



Centre for Research
on Violence Against Women and Children



Working With Communities.

The Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children: A Community Consultation – Phase One Report: Survey Findings

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Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children (CRVAWC): A Community Consultation

PHASE 1 REPORT: Survey Findings

Individuals connected to the Centre for Research on Violence Against Women and Children (CRVAWC) through schools and school boards, community agencies, research projects, and the University of Western Ontario, were asked to participate in the CRVAWC online community survey in February and March of 2004. Ninety-four individuals were sent an overview of the CRVAWC's recent activities and initiatives and were invited to participate in the online survey. Sixty-four individuals completed and submitted the online survey. No demographic information was elicited as the survey was sent to a specific subgroup of the community and anonymity was promised. See Appendix A for a chart summarizing the types of involvement that respondents have with the CRVAWC.

This report will highlight important findings from the CRVAWC survey. Some questions on the survey were designed to elicit qualitative responses from respondents, and others required individuals to provide a numerical rating or ranking. These two types of data have been amalgamated within this report.

Report on Responses to the CRVAWC Community Survey

The findings from the CRVAWC survey revealed that while there is a great deal of support for the work of the Centre, there are also concerns and critiques. It will be important for the Centre to redefine and expand community perceptions of what a research centre based on community-academic partnerships is. It will also be important for the Centre to improve its communication strategy and to raise awareness of the various projects and initiatives that are currently underway.

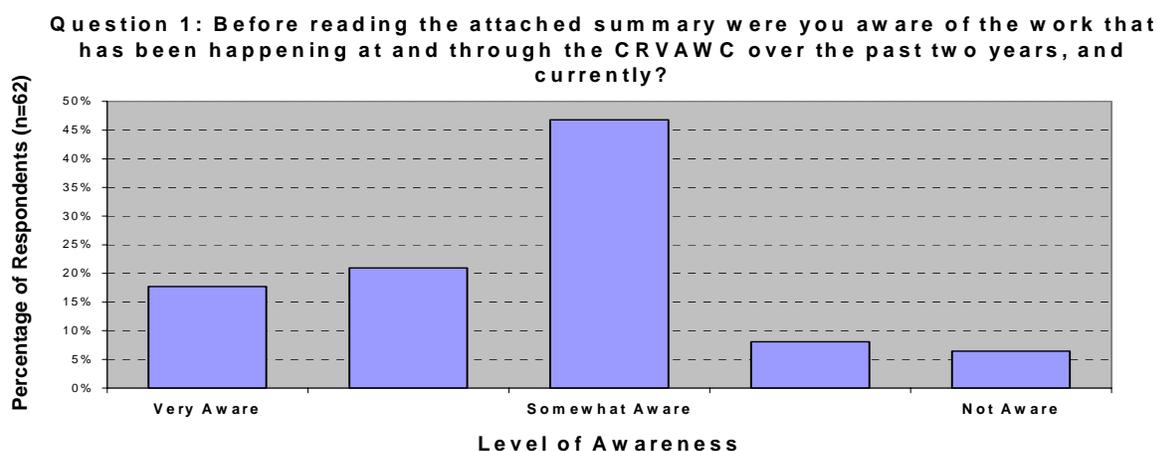
Some respondents who completed the survey suggested that we should have included our mission/mandate with the survey so that people could accurately assess what the centre is doing as compared to what the centre said it would do from the beginning. We did not include the Centre mandate because we were interested in gaining insight into the community's current perceptions of the CRVAWC. However, we are holding focus groups in June as a follow up to this survey and as part of our community consultation process. These focus groups will include

a discussion of the CRVAWC mission, followed by the opportunity to voice further thoughts and opinions regarding the issues raised in the survey and findings discussed in this report.

Awareness, Expectations, and Effectiveness of the Centre's Work

Community Awareness of the CRVAWC

The majority of respondents reported that they were somewhat-to-very aware of the work that the centre has been doing over the past two years and currently. See graph below.



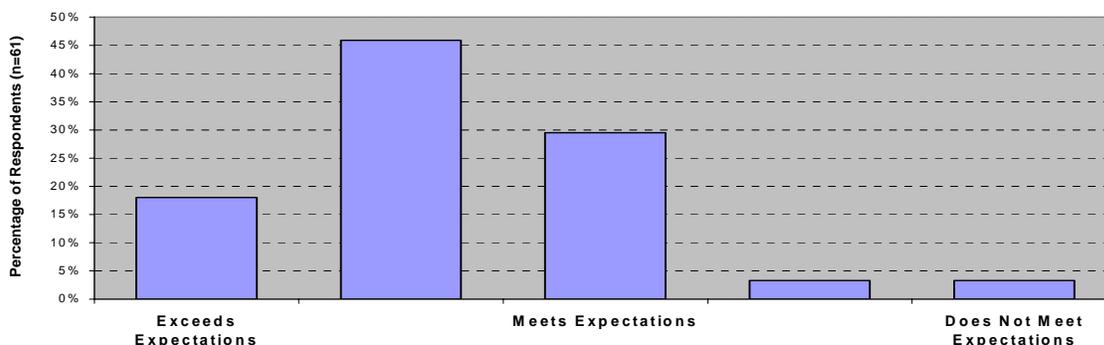
There are a large number of projects happening at and through the centre and every individual associated with the centre cannot be expected to know all that is happening. However, the finding that approximately fifteen percent of respondents were less-than-somewhat-aware of the recent work of the centre is concerning because the individuals surveyed were research associates, community agency employees and activists, and students who work on various projects at and through the CRVAWC. One possible explanation of this finding is that some respondents, especially work-study students, may only be minimally involved (5 hours per week) with one project through the centre and understandably less aware of the other work that is being done. However, this community consultation process, the Centre newsletters which have recently started to be regularly published and the new Centre website will help to increase community awareness of CRVAWC projects and initiatives.

Community Expectations of the CRVAWC

Although some respondents were not very aware of the Centre's recent work, the survey was accompanied by a summary of recent work of the CRVAWC. Respondents were asked to

read this before responding to the survey. Generally, the work of the CRVAWC met people's expectations of the work that a centre of this nature should be doing. The majority of respondents indicated that the work of the CRVAWC meets or exceeds their expectations. See graph below.

Question 2: Does the work that the CRVAWC has been doing meet your expectations of the work that a Centre of this nature should be doing?



Only a small minority of respondents reported that the work of the CRVAWC did not meet their expectations (approximately 8%).

Effectiveness of the Work

Respondents were asked about their views regarding the effectiveness of the CRVAWC in various aspects of the work on violence against women and children. Respondents' answers were similar across all aspects of the Centre's work, including: 1) establishing creative/innovative approaches to the research, 2) providing training and education opportunities, 3) raising visibility of the issues related to violence against women and children, 4) establishing community partnerships, 5) establishing academic partnerships, 6) establishing funding partnerships. The majority of respondents (over 90%) reported that the CRVAWC was Somewhat-to-Very Effective with regards to each of these initiatives. Please see Appendix B for graphs to examine respondents' answers regarding each individual aspect of the Centre's work.

It is important to consider quantitative findings on respondents' awareness, expectations, and perceived effectiveness of the Centre, in light of some of the qualitative comments written in response to other survey questions. There were at least one or two very negative comments written for each qualitative question on the survey. These comments were expressed in a very direct and uncompromising manner. An examination of the data set did

reveal that the extremely negative feedback does not reflect the general consensus of the community.

Significant Recent Contributions of the CRVAWC to Violence Prevention

Significant recent contributions that the CRVAWC has made to the prevention of violence against women and children in the local community and beyond were identified by respondents. The major areas that respondents identified included: 1) inclusion of diverse communities in the research & successfully engaging marginalized partners (working with the aboriginal community, fathers, and the Muslim family safety project to name a few), 2) girl child project, 3) school board partnerships and anti-violence initiatives (specifically The Fourth R project), 4) sexual and workplace harassment research and training, 5) information-sharing initiatives including workshops, seminars, publishing policy reports and educational materials/manuals, 6) raising community awareness of issues and bridging a gap between the community and academia, 7) economic analysis of the health costs of violence against women.

Unexplored Areas: Future Priorities for Small Grants and Community

Respondents were asked to identify any areas of work that they would like to see happening through the CRVAWC which are not already happening. Responses included: 1) exploring the Canadian (vs. US) practice of imposing gag orders on women who come forward re: clergy sexual abuse of women and girls, 2) development of action research projects by educators to promote cross-curricular integration of violence prevention, 3) child welfare responses to cases of woman abuse, how we are responding, and what impact it is having on families, 4) research on elder abuse, 5) barriers preventing abused women from minority communities from utilizing woman abuse services, 6) earlier intervention for high risk students, 7) how/whether victims can proactively gain/regain their personal power, 8) sexual violence, 9) measure outcomes of women's experiences accessing anti-violence services, and 10) gender neutral vs. women –centered services.

Respondents were also asked to identify directions for future CRVAWC research oriented work. The following suggestions will were made: 11) educational needs of abused women, 12) violence across the lifespan (infants to elders), 13) Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre (St. Joseph's), 14) research linking local issues to global issues, 15) engaging men and boys in preventing violence, 16) prevention work with young women, 17)

prevention work with children-at-risk for becoming perpetrators, 18) the unique situation of woman abuse and pet abuse in rural communities, 19) sexual violence against children and criminal sentencing.

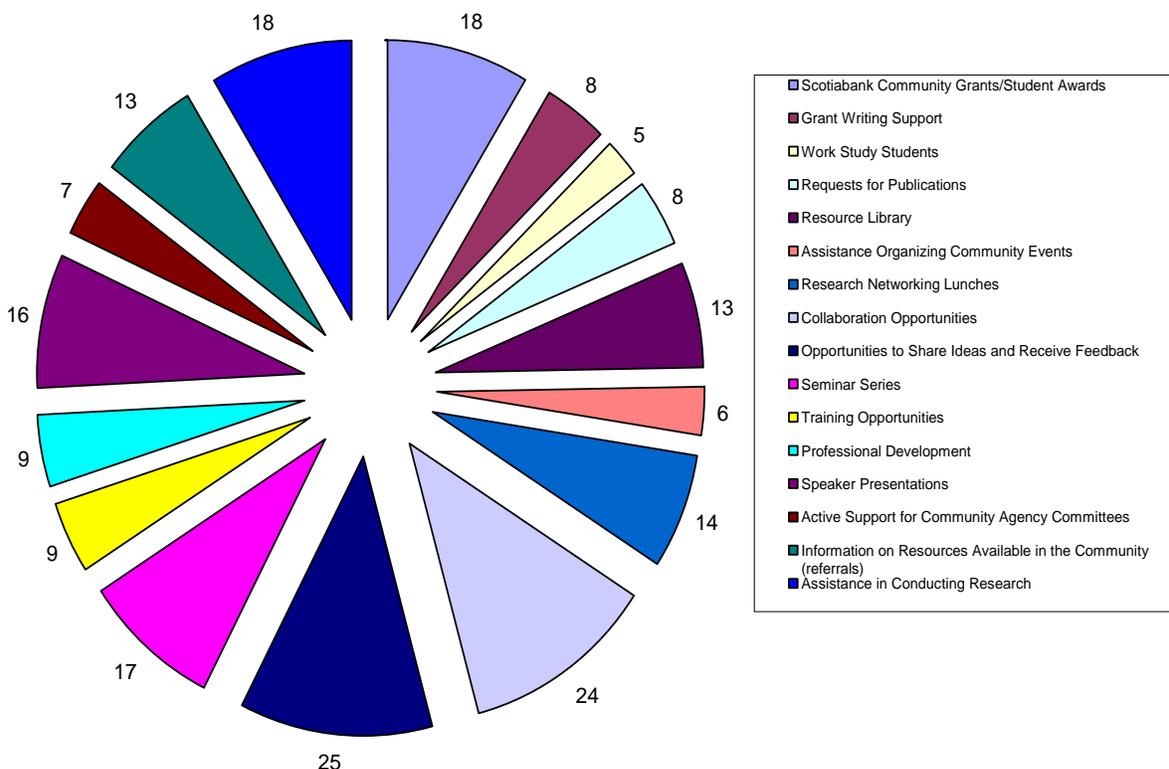
Other community priorities were identified through respondents' answers to the following question: "In what direction would you like to see the centre move in terms of future community-development oriented work?" Many individuals indicated the importance of CRVAWC-community collaboration and CRVAWC collaboration with community initiated projects. A small number of individuals indicated that they thought the centre was extended in community research already and should focus on current initiatives. Priorities for future community-development oriented grants will be: 1) collaboration with ethno-specific communities, 2) developing new models that are more culturally sensitive, 3) connection with child protection agencies, 4) research ways of making perpetrators more accountable for their abuse, 5) training with community groups, 6) work with B.Ed. students/prospective teachers, 7) engage school boards in prevention of men's violence, 8) connecting with more religious and cultural organizations, 9) critique the provincial/federal approach to violence against women's services (gender neutral and institutional), 9) affordable housing options and the impacts of no affordable housing, 10) link to schools (all ages) through a 'safe students' program.

Some of the areas identified by respondents are already priorities for the Centre, with work being conducted through a Scotiabank Community Grant or through a community partnership with one or more groups. All suggestions will be taken into consideration as new Scotiabank Community Grants are awarded and as new partnerships are developed.

Resources Accessed Through the CRVAWC

With the goal of increasing research collaboration and knowledge sharing, the CRVAWC was very interested in examining what resources respondents have accessed through the centre, and what resources they would have liked but did not receive. First, the most accessed resources were: 1) the opportunity to share ideas and receive feedback, 2) collaboration opportunities, 3) assistance in conducting research, and 4) Scotiabank Community Grants and Awards. Also utilized by many respondents were the Research Networking/Collaboration lunches, the seminar series, the speaker presentations/series, and grant writing support. See the chart below for a graphical representation of the number of respondents who accessed each CRVAWC resource.

Which, if any, of the following resources did you receive from the CRVAWC



Respondents were given the opportunity to share any other resources or supports they received from the centre that were not included in the list/chart above. Some respondents' comments are included here.

"The staff at the Centre are extremely open to providing consultation and assisting in finding appropriate support (community resources and research-based information). This openness and flexibility is highly appreciated and invaluable."

"I have been nurtured and supported by centre staff and volunteers. I felt mentored and respected, even when I asked dumb questions - like how to print."

"CRVAWC has been instrumental in encouraging us to extend our activities for high risk adolescent females. We are determined to maintain our program and build on it to support our students. CRVAWC has been instrumental in encouraging community links and has responded quickly to all our questions."

"I received lots of help/support from people at and associated with CRVAWC."

The resources received from/through the CRVAWC met the expectations of most respondents. With regards to the question addressing the possibility of a gap between resources expected and received, only three people had comments. The gist of their comments was that they would not turn to the centre for resources or information on current research, or contentious and challenging issues in the field, that the centre should provide more online information, and that there should be more opportunity to meet with other research associates who work with/through the CRVAWC.

The Centre's new website addresses the wish for more online information. We are organizing a Research Day for January 20, 2005 to provide an opportunity for research associates to meet each and to provide an opportunity for a mix of community and academic Research Associates to present current research.

Community Misperceptions of the Centre

The CRVAWC is a forum for the generation and exploration of ideas. It is a vehicle for promoting innovative and creative thinking on violence against women and children. The CRVAWC is not a resource centre/library for researchers or community agencies. Some responses to the CRVAWC Community Survey seemed to convey the fact that some community members have misunderstood the central thrust of the work of the Centre. For this reason the centre will be holding two focus groups in the month of June to review and discuss the CRVAWC mandate/mission and go over the questions asked on this survey in a more intimate setting.

Suggestions for Idea and Information Sharing

Centre staff will be looking at ways to implement the suggestions of survey respondents in order to increase community awareness of the work of the CRVAWC. Respondent suggestions included: create a listserv, continue to disseminate a newsletter (one just came out in June and the Centre will publish two each year), use the website more (it has recently been updated – go to www.crvawc.on.ca), create a teacher/practitioner-friendly link on the website, continue and expand the research collaboration lunches (they are still held every month), hold a conference (Fall 2005, on Workplace Violence and Harassment with Ivey

Business School), create a directory of everyone involved in the centre (advisory board, staff, director, research associates) and send out with the newsletter.

Final Comments

As we proceed with this community consultation, the focus will continue to be on redefining and expanding community perceptions of what a research centre based on community-academic partnerships is. At the heart of this community consultation is the goal of increasing collaborative research opportunities. We will also continue to focus on improving our communication strategy and raising awareness of the various projects and initiatives that are currently underway through the CRVAWC.

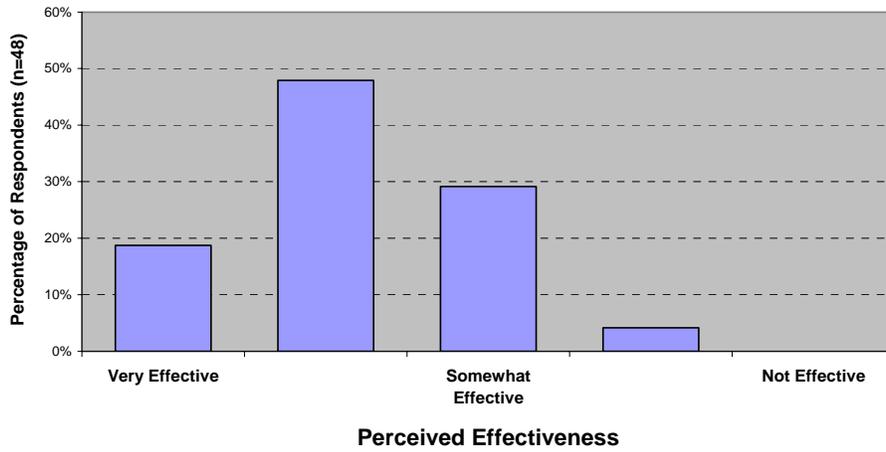
Appendix A

QUESTION 4: Please briefly describe your interactions with the CRVAWC over the past two years (indicate the type of project and duration of involvement).

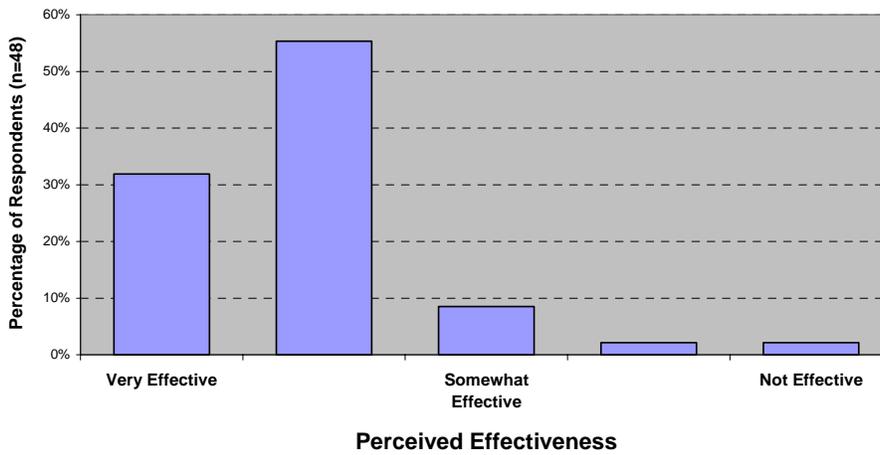
CRVAWC Project or Initiative	Number of Respondents
Respect-at-Work Training (facilitator)	9
Girl Child Project	3
Review of Effectiveness of the TVDSB Anti-Violence Programming	2
Research Collaboration Group Lunches	6
Scotiabank Community Grant	6
The Fourth R Project	2
Community Research Associate	3
Workplace Harassment Project	1
Ontario Women's Directorate Paper	1
Board Member of the CRVAWC	3
Research Review of Well Beings Program at Thames School	1
Safe Schools and PD for Teachers	1
Consultations with CRVAWC Staff Regarding Research Projects	1
Support Locating Resources and Research Literature	5
Attended Workshops and Lectures	4
Requested and received support for development of proposals.	1
Partner in a National Research Project	1
Research on Violence in the Lives of Girls	1
Harassment on Campus Survey	3
LCCEWA	3
Committee Work with CRVAWC	3
Orphans in Rwanda Project	1
Project on Prevalence of Children with Sexual Behavior Problems	?

Appendix B

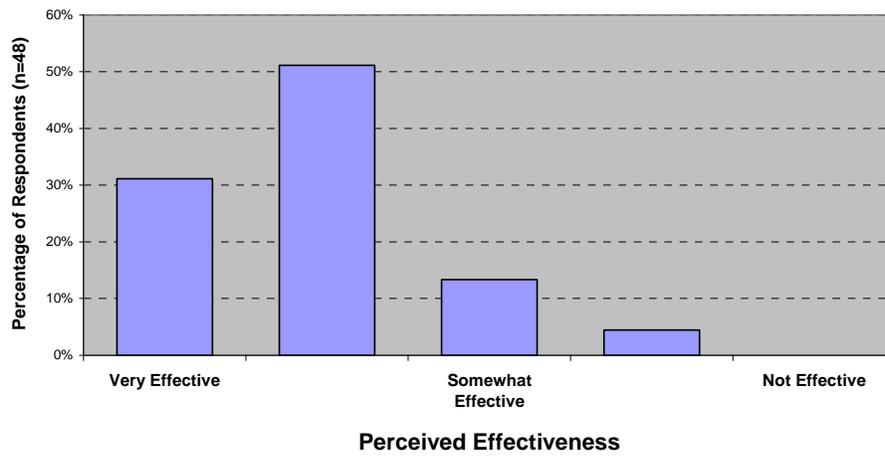
Question 6: How effective do you perceive the CRVAWC to be in raising visibility of the issues related to violence against women and children?



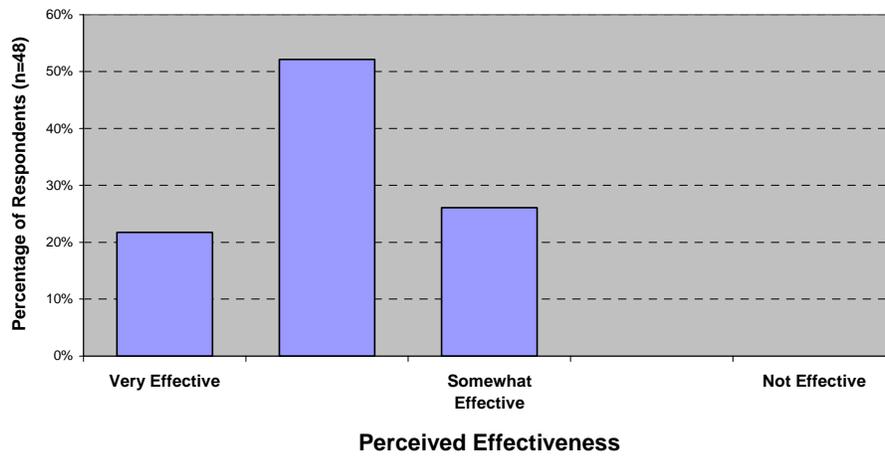
Question 7: How effective do you perceive the centre to be in terms of establishing community partnerships?



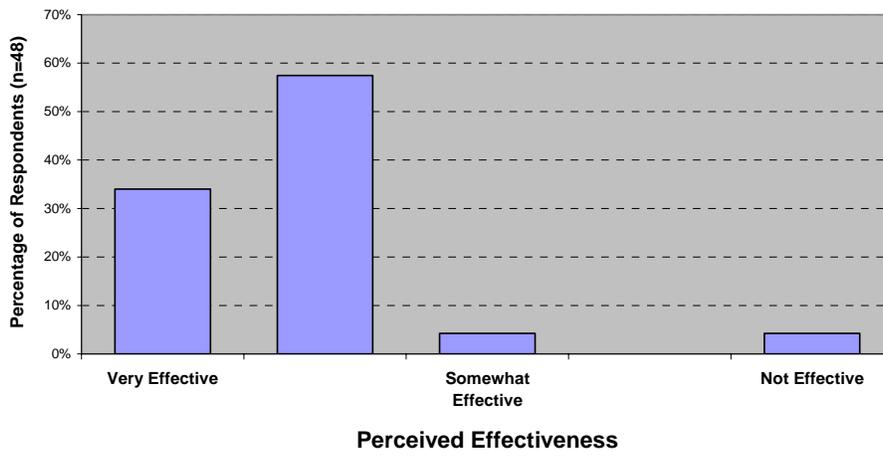
Question 8: How effective do you perceive the centre to be in terms of establishing academic partnerships?



Question 9: How effective do you perceive the centre to be in terms of funding partnerships?



Question 10: How effective do you perceive the centre to be in terms of establishing creative/innovative approaches to the work?



Question 11: How effective do you perceive the centre to be in terms of providing training and education opportunities?

