

**Planned  
Parenthood  
Ottawa**



**Planning  
des naissances  
d'Ottawa**



**VISITING GIRLS CHAT:  
A SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION PILOT  
PROJECT**

# CO-FACILITATORS

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Courtney Scanlan

Community Education Coordinator

Planned Parenthood Ottawa

Faiza Hassan (couldn't be here ☹️)

Second year law student;

previously worked at the Pinecrest-

Queensway Community Health Centre and

the Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre

# PLANNED PARENTHOOD OTTAWA (PPO)

- non-profit organization serving Ottawa for 46 years
- non-judgmental, inclusive, evidence-informed, sex-positive, pro-choice, community-oriented
  - confidential, supportive, GLBTTQ positive, youth positive
- philosophy is based on giving people accurate information so they can make informed decisions about what is best for them (client-focused)
- made up of 4 staff members, Board of Directors and volunteer body, plus placement students.
- Funded by the City of Ottawa, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, and Champlain Local Health Integrated Network

# APO PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- Community Education
- Options Support Counselling
- Information and Referral
- Insight Theatre
- Sexuality Awareness Program (SAP)
- Other Community Involvement (AIDS Walk, Pride parade, various committees, etc.)

# THE PROJECT...

## Why sexual and reproductive health?

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Planned Parenthood Ottawa (PPO) is a pro-choice organization promoting healthy sexuality and supporting informed sexual and reproductive health choices through education, counselling, information, and referral services.

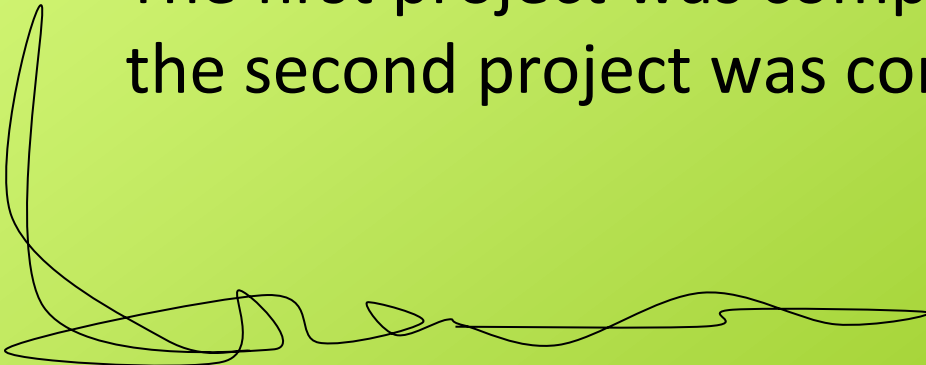
## Why this population?

A report revealed by the Social Planning Council in 2007 illustrated that Muslims constituted 26% of the minority populations in the city. The majority of these Muslims were part of the visible minority group and 20% have only recently immigrated into the country.

# THE PROJECT...

To respond to the needs of Ottawa's diverse and changing community, PPO commissioned research through Carleton University's School of Social Work about the sexual health needs of Muslim youth in Ottawa.

The first project was completed in 2009/2010, and the second project was completed in 2010/2011.



# TWO RESEARCH PROJECTS:

1. "Beyond the Absence of Disease: Identifying Barriers, Gaps and Needs in Sexual and Reproductive Health Services Offered to Muslim Youth in the Ottawa Area"

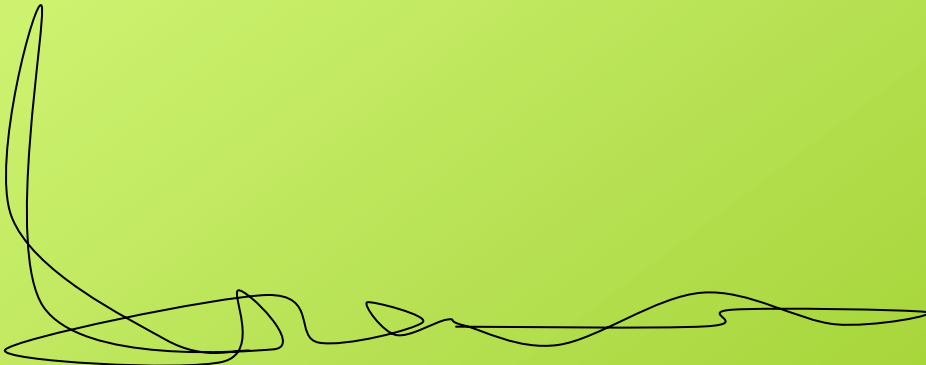
(Justine McNulty, Kristen Bongard, Lisa Middleton, Gifty Arkorful and Liette Perron)

2. "Program Evaluation: Community Education Pilot Project"

(Sinmi Akin-Aina, Allison Everett and Tobias Harrington)

# TWO RESEARCH PROJECTS:

Both research projects were framed with Anti-Oppressive and Feminist theories, which fits with PPO's core values.





# THE PROJECT IN 3 STEPS

## 1. *Needs Assessment*

First research group conducted a series of interviews with Ottawa service providers. Recommendations included the creation of tailored workshops to be delivered to gender-specific groups.

Needs assessment available on PPO's [website](#)

# THE PROJECT IN 3 STEPS

## *2. Adaptation and Delivery of PPO Programming*

Pilot project funding to adapt three existing workshops; hiring of a youth co-facilitator; collaboration with the ORCC who had existing programming in area schools for newcomer and immigrant youth; developed and facilitated the adapted workshops to two of the “Girls Chat” groups.

# THE PROJECT IN 3 STEPS

## 3. *Evaluation*

Workshops were evaluated by a second group of M.S.W. students through an in-depth focus group, after the workshops had taken place

Evaluation document available on PPO's [website](#)



# TENSIONS



- Muslim youth feel as though they are being pulled in two different directions at once, and that they must accommodate the pressures from their religious community while managing the pressures from their non-Muslim friends.
- The major sub-themes that emerged under the broader category of tensions were taboo/stigma, fear of judgment, cultural integration and choice.

# TENSIONS

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“Our Islamic teaching is: First you get married and then you have sex. Sex before marriage does not exist and we do not have this problem so parents say it’s like as if you are encouraging our youth to go out there and have sex.”

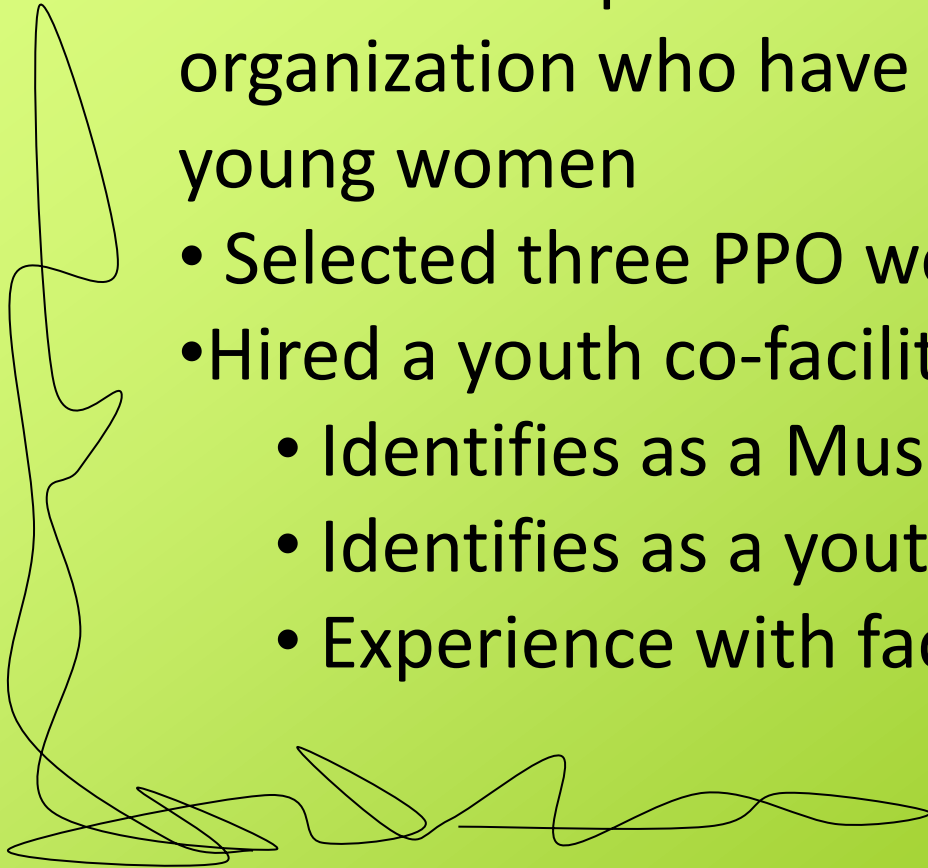
-Service Provider 1

# RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Expressed need by parents, youth and service providers for sex-segregated SRH education and services
- Youth expressed the need to have youthful SRH service providers
- Parents, youth and service providers expressed the importance of Muslim youth having SRH educators who share similar religious beliefs.
- Youth and parents expressed the need to have services offered in a confidential manner.

# IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Formalized partnership with Ottawa organization who have existing groups for young women
- Selected three PPO workshops for adaptation
- Hired a youth co-facilitator
  - Identifies as a Muslim woman
  - Identifies as a youth
  - Experience with facilitation



# FIRST BLOG POST

“Welcome Faiza – PPO’s Youth Co-Facilitator!”

[First Blog Post](#)





# SESSION 1: SELF-ESTEEM

## Self Esteem

- **Introduction**
  - Why we're here and who we are
- **Safe Space Guidelines**
- **Ice-breakers**
- **Discussion: "What influences our self-esteem?"**
  - Create list
- **Group work: media/images**
- **Role models discussion**
  - What does our choice in role model say about us?
- **"Homework"**
  - Love note to self, love note to a friend
- **Wrap-up/Questions**

# SESSION 2: WOMEN'S HEALTH

## Women's Health

- Ice breaker (body part faves)
- bring female anatomy boards
- washing/cleaning vulva → what is typical/atypical
  - what works for you (soaps, products, etc)
- discharge/mucous – knowing your body can help you understand what is typical/atypical
- regular physical exams/paps - explain what that includes
- menstrual products – choice
  - demos, discussion, questions about use
  - 1<sup>st</sup> day of cycle = bleeding; fertile & infertile times
- masturbation
  - normalizing and getting to know your body better

# SESSION 3: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

## Healthy Relationships

**Ice breaker** → My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and an important relationship I have is with my \_\_\_\_\_.

\*marriage, dating, and romantic relationships.

## **Healthy/Unhealthy/Unsure**

Each participant gets three coloured cards, each saying “healthy”, “unhealthy” or “unsure”. Participants listen to scenarios, and hold up the card they think best represents the scenario. Participants can volunteer to provide feedback on why they selected different cards.

What are the **rights and responsibilities** in a romantic relationship?

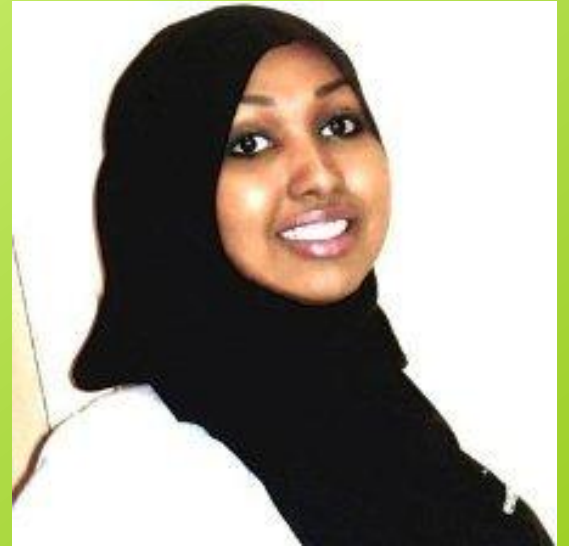
## **Discussion Points**

- Where do our concepts of “healthy” or “unhealthy” relationships come from?
- Why might a person stay in an unhealthy relationship?
- How do we define unhealthy relationships?
- What can we do if someone you know is in an unhealthy relationship?

# MEDIA

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Carleton University radio.mp3



# SECOND BLOG POST

“Girls Chat Pilot Project / MSW Project – Round #1”

[Second Blog Post](#)



# FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

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## Major findings:

- Participants did not want information on sexual and reproductive health to be specific or influenced by their culture and background
- The participants identified that they wanted full, complete, unfiltered, uncensored information. Participants receiving information would interpret and/or analyze the information provided in terms of their own personal religious, cultural, and socio-ethnic needs.
- The participants stated they would determine what is relevant to them personally.

# THIRD BLOG POST

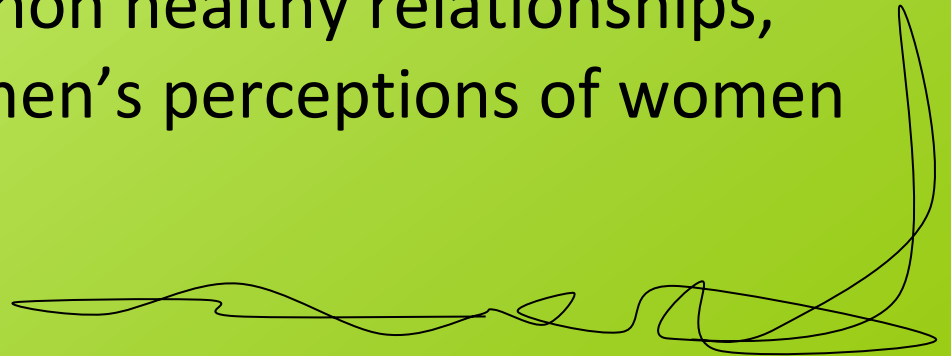
“Pilot Project Wrap-Up – by Faiza”

[Third Blog Post](#)



# RECOMMENDATIONS

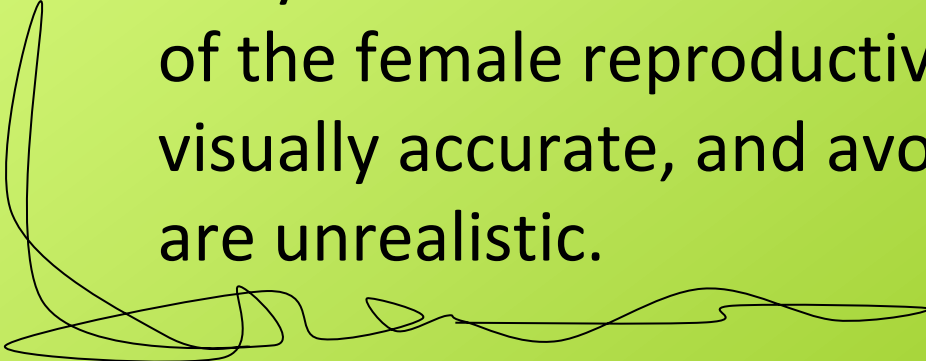
- The participants identified that they would like smaller groups for the workshops.
- They also wanted more time for each workshop, as the allotted time was too short.
- They also wanted more topics offered in the future. Some of these topics included: emotional health, healthy verses non healthy relationships, women's' health and men's perceptions of women when in a relationship.





# RECOMMENDATIONS

- They felt that other participants would gain from topics that covered the aforementioned.
- All the participants present in the focus group stated that they would recommend these workshops to their friends and/or other youth in their age cohort.
- They recommended that diagrams or illustrations of the female reproductive system should be visually accurate, and avoid representations that are unrealistic.

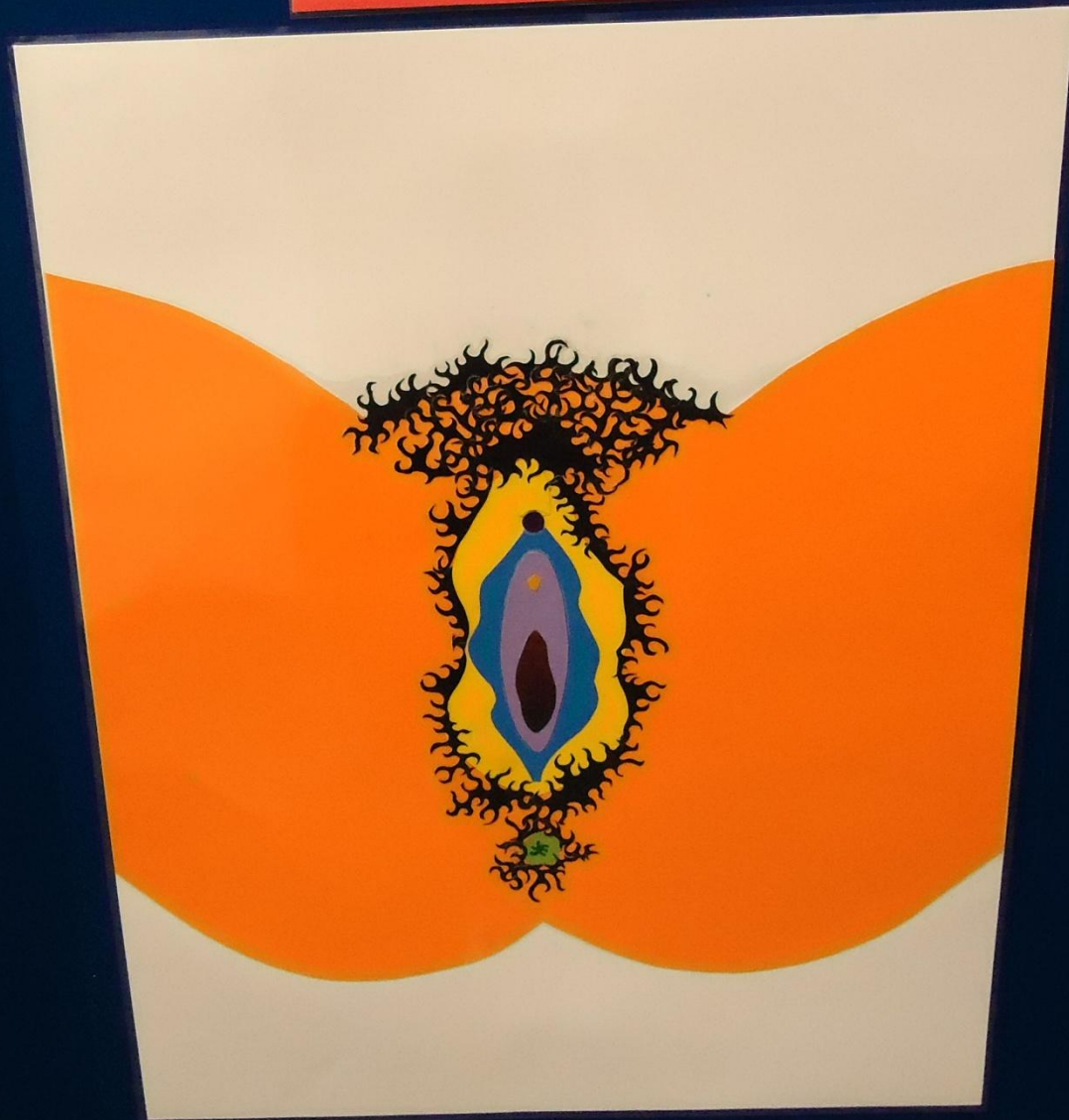


# Internal Female Anatomy



# External Female Anatomy

## Vulva



# FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

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“I felt comfortable and open to talking about any subject.”

“Felt comfortable, accepted, confident to speak.”

“How open the presenters were.”

“I believe this is a very good and helpful program for young women. It is very informative.”

# CHALLENGES

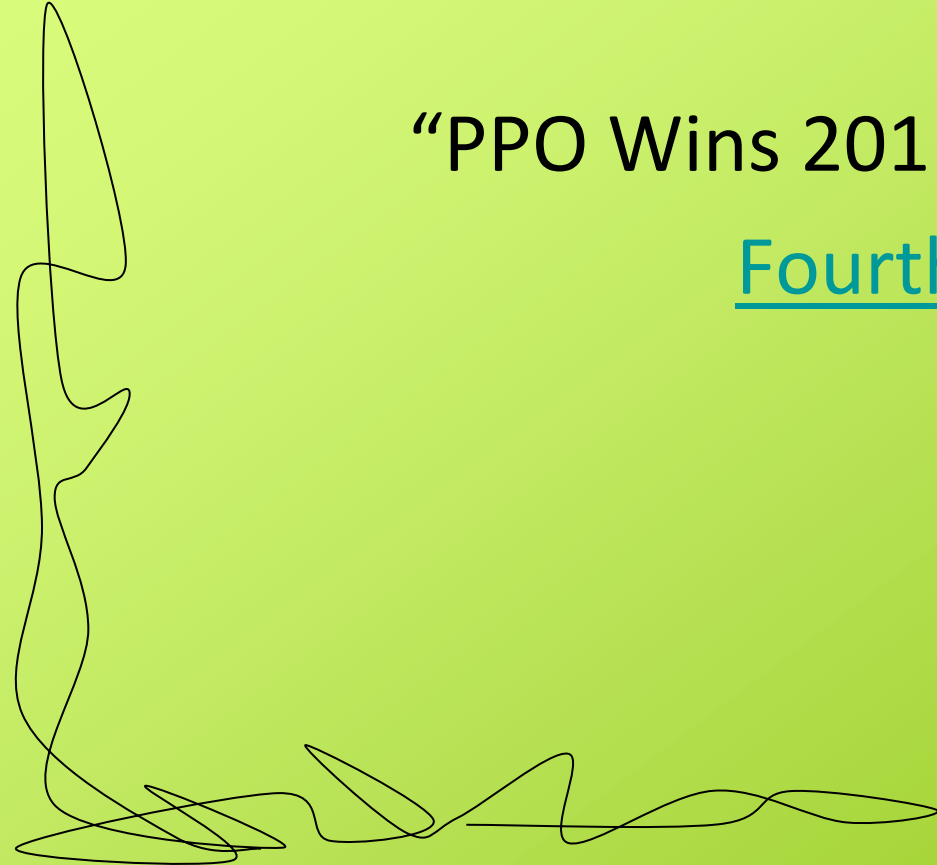
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- \$\$\$
- Partnership
- Two groups at two schools
- Focus group
- People dynamics; Pizza dynamics
- Too many cooks?
- Tight time-line
  - One hour sessions
  - Deadlines for research group(s)
  - Scheduling

# FOURTH BLOG POST

“PPO Wins 2011 Bentley Award!”

[Fourth Blog Post](#)



# RECOGNITION

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The Helen & Fred Bentley Awards for Excellence of Achievement are meant to recognize and publicize the outstanding achievement and program excellence of members of the Canadian Federation of Sexual Health. The award is offered yearly to CFSH Members who have shown outstanding achievement in the field of sexual and reproductive health.



MEDIA



**Ottawa Citizen**, May 4 2012

“Loss of United Way funding means end to sex-ed program for Ottawa Muslim girls”

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/news/Loss+United+funding+means+program+Ottawa+Muslim+girls/6561831/story.html>



# NEXT STEPS

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When PPO announced the project in our newsletter, we received numerous messages of support and interest in the work, including unsolicited interest from local media.

Our hope and plan is to grow the project to become a regular art of our Community Education program.