

Gender-Based Approach to Settlement

A Project of the Canadian Council for Refugees

Invitation to Conduct Informal Meetings

The Canadian Council Refugees invites non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community groups, relevant government departments and interested individuals to participate in the Gender-based Approach to Settlement Project by holding informal discussions at staff meetings, community round table gatherings, meetings of umbrella organizations, as part of your Annual General Meeting, staff/volunteer trainings, etc.

The goal of the project is to develop the capacity among NGOs, including immigrant- and refugee- serving NGOs, to ask relevant questions about the gender-specific needs of immigrants and refugees settling in Canada, and to respond to their needs appropriately.

If you are interested in discussing gender analysis as it relates to the settlement sector in Canada, please feel free to use the following resources to guide your discussion.

As part of this project, the CCR is developing a resource tool designed to facilitate gender-based analysis in the settlement sector. We would gratefully welcome a report back from any informal meetings and/or discussions that you conduct. A suggested report back sheet is provided below.

As you prepare for your informal meeting(s), please keep the following in mind...

The goal of gender-based analysis is to:

- a) acknowledge power differentials
- b) change society by transforming relationships
- c) develop the practice of doing gender-based analysis all the time.

If you are interested in any aspect of this project and/or would like to receive more information about it please contact Julie Mooney, Project Coordinator at ccr6@web.ca

Please feel free to pass on this information on to any individual or group you think might be interested.

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Suggested Agenda for Discussion

Select any combination of items from this agenda to use in your meeting.

1. Have participants review in advance of the meeting the “Questions and Intersections to Consider” and its corresponding “Bubbles Diagram.” At the meeting, with the plenary and/or in small groups, discuss these documents in terms of:
 - What did you like?
 - What is missing?
 - What should be changed?
2. As in number 1, have participants also review "Gender-based Analysis Background Information.” At the meeting, ask questions such as:
 - What was helpful in the document?
 - Where did you have difficulties or objections?
3. Have someone make a short presentation on GBA based on the "Gender-based Analysis Background Information.” Then invite the group to discuss any part of the materials provided:
 - Questions and Intersections to Consider
 - Bubbles Diagram
 - Gender-based Analysis Background Information
 - Case Studies
4. Hand out the “Questions and Intersections to Consider” at the meeting (rather than ahead of time) and its corresponding “Bubbles Diagram.” Invite comments on the document (see suggested questions under 1).
5. Divide people into small groups and give them a case study. Ask them to discuss the case using the “Questions and Intersections to Consider” and its corresponding “Bubbles Diagram.” Bring people back into plenary and ask people for further comments on:
 - the “Questions and Intersections to Consider” documents based on the small group discussion.
 - how to bring a gender-based approach to settlement
 - any barriers to the GBA process and thoughts on how to overcome them
 - your vision of success in applying Gender-based Analysis in the settlement sector

Note: Feel free to select one case study in particular to examine as a large group, or work on a few of the case studies dividing up into small groups.
6. Distribute individual evaluation forms for feedback on the themes discussed.

Report to the CCR

Informal Meeting Date: _____

Location: _____

Contact Person: _____

Agency or Group Affiliation: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please summarize discussions, input, and feedback from your meeting with respect to the following areas. Feel free to write in point form.

1. Thoughts on the “Questions and Intersections to Consider” and the “Bubbles Diagram” – add more questions/intersections, critique existing questions/intersections;
2. Suggestions on how to bring a gender-based approach to settlement. Please also identify any barriers to the GBA process and your thoughts on how to overcome them;
3. Comment on the terminology provided in the Gender-based Analysis Background Information such as: gender-based analysis, gender-based approach, definitions of sex and gender, intersectionality, gender identity, sexual orientation/identity, etc. . . What do you consider the most helpful terms to use?
4. If we are successful in applying Gender Based Analysis in the settlement sector in Canada, how will society be different? What is your vision?
5. Additional case studies you suggest for the resource tool.

We would also welcome any comments from the discussion that participants found particularly enlightening. We might be able to include these as quotations in the final tool.

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Meeting date & location:

EVALUATION FORM

Please provide your input for the following areas. Feel free to write in point form.

Your thoughts on the Questions and Intersections to Consider and the Bubble Diagram – add more questions/areas, critique existing questions/intersections:

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Your suggestions on how to bring a gender-based approach to settlement. Please also identify any barriers to the GBA process and your thoughts on how to overcome them:

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Comment on the terminology used in this meeting such as: gender-based analysis, gender-based approach, definitions of sex and gender, intersectionality, gender identity, sexual orientation/identity, etc. What do you consider the most helpful terms to use?

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-
-

If we are successful in applying Gender Based Analysis in the settlement sector in Canada, how will society be different? What is your vision?

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-
-

Case studies you suggest for the resource tool:

Could we include your case study in the resource tool? If yes, please provide your name and contact information so that we can follow up with you and include you in the general credits for the resource tool.

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Email Address: _____

Gender-based Analysis in the Settlement Sector Questions and Intersections to Consider

The following questions are intended as a guide to those in the settlement sector applying a gender-based analysis to:

- Individual case situations
- Specific settlement projects
- The overall program of organizations offering settlement services
- Policies affecting settlement

The questions are to be used as a starting point for reflection and should be read in conjunction with the categories below, along with other categories that may be relevant.

Throughout the analysis it is important to pay attention to the impact of the **migration experience**. For refugees and immigrants, migration may lead to many significant changes in their gender roles, in how they are racialized, in their gender and sexual identities, in their class, in the status accorded them on the grounds of their age, and in many other ways. It is therefore important to ask not only about the identities of refugees and immigrants today, but also how these have changed, and what stresses those changes may be causing.

Questions to consider

Analyzing the situation

- Who has power?
- Who has access to resources/services?
- Who makes decisions?
- How does the distribution of power affect individuals' relationships to each other?

Reviewing our knowledge and biases

- What assumptions are we making about people's realities and needs?
- What more do we need to know in order to understand roles and relationships?

Analyzing our intervention

- Who benefits from our intervention?
- Whose needs are not being addressed?
- Who is excluded?
- Will our intervention lead to greater/lesser/the same levels of equity? In the short term?
In the long term?
- Are there opportunities to transform unequal relationships?

Evaluating our intervention

- How will we gather more information about the situation and the impact of our intervention?
- How will we use the additional information to adapt our intervention as necessary?

Gender-based Analysis in the Settlement Sector Questions and Intersections to Consider

GENDER

Consider both – or all – genders, gender roles, and relationships between people of different genders.	For example: Do women and men, girls and boys have access to services? Are both men and women participating in decisions? How have gender roles and relations between men and women changed as a result of migration?
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GENDER IDENTITY

Consider people’s sense of their own gender identity, and the barriers and violence faced by people whose gender identity does not fit the conventional male/female distinction.	For example: Would a young refugee woman who is questioning her gender identity feel comfortable to discuss this with us? What particular support might transsexual and transgender immigrants need?
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AGE

Consider people of all age groups, the roles assigned to them, and the relations between them?	For example: Are elderly men and women able to access services? What is the impact of the absence of an older generation in some families and communities here in Canada? What are the particular needs of separated girls and boys in Canada? What is the impact when the oldest brother or sister must act in the role of parent for the younger siblings?
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RACE

Consider people’s experience of racialization and the impacts of racism.	For example: How do women and men experience racism differently? What support is needed for immigrants discovering after their arrival in Canada that they are black? Are there elements of racism in our own services?
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SEXUAL IDENTITY

Consider the diversity of sexual identities and the barriers and violence faced by people who are not heterosexual.	For example: Does our organization make it clear to someone walking in that we welcome gays, lesbians, bisexuals and queers? Might a woman who is leaving her husband need to be connected with a lesbian mothers peer group? How should LGBTQ services be adapted to meet the needs of both men and women? Do we have opinions about whether people should “come out” or keep their sexuality to themselves and do we impose those opinions on the people we serve?
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VIOLENCE

<p>Consider people's experiences of past violence and fears of future violence.</p>	<p>For example: What impact might an experience of rape in the course of refugee flight have on a woman's mental and physical health? How might we recognize signs that an older woman is suffering abuse in her family? Have we considered that an immigrant child who is doing badly at school might be the victim of racist or homophobic violence? How do we respond to a woman victim of conjugal violence who is worried that her husband might be deported if he is charged? Do we assume that men of certain ethnic groups are predisposed towards family violence?</p>
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ABILITY

<p>Consider the diversity of people's abilities (physical and mental), and the barriers and violence faced by people with disabilities.</p>	<p>For example: Do we know whether mainstream services for people with disabilities will respond appropriately to immigrants? What particular stresses might be felt by a woman whose husband is disabled? How can we meet the needs of refugees and immigrants of the Deaf culture who do not communicate in one of the official languages of Canada (French or English)? Is your agency able to provide information in alternate formats such as Braille or large print?</p>
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CLASS/ECONOMIC STATUS

<p>Consider how people may identify themselves by class, how society may identify them by class and the diversity of economic status.</p>	<p>For example: Should we/do we know what class people receiving our services belonged to in their home country? What different impacts might downward social mobility have on men and women? In what ways might the poor face barriers in accessing our services?</p>
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FAMILY ROLES

<p>Consider people's roles and responsibilities within the family and the pressures of family expectations.</p>	<p>For example: Do we assume that men don't need childcare services? What expectations might an adolescent girl be facing from her family? What pressures are likely facing a community where most members have family living in a refugee camp?</p>
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RELIGION

<p>Consider people's religion, the resources that they may derive from their faith, the prejudice they may face, and the pressures they may face if they choose not to follow the religion of their birth.</p>	<p>For example: Are women wearing the hijab likely to feel comfortable in your organization? What about a young woman who has chosen to renounce her parent's religion? What do we know about the forms of discrimination faced by refugees and immigrants on account of their religion? What are we doing about the discrimination?</p>
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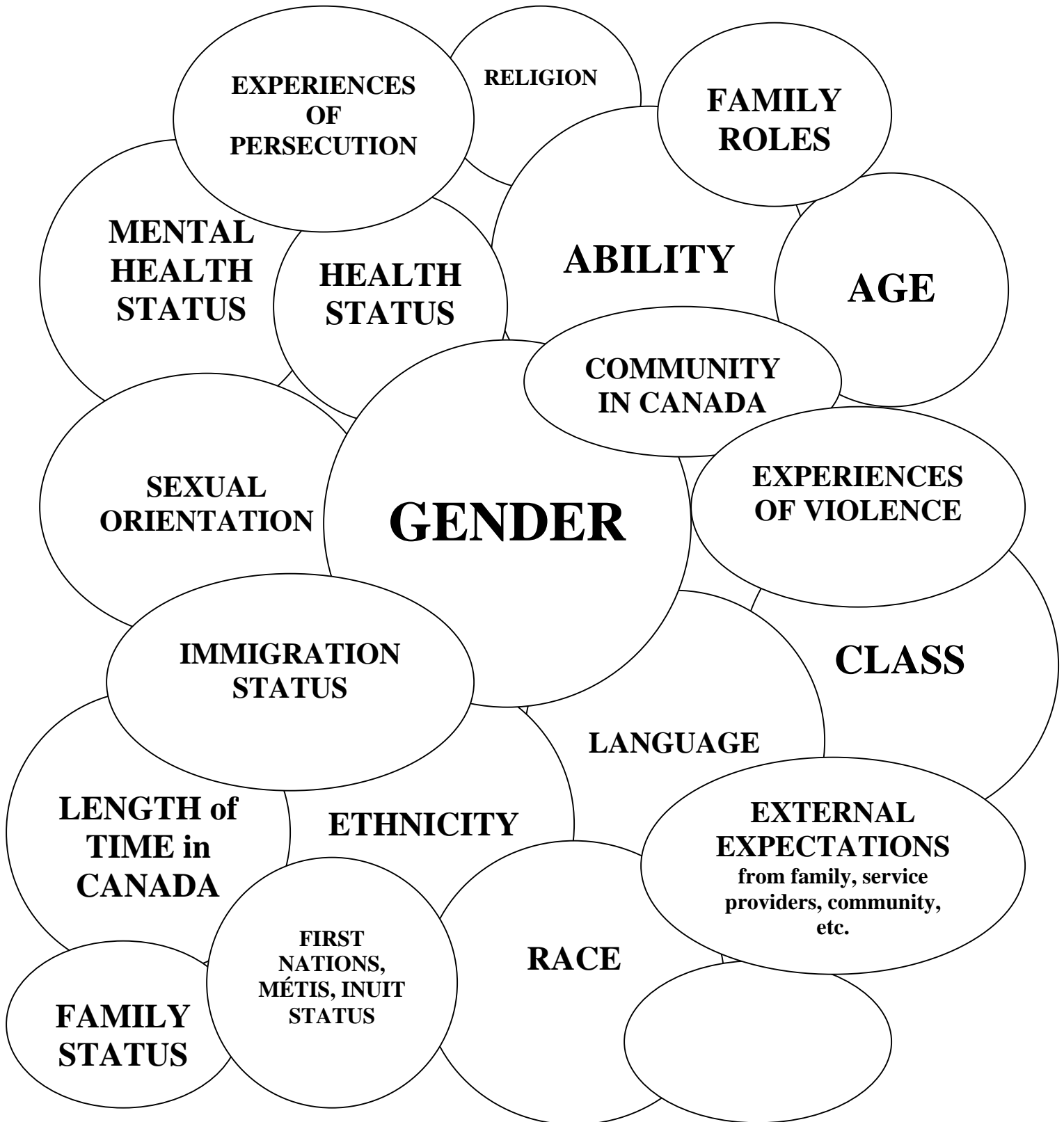
OTHER POINTS OF INTERSECTION

The above categories are only a few of those that need to be covered. Others might include: health status, immigration status, language, experience of persecution.... The bubbles on the following page illustrate how the different categories overlap and how we need to leave some spaces open to remind us that no list is exhaustive.

Gender-based Analysis in the Settlement Sector

Questions and Intersections to Consider – Bubble Diagram

(size/shape of bubble does not represent importance of issue)



Gender-based Analysis - Background Information

A. Importance of gender and gender-based analysis (GBA) within the settlement sector

Social roles, political and economic circumstances and life experiences affect our understanding of gender and gender relations. A gender-based approach to any dimension of private and public life (family relations, education, health, development, immigration, etc) asks us to take our different gender experiences into consideration, to design policies and implement programs in ways that respond fairly to gender differences.

Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures.

These roles and expectations are learned. They can change over time and they vary within and between cultures. Gender analysis helps to reveal how women's subordination is socially constructed. As such, the subordination can be changed or ended. It is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever. (*Source: ABC of Women Worker's Rights and Gender Equality, ILO, Geneva, 2000*).

Sex

The term '**sex**' is used to differentiate between the physical attributes, sex chromosomes, external genitalia and internal reproductive system identified as male or female. A sex of either male or female is assigned at birth.

B. Beyond Definitions

A thorough understanding of "gender" involves going beyond the mainstream definition of gender (given above). An understanding of "gender identity" is essential to an inclusive gender-based approach. We start by making an important distinction between "sexual orientation", also referred to as "sexual identity" and "gender identity".

Sexual identity or sexual orientation refers to our emotional and sexual attractions, sexual behaviours, and identification with a community. We may identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or heterosexual (Human Rights Office, Queen's University). Sexual orientation, then, refers to the choice of sexual partner and is distinct from gender identity. (*The Ontario Human Rights Commission, 1999*)

Gender identity refers to those characteristics that are linked to an individual's intrinsic sense of self that is based on attributes reflected in the person's psychological, behavioural and/or cognitive state. Gender identity may also refer to one's intrinsic sense of manhood or womanhood. It is fundamentally different from, and not determinative of, sexual orientation. (*The Ontario Human Rights Commission, 1999*)

C. Significance of gender identity

While we often think of gender as built on a **binary system** (either male or female), we need to look at areas of overlap. In mainstream Western culture, acceptable behaviour falls within a two gender system of male and female.

For example, men/boys are expected to exhibit masculine behaviours and social roles. Teenaged boys are discouraged from wearing make-up, a behaviour associated with femininity. Similarly, women/girls are expected to perform a feminine gender. Young women are socialized to wear skirts and dresses, not pant-suits.

Gender: a socially constructed role

Gender Identity: an individual's sense of their own gender identity as in a sense of "being" male or female, both or neither. Self identification. (source: *Darke and Cope, 1999*)

D. Critical Questions about gender

But we may want to pause and ask here:

- Should the experiences and feelings of all individuals be classified into rigid categories: female or male?
- Do some people have elements of both female and male in them?
- Do we all have elements of both female and male in us?
- Would it be better to think of gender as a continuum rather than a binary?

Is gender a continuum?:

Male _____ Female

Or is gender a binary?:

Male

Female

E. Variations in self-identification/self-expression

In reality, one's sense of self goes far beyond the socially constructed, binary classification of male and female genders. Examples of these variations include, but not restricted to:

- a) an individual who, having been born with a penis, testicles, etc., is assigned "male" at birth and raised as "male" by parents, family, school, etc., but who upon growing up discovers an intimate sense of themselves as being a woman; this process of identification as woman may lead to the desire to live one's life as a woman, possibly including a series of

interventions upon one's body (hormone treatment, surgery) to assert one's gender identity.

- b) a person may be comfortable with their body and its genitals or reproductive organs, but still have a sense of themselves as not being exclusively "male" or "female" in the dominant understanding of such terms..

Such persons' experiences challenge society's expectations that we are all either male or female. Furthermore, we cannot even say that biologically everyone belongs strictly to one sex or the other, as we can see from the experiences of "intersex" people..

"Intersex" is a term used to describe people who have both female and male aspects of their body, as well as people who start out their lives apparently female but then "become" physically male in adolescence.

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1983) has shown that the North American response to intersexuality has been to try to force intersex people into becoming one sex or the other. As such, many intersexuals who do not 'pass' as men or women, "either seek or are forced into surgery to cosmetically 'correct' the condition and become 'legitimate' males or females". (1998: 82).

F. Gender-based analysis

In discussing the "differences" between men and women and the spectrum of gender identities, it becomes immediately evident that generally men are granted unique privileges. Accordingly any gender-based analysis "involves examining **relationships** between women and men and the **inequalities** and power differences between them in a systematic way" (Leach, 2005). A gender analysis should work towards balancing unequal power relationships between and among different groups of people.

Gender Based Analysis refers to the variety of methods used to understand the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other. Gender analysis provides information that recognizes that gender, and its relationship with race, ethnicity, culture, class, age, disability, and/or other status, is important in understanding the different patterns of involvement, behaviour and activities that women and men have in economic, social and legal structures. (CIDA)

G. Gender is NOT just about women

It is crucial to realize that 'gender' is not equivalent to 'women' and that a gender-based analysis can not be achieved by having only women-specific concerns, discussions and programs. As noted by Leach (2004:10):

The commonly held assumption that men are oppressors and women are victims is a simplification of reality, and not helpful in addressing either male or female gender needs in a lasting manner. We need to view gender not as a unilateral women's issue but in

terms of relations of power and powerlessness in which men as well as women may be vulnerable and disempowered. We need to find constructive ways of working with men to transform power and gender relations without marginalizing women.

In many situations men have more power than women; addressing the power imbalance will affect men as well as women; therefore men must also be involved.

This CCR project aims to point to the shortcomings of women-specific approaches.

H. Settlement experiences vary based on gender

The CCR's work with immigrants and refugees over the years has shown that the migration experience is lived and felt differently by men and women. There are a number of ways in which gender roles and relationships are affected, from events precipitating migration (e.g. persecution, which may have affected men and women differently, or the decision to migrate, which may not have been shared equally) to the process of applying for coming to Canada and the resettlement experience which may force changes in the social and economic structure of the family unit.

Example:

What difference does it make if the woman is identified as the "dependant" of her husband?

What if it is the other way around?

Within the context of settlement, often women face additional barriers in many arenas, including paid-work opportunities, accessing health care system, and education attainment.

Tastsoglou argues that the process of integration may be extremely stressful and difficult especially for many immigrants who come from non-English speaking countries (and reside in English-speaking provinces). She adds that the experience is doubly difficult for immigrant women, who often come as dependent immigrants. "Institutional, social and even cultural barriers render integration for immigrant women slow and difficult to achieve, or even unattainable.

Based on statistical information, we know that immigrant women are not well integrated even though they often have higher levels of education than Canadian-born women, their average earnings are less, they are over-represented in the lower status jobs and they are often underemployed" (Tastsoglou, et al., 2000).

Integration refers to the process through which immigrants and refugees are able to participate fully in Canadian society. The United Nations Economic and Social Council defined integration as a "gradual process by which new residents become active participants in the economic, social, civic, cultural and spiritual affairs of a new homeland. It is a dynamic process in which values are enriched through mutual acquaintance, accommodation and understanding." (cited in Kage, 1962:165).

The latter point, the issue of lack of recognition of immigrant women's professional credentials in Canadian society points to the interconnectedness of different policies and practices. It points

to the fact that there are barriers that cannot and should not be addressed solely by the settlement sector. It can however advocate for changes.

Evidence suggests that one of the important barriers that newcomers face is the reluctance of employers and regulatory bodies to recognize professional qualifications and experience acquired outside Canada. Considerable attention has been paid to such problems faced by doctors and engineers, professions traditionally dominated by men. The sector can identify occupations that newcomer women are qualified for and advocate for the dismantling of systemic barriers faced by women in these occupations.

Many newcomer women seek administrative or other jobs that are not regulated but they still face barriers to access which have not been addressed by the initiatives that are focussed on licensed occupations. For example, Muslim women who wear the traditional head scarf (hijab) are discriminated against both in the hiring process as well as once in a job.

The newcomer's settlement experiences are further differentiated when other variables are added to gender differences – variables such as age, sexual orientation, ability, refugee or immigration category, and socio-economic standing.

The process of integration for LGBTQ people of colour, is doubly fraught with hardship as they experience complex oppression related to their sexual orientation, and/or gender identity and their race and ethnicity.

Concurrently, some researchers have observed that adolescents from ethnic minority communities are over-represented in correctional settings in Canada. They argue that intergenerational conflicts are more strongly felt by these communities as the youth seem to be caught between their parents' expectations to retain their ethnic identities and their own desire to adopt features of the dominant culture (Mann-Feder and Mojab, 1994)

Settlement A long-term, dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities (*Source: OCASI, Immigrant Settlement Counselling: A Training Guide – Introduction, 2005 Edition*)

An **understanding of Settlement** includes understanding the following concepts:

- Effects of and adjustments after migration,
- Processes and stages of individual adjustment to migration,
- Personal and social change,
- Variables that influence settlement,
- Impacts of major life changes,
- Effects of migration on family and economic life.
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(*Source: BC Settlement Workers Union. Foundational Knowledge Specifications. 1998*)

I. Intersections with Gender

Gender, gender roles and relationships impact all processes in life, including settlement in a new country. To better understand and respond to the needs of different groups of newcomers, we need to have an integrated approach to settlement that looks not only at gender but the intersection of gender, political persecution, asylum, race, class, ability, age, spirituality, sexual orientation etc.

Intersectionality suggests that **people live multiple, layered identities** that develop from social relations, history and structures of power. People are members of more than one community at the same time, and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege (e.g. a woman may be a respected medical professional yet suffer domestic violence in her home).

Intersectional analysis expose the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities. It aims to address the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other systems of discrimination create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women. It takes account of historical, social and political contexts and also recognizes unique individual experiences.

For example, the experience of a black woman in Cape Town is qualitatively different than that of a white or indigenous woman in that same location. Similarly, the experience of being lesbian, old, disabled, poor, Northern-based, and/or any number of other identities, are unique and distinct identities and experiences. (*Source: Women's Rights and Economic Change, 2004*)

Case Studies

Case Study #1

A blind Professor of Law from Thailand immigrated to Canada with her partner and their child. She had a stable job at a university in Bangkok, but agreed to leave it because her partner had found a job in the Mining Industry in Canada. They moved to a community with limited public transit and few employment opportunities for her. Her sense of isolation is great. The only contact she has with others is through the mosque. Because of her disAbility, her family had difficulty arranging a marriage for her. She feels little comfort in her partner's company.

Case Study #2

Ericka is a small town, human rights activist, sex trade worker and transsexual woman from Honduras, whose education has been primarily on the streets. After witnessing the police-sanctioned murder of one of her transsexual friends, and receiving numerous death threats, she fled to Canada. She was granted refugee status and now attends English classes at a local settlement agency.

Assigned « male » at birth, Erika feels she is female and hopes to become more fully her true self through gender-affirming hormone treatments, surgery and choosing a new - legally recognized - name for herself. In the mean time, she is struggling to get by on government social assistance and is working in the sex trade again.

Her ESL classmates are initially friendly with her, but when she starts receiving gifts of clothing and jewellery from one of her clients, her classmates start gossiping about her and stop spending time with her. One day, an elder woman in her class places a scarf over Ericka's hair and gently indicates that she should cover herself up more.

Students start complaining that she is inappropriate. A staff member asks her, "Why can't you behave like the other gay man in class, who is discrete and doesn't pretend to be a woman?"

Ericka is seriously concerned about how this new life in Canada is unfolding. At night, she lights a candle and prays. She gives thanks for the good things she's found and hopes there will be change around this newly encountered oppression.

Case Study #3

The staff at a language training school are predominantly Canadian-born women of diverse ancestries. Their students are largely from East-Asia and Latin America. One of the staff who speaks Mandarin, overhears a group of Chinese students talking, in Mandarin, about all the "Spanish" women in their class and how they take over the class with their loud voices. The group agrees that the Latina women are ignorant, probably illegally in Canada and that it's embarrassing to be in the same school as them.

The staff person raises the issue at the next staff meeting, saying that it's not the first time she has noticed animosity between her Chinese and Latina students. One of her Chinese co-workers takes offence to the way she is portraying the Chinese students, and makes a disparaging remark about the Latina students. The white-skinned manager then intervenes and says, "It's a question of classroom management. Teachers must make space for each student to have the same amount of speaking time in class."

There is one Argentinean-Canadian woman on staff. She says nothing during the meeting.

Case Study #4

The Board of Directors at a settlement agency is meeting with staff and managers to review the organization's intake policy. Because of a significant government grant to support pre/post-natal women on low incomes, the agency's clientele has shifted in recent years to become predominantly young immigrant mothers and their children.

A well-respected man, who has been working for the agency for several years, argues that this shift is inappropriate because it disadvantages fathers and single men and it limits the settlement services to a little more than a 9-month gestation period. He says, "Once the young mothers give birth we only see them a couple of times before they stop coming. This means a high turn-over

rate of our clients and no long-term relationships are built between our immigrant-serving agency and immigrant communities.”

A number of women on the predominantly female staff take offence to his comments. They tell him that men cannot be disadvantaged in a patriarchal society and argue that the pre/post-natal grant has moved this agency in a positive direction for serving immigrants. The Executive Director, who is an immigrant man, then shares a story of his settlement experience, demonstrating how smoothly it went for him. He does not believe that there is any need to reach out to immigrant men, saying, “We men can take care of ourselves; it’s women who are the vulnerable members of our society.”

A board member who is a new immigrant and father of 6 is not sure what to say. He has had a great deal of trouble figuring out the gender norms in Canada. Two of his children were born in Canada and he was impressed with all the support his family received from various social and health agencies while his wife was pregnant. But some days he doesn’t recognize his wife because of the new ideas she brings home and he worries about how his children are learning to be in relationships at school. Some days he wonders if their move to Canada was the right choice.