

Continuing to Build Upon Existing Resources:
*A supplementary environmental scan of gender-based violence supports
across the settlement sector in Canada (2020-2022)*



Report prepared for the *National Settlement Sector Gender-Based Violence [Project](#)*

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Table of Contents

Project Background	3
Methodology	3
Highlights of Key Findings	4
1) The National Settlement Sector Gender-Based Violence Project's New Resources	4
<i>GBV Policy and Protocol Toolkit</i>	4
<i>National GBV Settlement Sector Strategy</i>	5
2) The Development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on GBV	5
<i>Women's Shelters Canada Report</i>	6
<i>Ending Violence Association of Canada Engagement Session Report</i>	7
3) The Impact of COVID-19 on GBV and the Settlement Sector	7
<i>Key Takeaways</i>	8
<i>CREVAW – Learning Network Briefs</i>	8
<i>Ending Violence Association of Canada & Anova</i>	10
<i>Newcomer Students' Association & Immigrant Women's National Network</i>	10
<i>Canadian Women's Foundation Report</i>	11
<i>OCASI Roundtables</i>	11
<i>OCASI SHECovery Report and Survey</i>	12
<i>Butterfly</i>	13
<i>Royal Society of Canada & Pathways to Prosperity Partnership</i>	14
<i>The Vanier Institute of the Family and the Mothers Matter Centre Report</i>	14
<i>Association for Canadian Studies Magazine</i>	15
4) Emerging Non-COVID-10 Research and Resources	16
Community Resources	16
<i>OCASI – Community Access Networks Reference Guide</i>	16
<i>Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan</i>	16
<i>Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership</i>	17
<i>Bhuyan et al. Report</i>	17
<i>Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative</i>	18
<i>Sheridan College</i>	18
<i>Statistics Canada Report</i>	18
Information Campaigns	19
<i>Men Like Me Campaign</i>	19
<i>Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters</i>	19
Conferences	19
<i>Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative Conference</i>	19
OCASI Online Courses	20
Conclusion	21
List of Resources	22

Project Background

In April 2019, four organizations from the anti-violence and settlement sectors partnered to begin collaborative work on developing a national strategy to address gender-based violence (GBV) for newcomers and refugees. These organizations were: the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth, Ending Violence Association of Canada (EVA CAN), Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), and the Elmwood Community Resource Centre. Together, they formed the National Settlement Sector Gender-Based Violence Project.

Led by Dr. Salina Abji, a smaller working group comprised of members from the four organisations completed an [Environmental Scan](#) for this project in December 2019. The scan was part of a broader needs assessment of the project. The objectives of this scan were:

- To document what currently exists in terms of GBV supports for newcomers and refugees across the settlement sector, including the degree of consultation and collaboration between settlement and anti-violence sectors.
- To identify potential gaps in supports with respect to four key areas identified in the project's theory of change: a national GBV settlement strategy; training and curriculum on GBV; promising procedures, protocols and practices (3Ps); and networks for workers who are 'championing' GBV issues in their organizations.
- To identify gaps in knowledge that can be addressed using the two other methods in this research i.e. a national survey of settlement and anti-violence workers and qualitative interviews with leaders in the field.

Dr. Abji and the research team reviewed and analysed over 230 publicly available materials for the scan. The team produced an extensive report addressing the objectives outlined above.

Methodology

This Environmental Scan is a supplementary review that outlines key developments and publications relating to both the settlement and anti-violence sectors from January 2020 to March 2022.

This review examined 90 documents published between January 2020 and March 2022. Research Consultant Ashley Major gathered all resources over a four-month period from November 2021 to March 2022. All materials were gathered using keyword searches of open-source materials and websites relating to the settlement sector and GBV against non-status, refugee, and immigrant women (NSRI). While there are many sources that pertain to either the anti-GBV sector or the settlement sector, this Environmental Scan includes only those resources that span both sectors in some manner.

The materials collected are saved in a repository that can be accessed by project partners.

Highlights of Key Findings

- 1) The National Settlement Sector Gender-Based Violence Project has begun to address a large gap identified by the 2019 environmental scan through its creation of the GBV Policy and Protocol Toolkit (still in Draft) and the National GBV Settlement Sector Strategy.
- 2) The forthcoming National Action Plan (NAP) on GBV will likely be an important tool for addressing GBV in immigrant and newcomer communities.
- 3) Much of the literature emerging out of the past two years focuses on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on GBV broadly. Further research must be conducted on the unique intersection between the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact upon GBV on NSRI individuals and communities.
- 4) New examples of non-COVID-19 research and resources that can continue to influence the research and work of this project have also emerged over the past two years.

1) The National Settlement Sector Gender-Based Violence Project's New Resources

Since the completion of the 2019 Environmental Scan, the National Settlement Sector Gender-Based Violence Project has started to address some of the gaps identified in this initial review. The project has created two resources of particular importance: 1) The GBV Policy and Protocol Toolkit; and 2) The National GBV Settlement Sector Strategy.

GBV Policy and Protocol Toolkit

The GBV Policy and Protocol Toolkit was designed to support staff working directly with newcomer, immigrant, or refugee clients impacted by or experiencing GBV.¹ The overarching purpose of the Toolkit is to enhance awareness of the need to include safety planning in organizational policies and protocols. Specifically, the Toolkit provides guidance to service providers on how to include client safety considerations in organizational GBV policies and protocols relating to:

- Physically and emotionally safe spaces for clients;
- GBV-informed and aware staff;
- Client-centred interactions;
- Risk assessment and safety planning; and
- Collaboration and referral

¹ CISSA, EVACAN, YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth & OCASI, "Gender-based Violence (GBV) Policy and Protocol Toolkit: Using a Safety Lens to Support Clients (Draft February 2022)", online: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MqhPERmO-3lBujaUXrW3WlV_39svD78Y/view.

National GBV Settlement Sector Strategy

The 2019 environmental scan identified the lack of a National GBV Settlement Strategy as a major policy gap. This project designed and published the National GBV Settlement Strategy (Settlement Sector Strategy) in April 2021.² As outlined by the Settlement Sector Strategy, collaboration between the anti-violence and settlement sectors has the potential to provide more intersectional, comprehensive services to survivors requiring supports in multiple areas.

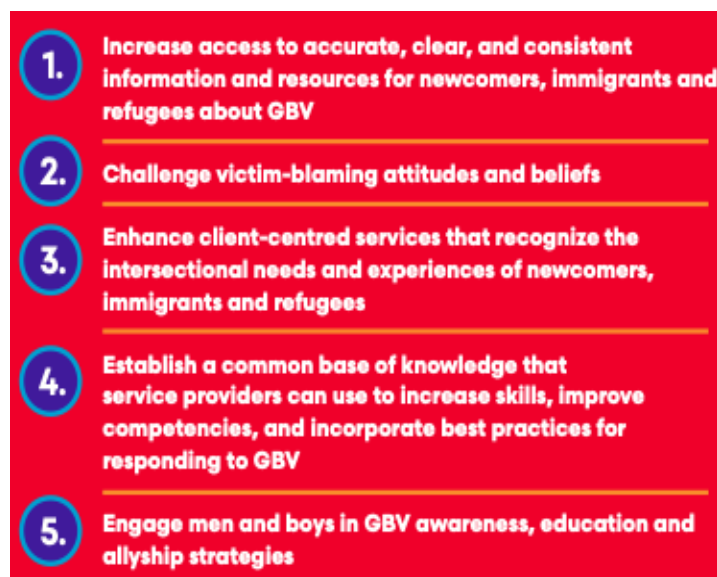


Figure 1

The Settlement Sector Strategy outlines five key priorities for the settlement and anti-violence sectors (See Figure 1). These priorities were identified through consultations with GBV experts and stakeholders in the settlement sector across the country.

The Strategy is underpinned by six guiding principles: Anti-racism; Anti-oppression; Cultural safety; Gender-based analysis; Intersectionality; and Trauma; and Violence-informed approaches.³

While the creation of the Settlement Sector Strategy is an important accomplishment, efforts must now be focused upon its proper implementation.

2) The Development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on GBV

Considerable progress has been made towards the development of a National Action Plan (NAP) on GBV since the publication of the 2019 Environmental Scan. The 2021 Federal Budget allocated \$601.3 million over five years for the creation of the NAP, and \$14 million over five years to WAGE to coordinate the NAP.⁴ In Spring 2021, several organizations led consultations regarding the creation of the NAP.⁵ Two of the organizations' findings and recommendations,

² YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth, "Gender-based Violence Settlement Sector Strategy" (2021), CISSA, EVACAN, YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth & OCASI, online: https://www.ngbv.ca/files/ugd/fb2f0c_9d08f8779c4f477d95a6a9e502074f6d.pdf [Settlement Sector Strategy].

³ Settlement Sector Strategy, Page 4.

⁴ Government of Canada, "Budget 2021: A Recovery Plan for Jobs, Growth, and Resilience" (19 April 2021), Department of Finance Canada, Pages 278 - 279, online: <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2021/home-accueil-en.html>.

⁵ OCASI also led consultations regarding the NAP. At the time of publication, a written summary of this consultation has not been made public. The YWCA also undertook broader consultations than what is reflected in the Ending Violence Association of Canada Report summarized below, but as of publication, a written summary of these consultations has not been published.

Women’s Shelters Canada and the Ending Violence Association of Canada, are explored below.

As of the time of publication of this Environmental Scan, the NAP has yet to be released. It is therefore too early to know the broader impact of these many consultations or how the Federal Government will engage with their recommendations. However, the fact that they were held is itself a positive step towards addressing GBV in NRSI communities – particularly given the extensive representation of anti-violence and settlement agencies at these consultations.

Women’s Shelters Canada Report

Women’s Shelters Canada (WSC) received funding from Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) to lead a strategic engagement process with GBV sector leaders.⁶ WSC made over 100 recommendations to the Federal government on proposed content for the NAP and key enactment strategies. Many of these recommendations touch upon GBV and the settlement sector, including:

- Dedicating funding to community-based organizations for interpreter and translation services for immigrant and refugee women experiencing GBV⁷;
- Improving immigration pathways for vulnerable immigrants, such as by prioritizing permanent residency for survivors of GBV⁸;
- Addressing discriminatory processes surrounding skills accreditation practices that increase vulnerabilities for immigrant women⁹;
- Committing to providing core, rather than program-based funding, to women’s and feminist organizations, including those that work directly with migrant, refugee and non-status women;¹⁰ and
- Grounding training for legal and justice professionals in the lived, intersectional experiences of NSRI women and other minorities¹¹.

⁶ Amanda Dale, Krysi Maki & Rotbah Nitia, “A Report to Guide the Implementation of a National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Gender Based Violence” (April 2021), Women’s Shelters Canada, online: <https://nationalactionplan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAP-Final-Report.pdf> [WSC Report].

⁷ WSC Report, Page 200.

⁸ WSC Report, Page 76.

⁹ WSC Report, Page 25.

¹⁰ WSC Report, Page 42.

¹¹ WSC Report, Page 64.

Ending Violence Association of Canada Engagement Session Report

The Ending Violence Association of Canada led a NAP engagement session and survey on behalf of YWCA Canada.¹² The purpose of the engagement session and survey was to specifically consider and address issues relating to sexual violence in the development of the NAP. This process related to sexual violence more broadly, not specifically against individuals in the settlement sector. However, certain responses and recommendations emerging from this process pertain to the settlement sector and may be influential in the development of the NAP.

For example, participants recommended abandoning all further appeals of the Safe Third Country Agreement, ending the policing of migrant sex workers, and ensuring that human trafficking legislation is not being weaponised against racialized and immigrant communities.¹³

The authors further explained that in their engagement,

“Particular attention was paid to groups with high levels of contact and engagement with marginalized and criminalized women, survivors accessing grassroots frontline services, and serving and/or advocating for survivors living with precarious status (immigrant/refugee, newcomer, non-status, etc.).”¹⁴

3) The Impact of COVID-19 on GBV and the Settlement Sector

The 2019 Environmental Scan was completed prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of the pandemic has been a central focus of many GBV and settlement organizations’ publications in the 2022 Environmental Scan. While the pandemic has posed difficulties for all, certain individuals and groups, including NSRI women experiencing GBV, have faced unique challenges.

This section explores important findings from these publications pertaining to the intersections of GBV and the settlement sector.¹⁵ Over the past two years, several organizations have conducted research on the impact of COVID-19 on NSRI women. Others have conducted research on rates and instances of gender-based violence more broadly,

¹² Ending Violence Association of Canada, “National Action Plan Community Engagement Initiative: Summary Report to YWCA Canada. Building a National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence: Identifying Priorities for Addressing Sexual Violence. Initial Summary of Findings” (2021), online: <https://endingviolencecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/EVA-Canada-SV-Engagement-Final-Report.pdf>.

¹³ Ending Violence Association of Canada Engagement Session, Pages 5, 19.

¹⁴ Ending Violence Association of Canada Engagement Session, Page 3.

¹⁵ Many, though not all of the resources in this section, focus upon the intersection of COVID-19 and GBV more broadly – with small carve-outs and analysis relating to NSRI women. The author has included these resources because of the unique challenges that COVID-19 has posed to GBV, while acknowledging the limitations of certain resources regarding the intersectional circumstances of NSRI women.

capturing information on NSRI women as part of their work. Others have researched the impact of the pandemic on the GBV and/or settlement sector itself.

Key Takeaways

- COVID-19 has exacerbated an already challenging environment, both for individual NSRI women experiencing GBV and the agencies that serve them.
- NSRI women and settlement agencies experienced unique challenges relating to GBV. These unique challenges should be researched more extensively and should form the basis of targeted recovery measures.
- There were some positives that emerged during the pandemic, such as expanded outreach due to virtual services. These positives should be incorporated as much as possible in future service provision.

CREVAW – Learning Network Briefs

In one brief, Centre for Violence Against Women – Learning Network (CREVAW Learning Network) explored how intersectional pathways led to higher levels of GBV in the pandemic.¹⁶ The brief highlighted the unique vulnerabilities of certain marginalized groups, including immigrants and refugees. They recommended that:

“Specific focus should be placed on avoiding potential sources of exclusion in GBV and health service provision. This can be accomplished, for instance, by strengthening access to referral pathways between diverse community-based services (such as services for immigrants and refugees, individuals with disabilities, and individuals experiencing housing precarity) and specialized GBV services and health services.”¹⁷

In another brief, the CREVAW Learning Network examined the intersection between Anti-Asian racism and violence during the pandemic, including specific forms of gender-based violence. The brief explored violence against immigrant and non-status Asian women, including sex workers. The brief also found that those with precarious immigration status are “are at an increased risk for labour exploitation, abuses, deportation threats, and surveillance.”¹⁸

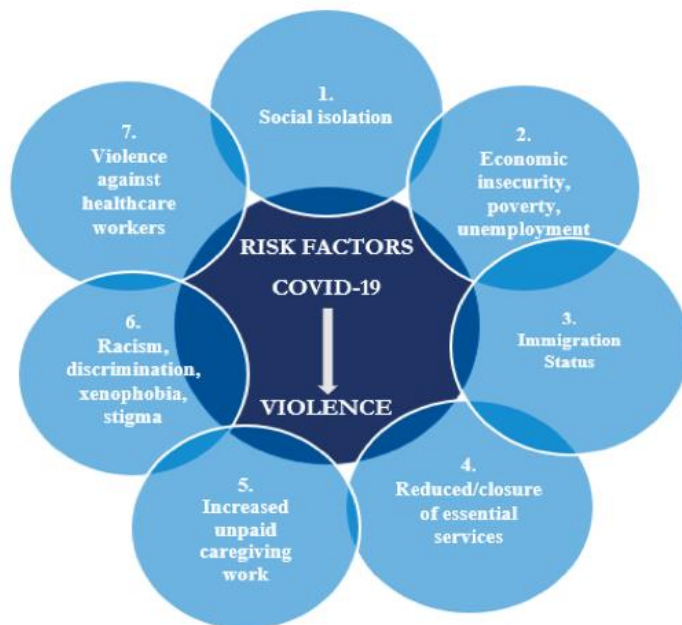
¹⁶ Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children – Learning Network, Women’s Shelter Canada, Ontario Association of Interval & Transition Houses, Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan, BC Society of Transition Houses, Alberta Council of Women’s Shelters & Manitoba Association of Women’s Shelters, “COVID-19 & Gender-Based Violence in Canada: Key Issues and Recommendations. Pathways to Violence and Barriers to Support During COVID-19: An Intersectional View” (2020), online: <https://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/docs/COVID-gbv-canada-recommendations.pdf>.

¹⁷ CREVAW 2020, Page 4.

¹⁸ Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women and Children – Learning Network, “Examining the Intersections of Anti-Asian Racism and Gender-Based Violence in Canada” (July 2021), Page 7, online:

Khanlou et al. Reports

A group of community researchers completed research with an objective to “understand the social determinants of mental health among racialized women and girls exposed to GBV during the pandemic”.¹⁹ The authors created an infographic detailing the broad risk factors for violence during the COVID-19 pandemic (below).²⁰



The authors also highlight the factors contributing to overarching vulnerabilities for immigrants, refugees, displaced persons, and those with precarious migration status may experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Such factors include stress relating to migration concerns, changes to support networks, changes to roles and responsibilities, and economic precarity.²¹

The authors further explain that immigrant and refugee women and girls may face barriers to

reporting GBV, including:

- ✓ *Fear of loss of children due to deportation*
- ✓ *Limited knowledge about their rights, and services available*
- ✓ *Discrimination and racism*²²

https://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/our-work/backgrounders/examining_the_intersections_of_antiasian_racism_and_genderbased_violence_in_canada_/Examining-the-Intersections-of-Anti-Asian-Racism-and-Gender-Based-Violence-in-Canada.pdf.

¹⁹ Nazilla Khanlou, Andrew Ssawe, Sajedah Zahraei, Jennifer Connolly, Soheila Pashang, Yvonne Bohr & Luz Maria Vasquez, “Gender-Based Violence and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Risk Factors and Systemic Challenges. Information Sheet 16, Office of Women’s Health Research Chair in Mental Health” (2020), Page 1, online: <https://cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/KHANLOU-information-sheet-2020-07-22.pdf>; See also Nazilla Khanlou, Andrew Ssawe, Luz Maria Vasquez, Soheila Pashang, Jennifer Connolly, Yvonne Bohr, Iris Epstein, Sajedah Zahraei, Farah Ahmad, Thumeka Mgwigwi & Negar Alamdar, “Covid-19 Pandemic Guidelines for Mental Health Support of Racialized Women at Risk of Gender-based Violence: Knowledge Synthesis Report (2020), online: https://covid19mentalhealthresearch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Khanlou_COVID19-Pandemic-guidelines-for-mental-health-support-of-racialized-women-at-risk-of-GBV.Nov2020.pdf.

²⁰ Khanlou et al., Information Sheet 16, Infographic, Page 1.

²¹ Khanlou et al., Information Sheet 16, Page 3.

²² Khanlou et al. Information Sheet 16, Page 3.

The authors also published a Toolkit for service providers on mental health supports for racialized women at risk of gender-based violence.²³

Ending Violence Association of Canada & Anova

Ending Violence Association of Canada & Anova disseminated a survey to front-line GBV service providers to determine how they were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. 376 staff and volunteers in the GBV sector completed this survey, including those working in the settlement sector.²⁴ Staff working in the settlement sector described some of the unique barriers that NSRI women experiencing violence faced during the pandemic:

“In newcomer communities, using computer/online platforms device skill is low and language is one of the barriers. It means virtual connections need more time and educational experience.”²⁵

“Huge implications for clients who in the process of obtaining status, with the courts/Immigration and Tribunal Board still closed, this limits these Survivors from financial means of moving forward with their life, such as receiving Child Tax, completing their Taxes, applying for social assistance, accommodations and job searching, etc. Also, trying to receive supports for their children, children, special needs supports etc.”²⁶

Newcomer Students’ Association & Immigrant Women’s National Network

The Newcomer Students’ Association and Immigrant Women’s National Network released “Ending the Silence”, a Policy Brief on the multifaceted, unmet needs of GBV survivors.²⁷ Ending the Silence is particularly focused on GBV in refugee and immigrant communities, including during COVID-19. The authors identified a systemic policy gap:

“There is a need to raise awareness of GBV within newcomer and immigrant families. In many racialized communities, patriarchal mindsets and male-dominant behaviours are pervasive. Families are currently not a part, either of solution-building or any interventions that may help in creating preventive paradigms. Cross-cultural

²³ Nazilla Khanlou, Andrew Ssawe, Jennifer Connolly, Soheila Pashang, Yvonne Bohr, Sajedah Zahraei, & Luz Maria Vazquez, “Mental Health Supports for Racialized Women at Risk of Gender-Based Violence. A Toolkit for Service Providers and Advocates” (2020), online:

https://nkhanlou.info.yorku.ca/files/2020/11/Khanlou_Mental-health-supports-Toolkit.Nov2020.pdf?x68747.

²⁴ AnnaLise Trudell & Erin Whitmore “Pandemic Meets Pandemic: Understanding the Impacts of COVID-19 on Gender-based Violence Services and Survivors in Canada” (2020), Ending Violence Association of Canada & Anova, online: <https://endingviolencecanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/FINAL.pdf>.

²⁵ Ending Violence Association of Canada & Anova Report, Page 13.

²⁶ Ending Violence Association of Canada & Anova Report, Page 13.

²⁷ Alka Kumar, Sihwa Kim & Sara Asalya, “Ending the Silence: Policy Brief” (2021), Newcomer Students’ Association & Immigrant Women’s National Network, online: <https://newcomerstudentsassociation.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/policy-brief-ending-the-silence-v3.pdf>.

education and outreach, with focus on families-elders and community leaders, men and boys- in a community setting, are missing. Secrecy and silence prevail in domestic matters, especially in relation to IPV and GBV as family values and honour systems are at stake. Creating supportive relational networks based in cross-cultural understanding, with respected insiders championing change, acknowledging, and taking ownership that the problem exists, can play an important role to strengthen informal support networks. This in turn can lead to long term behavioural change and transformation.”²⁸

The brief concludes with several intersectional policy recommendations for addressing GBV, informed by the lived GBV experiences of immigrants, refugees, non-status, and asylum-seeking women.

Canadian Women’s Foundation Report

The Canadian Women’s Foundation and several partners released a series of reports on the impact of COVID-19 upon gender equality.²⁹ One of these reports specifically examines the impact of COVID-19 on GBV.³⁰ The report explores the violence police have committed against migrant sex workers.³¹ It further explores the impact of state oppression against migrant and immigrant women, as well as the way that the pandemic has exacerbated such marginalization.³²

OCASI Roundtables

From April to October 2020, OCASI held a series of virtual national roundtables on the impact of COVID-19 and GBV on NSRI individuals across Canada.³³ These roundtables were part of the Building Leadership Capacity to Address Gender-Based Violence Against Non-Status, Refugee and Immigrant Women project. The overarching theme that emerged from the roundtables was “This was already a crisis”, as the settlement sector had been in a precarious position long before the arrival of COVID-19.

The roundtables offered extensive insight into the challenges posed by COVID-19 for organizations across Canada. They highlighted the ways in which these organizations can

²⁸ Ending the Silence, Page 5.

²⁹ To access all reports, see the Canadian Women’s Foundation website, “Resetting Normal Reports”, online: <https://canadianwomen.org/resetting-normal/>.

³⁰ Canadian Women’s Foundation, Women’s Shelters Canada, Pauktuutit, Inuit Women of Canada, Anita Olsen Harper & Jihan Abbas, “Resetting Normal: Systemic Gender-Based Violence and the Pandemic” (2020), online: https://fw3s926r0g42i6kes3bxg4i1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/20-08-CWF-ResettingNormal-Report3_v5.pdf.

³¹ Canadian Women’s Foundation Report, Page 18.

³² Canadian Women’s Foundation Report, Pages 25-26.

³³ OCASI et al., “Intersectional Impact of COVID-19 and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against Non-status, Refugee and Immigrant (NSRI) Across Canada” (2020), online: <https://ocasi.org/sites/default/files/consolidated-virtual-roundtable-summaries.pdf>

work to centre NSRI women’s experiences and knowledge in their advocacy. See some of the main themes that emerged from these discussions depicted in the visual below:



Figure 3

OCASI SHEcovery Report and Survey

Researchers on behalf of the OCASI Women’s Caucus³⁴ studied the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women-serving-women-led settlement organizations (WSWL) in Ontario.³⁵ This research was specifically focused upon COVID-19’s systemic, organizational impact rather than on its impact upon clients. The researchers completed an extensive literature review on both the pre-existing inequities in the settlement sector and the intensified impact of COVID-19 upon the sector and its clients. The researchers also conducted qualitative interviews with

³⁴ The OCASI Women’s Caucus comprises the 38 WSWL Organizations that are part of OCASI.

³⁵ Salina Abji, Ashley Major & Roshni Khemraj, “Leading the Settlement SHEcovery: Advancing an Intersectional Pandemic Recovery by Investigating in Women-serving-women-led Organizations in Ontario’s Refugee-and-immigrant-serving Sector” (2021), OCASI Women’s Caucus Research Report, online: <https://ocasi.org/sites/default/files/abji-major-khemraj-2021-for-ocasi.pdf>.

23 individuals representing WSWL settlement organizations across Ontario, many of which work with survivors of GBV. The key findings included:

- WSWL organizations quickly adapted their operations in response to COVID-19. Some of these changes, including services adapted to an online format, were positive for certain clients as it allowed broader forms of access;
- WSWL organizations also used their specialized knowledge of systemic barriers and the intersectional client needs to identify and respond to critical gaps in public health measures; and
- These organizations can play a vital role in recovery by:
 - Contributing their specialized knowledge
 - Leveraging their networks and relationships of care; and
 - Drawing from their lived experiences to lead and inform systemic change.³⁶

OCASI also conducted a quantitative survey about the impact of COVID-19 on organizations in the OCASI Women’s Caucus.³⁷ The survey explored the impact of COVID-19 on services and programs, human resources, and organizational finances. It further explored the actions taken by the organizations and their future plans to address the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Butterfly

Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network) conducted community-based research on the impact of COVID-19 upon Asian and migrant workers and sex workers.³⁸ 106 workers from the Greater Toronto Area participated in Butterfly’s survey. The report examines the intersecting factors that led to migrant workers and migrant sex workers’ vulnerabilities during the pandemic.

While the report is not specifically focused upon GBV, the authors highlight the rise in anti-Asian racism and discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic.³⁹ Butterfly received more than 500 calls and texts from workers fearing for their health and safety at the start of the

³⁶ OCASI Women’s Caucus Research Report, Page 36.

³⁷ OCASI, “Women’s Caucus Survey Findings” (2021), online: <https://ocasi.org/sites/default/files/presentation-ocasi-women-s-caucus-survey-finding-2021.pdf>.

³⁸ Butterfly (Asian and Migrant Sex Workers Support Network), “How are Asian and Migrant Workers in Spas, Holistic Centres, Massage Parlours and the sex Industry Affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic” (2020), online: https://576a91ec-4a76-459b-8d05-4ebbf42a0a7e.filesusr.com/ugd/5bd754_bacd2f6ecc7b49ebb3614a8aef3c0f5f.pdf.

³⁹ Butterfly, Page 3.

pandemic.⁴⁰ Some participants indicated that they felt worried they would be bullied or attacked for wearing a mask.⁴¹ The authors explain the intersectional oppressions:

“Asian workers are facing oppression and inequality: racism, gender inequality, whorephobia and xenophobia.”⁴²

Royal Society of Canada & Pathways to Prosperity Partnership

The Royal Society of Canada, in collaboration with the Pathways to Prosperity Partnership, published a policy brief on the vulnerabilities in the Canadian immigration system that were highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors made several recommendations for improving the system. One recommendation specific to the issue of GBV in the settlement sector was:

“To address the elevated incidents of family violence among newcomers during the pandemic, it would also be useful for IRCC to collaborate with the settlement sector to develop settlement-informed multilingual domestic violence supports. This should include a national sector capacity building approach between IRCC and the sector with the creation of training and tools to increase settlement staff ability to appropriately support newcomers experiencing family and domestic violence.”⁴³

The authors further made recommendations specifically for the settlement sector. Within this section, the authors recommended that the provincial and federal governments provide targeted funding to support socially-isolated immigrant women at an increased risk of family violence, within a larger gender-responsive COVID-19 plan. Such a plan should include considerations for women living in smaller, rural, and remote communities.⁴⁴

The Vanier Institute of the Family and the Mothers Matter Centre Report

The Vanier Institute of the Family and the Mothers Matter Centre conducted a study on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted 341 newcomer and refugee mothers across Canada.⁴⁵ The report’s findings do not specifically include mention of GBV, though in one question, 91.8% of respondents answered that they felt safe in their homes and 4.3% answered that they did not.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ Butterfly, Page 3.

⁴¹ Butterfly, Page 3.

⁴² Butterfly, Page 3.

⁴³ Victoria Esses, Jean McRae, Naomi Alboim, Natalya Brown, Chris Friesen, Leah Hamilton, Aurelie Lacassange, Audrey Macklin & Margaret Walton-Roberts, “Supporting Canada’s COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery Through Robust Immigration Policy and Programs” (2021), Royal Society of Canada, Page 60, online: https://rsc-src.ca/sites/default/files/Immigration%20PB_EN.pdf.

⁴⁴ Royal Society of Canada Report, Page 86.

⁴⁵ N Battams., & M. Hilbrecht, “COVID-19 Impacts: Newcomer and Refugee Mothers in Canada – Final Report” (2022). The Vanier Institute of the Family and Mothers Matter Centre, online: <https://bit.ly/3oqfu2c>.

⁴⁶ Vanier Institute and Mothers Matter Centre, Page 17.

The report did examine many of the factors identified in other literature as potentially contributing to GBV in NRSI communities, including financial stress, changes to mental and physical health, changes to support systems, and changes in connections to outside supports.

Association for Canadian Studies Magazine

The Association for Canadian Studies published a magazine special on the impact of COVID-19 on immigrants, immigration, and the settlement sector.⁴⁷ The magazine explored the impact of the pandemic through articles allocated under five main sections:

- (1) Background, Concepts & Data;
- (2) Disproportionate Impact: Structural Problems & Solutions;
- (3) Health: Safety, Access & Vulnerability;
- (4) Fertile Ground for Racism; and
- (5) Community Strategies and Experiences

Although most of these resources were written by academics, the authors have connections to many grassroots and non-governmental organizations conducting advocacy in the settlement sector. One of the magazine's articles explored COVID-19, intersectionality, and domestic violence more specifically.⁴⁸ The authors stated:

“Our findings imply that structural changes aimed at improving immigrant women’s employment participation and income security are crucial to consider during and post-COVID-19 to reduce the risk of violence and its associated deleterious consequences. It is well-documented that immigrant populations have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and that immigrant women, who are more likely to be precariously employed, are among the most economically vulnerable... Pro-active and innovative responses are needed to identify and respond to the needs of women at risk of abuse who may be socially isolated at this time.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Association for Canadian Diversity, “Immigration in the time of Pandemic: Confronting the Challenge”, *Canadian Diversity* (2020) 17(3), online: <https://acs-metropolis.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/canadiandiversity-vol17-no3-2020-d3549.pdf>.

⁴⁸ See Ilene Hyman & Bilkis Vissandjee, “COVID-19, Intersectionality and Concerns about Violence in the Home”, *Canadian Diversity*, Page 36-38.

⁴⁹ See Ilene Hyman & Bilkis Vissandjee, “COVID-19, Intersectionality and Concerns about Violence in the Home”, *Canadian Diversity*, Page 36-38.

4) Emerging Non-COVID-10 Research and Resources

The following resources are examples of non-COVID-19 and resources and research that have emerged over the past two years. The documents are separated into community resources, conferences, and courses.

Community Resources

OCASI – Community Access Networks Reference Guide

OCASI released a Reference Guide for Community Networks as part of its Building Leadership Capacity to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) against NSRI women across Canada project.⁵⁰ The purpose of the guide is to share information and facilitate knowledge exchange amongst grassroots community advocates, organizations, and survivors.

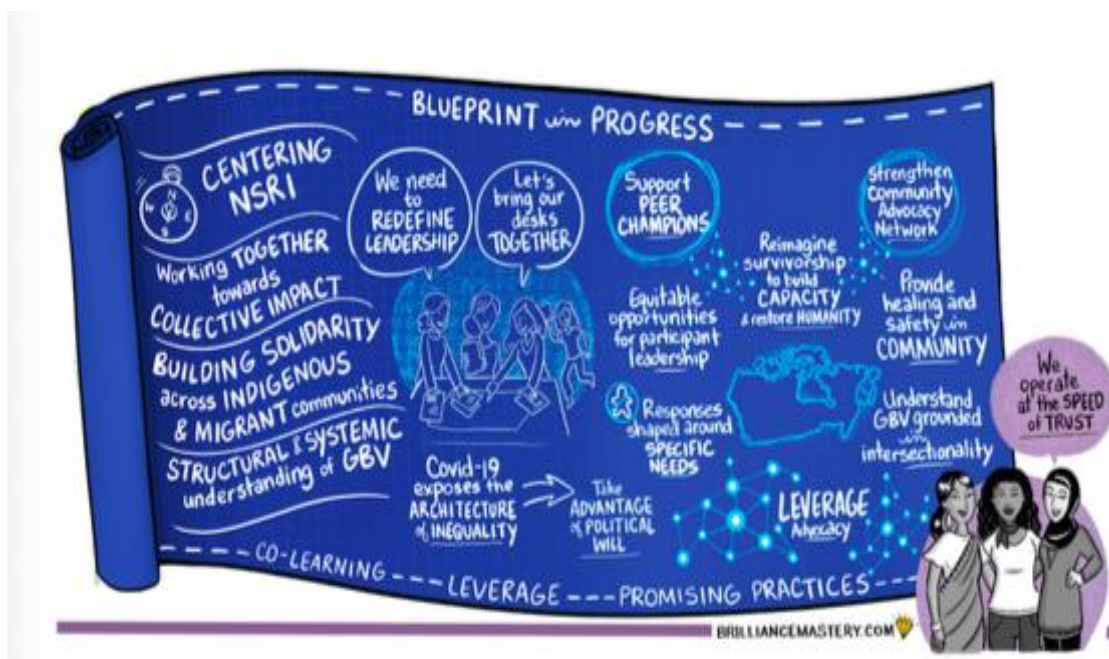


Figure 4

Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan

In 2020, the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) published the study “Needs of Newcomer Women Who Experience Intimate Partner Violence: Adjusting to Life in the Prairies”.⁵¹ The study sought answers to the following four questions:

⁵⁰ OCASI, “The Role of Community Advocacy Networks in Addressing Gender Based Violence against Non-Status, Refugee and Immigrant Women Across Canada: What can we do Together?” (2021), online: <https://ocasi.org/sites/default/files/can-reference-guide-digital-sep-21.pdf>.

⁵¹ Crystal Giesbrecht, Alisa Watkinson, Daniel Kikulwe, Christa Sato, Anahit Falihi, Michael Baffoe & David Este, “Needs of Newcomer Women Who Experience Intimate Partner Violence: Adjusting to New Life in the

1) *What are Newcomer women’s experiences with IPV and the consequences for them and their children in the Prairie Provinces?*

2) *What are the formal (institutions such as shelters) and informal service (including family, friends, places of worship, and cultural groups/association) barriers Newcomer women face when seeking services and/or supports associated with IPV?*

3) *What are the formal and informal interventions that work or do not work for Newcomer women who experience IPV?*

4) *How do service providers respond to challenges of IPV as experienced by Newcomer women, and what do they think can improve services and supports?⁵²*

The four overarching themes that emerged from the research were: experiences of migration chaos; isolation and dependence; deception and threats; and patriarchal pressures carried out by partners, families, and cultural communities.⁵³

Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership

The Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership’s Women Against Violence Action Group updated its GBV toolkit for front-line service providers, with a 4th edition released in 2020 and an updated 5th edition released in 2021.⁵⁴ Though drafted by those in the settlement sector, the guides are for GBV practitioners more broadly and are not focused specifically on GBV against NSRI women.

Bhuyan et al. Report

In another resource, community activists published a report, “Transformative Resilience Through Collective Action: A Study on Migrant Organizing in Toronto”. This report examined and addressed three primary questions:

1. *How and why do migrant communities self-organize collective actions?*
2. *What are the effective strategies for organizing within migrant communities?*

Prairies” (2020), Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS), online: <https://pathssk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Newcomer-Women-IPV-Prairies-2020.pdf>.

⁵² PATHS, li.

⁵³ PATHS, lv.

⁵⁴ Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership, “Gender Based Violence: First Responder Toolkit for Frontline Staff. 4th edition” (2021), online: <https://www.torontowestlip.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WAVToolkit5Edition2021.pdf>.

3. *How does migrant collective action promote individual, community, and transformative resilience?*⁵⁵

This important resource highlights the important need to support survivor-centred and survivor-led initiatives. While not focused specifically on GBV in NSRI communities, this research provides important insight into engaging with survivors and migrant community movements.

Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative

In a brief, the Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative (CDHPI) explored the unique risk factors of four high risk populations: children exposed to domestic violence; Rural, Northern and Remote populations; Indigenous populations; and immigrants and refugees.⁵⁶ The brief highlights that for immigrants and refugees, language issues, cultural issues, isolation, fear and distrust of the police and Government, and stress and trauma are risk factors for domestic homicide.⁵⁷

Sheridan College

Researchers at Sheridan College wrote a book of case studies on violence in immigrant communities.⁵⁸ The chapters are meant to act as guides for social workers and family lawyers working with NSRI women experiencing violence. The book explores 15 case studies and includes an extensive literature review on violence in immigrant communities.

Statistics Canada Report

A recent report by Statistics Canada examined rates of intimate partner violence amongst visible minority women in Canada.⁵⁹ The report found that one in four (26%) visible minority immigrant women reported experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime.⁶⁰ Reported rates were lower when compared with visible minority non-immigrant women

⁵⁵ Rupaleem Bhuyan, Tenzin Chime, Alisha Alam & Andrea Bobadilla, "Transformative Resilience Through Collective Action: A Study on Migrant Organizing in Toronto" (2021), Building Migrant Resilience in Cities, online, Page 5: <https://bmrc-irmu.info.yorku.ca/files/2021/09/Transformative-Resilience-Research-Report.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Gena Dufour & Diane Crocker, "Domestic Violence Safety Planning, Risk Assessment and Management: Perspectives from Service Providers in Nova Scotia. Domestic Homicide Brief 10" (October 2020), Page 13, online: http://cdhpi.ca/sites/cdhpi.ca/files/201030_Brief%2010%20EN.pdf.

⁵⁷ Dufour & Crocker, Pages 14-15.

⁵⁸ Ferzana Chaze, Bethany Osborne, Archana Medhekar & Purnima George, "Domestic Violence in Immigrant Communities: Case Studies" (2020), *Books & Chapters* 8, online: https://source.sheridancollege.ca/fahcs_books/8/.

⁵⁹ Adam Cotter, "Intimate Partner Violence: Experiences of Visible Minority Women in Canada, 2018" (2021), Statistics Canada, online: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/85-002-x/2021001/article/00008-eng.pdf?st=ejBC2sKM>.

⁶⁰ Statistics Canada, Page 6.

(47%) and non-visible-minority non-immigrant women (48%). However, the report notes that this research was conducted only in French and English. As not all immigrant women speak either French or English fluently, the research may not fully reflect the experiences of immigrants in Canada.⁶¹

Information Campaigns

Men Like Me Campaign

The Mothers Matter Centre released a video campaign raising awareness about violence against women in refugee and immigrant communities. Partnering with White Ribbon Canada, the campaign explores the important, positive roles that men in these communities have in preventing such violence.⁶²

Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters

In 2021, the Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters (MAWS) launched an awareness campaign with multilingual instructional videos for immigrant, newcomer, and refugee women and families experiencing GBV. The campaign, #YouAreNotAlone, released videos in Arabic, English, Mandarin, Persian, and Punjabi.⁶³

MAWS also launched another project in 2021 that provides intersectional gender-based violence supports and services for underrepresented women, including immigrant, newcomer, and refugee women.⁶⁴ The project, called Centering the Rights of Women on the Margins, takes a human-rights based approach that centres the experiences and unique needs of survivors when designing and delivering services.

Conferences

Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative Conference

The Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative held a four-day online conference from May 11th to May 14th, 2021, entitled "Preventing Domestic Homicide: From Research and Lived Experiences to Practice. Focus on Indigenous; Immigrant and Refugee; Rural,

⁶¹ Statistics Canada, Page 6.

⁶² Mothers Matter Centre, "Men Like Me Campaign" (2022), online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aWrbliSgEY>.

⁶³ Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters, "#YouAreNotAlone", online: https://maws.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/yana-slideposter-2_1nov2021-1.pdf.

⁶⁴ Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters, "Centering the Rights of Women from the Margins", online: <https://maws.mb.ca/centering-the-rights-of-women-from-the-margins/>.

Remote and Northern Populations; and Children”.⁶⁵ Three panels offered particularly relevant insights on GBV against NSRI women:

- Service providers’ perspectives on the implications and complexity of DV and homicide risk assessments for service provision within immigrant/refugee communities;⁶⁶
- Immigrant and refugee perspectives on gaps in services and strategies for preventing domestic violence in homicide⁶⁷; and
- Pre and post-migration stress and trauma as possible factors for IPV in immigrant/refugee communities.⁶⁸

OCASI Online Courses

OCASI offers several courses⁶⁹ bridging the intersection between GBV and settlement for practitioners to complete. New courses since 2020 include:

Building Indigenous-Migrant Solidarity: A focus on GBV

- *A 5-module course for settlement workers to learn of the commonalities and differences between racialized NSRI and Indigenous people*

Bridges to Safety

- *A 6-week course for workers in the settlement sector to recognize and respond to GBV to meet the needs of NRSI people*

⁶⁵ Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative, Conference Program: “Preventing Domestic Homicide: From Research and Lived Experiences to Practice. Focus on Indigenous; Immigrant and Refugee; Rural, Remote and Northern Populations; and Children” (11-14 May 2021), online:

<http://www.cdhipi.ca/sites/cdhipi.ca/files/Conference%20Program%20-%20EN.pdf>.

⁶⁶ See the slides for this presentation by Abir Al Jamal, Meineka Kulasinghe, Sarah Yercich & Kate Rossiter, “Service Providers’ Perspective on the Complexity of Domestic Violence and Homicide Risk Assessments, and its Implications for Service Provision Within Immigrant and Refugee Communities” (12 May 2021), online:

http://www.cdhipi.ca/sites/cdhipi.ca/files/Day%202_Service%20perspectives%20on%20the%20complexity%20of%20DV.pdf.

⁶⁷ See the slides for the presentation by Kate Rossiter, Abir Al Jamal, Sarah Yercich, Misha Dhillon, Mohammed Baobaid, Sepali Geruge and Margaret Jackson, “Immigrant and Refugee Survivors’ Perspectives on Help-Seeking, Gaps in Services, and Strategies for Preventing Severe Domestic Violence and Homicide” (13 May 2021), online:

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⁶⁹ OCASI, “Online Training”, online: <https://ocasi.org/gender-based-violence>.

Conclusion

This Environmental Scan highlights the research and resources that have emerged from January 2020 – March 2022. Many of these resources engage with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic – an issue that was not present in the 2019 Environmental Scan. Other resources have begun to address some of the gaps identified in the 2019 Environmental Scan, including the National Settlement GBV Strategy and the Draft GBV Policy and Protocol Toolkit created by this project. These resources are promising examples of collaborative problem solving and information sharing at the grassroots level. While the National Action Plan on GBV has yet to be implemented, several important steps have also been taken towards reaching this goal over the past two years.

However, some of the key challenges and gaps identified in the 2019 Environmental Scan remain. Oftentimes, the intersectional needs and realities of NSRI women experiencing GBV are not explored in depth in GBV research and advocacy. Some resources addressing GBV include only passing reference to NSRI women. Others fail to engage with the intersectional differences that may arise for the women under this umbrella term.

Our hope is that this Environmental Scan can help to facilitate further knowledge exchange and information sharing that may continue to address gaps and influence meaningful policy change.

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