

## POLICY RESPONSES FROM CANADA

Our analysis clearly shows that policy and legislative frameworks may make migrant and refugee women more vulnerable to Gender-Based Violence.

The persistence and normalization of gender inequality masks the problem of GBV. People believe that GBV service providers are "making a big deal out of nothing." GBV survivors are stigmatized and blamed for their situations. Public perceptions and policy responses tend to individualize a structural problem.

Some policy and practice changes in the right direction are: recent legislative changes in the Divorce Act; new policies on subsidized housing; and student grants and loans for permanent residents.



## ABOUT US

Project Title: "Violence against Women Migrants and Refugees: Analyzing Causes and Effective Policy Responses"

The Canadian Team: Dr. Evangelia Tastsoglou (Saint Mary's U); Dr. Myrna Dawson (U Guelph); Dr. Catherine Holtmann (U New Brunswick); and Dr. Lori Wilkinson (U Manitoba).

We study policies, social and cultural attitudes to migration, the migration process, and make recommendations on government, NGOs, or regional and international policy-making institutions that may help protect women, and provide better services to survivors.

For more information, please visit our website.



# GBV-MIG CANADA

[WWW.SMU.CA/GENDERNET](http://WWW.SMU.CA/GENDERNET)

## Policy Responses to Gender-Based Violence in the Context of Migration



Funding agency: CIHR

The Canadian project is part of the international GBV-MIG, a winning project of the Gender-Net Plus Consortium

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand pre-arrival settlement services, including full information on GBV, Canadian law, rights, entitlements and responsibilities associated with the legal status under which spouses come into Canada. Such information should be provided through user-friendly, modern, accessible and up-to-date media in the languages understood by couples.
- Fund and promote culturally-sensitive GBV resources and support services (e.g., public health-care providers, settlement service providers) post-arrival for both permanent residents and women with precarious immigration status.
- Broaden government public education campaigns – in multiple languages and through a variety of community venues – about GBV and the rights and resources available to all survivors of GBV, regardless of their immigration status.
- Enhance service providers' knowledge of existing resources and organizations.

## GOOD PRACTICES

- ✔ Intersectional approaches to gender!
- ✔ Recognizing the structural roots of GBV!
- ✔ Including economic and psychological abuse!
- ✔ Avoiding myths, stereotypes and incorrect assumptions about whom GBV affects and how victims are supposed to present themselves!
- ✔ Trauma-informed process for refugee status determination!
- ✔ Trauma impacts and distorts memory and behaviour and this needs to be understood by decision-makers!



## WHO IS HELPING SURVIVORS?



And many other settlement agencies across Canada are some of the voices leading public conversations concerning the impacts of Canadian immigration policies on migrant women survivors of IPV.

