



# A Coordinated Community Response to Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Experienced by Immigrant and Newcomer Women in New Brunswick.

Needs Assessment Report  
December, 2016

**Prepared by:**  
Ginette Gautreau  
Project Coordinator, NBMC

**Authored by:**  
Catherine Holtmann, University of New Brunswick (UNB)  
Maria Costanza Torri, UNB  
Tracey Rickards, UNB  
Crestina Matta, UNB

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PROJECT .....	3
1.2. EXPECTED RESULTS .....	4
1.3. PROJECT ACTIVITIES .....	5
<b>2. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OF THE NEW BRUNSWICK MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL TO IMPLEMENT A GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>3. ISSUE AND COMMUNITY ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
3.1. STAKEHOLDERS .....	7
3.2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
<b>4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>15</b>
4.1. CONSULTATIONS .....	15
4.2. CURRENT SITUATION .....	16
4.2.1. <i>Analysis of Data from Immigrant Women (N=18)</i> .....	16
4.2.2. <i>Analysis of Data from Public Service Providers (N=54)</i> .....	25
4.2.3. <i>Commonalities in Barriers to a Community Coordinated Response to D/IPV Identified by Immigrant Women and Public Service Providers</i> .....	32
4.2.4. <i>Differences in Barriers to a Community Coordinated Response to D/IPV Identified by Immigrant Women and Public Service Providers</i> .....	33
<b>5. KEY FINDINGS – SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>34</b>
5.1. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS.....	34
<b>6. BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>36</b>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

This 36 month project aims to improve service responses for immigrant and newcomer women who are victims of domestic and intimate partner violence (D/IPV) in New Brunswick. Through partnerships, a coordinated community response will be developed between provincial government departments, domestic violence support-service providers, immigrant serving organizations and community partners, incorporating the lens of immigrant and newcomer women's experiences throughout the project. The learnings from this project will be integrated into future provincial strategies to address D/IPV experienced by immigrant and newcomer women.

The two guiding objectives of the project, approved under the Status of Women Canada (SWC) call for proposal: *Working in Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls*, are:

- To assess and understand the current systemic and structural barriers as well as the state of public services relating to immigrant and newcomer women experiencing D/IPV in New Brunswick; and
- To work with key stakeholders across the province to develop and implement a coordinated response to D/IPV experienced by immigrant and newcomer women in New Brunswick. This includes, educating public service providers about the complexities, increased risk, and barriers to safety faced by immigrant and newcomer women in violent relationships, as well as building the capacity of NB immigrant and newcomer women to share their experiences and assist in the development of culturally sensitive D/IPV interventions.

This project's activities are provincial in scope, and the Project Team has selected specific communities that represent the diversity of immigrant and newcomer populations in New Brunswick, represent a cross-section of the province based on population density and language (urban vs. rural; English vs. French), and have existing capacity and relationships with the multicultural associations in the regions chosen. The communities selected are Greater Moncton and Southeastern New Brunswick, Bathurst and the Acadian Peninsula, Saint John and Fundy Region.

The Project team is made up of the following people:

- Ginette Gautreau, Project Manager – New Brunswick Multicultural Council
- Alex LeBlanc - New Brunswick Multicultural Council
- Shelley Murray - Women's Equality Branch, Government of New Brunswick
- Stephanie Sanford - Department of Justice and Public Safety, Government of New Brunswick
- Maria Costanza Torri - University of New Brunswick
- Catherine Holtmann - Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre, University of New Brunswick
- Tracey Rickards - University of New Brunswick

- Phylomène Zangio - Independent Consultant
- Fiona Williams - Liberty Lane Second Stage Housing
- Hyasinter Rugoro - Independent Consultant
- Carole Tremblay – Multicultural Association of Chaleur Region
- Diedre Smith – Community Outreach Worker
- Sue Calhoun, Project Evaluator – Independent Consultant

## 1.2. EXPECTED RESULTS

<b>Planned Results</b>	
<b>Short Term</b>	<b>Medium Term</b>
Stakeholders have increased knowledge of the service delivery barriers faced by immigrant women experiencing D/IPV	An immigrant lens has been incorporated into the province-wide Coordinated Community Response to D/IPV resulting in lasting systemic changes
Stakeholders have identified promising practices and enhancements to access and services for immigrant women experiencing D/IPV	Stakeholders and communities are actively engaged in eliminating and reducing D/IPV through the delivery of a new coordinated response to ensure continuous access and quality service delivery for immigrant women experiencing D/IPV
Stakeholders have an increased ability to work collaboratively in better supporting immigrant women experiencing D/IPV	

The overall expected results of the project are to:

- Enhance the capacity of NB immigrant and newcomer women to share their stories about D/IPV violence and to connect with each other;
- Build bridges in terms of understanding and information sharing between D/IPV violence and immigrant service providers, and immigrant and newcomer women;
- Increase understanding about issues surrounding D/IPV violence amongst immigrants and newcomers;
- Produce coordinated community response tools and resources to continue the collaborative work between all stakeholders to ensure continuity after the project's completion.

### 1.3. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The project is expected to be implemented in six phases over the three years:

#### Key Activity A - Partnerships and Collaboration:

The Project Manager has worked to establish partnerships and collaborative relationships with stakeholders across the province, as well as building the Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) with immigrant women, in conjunction with the Project Team, to ensure that all activities completed throughout this project are collaborative and engage the relevant community stakeholders and service providers.

#### Key Activity B - Needs Assessment:

Individual interviews have been carried out with immigrant women having different backgrounds, and focus groups have been conducted with both immigrant women and service providers in order to i) understand the current knowledge and experience in serving immigrant and newcomer women who experience D/IPV; and to ii) identify collaborative strategies to reduce and/or eliminate D/IPV against immigrant women.

#### Key Activity C - Choosing an Option:

The Project Team will evaluate the findings of the Needs Assessment to identify a range of options based on the perspectives of immigrant women and service providers. These options will be presented to stakeholders in consultation sessions in each project site to ensure buy-in and support from all involved, and to reduce the risk of oversights and gaps.

#### Key Activity D - Strategy and Implementation:

The Strategy and Implementation phase will involve ongoing collaboration with partners, service providers and stakeholders from each project site in the development of a coordinated community response model specific to immigrant women experiencing D/IPV. The chosen strategy will foster collaboration between stakeholders to address structural barriers, raise awareness of relevant policies, highlight gaps in services and existing communication barriers, and promote promising practices and interventions.

#### Key Activity E - Knowledge Sharing:

All key findings, knowledge and insights generated, including recommendations for future collaboration and coordination, will be shared with direct and indirect stakeholders throughout the province. This is an essential step to ensure the sustainability and continuation of the project's success beyond the end of its funding period.

#### Key Activity F - Project Evaluation:

An evaluation process will be developed in consultation with a third party evaluator at the beginning of the project to be implemented throughout the entire project ensuring relevant data collection and measurement strategies.

## **2. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY OF THE NEW BRUNSWICK MULTICULTURAL COUNCIL TO IMPLEMENT A GENDER EQUALITY PROJECT**

The New Brunswick Multicultural Council (NBMC) is a bilingual non-profit umbrella organization, which supports and represents immigrant-serving agencies, multicultural and ethno-cultural associations across New Brunswick. Its mandate is to facilitate member, government and community efforts to make New Brunswick the province of choice for both newcomers and residents through enhancing the economic, social and cultural value of diversity. The NBMC secretariat is located in Fredericton, but through its large network of 16 member agencies, its reach spreads across all corners of the province. As such, the Council is in a unique position to reflect the diversity of voices within the province-wide immigration and multicultural sector.

The promotion of equality and social inclusion is central to all of NBMC's work, with all programs and projects designed to highlight the values of respect, empowerment and cultural diversity. Through its work, NBMC seeks to bolster the voices of communities that are traditionally underrepresented at the decision making tables, such as those of immigrant women, refugees and newcomers, visible minorities, francophone immigrants and immigrants in both rural and urban settings – each with their own unique challenges and opportunities. In addition, the Council advocates for improved services for immigrant populations across the province more generally. For example, NBMC hosts a cross-cultural education program geared at encouraging and fostering cultural diversity and inclusion in the workplace and throughout various sectors of society.

Furthermore, in recent months, NBMC has played a cornerstone role in the Syrian refugee resettlement efforts, leading vital initiatives ranging from provincial integration and retention strategies, to province-wide donation drives, online awareness raising campaigns, and the creation of a welcome video to showcase the diverse aspects of life in New Brunswick to Syrian newcomers. Efforts such as these demonstrate the Council's unique capacities, reach and potential as a driver of change for social inclusion and diversity in our province. The ripple effects of these initiatives have the potential to be transformative for the province; and at the very least, they have opened the door for some significant conversations across our province and expanded the realm of cross-sector collaboration on the questions of inclusion, integration and diversity in New Brunswick.

NBMC's strength as a convener for the province's immigration sector and promoter of the values of inclusiveness, cultural diversity, and women's rights and empowerment, and its unique role in the province's civil society landscape lends itself well to the promotion of equality through this project and beyond. As a matter of fact, the NBMC was awarded a spot on the New Brunswick Council of Women and is represented by former NBMC co-founder, Madhu Verma.

This particular project is exemplary of NBMC's engagement with gender equality issues as it seeks to assess and understand the structural barriers faced by immigrant women who experience domestic and intimate partner violence (D/IPV). This project builds on NBMC's

capacity and drive to strengthen linkages and cooperation across sectors and diverse stakeholders and improve government protocols on the matter.

The NBMC has partnered with a multitude of voices to build a diverse Project Team with strong gender expertise – including but not limited to representatives from the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Center, Women’s Equality Branch, Department of Justice and Public Safety, Liberty Lane Second Stage Housing, as well as the important perspective of immigrant women themselves. In fact, three members of the Project Team have worked with immigrant women survivors of D/IPV. Two of these women work directly with immigrant associations. Another member of the Project Team is a domestic violence service provider.

In addition, the partnership building component of the project includes the creation of a Provincial Advisory Committee comprised of immigrant women who represent the demographic and geographic diversity of the immigrant communities across New Brunswick. Committee members include those who have an understanding of the complexities of D/IPV, some are also survivors of D/IPV. The PAC will draw up its own terms of reference (Annex B of the Interim Narrative Report) to ensure its effectiveness and sustainability.

Finally, all project activities also includes the participation of immigrant and newcomer women and other women community leaders as well as the engagement and collaboration of service providers from the violence prevention field, from the immigrant and multiculturalism field, and from the women’s empowerment and community development fields. Many participants are themselves survivors of D/IPV, have profound gender expertise, expertise in working with immigrant communities, and expertise in community-based collaboration. Through focus groups, individual interviews, meetings, consultations and continued engagement, the diverse stakeholders involved in this project play a significant role in enhancing the Project Team and the NBMC’s understanding of, and capacity to address the complex structural barriers to accessing services faced by immigrant women in New Brunswick who experience D/IPV. The development of an action strategy and its implementation phase will further invite feedback from and dialogue with these stakeholders.

### **3. ISSUE AND COMMUNITY ANALYSIS**

#### **3.1. STAKEHOLDERS**

The project’s primary stakeholders fall in four diverse categories.

Multicultural Associations (Immigrant Serving Agencies):

These agencies have a mandate and expertise to deliver settlement programs, language programs, employment programs, and to promote multiculturalism, but have no training mandate, or formal experience addressing cases of D/IPV, and many lack gender expertise. Multicultural Associations represent the most proficient service providers in the province with regards to serving various cultural groups, but fall short in their

experience with D/IPV. It is thus important to enhance their capacities to address cases of D/IPV among their clients, raise awareness among staff and volunteers who work closely with newcomers on issues of D/IPV, and increase and broaden collaboration between the multicultural associations and the D/IPV service providers.

#### D/IPV service providers:

Various agencies including emergency shelters, second stage housing, social workers, health care providers and mental health professionals, emergency responders, police, victims services, and many others throughout the province serve women and their families when experiencing D/IPV; however, these service providers self-admit having no formal training or expertise to serve immigrant women and lack cross-cultural communication skills. In this light, it is important to work with these service providers to enhance cross-cultural sensitivity and awareness when working with newcomer, immigrant and visible minority communities, as well as strengthen collaboration with cultural associations and immigrant serving agencies in their respective regions.

#### Provincial government departments:

Government departments such as Department of Justice and Public Safety, Women's Equality Branch, Education, Social Development, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, and Health all have a mandate to serve women experiencing D/IPV and/or the immigrant and newcomer population, but lack experience, training and therefore capacity to serve the particular needs of immigrant and newcomer women. This is evidenced by the recent launch (2014) of Women Victim of Abuse Protocols which were developed for every provincial department implicated in services for women experiencing D/IPV, and which lack adequate reference to serving immigrant women, and are missing complete protocols or best practices for serving immigrant women. Where there is specialization in serving immigrants, there tends to be a lack in gender expertise; and where there is gender expertise, there tends to be a lack of specialization in immigrant issues. There is an opportunity to build bridges and enhance expertise in both areas among government partners.

#### Community organizations and others:

There are many other allies, stakeholders and supporters, individuals and community-based, who can support the collaborative efforts of addressing cases of D/IPV among immigrant women. Where possible, efforts will be made to identify and engage community leaders, including but not limited to ethnocultural associations, faith-based organizations, legal services, and women's groups, as well as schools, libraries, community centres, local health clinics and healthcare providers, local family support services, local police forces and/or RCMP, and many more. Mapping these agencies, engaging them, and ensuring collaboration across sectors is the best route to success.

Overall awareness and training around D/IPV and cross-cultural sensitivity across all stakeholders is a good starting point, and further evaluations of assets to identify creative and innovative ways we can work together as communities and as a province are to be explored throughout the subsequent phases of the project.

### 3.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Immigrant population in New Brunswick has undergone significant changes in the past decade. Provincial governments in the Atlantic region have stepped up efforts to recruit more immigrants to the region including establishing agreements with the federal department of Citizenship and Immigration to create Provincial Nominee Programs (PNP). This allows provincial governments to screen and nominate immigrants to meet their population growth, labour and investment needs (Ramos & Yoshida, 2011). As a result there has been a rise in the number of people immigrating to the Atlantic region since 2003 as well as an increase in the visible minority proportion of the population. In addition to those who immigrate, in 2005 more than 7,000 international students were pursuing post-secondary education at a university in the region. The majority of these students originate from East/Southeast Asia (Akbari, Lynch, McDonald, & Rankaduwa, 2007). More recently, the resettlement of approximately 1,500 over the year 2016 has further jolted the New Brunswick immigration system and its stakeholders. And now, as we look forward, a new pilot program announced by the Minister of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) may potentially bring in 2000 additional principal nominees and their families to the region (Government of New Brunswick, 2016). In sum, the immigration and multicultural landscape in New Brunswick is evolving at high speed and giving rise to new sets of challenges and opportunities to evaluate existing practices, policies and programs in the field.

Immigrant retention in the region is a perennial concern. Using data from Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, Ramos and Yoshida (2011) found that immigrants left the Atlantic region for other provinces not because they could not find work but rather because they were under-employed. Immigrants who had not been involved social groups or organizations in the first two years after landing left at higher rates than those who were not connected through a formal social network, pointing to the important role that immigrant social ties play in the region. The research revealed that 29% of immigrants who initially landed in Atlantic Canada experienced some form of discrimination.

Continuing to pursue research and interventions in the domain of D/IPV experienced by immigrant women in the Maritimes is thus particularly timely. Despite the rise of the number of immigrants nationally and regionally, little research has been done so far to determine if D/IPV prevalence rates for this group differ from the rest of the population. Remarkable diversity exists among these communities, and yet relatively little data exists on how domestic violence plays out among those who have migrated to Canada and more in particular in Atlantic Canada. The absence of data in this respect is particularly problematic as it can hinder the creation of culturally appropriate initiatives to tackle the issue of domestic violence against immigrant women. Immigrant women may share personal experiences and a collective identity as immigrants that make them unique and different from the mainstream society. These differences and similarities among immigrant women pose challenges in offering services to immigrant women, as well as emphasize the importance of providing culturally competent services to this population target.

In their study of immigrant settlement services in the Maritimes, Thériault and Haan (2012) found that members of these organizations felt they were underfunded given the increasing demand for services. This study also shows that there are few examples of women-specific settlement services in the region. The need to improve the training of settlement service providers in best practices regarding domestic violence has also been identified (Meidema, 1999). A deeper understanding of the different immigrant communities existing in Atlantic Canada and a comprehension of the socio-economic, cultural, and political contexts within which immigrant women experience domestic violence is central to culturally competent domestic violence services for this specific population. Such knowledge can contribute to the development and implementation of policies, programs, and approaches that respectfully as well as effectively respond to the unique and specific needs of immigrant women who experience domestic violence or are prone to this risk.

New Brunswick is thus at a critical point in terms of its growing immigrant population. Efforts in the domain of settlement and retention services must include responding to the needs of immigrant women for safety and well-being as they play a key role in the integration of immigrant families in society. The provincial Department of Safety has launched a Crime Prevention Strategy that prioritizes the response to domestic violence but the strategy does not yet include an in-depth understanding of domestic violence amongst immigrant women and the structural barriers that put their lives at risk. This is an important time to enhance the development of coordinated community response to domestic violence through the incorporation of the unique perspectives of immigrant women.

According to the Women Victims of Abuse Protocols developed by the Government of New Brunswick, “Women can either be the direct victims of abuse (physical, psychological, verbal, financial, sexual assault/ violence and/or spiritual abuse) or subjected to threats of abuse to themselves and/or their children, step-children or other loved ones including pets/farm animals by their boyfriends, girlfriends, partners or former partners - marital or common-law, heterosexual or same sex” (2014, p. 19). Intimate partner violence or domestic violence “occurs when a person who is currently or previously in an intimate personal relationship uses abusive, threatening, harassing or violent behaviour as a means to psychologically, physically, sexually or financially coerce, dominate and control the other member of the relationship” (GNB, 2014, p. 61).

The United Nations has declared that domestic violence is the most widespread form of violence against women in the world (2008) and the World Health Organization estimates global prevalence rates at 30% (2013). Canada’s national Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS), conducted in the early 1990s, revealed similar lifetime prevalence rates (29%) of domestic violence (Johnson & Dawson, 2010).

Currently official rates of domestic violence in Canada are assessed by two means: through self-reports via the General Social Survey (GSS) and through police-reported data on crime. Both of these sources of data are considered conservative measures of the level of violence perpetrated against Canadian women by their intimate partners. Data on police-reported violence against women shows that New Brunswick has the highest rate of police-reported violence against women in Atlantic Canada (45% of which is some form of intimate partner

violence). New Brunswick also has the highest rate of women killed by their intimate partner than any other Atlantic province. Saint John and Moncton have the second and third highest rates of police-reported violence against women of all Canadian cities (Sinha, 2013).

It is because of these alarming rates that domestic violence is a priority of New Brunswick's Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy. The perspective of immigrant women has not been adequately addressed in the development of this strategy and also needs to be incorporated into the Provincial Women Victims of Abuse Protocols.

Despite the rise of the number of immigrants nationally and regionally, little research has been done to determine if domestic violence prevalence rates for this group differ from the rest of the population. Brownridge's analysis of Statistics Canada data (Brownridge & Halli, 2003; 2009) found that immigrant women from industrialized countries have lower rates of domestic violence compared to Canadian-born women. He suggests that these results should be interpreted with caution since immigrant women may be more reluctant than Canadian-born women to disclose domestic violence to interviewers due to language or cultural barriers.

Collective understanding of domestic violence in immigrant families in Canada is still limited (Barrett et al., 2011) and this is especially the case in New Brunswick. How a woman considers D/IPV or how she may identify her partner's act is partly based on her own viewpoint shaped by her cultural background. Thus, the definition of domestic violence and the collective response to the problem is not complete unless they include the specific dynamics of violence and abuse that are peculiar to groups of women coming from different cultural backgrounds. Further to this understanding of domestic violence amongst immigrant women in New Brunswick is an appreciation of the structural barriers that they face in accessing public services as well as the intersecting challenges they may face in New Brunswick due to their gender, race, ethnicity, religion and language abilities.

One structural barrier for victims of abuse is access to information. There are important gaps between receiving information, acquiring knowledge and understanding the information. Newcomers are often overwhelmed with new information to process. Immigrant serving agencies have learned that usually, information has to be shared repeatedly and in varied ways to ensure the newcomer has fully integrated the knowledge. With regards to IPV, information is not always shared upon arrival – nor at later stages of settlement, particularly if the immigrant did not initially use the services of the immigrant agencies. As such, immigrant women usually only begin to learn about Canadian law and public services as they pertain to domestic violence when they become personally affected (Holtmann, 2016).

Another structural barrier for abused immigrant women seeking help is the impact of Canadian immigration policies concerning family sponsorship and principal applicant regulations (Mosher, 2009; Canadian Council for Refugees, 2016). These regulations can force immigrant women into positions of economic and social dependency on their husbands and have significant impacts on family dynamics. In a study of domestic violence amongst immigrant women in New Brunswick (Meidema, 1999), several participants indicated that it was their husband's decision to immigrate and that they were reluctant migrants. The current immigrant system – the point-based system – favours male applicants in its efforts to attract

skilled workers and investors. Combined with the sponsorship model, the system often categorizes women as “dependents”, inextricably creating a hierarchy of power which may not have previously existed.

“One form of abuse faced uniquely by immigrant, refugee and non-status women is the threat of reporting them to the immigration authorities and having them deported. Many women fear deportation even if they have the right to remain in Canada, because their partner may keep them uninformed of their full rights. Immigration, refugee and sponsorship processes often put one partner in a position of power over the other. The reinforcement of power imbalances works in favour of an abusive partner or spouse.” (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2016)

The fear of deportation often keeps immigrant women in violent relationships because they are unaware of Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada’s (IRCC) provisions that address cases of abuse. Yet even these provisions place a considerable burden on immigrant women who must provide substantial evidence of the abuse, including having accessed public domestic violence services (Mosher, 2009). The threat of withdrawal of sponsorship (which can be done up to the moment the sponsored individual receives his or her permanent residency) may be used a coercive tool to ‘make the woman stay’ in an abusive relationship (Canadian Council for Refugees, 2016).

Furthermore, non-status women and asylum seekers are even more vulnerable when experiencing abuse because they have no legal status. “This often makes them too afraid to call the police when a domestic violence incident occurs. They fear that police involvement will lead to deportation.” (Idem). While both women, those who may have their sponsorship withdrawn and those without legal status, have the right to apply to remain in Canada on humanitarian and compassionate grounds, they will need a settlement worker or lawyer to assist them in the application, including gathering evidence. These applications are not guaranteed, they can be lengthy and costly.

Providers of D/IPV support services in the province may not be familiar with these immigration policies concerning immigrant women with precarious citizenship status and who have been victimized by violence. Thus they are unable to provide the kind of information and documentation that abused immigrant women need.

Another barrier for abused immigrant women is social isolation. Immigrant women, uprooted from their native countries, usually have few people who share their ethno-religious background to turn to for support other than the aggressor and/or his family. Most immigrant women are simply invisible to the native-born citizens of New Brunswick society and their voices are not heard in public discourse. In many cases, newcomer immigrant women have young children and accept or are forced into narrowly defined gender-specific roles. This also plays a determining factor into how these women may be reached and/or how they may access adequate information. Working through ethno-cultural communities may not always work in delivering information to those who need it most. Finding creative ways, and in particular, working through the school system, may be essential in reaching many immigrant women.

Furthermore, immigrant women who experience domestic violence, like other victims, are afraid that disclosing the situation may jeopardize their children's future or lead to the loss of contact with their children. In an effort to adapt to Canadian culture immigrant women's children place pressure on immigrant women. The children want their families to fit in further preventing disclosure of domestic violence. Social isolation and fear hide the domestic violence experienced by immigrant women.

Communication is another barrier that immigrant women encounter. Many struggle to communicate using either of the official languages in New Brunswick and find it challenging to access and understand important information concerning the resources available to them. Furthermore, the challenge of confidentiality in small ethno-linguistic groups in New Brunswick can add to the barriers. If interpretation is required, there is a considerable probability in New Brunswick that different individuals within the same ethno-linguistic group – such as the client and the interpreter - may know each other, or know of each other.

In addition, abusive partners often restrict women's access to information and/or financial resources that can be used to plan for security and safety (CLEO, 2014). Language barriers make it particularly challenging to access public social services. Public services provided online and over the phone present barriers for women who are insecure about their language abilities, have low literacy skills, or who are prevented from accessing online information by their intimate partners. Disclosing intimate partner violence and abuse requires considerable courage even without communication barriers. A doctoral study of immigrant women in New Brunswick (Holtmann, 2013) revealed that even women with high levels of language proficiency are criticized by members of the native-born population for speaking English with a strong accent. Cross-cultural communication is a complex process requiring new skills and understanding on both sides.

Accessing public services in Canada by immigrant survivors of domestic violence can be yet another barrier as the lack of cultural sensitivity and racism amongst professionals in the domestic violence, criminal justice and health care systems continues (Fong, 2010).

Many immigrant women are not accustomed to accessing public services in their countries of origin and some have experiences that have led them to distrust public officials and police. Many public service providers in the region are unaware of the impact of the multiple intersecting structural barriers on the lives of immigrant women. In New Brunswick there is limited ethno-religious diversity among public service providers, yet the composition of immigrants in the region has changed significantly in recent years. The differences between the ethnic and visible minority composition of the immigrant population and that of the public service providers reflects imbalances in social power in the province. Public service providers, particularly those delivering services to victims of domestic violence, have faced funding cutbacks due to restructuring of social welfare programming in recent years. Shelter workers in New Brunswick indicate that they do not have funds to translate existing information into the languages of newcomer groups. Shelter administrators who are aware of ethnocentric attitudes amongst their staff indicate that they are unable to provide cultural sensitivity training due to a lack of resources.

Furthermore, while women may be aware of services available in the community, such as those of the immigrant settlement agencies, they may not be able to benefit from their services. For instance, wives of international students, sponsored spouses and non-status or temporary status individuals must wait for their permanent residence to access the social networks, language classes, employment counseling and other services offered. Those who care for young children or who are employed full time are also faced with barriers when seeking these services (Holtmann, 2016). This further contributes to immigrant women's feelings of isolation and hinders their full inclusion into their receiving community.

Differences in cultural values also create barriers for immigrant women who access domestic violence services. Immigrant women's identities are strongly linked to their cultural community and the extended family. Domestic violence services, particularly shelters, are based on an individualistic model of identity. Many immigrant women are uncomfortable with this model of service delivery (Baskin, 2010). New Brunswick service providers are unfamiliar with ethno-religious and cultural particularities of immigrants from diverse countries of origin (Holtmann, 2013). The challenge is for service providers to incorporate understandings of immigrant women's collective ethno-religious identities into their practice and consider alternative responses to D/IPV without jeopardizing the women's safety or privacy rights. Prejudice, preconceptions and generalizations on behalf of service providers must also be kept in check. It may be assumed that certain cultures are more patriarchal and violent than the other, and if given too much credence, may minimize the experience of the individual and overlook the dynamic nature of culture as well as the woman's agency within it: "Culture does not cause IPV but mediates and shapes it" (Liao, 2006).

In their study of immigrant settlement services in the Maritimes, Thériault and Haan (2012) found that members of these organizations felt they were underfunded given the increasing demand for services in the last few years. The study also identified gender differences in help-seeking amongst immigrants. There was recognition among settlement service providers that there are differences in the delivery of basic settlement services to immigrant women and men usually based on women's child care responsibilities. Yet there were few examples of women-specific settlement services in the region. In the case of the wives of temporary foreign workers, they are not eligible for government-funded settlement services and are also prohibited from applying for work permits. Likewise, the wives of international university students in the region are not able to access government-funded settlement services such as language training (Holtmann, 2013). These two groups of immigrant women are falling between the cracks in terms of settlement service provision. Settlement service agencies are one of the few public service providers in the Maritimes that has ethnic diversity amongst employees. There is significant need to improve the training of settlement service providers in best practices regarding domestic violence (Meidema, 1999).

In spite of the many barriers and challenges immigrant women face in New Brunswick, their strength and ability to adapt must not be overlooked. The women who have immigrated here have demonstrated willingness to face an immense challenge which reflects strategic abilities to make choices, resiliency, resourcefulness and agency. Service providers can learn to draw on these strengths to help women enact change in their abusive relationships. Service providers should also inquire – ask the woman directly – what role family, religion and

culture play in her life and her relationship. This can be a first step in identifying a pathway to supporting the individual through the challenges of an abusive relationship.

This project is critical when one considers the growing immigrant population in New Brunswick and the gaps in understanding of immigrant women's experience of domestic violence, the current systemic and structural barriers, as well as the state of public services for immigrant women in the province. Its results will help inform the development of a coordinated response to D/IPV experienced by immigrants and fill the current void in provincial protocols and response models. This work will help to increase equality between men and women and promote a full and harmonic integration between the different ethnic groups in New Brunswick.

## **4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1. CONSULTATIONS**

Since January 2016 up until September 2016, nearly 150 meetings with over 110 immigrant women, men and service providers have been met as part of both the Partnership and Collaboration phase, as well as the Needs Assessment phase of the project. Together, along with the supportive data of past research on similar themes, the research team was able to identify key themes and concerns from service providers and immigrant women alike.

#### Focus Groups and Interviews

- 7 focus group discussions took place with service providers, totaling 54 individuals from 46 different organizations (18 Anglophone and 28 Francophone).
- 1 focus group with 12 individuals and 6 individual interviews with immigrant women were conducted.
- Partnership and Collaboration-building meetings took place with 93 individuals (many the same as those participating in the focus group discussions), divided as 66 individuals representing 42 different organizations, and 27 immigrant men and women who are leaders in their community.

In total, approximately 120 individuals have been reached and spoken to, some emailed, in a period of 9 months over some 150 meetings, interviews and focus groups. With each individual, not only was the project itself discussed (timelines, objectives, etc.) but the issues at hand were also discussed in great details.

## 4.2. CURRENT SITUATION

### 4.2.1. Analysis of Data from Immigrant Women (N=18)

#### **The Context in Which Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Takes Place**

##### ***Challenges Encountered by Immigrant Women During the Settlement Process***

There are multiple theories about the causes of domestic/intimate partner violence (D/IPV) including an imbalance of power and control, the social learning of perpetrators and victims (in particular the intergenerational transmission of D/IPV in families), the widespread prevalence of violence in society, the exposure to violence through all forms of media, and the lack of significant consequences for perpetrators. Multiple factors contribute to the increased risk of D/IPV amongst members of particular social groups. Immigrant women are an example of one such group that is vulnerable to D/IPV. One of the factors associated with D/IPV for immigrant women is the social context in which D/IPV occurs. D/IPV does not take place in a vacuum. It is shaped by the social context and culture in which it takes place. For immigrants, their experiences of D/IPV are shaped by their countries of origin as well as by the province of New Brunswick. This is not a traditional immigrant receiving context like that of Quebec, Ontario or British Columbia. Immigration levels have increased in the past decade and so too has ethno-cultural diversity amongst the immigrant population. Before the recent wave of immigration, immigrants who came to New Brunswick after 1970 were most likely to attend and/or work at one of the four provincial universities. Settlement of immigrant groups throughout the province's cities, towns and coastal communities is a relatively recent phenomenon. The findings of the needs assessment reveal the following characteristics of the New Brunswick social context that contribute to immigrant women's vulnerability in cases of D/IPV.

##### **Women at the Forefront of Immigration:**

Many of the immigrant women who participated in the needs assessment are in the province alone, whether they came as international students or sponsored spouses. Social as well as geographical isolation pose challenges to immigrant women during the settlement process. These women are isolated as they adapt and cope in their new environment. An international student from South Asia noted that *"I guess the first challenge to me was, like not having any support system, you know. I came all alone, like I didn't know anybody here. Like I do not have family, no relatives. So not having that community was . . . you know to support myself."*

##### **Finding Employment:**

New Brunswick actively recruits and welcomes immigrants in order to contribute to the economic and demographic health of our province. They arrive from abroad fully expecting that their high levels of education and work experience are in demand. However, all of the immigrant women who have participated in the needs assessment thus far have experienced considerable difficulty finding employment. Some have

immigrated on their own and others as part of nuclear families. Others are single-parenting their children. A woman from South America with a background in business administration and accounting volunteered and sought employment for years before finding a permanent job. Now she has one full-time and one part-time job and continues to volunteer. The immigrant women spoke of feeling a great deal of pressure to find employment quickly because of all of the financial challenges they face in paying for housing, transportation, child care, education and food.

#### Acquiring Language Skills:

The immigrant women indicate that there is a difference between studying language and actually using it to communicate and navigate daily life in New Brunswick. They spoke about how locals have difficulty understanding them because of their accents and vice versa. They also mention that it takes a long time until they truly understand what native-born English speakers are actually talking about. One participant in the project said, *“You no longer have the appropriate judgements and all of your past experiences and knowledge of the surrounding is totally thrown away. So that is hard and that is beyond the language, after you accomplished language proficiency.”* This is important consideration when it comes to information about public services available to immigrant women in New Brunswick, services that might not exist in their countries of origin such as immigrant settlement and domestic violence services.

#### Affordable Child Care:

The immigrant women strongly identify with their families. Many of them indicate that their reasons for immigration are so that their children have a better future. Like their Canadian counterparts, mothers are more likely to spend more time performing child and home care work than fathers. An East Asian immigrant woman with a young child spoke about how difficult it was for her and her husband to take language classes, search for a job and care for their daughter all at the same time. They needed to pay for child care in order to improve their English and meet with potential employers, but child care was very expensive. She said that they could no longer afford child care and her husband was pressuring her to stay home. However, she felt that she had a better chance to find work than her husband. She said that this pressure contributed to tension and physically violent conflict in her marriage.

#### Making New Friends:

The combination of the difficulties in communication in New Brunswick and the loss of social support networks from their countries of origin make immigrant women long for close friends. The immigrant women who participated in the needs assessment spoke about their feelings of homesickness. They maintain contact through the internet, social media and smartphones with family and friends back home, but it is just not the same as getting hug. The size of any particular immigrant group in the province is small, so even amongst other immigrants who speak the same language and share similar cultural backgrounds, the pool of potential friends is limited. Isolation is a known factor that contributes to the vulnerability of immigrant women to D/IPV. Transnational family situations make this even more of a challenge and this is the reality for many immigrant

women in the province. A woman who is single-parenting two children while they pursue their education and her husband continues to work back in their home country in the Middle East spoke about how very, very hard it was for her to make friends. She described herself as a very social person but in moving back and forth between two countries for her husband and her children, she felt uncomfortable, alone and misunderstood in both places.

#### Anti-Immigrant Rhetoric:

A second-generation daughter of immigrants notes that, *“a lot of New Brunswickers perceive immigrants very negatively and they have stereotypes about like the treatment of women in particular.”* Although discrimination against immigrants has an unfortunately long history in Western societies, it has become increasingly common in Canada and the United States to hear anti-immigrant rhetoric from federal political leaders. This creates fear amongst immigrants and puts pressure on immigrant women not to disclose problems. Community pride is one of the strongest values immigrant communities hold and *“there is this kind of like pressure to appear perfect to other people, to Canadians.”*

#### ***Strengths that Immigrant Utilize in Meeting these Contextual Challenges***

Although there are numerous challenges that immigrant women encounter during the process of settling into and learning about New Brunswick society, they face these challenges head on using the resources available to them.

#### Formal and Informal Support Networks:

Immigrant settlement service agencies are often the first public service that immigrant women access when they arrive in New Brunswick. They are interested in taking the government-sponsored language classes and it is here that they begin to meet and get to know other immigrants and agency staff. There is only one settlement agency in the province that provides gender-specific programming for immigrant women. It was at this agency that we conducted a focus group discussion with participants. It was clear that these women knew each other well and were comfortable talking about the difficult issue of D/IPV amongst immigrant women. One of the immigrant women who was not part of this group had also connected with other immigrant women through her local immigrant settlement agency. Another woman had arrived in the province from Africa as an international student. The university's international student office had set up a host family program for new students. This meant that not only was she embraced by the members of a Canadian-born family, she also was a part of the support network amongst the growing international student population at her university. She said, however, that the community beyond the campus was far less multicultural or easy to navigate as a member of a racial minority group. Off campus and outside the settlement agency walls, the immigrant women in this project create or become part of more informal social support networks. For example, the immigrant woman originally from the Middle East turned to members of the local Middle Eastern immigrant community for support. But

there were few other women with whom she could identify. As an Orthodox Catholic, she sought out a church and realized that the closest one is in Halifax - a lengthy drive away from her home. She makes the trip on a regular basis but cannot become an active member of the congregation in order to access social support networks. Currently her life revolves around the lives of her children but she is planning on moving to Halifax where she believes she will be happier.

#### Adaptability:

The immigrant women that spoke to members of the project team recounted the ways in which they are learning to adapt and integrate into their new host society. As already mentioned, the immigrant woman from South America did a lot of volunteer work as part of her strategy in finding full-time employment. She had a great deal of insight into the historical imbalance of power between men and women in her home country. Nevertheless she believes things are changing there because women are being empowered and becoming more financially independent. She said that developing self-esteem is important for immigrant women here as well: *"It starts about love our self - no?"* She married a Canadian-born man after migrating to New Brunswick and highly values the good communication she has with her partner.

Integration takes time and patience. An East-Asian immigrant woman said that in the early days after arriving here she spent lots of time wandering around her city and figuring out where to go. The process of physical reorientation was accompanied by an emotional process as well. She believes that integration requires an open mind on the part of immigrants and locals and she considers herself lucky that she found people that she could chat with. A woman originally from Africa said, *"You have to do something to be accepted and to accept others."* New immigrants are forging the way for the generation that will come after them - the lives of immigrant children will be better because they are built on the experiences of their parents.

#### Resilience:

Immigrant women express pride in overcoming the challenges of the immigration process. An international student reflected on the courage she had when leaving all that was familiar to immigrate to a strange land: *"When you think about it, I was actually brave to do that because [the city], it was, you know, not the place that is very well known. You know it's nowhere up and I just decided to get here and I did not know anybody and yeah, when it comes to think about it, it is actually very brave of me."* Another example of resilience for immigrant women is illustrated in the way that they pick themselves up and continue on regardless of the challenges they face. Having some postsecondary education and training helps immigrant women to seek out resources from local organizations such as settlement services to find employment and/or pursue higher educational attainment. Employment helps immigrant women to achieve economic independence - another form of resiliency in meeting the contextual challenges that they face. A woman from South Asia who was sponsored by her husband expressed her pride in the fact that she is working a full-time job while pursuing a Master's Degree in Engineering.

In cases of D/IPV, some immigrant women are aware of the availability of public services. One international student from South Asia's educational experiences in the province changed her mindset from that of her mother's, and she sought help from the police, "*I did call the police in order to ask like, 'Okay, will you record these things if I ever have to pursue any case against this person?'*"

### ***Immigrant Women's Experiences of Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence***

Not all of the immigrant women who have participated in the project thus far are survivors of D/IPV. But all of them had opinions about the subject when they were asked.

#### **The Importance of Family:**

The immigrant women understand their individual identities in relationship to their families. They are embedded in families and are aware of how their decisions impact others in extended family networks. They have a great deal of respect for their parents. An East-Asian woman indicated that she had married for love – against the warnings of her parents that her husband had a bad temper. In the aftermath of D/IPV she believes that because she chose to marry this man despite her parents' warnings, she deserves the consequences. She is desperately searching for ways to help her husband change his behavior so that their little family stays intact, including disclosing her situation and seeking help from public service providers.

In the words of another immigrant survivor of D/IPV: "*The family - it is a very important thing for us . . . whenever you are together you are strong.*" This woman loves her husband, despite the fact that he bullies her and has affairs. She believes that divorce would destroy her family and that she could not live with the consequences of divorce. She is using immigration as part of a strategy of dealing with her husband's abusive behaviors. Living in New Brunswick and looking after their children, she does not have to deal with him on a regular basis since he continues to work and support the family from their country of origin. She believes that her growing sense of self-worth and inner strength has scared her husband – he is jealous that she is successful on her own without him.

Some of the women who participated in the needs assessment said that violence against women is part of the culture in their countries of origin. There is a "*collective aspect of violence where sometimes either the other family members of the wider community can be involved with, like being complicit in the abuse or like, working with the abuser to control the person in question.*" Because families are close knit and highly valued, attitudes that tolerate violence and abuse are passed down between mothers and daughters from generation to generation. "*I was born in that kind of a culture and seen our fathers doing it to our mothers and brothers doing it to our sisters-in-law, our brothers doing it you know like doing it to you. So lots of these things are accepted as norms. Its violence against women is part of a culture.*" Second generation immigrant women realize that they have an opportunity to break this intergenerational cycle of violence in New Brunswick.

### Children:

As already mentioned, many immigrant women highly identify with their roles as mothers. Much of their time and energy in New Brunswick is spent ensuring their children's educational success. In some cases of D/IPV, Canadian immigrant women do not disclose what is happening to anyone because they are afraid of losing their children. A woman from Africa said, *"In my culture, if the man wants to take his children, he can do that and no one will stop him. In my culture, they say that children belong to their father. If there is a separation, the man will take the children. It's not a law, just a cultural belief."* Threatening to take away a mother's children is a form of psychological or emotional abuse used by immigrant fathers because it strikes at the heart of some immigrant women's identity.

### Husbands and Wives:

The immigrant women mentioned other forms of D/IPV perpetrated by immigrant men. These include isolating immigrant women so that they cannot disclose the abuse they are experiencing to others – especially those outside their cultural groups. As detailed above, shared cultural norms concerning the importance of families and children keep immigrant women in violent marriages. Additionally wives are prevented from leaving the family home without their husbands' permission. Because of the economic pressures that face most immigrant families in the early months and years of settlement or because of transnational family situations, many immigrant women are economically dependent on their husbands. In some cases of D/IPV, husbands will threaten their wives financially. If the women are not contributing financially to the household, then some immigrant men feel that their wives are obligated to obey them, no matter what.

Another form of D/IPV for immigrant women is when their husbands destroy or hide important documents, like their passport. Likewise destroying objects from a woman's home culture – things that remind her of her distant family and friends – is another means that immigrant men use to intimidate and erode their wives' self-worth.

One woman suggested that some immigrant men prevent their wives from getting an education in New Brunswick because they are worried that a Western education will lead immigrant women to begin to question traditional male power and privilege. She speculated that education alone will not change the mindset of immigrant women, particularly those of the older generation. *"I know many women who are cultured and are highly respected, but will still accept being abused and won't divulge issues."* She believes that the rates of D/IPV amongst immigrants will change with the generations. Young people who are not raised in the home country of their parents and educated in New Brunswick are more likely to disclose D/IPV than their mothers' generation.

### Shame and Guilt:

Disclosure of D/IPV is difficult for any victim, regardless of their ethnic origins or cultural background. According to immigrant women in New Brunswick, many immigrants believe strongly that the privacy of the family must be protected. A woman from Africa said, *"In married life, there are things that are supposed to stay private."* Disclosing marital

problems in the public sphere will bring shame to the family. Women are expected to deal with D/IPV on their own or within the family network. If word about D/IPV gets out beyond the boundaries of the family, women bring shame and embarrassment upon themselves and their families. Concern was expressed that if an immigrant woman discloses D/IPV to others in her social networks, she and her family will become the subject of gossip. Immigrant women feel responsible for failed marriages and can be wracked with guilt.

### ***Barriers to Accessing Public Services***

The immigrant women were asked about they perceived as barriers to accessing public domestic violence services in New Brunswick.

#### **Lack of Public Services in Countries of Origin:**

Immigrant women come to this province from a variety of countries, many of which do not have extensive public services, particularly for victims of D/IPV. As mentioned above, in these countries D/IPV is still considered a private problem and not a public social problem like it is in New Brunswick. One immigrant woman indicated that she just happened to find out about domestic violence services in her local area by chance. She said, *“Now, I am aware of these services and would be able to refer a friend, but not all immigrant women are.”*

#### **Accessing Information:**

Although immigrant women may receive information about the public services available to them upon arrival in Canada, because of their lack of comprehension of the public nature of D/IPV in this country they do not understand how public service provision for victims of D/IPV works. For example, during a focus group discussion, the immigrant women were very interested in learning how police in Canada actually respond when someone calls them for help in a situation of D/IPV. One woman indicated that women do not rely on the police in her country of origin because if they respond to a situation of D/IPV the police simply tell the couple to try to better understand each other and get some rest.

The immigrant women who participated in the needs assessment wanted explanations about the pro-charge policies to which police are required to adhere. They wanted to know what constitutes evidence of D/IPV when police arrive at a home. The women did not know that there are domestic violence outreach workers in cities and villages throughout the province who will provide them with information and support concerning D/IPV.

#### **Public Service Providers Lack of Understanding:**

Although they are working hard, some immigrant women believe that local D/IPV service providers do not have all of the tools and information necessary to help immigrant women completely. For example, D/IPV service providers are unfamiliar with immigration policies and the precarious citizenship status that some immigrant women

have. Due to the withholding or destroying of important immigration documents by their husbands, some immigrant women themselves are unsure of their citizenship status.

Local D/IPV and mainstream counseling services have been developed for the native-born population and service providers lack knowledge of immigrant women's religious and cultural backgrounds and how these may influence the women's understandings of D/IPV. Religion, ethnicity and culture do not create D/IPV, but they shape the way it unfolds and influence effective intervention strategies. An international student complained about being assigned to a male counselor after she had disclosed experiencing abuse during her first visit to student services. This student stated *"first I went to a girl; she was really, really understanding... I feel like really validated and the second time when I went to this guy he was like not very validating. He did not understand what I was trying to say and he was kinda trying to justify my ex-boyfriend's actions."* Another student who wanted to volunteer with a local sexual assault centre said that the training session was insensitive to cultural diversity amongst the volunteers.

### ***Gaps in Responding to D/IPV amongst Immigrant Women***

It has been difficult to recruit immigrant women to participate in the needs assessment. Although initially enthusiastic, continual follow-up with potential participants often was unsuccessful. Given the importance of families to immigrant women, the challenges that immigrants face during the settlement process, immigrant women's strong identification with their roles as mothers, the understanding of D/IPV as a private problem that should not be disclosed, and the shame and guilt that comes with public disclosure it should be no surprise that there is silence concerning D/IPV amongst immigrant women in New Brunswick.

#### **Silence Concerning D/IPV Amongst Immigrant Women:**

Nevertheless, the immigrant women who took part in the needs assessment had a great deal to say about the problem. Speaking in a confidential way with members of the project team enabled the women to speak freely about their experiences and attitudes towards D/IPV. This leads us to believe that providing safe spaces for immigrant women to share their experiences with one another in the presence of professionals trained in best practices when responding to disclosures of D/IPV should be prioritized. It may be that immigrant women discuss the problem amongst themselves through informal support networks. However, given the results of the needs assessment to this point, it is likely that members of these informal networks do not have training in responding appropriately to D/IPV disclosures or adequate information about the public services available.

#### **Gendered Settlement Services for Immigrants:**

There is only one immigrant settlement agency in New Brunswick that has specific programming for immigrant women. In the focus group discussion with the immigrant

women in this agency, it was evident that the women had developed trust with one another and with the agency workers and were able to speak freely about D/IPV and to ask questions of members of the project team. This highlights the importance of providing some gender segregated settlement programming for immigrants. It is through shared experiences that immigrant women create emotional bonds and trust develops. This can happen through language classes, women's circles, cooking classes, self-esteem programming, moms and tots groups, etc. Agencies can use these classes strategically when it comes to helping to break the silence concerning D/IPV amongst immigrant women. Once social bonds have been formed, then skilled service providers can facilitate a discussion concerning D/IPV. This will provide immigrant women with an important opportunity to talk in a safe and confidential space, learn about the support services available to them, and ask questions.

#### Culturally Sensitive Domestic Violence Services for Immigrants:

The immigrant women indicate that domestic service providers do not really understand the situations of immigrant women survivors. A complication for domestic violence service providers working with immigrant women is understanding their patriarchal cultural values. Having come from a society in which patriarchal structures reinforce husbands' roles as leaders and providers and wives' roles as mothers and caregivers, these roles can provide stability for immigrant families during a time of tremendous change and challenge, particularly in the early months and years following arrival in New Brunswick. But having and practicing patriarchal cultural values is not necessarily the source of D/IPV in immigrant families. The challenge for service providers is to help immigrant women recognize the differences between freely chosen subordination for the greater good of the collective (family or immigrant group) and the abusive and violent use of power and control by husbands and members of the extended family such as mothers-in-law. This is difficult when domestic violence service providers are unfamiliar with the cultural and religious values and norms for gender roles which guide immigrant lives.

#### Cultural Sensitivity Training for Public Service Workers:

Because language acquisition and comprehension are capacities that take time for immigrant women to acquire, public service workers in a variety of sectors need to develop greater sensitivity and patience towards immigrants who access their services. This applies to health care workers, government employees, and workers in the private sector such as retail salespersons. Disdain, impatience and mistrust of people who are from minority cultures by members of the majority are forms of racism. Those who serve the public can acquire skills in learning to listen carefully to immigrants who speak English and French with a strong accent. They can also learn to explain information in language that is easier for second language learners to understand. Finally, they can practice compassion and patience in dealing with people who are amongst the most vulnerable members of our society.

#### 4.2.2. Analysis of Data from Public Service Providers (N=54)

##### *Immigrant Settlement Workers and Domestic Violence Workers*

There are numerous cultural, economic, and legal factors that prevent immigrant women who are victims of domestic violence from seeking or receiving the help they need from the service providers. The reasons for underutilizing the existing services span from language barriers, lack of knowledge and awareness on the part of the women about the existing services, to lack of cultural understanding and trust.

##### *Barriers Immigrant Women Face in Disclosing D/IPV and Approaching Service Providers*

Language barriers:

From the interviews it emerged that according to the service providers, language is a major barrier for many immigrant women, especially the newcomers. Indeed, poor understanding of language makes gaining access to information, resources and services particularly difficult for the immigrant population. A service provider shared her experience with a client from a different linguistic background: *"It is difficult to understand each other, she did not know how we proceed because we have criteria we have to meet, and even if she wants something to happen, it doesn't always happen like that. She became frustrated, she didn't understand what I was saying"*. Another participant explains: *"Sometimes the police bring them in, they don't know what's happening and they need a translator to tell them that they're in a transition home"*.

Members of the extended family of the victims can be used as interpreters, when other interpreters are not readily available. This is problematic, especially when bilingual children are used to communicate with social workers, doctors, or police, as they are forced to hear details of the abuse that are not appropriate for their age, and they are often blamed by one parent or the other for "taking sides." A service provider explained: *"I saw a situation in Saint John where the parents did not speak French or English, the man could speak a tiny bit. The children were translators for them, and were put in a very adult situation"*.

Overcoming language barriers through interpreting services is indeed a problem without an easy solution. As service providers highlighted, interpreters, especially for certain ethnic groups, are still not available on regular basis, especially in rural areas in New Brunswick, and their lack of professionalism (e.g., lack of interpreting skills and limited knowledge of the language spoken) can produce distorted information. Similar caution needs to be applied when using community members as interpreters due to confidentiality issues that can exacerbate the exposure to further violence from the family and the community for the women who are victims of domestic violence.

#### Lack of information about rights/laws:

Immigrant women are often victims of threats and violence from their partners or spouses, used to assert power and control over them. For instance, if the abuser is a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident, he can use his position to threaten to have the victim deported by reporting her undocumented status to the Immigration offices. He can also threaten to revoke sponsorship, or refuse to file necessary documents that would provide the victim with lawful immigration status. A service provider explained: *“They are afraid they are going to get sent home. And home could be worse. They are afraid they're going to lose their children, so partners do use that”.*

Participants mentioned that immigrant women often lack of awareness and knowledge about laws and rights in Canada, which can hold them in abusive relationships. A participant shared her experience: *“I recently heard a story of a Latin American woman who wanted to divorce her husband because it was a violent relationship, but she didn't know all the laws. The husband told her that she could get divorced, but she will lose everything. He threatened her and controlled her, so she decided not to pursue a divorce because she was scared of losing everything. Several years later, she spoke with a friend who told her it wasn't how Canadian divorces worked, and that she would receive half. She learned that she had resources”.*

Service providers also highlighted that the bureaucratic intricacies produced by the immigrations laws can be quite complex. For instance, IRCC's provisions address cases of abuse but immigrant women need to provide substantial evidence of the abuse, which can dissuade a woman to disclose that she is a victim of domestic violence. A participant explained: *“We currently have a Canadian law that is very problematic, as you probably know. If you are the principal applicant for immigration, often the husband who finds a job, who sponsors his wife and children. The law says the woman must stay in the same home in a relationship for a minimum of two years before she can apply for permanent residence. If everything goes well, okay, that's nice. But if there are domestic violence issues, are there ways under the law for the wife to escape domestic violence? Yes, but if you think it's easy, it is not. You have to prove violence, etc., it can take time, it can be expensive, if it doesn't work will you risk losing permanent residency, being separated from your children, having to return to your country. Is it worth it?”*

Another barrier to access to service providers is the lack of knowledge about the services available and lack of knowledge on how to access them. This problem is especially present for certain categories of immigrant women, such as those who came to Canada with a spouse or a student visa.

#### Patriarchal values and culture:

According to service providers the cultural traditions of immigrant women could represent an obstacle to the access to services available to immigrant women who experience domestic violence. These barriers often take the form of gender role expectations, family and community values.

According to the service providers, immigrant communities often come from societies with patriarchal values, where men have authority over women and their families and where women are expected to obey that authority, without questioning. Patriarchal values, also based on the belief that men are physically and morally superior to women, can be used to condone violent or aggressive behaviors of men towards women. A service provider shared her experience and her frustration: *“Sometimes we see that even if the wife wants to get help, it is hard for her to do it without her husband’s permission”*.

When talking about cultural values and patriarchy, participants highlighted the different perceptions of what behaviors are considered as constituting “domestic violence”. In this regards, a service provider commented: *“Sometimes the women did not understand all the forms of violence. They would say they understood that it’s not okay for their husband to hit them, but they wouldn’t understand that their husband also couldn’t threaten their lives. They think when they insult them, it’s not exactly violence. We even had some Canadian women who said, ‘No, I’m not smart enough, I made him do this to me.’ But with immigrant families, culturally, the families will even encourage the husband to control his wife, so there is a cultural barrier as well”*.

Although service providers perceive some cultures as more “problematic” than others in terms of domestic violence and abuses towards women, they also seem to be well aware of their own cultural biases, as Canadians. A service provider declared: *“We expect them to act in a certain way, because we have our own prejudices. In New Brunswick, we have a very limited immigrant population. We have racism and discrimination problems, as well as pure ignorance. ....”*.

Service providers also pointed out that it is important not to generalize when talking about different cultures and ethnic groups. There is a well-spread awareness of the risks of underestimating differences among people in a specific culture and supporting discourses that construct members of immigrant communities as homogeneous “others”. A service provider declared: *“It’s very important to not stigmatize the immigrant population as a whole, because we know it’s not all immigrants, not even all cultures. It’s not necessarily that it existed before, but there can be new factors like frustration, changes in the life, and in the family dynamic, that can provoke domestic violence”*.

Specific situations of immigrants that can trigger violence:

Lack of education, social isolation, diminished social status and precarious financial situations following the immigration process can also contribute to domestic violence towards immigrant women. Service providers highlighted how immigrant communities may face structural or systemic barriers once they move to Canada. For instance, many immigrants face a rejection of the credentials they earned in their countries of origin and discrimination in the labour market. Service providers highlighted how lower socioeconomic status and social discrimination might threaten men’s masculinity and their feeling of power. When men internalize oppression and feel powerless and frustrated, women can become victims of violence.

A service provider explained: *“In some cases, there are patriarchal cultures where the role of the man is very important, as a breadwinner. This could cause new problems, and we see with new arrivals from Syria where the men cannot work yet, they don’t speak the language, and there is a feeling of frustration. Their masculinity is being threatened, and it can cause stress and lead to violence or other family issues, such as economic security. All the changes plays a role in how the children and parents integrate, into if the man can find work, if the wife will work or are there other areas she will participate in. Is the community welcoming- do we embrace them, or do they feel left out?”*

#### Community and family control over women:

Family and local immigrant communities can be resources that enable immigrants to overcome the difficulties and the isolation that often characterizing the process of migration. A service provider declared: *“Syrians or other communities, if they know each other, there is pressure from the community that surrounds them. Sometimes the community can be a good source for support and help, which will help them leave a bad situation”.*

However, families and communities can also become a problem for women and increase the social pressure on them. An aspect highlighted by service providers is the control and close scrutiny to which immigrant women are subjected. A service provider explained: *“When we have international students, the women were often watched and supervised by other male members of their community. There are a lot of international students at the Université de Moncton. The brothers or cousins will be watching the woman to see what she is doing.”*

Communities respond to some women’s efforts to seek safety when they experience domestic violence by shaming them or by putting pressure on them to remain in the marriage. As divorce is stigmatized in some communities, women can be pressured to stay with their abusers to save the “honour” of their families and their communities. In collectivist communities, the individual woman’s welfare is deemed insignificant, the integrity of the family always comes first. As a result, women are led to sacrifice themselves for the greater cause (the family and the community). Fears of not being believed, ostracized or re-victimized by people around them, can determine or intensify women’s reluctance to take help-seeking steps. As a service provider explained: *“We’re talking about how the extended family is important, so it’s very delicate for the woman to declare the violence in their family because they may be banned from their extended family and for them, that’s their family”.*

People are also very concerned with the way people see them. To “save face” means to avoid being looked down upon or shamed by others. The difficulty to overcome the social pressure created by the community is clearly explained by a service provider: *“Well for white English speaking people it’s, ‘you’re making our community look bad, you’re making our street look bad’ ‘you’re making our apartment building look bad’, by calling the police, by accessing services, by going to court, so obviously it’s 1000 times for difficult if you are a part of an ethnic enclave”.*

#### Confidentiality issues:

Confidentiality and privacy were described by service providers as important issues, as was the trust in the services they offered. Due to bad experiences in home countries, immigrant women may lack trust in the service system, particularly the police force. Building trust and meeting women's expectations was therefore seen as a way to enhance the access to these services for immigrant women. A service provider shared her thoughts: *"Even then, you had confidentiality issues, because you're getting someone from the same community to come into the transition home. Often the taxi drivers are immigrants, so sometimes we had to ask taxi drivers to stop speaking to the children in Arabic, because I didn't understand what was being said. I could clearly see the taxi driver knew the kids. So there are issues with that"*.

#### "Mail brides" are vulnerable:

A category of immigrant women, represented by "mail brides" and women dating online, was identified as particularly vulnerable. A "mail bride" is a woman who lists herself in catalogs of international marriage agencies or online dating sites and is selected by a man for marriage. A service provider explained: *"There's not a lot of cases, but in New Brunswick, there have been mail order brides, which is a different dynamic. The man says they have paid for them, so they can control what they do"*.

Finding themselves in abusive and extremely controlling relationships can be a possible scenario for women who leave their countries to join a man they met online. This is highlighted by another service provider: *"Online dating can lead to women being manipulated into coming here, even Canadian women. Situations where the man wants her to move here and leave her husband, it's a nicer country, etc. For the women, it's all perfect here because their current life is probably not good or balanced. They are seeking a way out. So they are in a vulnerable position, where she signs papers but doesn't really understand. They are manipulated by their new husband"*.

Women whose immigration is dependent upon sponsorship by a husband have to comply with the existing immigration policies, mentioned above. These policies make it difficult for abused "mail brides" to seek safety.

#### Lack of trust in police and other service providers:

One of the issues in accessing services by immigrant women was their lack of trust towards police and service providers. Participants felt that building trust between them and immigrant women was a complex and lengthy process, often unsuccessful and frustrating. As a service provider explained: *"There is also pressure in some of the communities, I spoke to one Romanian woman, who I was hoping could come today, but there is just a complete lack of trust. Because she read 'this' and she said, 'No, I don't know these people, how do I know they aren't going to talk?' and then you know. So there is just a complete lack of trust"*.

As a service provider emphasized, in some cases immigrant women are reluctant to call the police because they don't think they will help them or because they have witnessed police's brutality or corruption in their own countries: *"And in many countries of origin, the government, the police, they are not your friend, they are the people to be afraid of. If your partner gives them enough dough, they will do anything. It's a challenge"*.

### ***Gaps in Public Services for Immigrant Women in Situations of D/IPV***

Service providers may not be able to meet the needs of immigrant women once they overcome the obstacles in making appropriate contact. Some of the main institutional barriers identified by the services providers include lack of coordination and partnerships between the different service providers, professional background of board or staff, and the cultural competency and the language skills of the staff.

Lack of coordination and partnerships between organizations:

A lack of coordination and networking between the different service providers was highlighted during the interviews. The service providers emphasized the importance of networking, sharing of information and resources in order to reduce any duplications and enhance the quality of the services offered to immigrant women. Training on immigration policies has also been identified as another important area that would help front-line workers to provide more effective services to immigrant women. According to participants, partnerships are more likely to be created in small cities, as people know each other and it is easier to make connections. The difficulties in creating institutional collaborations and coordinated efforts among service providers can possibly be explained by the high turnover of the staff as the new people working for the different agencies often are not fully aware of the existing services and how they relate to each other. As a service provider pointed out: *"There is a lack of information between all the different agencies. And there is turn-over with all the helping agencies so there are people coming into Charlotte County, and setting up shop, or moving into a new office, who aren't aware that there is a transition house, that there is domestic outreach worker, that there is a child support worker, that we do a girls' circle that we speak with community organizations, that we go into schools"*.

Lack of training for service providers:

The service providers emphasized how it would be very important to be more aware of the history and cultural practices and values of the communities they are trying to serve and use this information to engage their clients in a more effective way. Understanding the client's perspective seems to be a priority for service providers, especially when they have to deal with the immigrant population. Trainings on topics such as immigration laws, legal issues, medical issues, impact of family violence on immigrant women, and cross-cultural training in working with women from different cultures can be useful to service providers.

#### Lack of time and financial and human resources :

The lack of time and of financial/human resources was identified by the service providers as an important challenge when dealing with immigrant women. Several service providers explained how they had to spread themselves too thin when dealing with numerous tasks at work: *“And then it became, well no, if you want to go to that meeting you have to possibly do it on your own time, you can’t take it on your working hours. Which we get, you only have a finite amount of time and you’ve got clients you need to see, and you’ve got projects you are already working on. So it becomes more and more difficult to again gather people around and share information”.*

The lack of resources often hinders the creation of new programs and the possibility for the service providers to effectively meet the expectations and needs of the clients. This is clearly explained by a service provider who declared: *“We lack personnel in this area. The transition house has the same problem. Obviously there is an issue where the entire staff is being replaced every few months. They have to hire new people all the time, so what isn’t working? I’m not just talking from personal experience. Unfortunately, it is the most important resource, because it’s where we place these women immediately”.*

#### Lack of language skills:

The inability to communicate in the language spoken by their clients represents for service providers a major issue. The lack of language skills of the service providers in languages other than English or French and the difficulty to get professional interpreters is detrimental to abused immigrant women as it reduces their chance to obtain information and access services that are available to Canadian women. The service providers highlighted how services in other languages are not always available. As a service provider clearly explained: *“We don’t always have translators that speak Syrian Arabic. There can be comprehension issues”.*

Moreover, some immigrant women only feel comfortable speaking to somebody who is fluent in their language and who is from their cultural background, which drastically reduces the chances for service providers to reach them.

#### Lack of continuity and high turnover of staff:

Excessive staff turnover is considered negative to efficient organizational functioning and can aggravate the existing lack of financial and human resources that service providers already experience within their organizations. In particular, a high staff turnover seems to be present among people working in transition houses, where the salaries are low. The lack of continuity of staff can negatively impact the creation of trust between services providers and immigrant women, as a service provider clearly explained: *“For example, a woman was creating a program at the home and then she left and there was no one to pick up the pieces. You have to rebuild it from the ground up. For an immigrant woman, when they are forming a relationship with a certain service provider and then that person leaves their position, it can be very hurtful”.*

Furthermore when the turnover is high, there will be a higher component of the organization’s workplace composed of new employees who are less familiar with the

facility's policies and procedures, and less aware of the other existing service providers that can help immigrant women who experience domestic violence.

High staff turnover may also result in longer periods of understaffing, if the vacant positions of an organization cannot be filled promptly. This might require the existing staff to work overtime, and to have higher workloads, which reduces the amount of time and energy that can be dedicated to clients in general and immigrant women more in particular.

**Lack of cultural understanding:**

There is growing recognition that understanding how various communities perceive and respond to domestic violence is essential for designing effective, culturally competent interventions for service providers. Improving the access to and delivery of services for immigrant communities to make sure they are culturally sensitive was considered to be particularly important by the service providers, especially in a multicultural country such as Canada. For instance, the lack of cultural understanding characterizing some staff working in hospitals was highlighted by a service provider: *"She often can't understand what is happening. They will say that an immigrant person came in, and when you ask from where, they say oh, South America. Well, that's not a country. What language does she speak? Not sure. Hmmm probably Spanish. What is her status? What do you mean status? Well is she a refugee, is she an economic immigrant? It's amazing what questions aren't being asked by hospital staff".*

**4.2.3. Commonalities in Barriers to a Community Coordinated Response to D/IPV Identified by Immigrant Women and Public Service Providers**

**Language:**

Understanding and trust between immigrant women and domestic violence service providers are essential elements of a community coordinated response to D/IPV amongst immigrant women in New Brunswick. Immigrant women survivors of D/IPV who seek public services and those who are trained to help them need affordable access to interpreters. Interpreters with the necessary language skills for translation also need training in the importance of confidentiality when it comes to working in situations of D/IPV whether that work takes place in a hospital, shelter to courtroom.

**Complexity:**

The reality of Canada's immigration policies and laws is complex, to say the least. There has been a great deal of change to these policies in recent years, making it difficult for immigrants and service providers to understand immigrant status within Canada. The complexity of the pathway towards citizenship is compounded by the challenges that immigrant families face in settling into communities throughout the province. Given that immigration policies make immigrant women dependent on their husbands either as principal applicants for full citizenship or as family class sponsors, it is natural that immigrant wives look to their husbands for guidance. The complexity of the pathway

towards citizenship is exacerbated in situations of D/IPV in which an abusive husband is using his wife's precarious immigration status as a means of control. Immigrant women survivors usually do not have the funds to hire an immigration lawyer. Domestic violence service providers indicated during the needs assessment that they sometimes do not know what to do in these cases. Immigrant settlement workers are much more familiar with the immigration policy landscape. In some cases in which immigrant women do not have documentation of their citizenship status, domestic violence service providers may be concerned that in providing safe shelter from violent husbands they are also breaking the law.

**Trust:**

There is a lack of understanding amongst immigrant women of the role of domestic violence service providers and the nature of the services offered. Because of experiences from their countries of origin or from other public services they have accessed since arriving in Canada, immigrant women fear that they will not be understood. Domestic violence service providers lack an understanding of the vast range of cultural practices and values that immigrant women have. Without understanding on both sides of this situation it is difficult to build trust. Immigrant women develop relationships of trust quite readily with immigrant settlement service workers and other immigrants that they meet when accessing settlement services such as language training or employment counselling. Trust is absolutely necessary for immigrant women to disclose situations of D/IPV outside the privacy of the family and seek help from those trained in best practices of responding to D/IPV, especially domestic violence service providers.

**4.2.4. Differences in Barriers to a Community Coordinated Response to D/IPV Identified by Immigrant Women and Public Service Providers**

**Collective Identities of Immigrant Women:**

The importance of family and immigrant social networks emphasized by the immigrant women who took part in the needs assessment is an indication that their identities are primarily rooted in the collective. For many immigrant women, their collective identities as mothers, wives, and daughters comes first and then their individual identity. The challenges of the immigration and settlement process increase immigrant women's dependence on others, especially the nuclear family. This is in contrast to the emphasis on individual identity upon which the contemporary model of D/IPV service provision is based. D/IPV interventions which involve the break-up of the family are problematic for immigrant women.

**Collaboration and Coordination of Settlement and Domestic Violence Services:**

The focus group sessions with service providers provided valuable information about the lack of collaboration between immigrant settlement services and domestic violence services in cities and regions of New Brunswick. This is not due to a lack of desire on the part of agency workers, but more likely due to the fact that all public service agencies are

under-resourced, staff are over-worked and the high turn-over in agency staff. Sometimes the focus group session conducted by the project team was the first time that the workers from different service agencies had met. They were clearly interested in getting to know one another and ask questions about the types of services their counterparts provided.

Information sharing was identified as important as was the issue of collaboration. Domestic violence workers emphasized that when an immigrant woman discloses a situation of D/IPV it is important that she not have to repeat her story again and again to different public sector service providers. This highlights the importance of the issue of confidentiality. It was suggested that service providers in local context work out the logistics of sharing confidential information between agencies so that victims of D/IPV are not re-victimized and re-traumatized.

#### Financial Issues:

Both the immigrant women and public service providers involved in the needs assessment thus far have spoken about financial issues but in different ways. Financial stability for immigrant families is a primary concern and access to the primary labour market in New Brunswick is important. Currently this segment of the labour market – the one with high skill and higher wage jobs – is very difficult to immigrant women to access, regardless of their credentials. Many immigrant women are pushed into the secondary labour market of precarious work with lower wages. This labour market segregation is racialized and gendered putting immigrant women at a distinct disadvantage.

Public service organizations and agencies in the immigrant settlement and domestic violence sectors do not have core funding and are pushing their current resources to the limit. There is a need for gender specific programming and increased collaboration but these will require additional funding.

## **5. KEY FINDINGS – SUMMARY**

### **5.1. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

Our team has been engaged in gathering important information from the community. We have conducted focus groups and interviews with settlement serving agencies, domestic violence and crisis intervention agencies, and immigrant women. As we approach the end of the first year of this grant we are engaged in reviewing the analysis of the data gathered during the needs assessment phase in order to be able to tease out the finer points and nuances of the very complex issue of D/IPV of immigrant women living in NB.

We have identified a number of areas where more work will be required; they include but are not limited to:

- It is clear that a significant lack of coordination between organizations exists at the community level, a lack of understanding about how to help women from diverse cultures, a significant divide between immigrant settlement agencies and domestic violence serving agencies, and the problem of securing the resources, both financial and human resources, to provide effective assistance and interventions for immigrant women experiencing D/IPV in New Brunswick.
- As a result of the rich information we have received from our consultations with immigrant women and immigrant serving agencies and domestic partner violence resources we feel strongly that the New Brunswick Women's Abuse Protocols should be updated to include a chapter that is reflective of immigrant women's experiences and the socio-cultural context that creates the barriers they face in seeking assistance when faced with IPV and/or domestic violence.
- We also recommend that local Women's Abuse Protocols be developed for serving immigrant women in the project's three pilot sites.

## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akbari, A., Lynch, S., McDonald, J.T., & Rankaduwa, W. (2007). *Socioeconomic & demographic profiles of immigrants in Atlantic Canada*. Halifax, NS: Atlantic Metropolis Centre.

Barrett, B.J. (2011). Variations in Women's Help Seeking in Response to Intimate Partner Violence: Findings From a Canadian Population-Based Study. *Violence Against Women*, 17(1): 47-40.

Baskin, C. (2010). Challenges, connections and creativity: Anti-violence work with racialized women. In J. Fong (Ed.), *Out of the shadows: Woman abuse in ethnic, immigrant and aboriginal communities* (pp. 78-98). Toronto, ON: Women's Press.

Brownridge, D. A. (2009). *Violence against women: Vulnerable populations*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Brownridge, D. A., & Halli, S. S. (2003). Double advantage? Violence against Canadian migrant women from "developed" nations. *International migration*, 41(1), 29-45.

Canadian Council for Refugees. (2016). *How immigration status can affect women in situations of violence or abuse*. Available: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/how-immigration-status-can-affect-women-situations-violence>. Last accessed : 09-12-16.

Community Legal Education Ontario (CLEO). (2014). *Women, family violence, and immigration: Family violence when a woman is sponsored by a spouse or partner*. Available: [http://www.cleo.on.ca/sites/default/files/book\\_pdfs/famvio.pdf](http://www.cleo.on.ca/sites/default/files/book_pdfs/famvio.pdf)

Fong, J. (2010). *Out of the shadows: Woman abuse in ethnic, immigrant and aboriginal communities*. Toronto, ON: Women's Press.

Government of New Brunswick. (2014). *Women Victims of Abuse Protocols developed by the Government of New Brunswick*. Fredericton, NB. Available: [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/Violence/PDF/en/WVAP\\_%202014-E-jan2016.pdf](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/eco-bce/Violence/PDF/en/WVAP_%202014-E-jan2016.pdf)

Government of New Brunswick. (2016). *Pilot program to facilitate entry of 2,000 principal immigrants into Atlantic Canada in 2017*. Press Release. Fredericton, NB.

Holtmann, C. (2016) *Christian and Muslim Immigrant Women in the Canadian Maritimes: Considering their Strengths and Vulnerabilities in Responding to Domestic Violence*. *Studies in Religion*. 45(3): 397-414.

- Johnson, H., & Dawson M. (2010). *Violence against Women in Canada: Research and Policy Perspectives*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Liao, MA. (2006). *Domestic violence among Asian Indian immigrant women: Risk factors, acculturation, and intervention*. *Women & Therapy* 29(1): 23–39.
- Miedema, B. (1999). *Barriers and Strategies to Improve Services for Abused Immigrant Women in New Brunswick*. Fredericton, NB.
- Mosher, J. (2009). *The complicity of the state in the intimate abuse of immigrant women*. In: Agnew VJ (ed.) *Racialized Migrant Women in Canada: Essays on Health, Violence, and Ethnicity*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, pp. 41–69.
- Ramos, H., & Yoshida, Y. (2011). *Why do recent immigrants leave Atlantic Canada?* Working paper, Metropolis Atlantic, Halifax, NS.
- Sinha, M. (2013). *Portrait of caregivers, 2012: Spotlight on Canadians: Results from the General Social Survey*. Statistics Canada. Ottawa, ON. Available: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.pdf>
- Thériault, L. and M. Haan. (2012). *Non-profit Immigrant Settlement Agencies in New Brunswick: Answering the Call for Population Growth?* Halifax: Atlantic Metropolis Centre Working Paper Series.
- United Nations. (2008). United Nations Secretary General's Campaign: UNite to End Violence Against Women. Available: <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2013). *Global and Regional Estimates of Violence against Women: Prevalence and Health Effects of Intimate Partner Violence and Non-partner Sexual Violence*. Available at: [www.who.int/reproductivehealth](http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth)