

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Migrant Mothers Project
Research Advisory Committee
Updated September 11, 2015

Preamble

The Migrant Mothers Project explores how Canadian immigration policies produce inequality that contributes to gender-based violence with a focus on people who identify as women and who have precarious immigration status in Canada (i.e. are not permanent residents or citizens).

The four objectives of this research are:

- 1) To examine how women with precarious immigration status negotiate rights for themselves and their children when seeking services and support related to gender-based violence;
- 2) To identify the ways in which changes in immigration policy are impacting access to permanent residency and the settlement of sponsored spouses/partners and people working in the Caregiver program;
- 3) To understand how immigration enforcement (deportation and removal from Canada) impact immigrant women's safety and access to support services;
- 4) To work with advocates and service providers across the provinces of Ontario and Alberta to identify regional similarities and differences across Canada.

The Research Advisory Committee is an important part of this research because they represent different bodies of knowledge significant to the lives and experiences of women with precarious status.

Purpose

The MMP Research Advisory Committee is designed to provide the infrastructure that is necessary for ongoing communication, relationship building and collaboration in our shared goal to understanding immigrant women and their experiences of violence and to strategizing ways to connect to both advocacy and policy with the goal of ending violence against immigrant women.

Mission Statement

"The MMP Research Advisory Committee is a network of researchers, service providers experts in the area of gender based violence, immigration and refugee policy and service provision to women who have precarious status and other community based organizations seeking to eliminate violence and exploitation against migrant women and children, through a variety of direct service initiatives, community mobilization, relationship building and clear communication structures"

Membership

The membership of the MMP Research Advisory Committee shall consist of the MMP Research Team (i.e. principal investigator, co-investigators, research assistants), community members and representatives of community-based organizations who are experts in the area of gender based violence, immigration and refugee policy, service provision to women who have precarious status and are committed to furthering the MMP mission.

Other community-based organizations may be formally approved and admitted to membership by the MMP Research Team, in consultation with the full MMP Research Advisory Committee.

The Structure of the Research Advisory Committee

The Research Advisory Committee will integrate the expertise of its subcommittees and the MMP Research Team.

Responsibilities of the Research Advisory Committee

The Research Advisory Committee serves as the steering and decision making group for the project. Each organization and individual that is part of the Research Advisory Committee is accountable to the Research Advisory Committee as a whole.

On occasion members of the Research Advisory Committee may wish to opt-out from responsibilities or their participation in certain activities which may conflict with their organizational mandates.

The Research Advisory Committee will meet a minimum of four times per year. The Sub-committees may meet more frequently.

The Research Advisory Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Committee is functioning and that its membership is such that it continues to bring experience and perspectives from the diversity of women in Toronto. The Research Advisory Committee will seek input from MMP staff and the Committee as a whole.

Division of Work

The Research Advisory Committee will divide the work according to the expertise among the RAC members.

The MMP Research Team is responsible for disseminating quarterly reports to the MMP RAC that will include: an updated budget report and a summary of completed, ongoing and future research activities. MMP Research Team is also responsible for coordinating RAC meetings and communication with RAC members.

Community Partners who are Members of the Research Advisory Committee are accountable for the performance of the tasks that they have agreed to, in a relationship that will be monitored by the Project Administrator in its role as an administrative entity.

Members of the Research Advisory Committee are expected to commit to the principles that underpin the Committee's collaborative work. Each member will commit to attend a minimum of two meetings per year. While unexpected changes in schedule may occur from time to time, after two unforeseen absences (i.e. if there has been no contact between the RAC member and the MMP Research Team) on the part of any one member, the other members will agree to point a person to contact the absent party. This is to ensure their continued participation in the Advisory Committee.

Sub-Committees

Sub-Committees will include members from the Research Advisory Committee who are working on specific tasks in line with the overarching goals. The specific goals of each sub-committee may change over time and will be updated accordingly by members of the sub-committee.

Current Sub-committees are:

- a) Data collection and analysis: This committee will work with the MMP Research Team to identify sources of data (i.e. CIC data; city-wide data) to inform the research objectives; this committee will also support the development of research data collections tools (i.e. interview guides, online survey questions);
- b) Community outreach: This committee will work with the MMP Research Team to develop ways to engage with women who are sponsored spouses or who work as Caregivers. Engagement may include: recruitment to the RAC, capacity building to take an active role in the research activities, or developing solidarity spaces/activities of women with precarious immigration status.

Responsibilities of Sub-Committees

Sub-Committees will play a key role in developing program plans and materials. The Sub-Committees will meet regularly to review and respond to any work or questions referred to it by the MMP Research Team and/or the Research Advisory Committee.

Sub-Committees will produce materials or program plans, in draft form, and will expect to receive feedback from the Research Advisory Committee. It is expected that the Sub-Committee will provide brief reports and seek advice from the Research Advisory Committee.

Project Administrator

The Project Administrator is Rupaleem Bhuyan, who is also the Principal Investigator for the Migrant Mothers Project. The Project Administrator will play a key role in the leadership and management of the Research Advisory Committee and Sub-Committees.

While all members of the Research Advisory Committee and Sub-Committees are equal partners and carry equal weight, the Project Administrator will have the responsibility to ensure network management and minutia is arranged appropriately for meetings.

Any contract relationship with any external funder will be monitored by the Project Administrator.

Decision-making process

While striving for consensus in all decisions, it is expected that conflict may arise, and be resolved via consensus. It is expected that resolution will occur through competent administration, coordination and facilitation, and the respectful conduct of individual members. Where disagreements are fundamental in nature, and cannot be resolved through consensus integrating discussion and reference to the principles and guidelines of the Research Advisory Committee, a voting process will be invoked.

The Project Administrator will be given one vote. All other MMP Research Team members will be non-voting members of the RAC. Each subscribed member of the Research Advisory Committee, who is an individual or representative of an organization, will be entitled to one vote.

All members of the Research Advisory Committee, Sub-Committees and Project Administrator are equal partners and carry equal weight. No organization carries a veto in regular decision-making, with the exception of those issues that could threaten the strict terms of fulfillment of the contract for any additional funding, in which case the Project Administrator reserves the right to act in accordance with its legal responsibility to any external funder.

Principles that Guide our Work

- ‘Woman’ is a fluid category in social practice that includes trans and non-gender conforming ways of being;
- Gendered inequality is systematic and reflects overlapping and intersecting forms of discrimination, including but not limited to that based on sex, gender identity, race, class, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, colour, political belief, cultural affiliation, legal status, ability, ethnicity and family status;
- Social justice requires the leadership and participation of women in society and in the decisions that affect their lives, families and communities;
- Programs must address gaps in available resources, important strategies and tools for service providers and be accessible to the diversity of women in Toronto;
- All partner organizations and individuals have an important role to play in this project and visibility should be shared under the banner of the MMP.

Intra-Project Communication and Support

All meetings of the Research Advisory Committee will be minuted and circulated to members. Provisions for accommodations/support to ensure equitable access to participation by all Committee members will be put in place, including wheelchair access, teleconference, travel costs, etc. Regular bulletins and communications will be circulated to all Committee members with the view of apprising them of the progress of the project and the opportunities for feedback.

Contact information (i.e. e-mail address) of the Research Advisory Committee members will be shared among RAC members in order to permit the dissemination of information relevant to the MMP research and community engagement goals.

Confidentiality

Members of the Research Advisory Committee and Sub-Committees shall not disclose any information about the Project that is deemed to be confidential –unless the Committee deems it ready and expresses permission to distribute information to the public.

ADENDEUM—Access to/dissemination of Data

(TO BE APPROVED AT DECEMBER MEETING)

The MMP Research Team will be responsible for collecting and maintaining research data under the supervision of the Project Administrator/Principal Investigator.

Usage of the data will be in accordance with our ethics protocol as approved by the University of Toronto and University of Calgary, and in accordance with the project's guiding principles.

Data will be used for:

- Advancement of knowledge
- Identification of future research questions
- Making recommendations for service provision and policy
- Informing advocacy goals

Data should not be used for:

- Individual interests that are not related to the goals of the research

Research data that is de-identified will be shared with the Community Advisory Committee to inform discussion of research design, analysis and to plan for future dissemination activities.

Community Advisory Committee members are encouraged to be involved in disseminating research findings through a variety of activities including:

- Community Forums
- Conference Presentations
- Agency workshops and Trainings
- Newsletters
- Opinion Pieces and News Articles
- Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles