of the research**

*“The challenge is to develop alternative possibilities for the future organization of this work [social reproduction] based on the goals of social justice and sustainability within a discursive political terrain in which economic rationale has become nearly ubiquitous and in which political and social action are considered marginal and suspect” (Braedley, 2006, p. 230)*

Throughout this research it is obvious systems uphold and accept violence against women. The oppressive tendencies of capitalism, ultimately hold women in a reality characterized by violence. As feminist Silvia Federici so poignantly explains “you beat your wife and vent your rage against her when you are frustrated or overtired by your work or when you are defeated in a struggle (but to work in a factory is already defeat)” (Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle, 2012, p. 18).

While this research examines models to best support women who have experienced violence by meeting them in their humanity and the entirety of their being, it must be recognized that the best possible solutions must address and eliminate the root causes of violence. That is why it is abundantly clear that any solution or service provided to women that is not also actively challenging systems of oppression that uphold classism, patriarchy and colonialism fails them.



This research gives voice to women who are often the most marginalized in society.

Their experiences present key considerations for social enterprise, but perhaps even more importantly they shine light on the need for better state social provisioning.

Women who experience violence at the hands of men, continue to experience violence at the hands of government, due to inadequate social assistance, health care, childcare, housing, and food programming. In this way, a country whose leadership boasts of their feminist allyship continues to hold women responsible for the violence they have experienced, and to heal from the extensive impacts it has on their lives.

The new social economy, like social enterprises, presents an opportunity to incorporate value of social reproduction labour into political and economic institutions (Bezanson & Carter , 2006). Feminists and academics have articulated the importance of recognizing the value of social reproduction labour to uphold the economy, as once its value is recognized social provisioning and its associated ideology will change.

“Gender analysis of individual fiscal policies, however, while valuable and worth insisting upon, cannot easily resolve inequalities that are rooted deeply in the organization of social reproduction.” (Philipps, 2002, p. 42). The consequences of not doing this are far too great, and result in an increase in violence against women (Federici, 2012).

Feminist Nancy Fraser explains that the devaluation of social reproduction labour, and the perceived elasticity of women to take on the growing responsibilities of this labour “*will not be resolved by tinkering with social policy*” (Crisis of Care? On the Social Reproductive Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism, 2017, p. 36). Deep structural transformation of the current social order is required, a transformation that will

overcome “*capitalism’s rapacious subjugation of reproduction to production without sacrificing emancipation or social protection*” (Crisis of Care? On the Social Reproductive Contradictions of Contemporary Capitalism, 2017, p. 36).

What does this look like, how can social reproduction work begin to be valued, and a transformation to the current social order happen. If, as discussed, social reproduction labour has been intensified due to the reduction in state social provisions, then to begin to reduce the burden of social reproduction labour would be to increase social provisioning. Adequate rates of social assistance, through a guaranteed basic income, that is easily accessible to individuals (Federici, 2012; Rousseau, 2016; Weeks, 2011; Bezanson & Carter , 2006; Ferguson S. , Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction, 2020; Fraser, 2017). A guaranteed basic income would replace other forms of social assistance, such as Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program, which would also erode some of the negative impacts of workfare policies (see findings section for further information). Another social provision required is accessible and affordable childcare, which will allow for women to exercise a different level of autonomy (Fudge & Cossman, Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, 2002; Eko Nomos , 2010; LeBaron, 2010; Mosher, 2011; Ferguson S. , Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction, 2020; Fraser, 2017). Access to affordable and healthy food; as food has become privatized it is no longer socially or politically guaranteed (McMichael, 2003; Fraser, 2017; Mohandesi & Teitelman, 2017; Abramowitz, 2010). Programs that ensure access to affordable and safe(er) housing (Mohandesi & Teitelman, 2017; Fraser, 2017; Bezanson & Carter , 2006). Accessible and adequate mental and physical health care

(Fraser, 2017; Bakker & Gill, Global Political Economy and Social Reproduction, 2003; Bezanson & Carter, 2006; Fudge & Cossman, Introduction: Privatization, Law, and the Challenge to Feminism, 2002).

Each one of these supports would have made a significant impact on the lives of the women engaged at OG. It would certainly support them to achieve and maintain a sustainable livelihood and would demonstrate a value and respect for their existence. This really highlights one of the most important aspects of this research, integrating the lives of women who have experienced violence into policy considerations and social structures. The experiences and voices of women with lived experience of violence are often ignored outside of discussion on the criminal code and the psychological impacts of trauma. Yet, as demonstrated in this research, violence impacts every aspect of women's lives, as such their voices and experiences must be integrated into all aspects of economic, social, and political institutions and decision making.

### **Future research**

This research is a very unique opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of the multitude of impacts of violence against women. The striking increase in the burden of social reproduction on women who have experienced violence is significant. This research was limited by the limited sample size, which created an inability to properly analyze the data meaningfully through an intersectional feminist lens. Recognizing the disproportionate rates of violence faced by Indigenous and racialized women, a similar study should be conducted with a larger sampling of women, or a different demographic group where the data can be examined through the intersection of race and violence. This could provide meaningful insights as to the similar and unique needs of racialized

women who have experienced violence, which would ultimately be able to inform social services and policy.

Social enterprises take on many forms and are defined in many ways. Dependent on the structure of a social enterprise, their priorities shift. OG is a social enterprise, which arguably reduces the chances that profit will begin to outweigh its social and environmental objectives. However, in my five years' operating the social enterprise, it has become apparent that many use the words social enterprise to describe their business to give them a competitive edge, without having clearly articulated social and/or environmental objectives. Within a capitalist society, definition of what constitutes social enterprise is of the utmost importance, as social enterprises can quickly become an unsubstantiated marketing ploy that take on the same exploitative processes of capitalist production. It was not within the scope of this research; however further research should be completed to examine social enterprise structure and its definitions. Further research should also be conducted to evaluate OG and conduct an in-depth analysis of the impacts and limitations of the program.

Questions this research incites:

- Is there a correlation between the devaluation of women's unpaid labour and their mental health?
- Is there a correlation between the structure of a social enterprise and its impact?
- Does the social enterprise model as a response to community need negate government responsibility for meeting the needs of this more marginalized group of women?

- To what extent can social enterprise challenge systems of oppression?
- How can governments be held responsible to provide adequate social provisioning?
- How does Operation Grow as a social enterprise compare to existing social enterprises in Ontario?
- To what extent to work-integration social enterprises support workfare policies?

## **Final Thoughts**

Women who have experienced violence deserve to have supports that treat them with dignity and respect. But that is not enough. Women deserve programs, services, and supports that challenge the systems of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism that create and uphold their oppression. Until the root causes of women's violence is addressed, women's bodies will continue to be raped and beaten, their voices will continue to be silenced, and their bank accounts will continue to be empty. Feminists and activists continue to bring solutions from women's voices to the forefront. We must listen. We must act. We must do things differently!

## **APPENDICES**

- A. References
- B. Stages of Livelihood
- C. Consent to Participate
- D. Script to Introduce the Project
- E. Discussion of Assets
- F. Asset Map
- G. Operation Grow Process Map

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## APPENDIX B: STAGES OF LIVELIHOOD

Destabilized / Stabilizing		Engaging	Foundation Building	Transition	Consolidation	Sustainable Livelihood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Depleting assets</li><li>• Cycle of crisis</li><li>• Focus on coping</li><li>• Meeting basic needs</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ready to connect to community and the economy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Base of stability</li><li>• Building employability</li><li>• Still requires support</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Making progress</li><li>• Changing life patterns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Economic Solutions</li><li>• Decreased vulnerability</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Livelihood Security</li><li>• Resilience and ability to reduce vulnerability</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Low esteem.</li><li>• Lack of personal safety/security.</li><li>• Isolated.</li><li>• Under/unemployed.</li><li>• Compromised health.</li><li>• Insufficient and insecure income.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thinking about making a change in her life.</li><li>• Substandard housing.</li><li>• Conditions for participation (transportation, childcare).</li><li>• Desire to decrease isolation.</li><li>• Awareness of need for increased skills and employability.</li><li>• Accessing banking.</li><li>• Accessing health care.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increasing self-worth and self-confidence.</li><li>• Takes initial steps to reach out to new people/supports.</li><li>• Adequate housing.</li><li>• Able to meet participation requirements of children/accessing childcare.</li><li>• Gains experience and skills.</li><li>• Patching entitlements and income in order to make ends meet and maintain family commitments.</li><li>• Improving health.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increased resilience-able to recover quickly from setbacks.</li><li>• Has access to a peer support group.</li><li>• Shifts from basic needs to emphasis on building assets.</li><li>• Clearly focused on building skills and knowledge.</li><li>• Health becomes self-directed.</li><li>• Improved personal health.</li><li>• Beginning to focus on best income source.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Growing independence.</li><li>• Beginning to play a leadership role.</li><li>• More strategic in building contacts and networks to support employment/business development objectives.</li><li>• Purchasing power improved.</li><li>• Investing in own professional development.</li><li>• Strong financial management knowledge.</li><li>• Access to health benefits</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Giving back to the community as a leader/mentor.</li><li>• Strong support network.</li><li>• Desired Housing.</li><li>• Happy with skill and education levels.</li><li>• Has solid foundation of social protection in place (insurance, savings, and retirement savings).</li></ul>	



## APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

### Tool 3: Consent to Participate

Participants:

I understand that the purpose of the interview is to learn more about what services and programs would be useful for me at Operation Grow and might also benefit other members.

I understand that:

- ☐ Participation in this research is voluntary and I agree to participate in the research project.
- ☐ I can refuse to answer any question I am asked.
- ☐ I can decide not to participate at any point.
- ☐ No quotations will be connected to me personally.
- ☐ A representative from Operation Grow will interview me privately now and possibly again in a few months.
- ☐ I will be asked questions about topics including:
  - ☐ Basic needs
  - ☐ My connections
  - ☐ My sense of self
  - ☐ My skills and employability
  - ☐ Money
  - ☐ My community
- ☐ Each interview will be approximately 1 hour.

I understand that everything that I say will be kept confidential. The information that I provide will be combined with information from all the other people from Operation Grow who are involved in the project.

Operation Grow will keep my name, personal information and comments confidential. Any quote from me that is used will be anonymous. This information will only be used by the management team *and will be destroyed at the end of the project.*

*The research team will invite you to a meeting at Operation Grow to hear about the findings of the research.*



This consent form has been read to me and I understand it.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Name (printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Staff Name (printed)

Contact Information:

Address (if possible, please include postal code):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

I would prefer to be contacted by:

- ☐ Call
- ☐ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

When works best for you to participate in a meeting?

- ☐ Morning
- ☐ Afternoon
- ☐ Evening



## APPENDIX D: SCRIPT TO INTRODUCE THE PROJECT

### Tool 2: Script to Introduce the Project

Before we begin, is there anything that you would like me to know about your communication style?

Operation Grow is a social enterprise holistically designed to address poverty, food scarcity, isolation, and the impacts of violence, envisioned by women with lived experience of violence. Any woman who has accessed service at Huronia Transition Homes is eligible to become a member, by completing the welcome form and orientation. Membership is completely free, and self-directed. As a member of Operation Grow, you have the opportunity to build relationships with your peers, and access any of the services available. These services include a drop-in center, workshops, trauma-informed meditation and yoga, paid apprenticeship as a vertical cultivator in our vertical farm, and other training opportunities. Operation Grow will provide members such as yourself, a space to build community, reduce isolation, build economic resiliency and have access to good healthy food.

- ☐ The aim of Operation Grow is to help you build upon your existing assets and capabilities, to increase your overall well-being and quality of life.
- ☐ I am one of the staff members that work at Operation Grow who will be meeting with members, like yourself, talk about your assets and find out where you are with no judgement and no assumptions. (this goes into the Tool #3 Consent to Participate).
- ☐ These conversations are important to the evaluation of Operation Grow. I am going to be entering this information anonymously into our data collection system. All of the information gathered in our evaluation will remain completely confidential.
- ☐ This is the beginning of this project and there may be more opportunities for you to participate in the evaluation. We hope to check in with you in six months to see how things are going.





## Tool 5: Discussion of Assets

Question	DO NOT USE AS CHECKLIST!	Yes	No	Comments
1. Interviewer name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Record in comments			
2. Year of birth?	<input type="checkbox"/> Record in comments			
3. Self-identified cultural background	<input type="checkbox"/> Record in comments			
4. Which program at HTH have you accessed?	<input type="checkbox"/> La Maison Rosewood Shelter (VAW) <input type="checkbox"/> La Maison Rosewood Shelter (HT mandate) <input type="checkbox"/> La Maison Rosewood Shelter (Homelessness) <input type="checkbox"/> Choices for Children <input type="checkbox"/> Athena's Sexual Assault Counselling & Advocacy Centre			
5. What types of violence have you experienced?	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional <input type="checkbox"/> Digital <input type="checkbox"/> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/spiritual <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic violence			
6. Housing	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have stable housing? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you in danger of losing your housing?			



## Tool 5: Discussion of Assets

7. Income security	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel that you have enough money to make ends meet on a monthly basis? <input type="checkbox"/> Did you file your income taxes last year? <input type="checkbox"/> Source of income (inclusive of OW/ODSP/CPP)? <input type="checkbox"/> Are you regularly worried about money? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you been behind on a bill payment in the past 3 months?			
8. Help at home	<input type="checkbox"/> Are you able to complete daily chores and tasks? <input type="checkbox"/> Do need help at home? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have help at home?			
9. Personal or family member illness	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you or someone in your household have any health concerns that require special attention?			
10. Training/education	<input type="checkbox"/> Are you able to access training and education opportunities? <input type="checkbox"/> What is your level of education?			
11. Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> Do have currently have a job? <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, are you working in a job that you want to be in? <input type="checkbox"/> If no, are you looking for work?			
12. Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel safe at home? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you feel safe in your community? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have one or more supportive people in your life right now?			
13. Access to technology	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have a computer with internet at home?			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Do you have an operational phone?			







APPENDIX F: ASSET MAP

My Plan #2

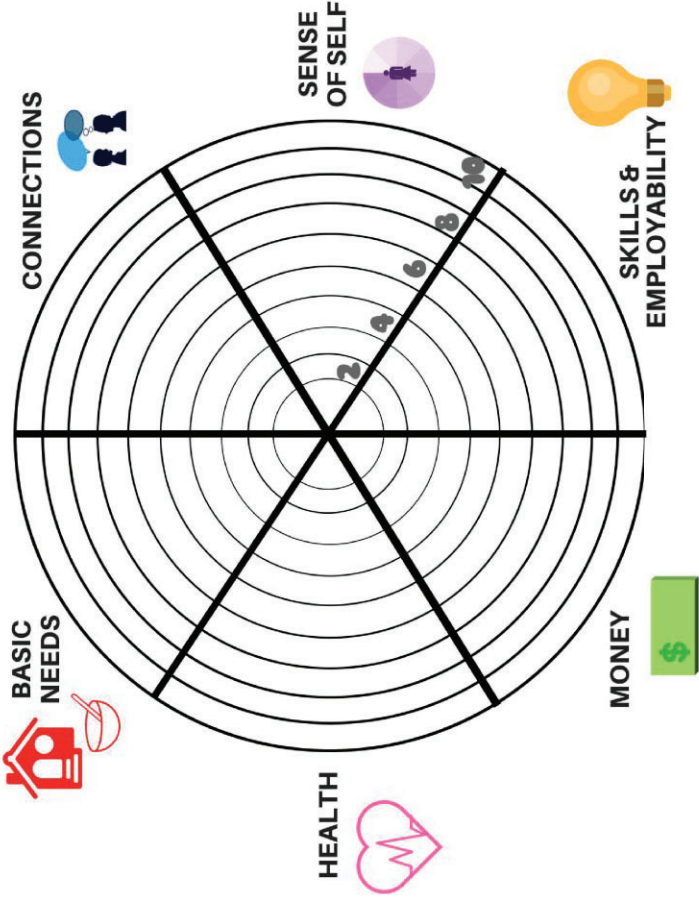
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My Plan to build assets myself







BASIC NEEDS	Y/N	
CONNECTIONS	Y/N	
SENSE OF SELF	Y/N	
SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY	Y/N	
MONEY	Y/N	
HEALTH	Y/N	

What are your main assets right now?



What's important to you in your life right now?

What assets do I have?

BASIC NEEDS	
CONNECTIONS	
SENSE OF SELF	
SKILLS & EMPLOYABILITY	
MONEY	
HEALTH	

# APPENDIX G: OPERATION GROW PROCESS MAP

**Tool 6- Process Map for Members at OG**

<b>WELCOME</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Immediately</li><li>• Tour of OG</li><li>• Registration as a member</li><li>• Discussion of programs</li><li>• Review <u>Tool 2-</u> Script of the Project with women</li></ul>	<b>Orientation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (begins when minimum of 8 women registered)</li><li>• Orientation to vision of OG and Sustainable Livelihoods, <u>ORIENTATION PRESENTATION</u></li><li>• Sign <u>Tool 3-</u> Consent</li><li>• Complete <u>Tool 5</u> Discussion of Assets</li><li>• Record data in Survey Monkey immediately</li></ul>	<b>Asset Mapping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2-3 weeks after orientation</li><li>• Complete <u>Tool 4 - My Plan</u></li><li>• Record data in Survey Monkey</li><li>• Locate woman on <u>Tool 7- Stages of Sustainability</u></li></ul>	<b>Group Meetings Cohort of 8</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regular monthly meetings with cohort from orientation</li></ul>	<b>Check In</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At 6 months</li><li>• See how women are doing with their asset-map plan.</li><li>• (Discuss the plan before looking at the map)</li></ul>	<b>Asset Mapping Revision</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At 1 year</li><li>• Review past asset-map</li><li>• Complete <u>Tool 4- My Plan</u> again</li></ul>
		<b>Apprenticeship training</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• *must occur after orientation *</li><li>• <u>TRAINING PROGRAM</u> delivered to women</li><li>• Women provided certificates gained through training</li></ul>	<b>Pre-Apprenticeship</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• After completion of training</li><li>• Members receiving social assistance provided letter confirming engagement as paid-apprentice</li><li>• Members provide payment for uniform to Supervisor of Support</li></ul>	<b>Apprenticeship</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Once women receive their uniform</li><li>• Supervisor of Support provides list of apprentices to appropriate Supervisor (Supervisor of Farm, Vertical Cultivators; Supervisor of Food and Rental , Maintenance workers)</li><li>• Supervisor of Farm, and Food and Rental begin scheduling women</li></ul>	