Building Connections: Refugee Research & Community Outreach

Migration Law Research Cluster Conference Report

March 2015

Introduction

The "Building Connections: Refugee Research and Community Outreach Conference" took place at Robson Hall on March 28th, 2014. The conference was organized by the Migration Law Research Cluster (MLRC) at Robson Hall, founded by Professors Shauna Labman, Amar Khoday and Gerald Heckman. Participants focused on creating relationships between the academic world and community organizations involved in the area of refugee protection and resettlement. Panelists included both scholars and representatives of community organizations from across the country who work within various sectors of refugee protection, settlement and advocacy. These panel discussions fuelled discussions in smaller groups.

The conference was organized to cultivate ideas, identify intersections and explore opportunities for both collaboration and knowledge-sharing between these groups. The conference focused on the 'local', the particularity of local refugee issues in Winnipeg as well as areas of intersections and opportunities for collaboration between community organizations and universities. The overarching question was: "What is the relationship between academic research on refugees and community interests?"

This report explores the over-arching themes and practical considerations of refugee scholarship and community outreach as they emerged from the varied presentations and discussions with the conference attendees. It reflects the thematic structure of the conference and synthesizes the ideas presented in the various panels and by the various speakers (see Conference Schedule, Appendix "A").

The report was prepared by students of Robson Hall, Faculty of Law. It is intended to reflect the discussions held rather than to capture precisely what was said or encompass all views expressed at the event. The views expressed are those of conference participants and may not represent the views of the MLRC or the Faculty of Law at Robson Hall.

Panel I: Academic research on refugees and community interests: academic perspectives

Chair: Amar Khoday
Panelists: Shauna Labman, Stephanie Stobbe, Lori Wilkinson

Shauna Labman

The first panelist, Shauna Labman, is an Assistant Professor of Law at Robson Hall, Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba as of July 2013. She is also a founding member of the Migration Law Research Cluster. Shauna's doctoral research examined the intersection of international rights, responsibility and obligation in the absence of a legal scheme for refugee resettlement. She has additionally worked in a variety of capacities with governmental and non-governmental entities such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in New Delhi, the Canadian Embassy in Beijing, the Law Commission of Canada, the Nunavut Court of Justice and, in a clerking capacity, with the Federal Court of Appeal. Her focused research areas are citizenship, immigration and refugee law, human rights, international law and jurisprudence. She currently teaches torts, legal systems, and immigration law.

Shauna's Perspective: Advocacy and Academics

As one of the MLRC organizers of the conference, Shauna discussed her own experiences with collaboration between academic research and community organizations and the inherent tension therein. Shauna's recently completed PhD forced her to examine the close alignment of law, activism and advocacy and the pressing need for academics to address the potential for divide between the respective arenas. The specific and accurate divide between advocacy and academics is something that may appear less directly in disciplines that are not professional and have a more established tradition of academic inquiry than the field of law, which was traditionally more technically focused.

Shauna explained that she pursued immigration law research at a time when it was a highly polarizing and changing subject area. Wanting to engage in a public dialogue by writing opinion pieces and attempting to communicate at the practical level of the 'everyday things' that were happening in the community made the distinction between academic inquiry and advocacy rather blurred in her case. As an academic with extensive experience abroad working in an advocate capacity, Shauna articulated the difficulty in remaining unbiased and neutral as an academic, and asked whether or not it is possible in this field of work.

Challenges in Research Agendas:

Shauna articulated three specific challenges she wished to address in her own research agenda. The first was reciprocity in relationships between the academics and the community they

research. She acknowledges that in order to enable people to share their experiences and data with the academic community it needs to be beneficial to them. There needs to be collaboration with the community to make this a reality when engaging in these types of partnerships. The second articulated challenge relates to the first and concerns open sharing of the information between academics and the community. She asked the audience what would be the best way to share the information and research done by academics with the community whom it most concerns. The third challenge concerned the misalignment of research objectives and community interests. Often, research conclusions do not match community interests directly, and she discussed how academic research differs from community desires for knowledge. In closing, Shauna stated that she wants her research to be useful to the community. She believes this will be accomplished in part by pushing the research agenda of academics in this field towards a place of better practical use and community involvement.

Stephanie Stobbe

The second panelist, Stephanie Stobbe, is an Assistant Professor of Conflict Resolution Studies at the Menno Simons College at the University of Winnipeg. Stephanie is a leading expert on Southeast Asian processes of dispute resolution. She is also an educator, trainer and ADR practitioner who has consulted and researched in Canada, the United States, South America, Lithuania, and South East Asia. She is an accomplished editor, researcher and author on topics such as peace-building in Laos, immigration and Canada's labour market, the intersections of gender, peace-building, social movements and conflict resolution as well as refugee storytelling in diaspora. She has additionally served as an expert to non-governmental and governmental entities such as the American Bar Association and the United Nations Development Programme. She was a Visiting Professor/Researcher at the Matsunaga Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution at the University of Hawaii in 2012.

Indochinese Refugee Research: Conflict & Peace Studies' Perspectives

Stephanie focused her panel talk on her research on Indochinese refugees. She explained that her interest in the topic comes from her own background as her family came to Canada as refugees from Laos in the late 1970s. As an instructor and researcher of conflict resolution she has always been drawn back to incorporating her interest in the histories and stories of the refugee experience into her work. Prior to her work, there was not a great deal of research in the field of peace and conflict studies on the Indochinese refugee experience.

She identified a number of questions that were crucial in framing her research:

- What kinds of conflicts were present when the Indochinese refugees resettled?
- What kind of conflict resolution skills can be used/are used for dispute resolution to help mitigate these conflicts?

- What kind of traditional processes of dispute resolution do these refugees use? How do they react when these are in conflict with the recognized practices in Canada?
- What can be done to help refugees resolve their disputes in a way that is culturally sensitive?

Stephanie provided a historical, and personal, context for her research. During the Vietnam War (1956-1975) there was a large exodus of refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. Her family left Laos and crossed the Mekong to Thailand then came to Canada. At the height of the crisis 3,000,000 people left these countries. Canada resettled and sponsored 60,000 of these migrants from 1979-80. This was the first time the Canadian government had looked at this group from Indochina as immigrants. 58,000 Vietnamese, 7,000 Cambodian, and 7,700 Laos came to Canada. There are about 22,000 Laotians in Canada today.

Stephanie has researched the cross-cultural experiences of refugees and Mennonite sponsors in British Columbia and Manitoba during the 1970s-90s. While there had been very little research done, she discovered that the Mennonite community has a long history of sponsoring Laotian refugees. She wanted to look at both parties' experiences in resettlement to isolate particular challenges and see if these might suggest how sponsorship programs might be improved in the future. She conducted in-depth interviews with 29 people (12 refugees, 17 sponsors) whose average age at the time was 27.

Cultural Challenges:

There was a general adjustment concerning Canadian food and the Canadian environment. It was very difficult for the Laotians as they had very little access to 'ethnic' food and were not provided with their traditional staples such as rice. Ninety percent of the interviewees explained that the weather was a big adjustment as there was no information provided to incoming migrants about what to expect. Another challenge concerned respect for elders and those in authority. The only way that some of the migrants knew how to show respect was to articulate it through calling their sponsors Mother, Father, Grandmother or Grandfather. This lead to a great deal of confusion from the sponsors as there was clearly no biological relationship. The living arrangements posed a challenge as many refugees were placed on farms and were not accustomed to such open spaces and geographic isolation from neighbours. The informality of Laotian culture concerning visiting, or 'dropping in' on neighbours, was cause for some tension as North Americans tend to be more inclined to make appointments with those with whom they plan on socializing. Religion likewise posed somewhat of a challenge as the traditionally Buddhist Laotians ended up attending the Christian churches with their Mennonite sponsors out of respect. It was explained by the Laotian interviewees that during their first year in Canada they were less concerned with keeping up their cultural traditions and more concerned with basic challenges of survival, such as feeding their families.

Sponsors' Perspective:

From the sponsors' perspective, language emerged as the largest barrier. Sixty (60) percent of refugees had interpreters and many others made do with dictionaries or non-verbal communication. There was a suggestion that language programs should be available and interpreters more easily accessible to aid in this initial transition. The differing cultural definitions of family also posed some difficulty in ascertaining who was actually related. Forty (40) percent of the Laotian migrants were not actually biological family members, but rather unmarried partners or friends. They would sometimes identify as family members to facilitate their entry to Canada as a group. The sponsors observed that elders held a huge place of importance in the Laotian family and that caring for aging parents was very important. There was a lot of gift giving from Laotians to their sponsors, a general openness to being emotionally close to their sponsors and a readily accepting attitude towards their sponsors' religion - Christianity.

Refugees' Perspective:

There were very specific recommendations from the Laotian perspective that Stephanie uncovered in her research. First, they wanted to ensure that, in the future, government and sponsoring agencies had specific knowledge of incoming refugees' culture by way of pamphlets or information packages. At the time they immigrated there was very little information for sponsors and it exacerbated the cultural gap between the two groups. Second, they articulated the importance of allowing refugees to learn English before starting work and to provide a series of levels of language courses so those who already speak English a bit will feel more motivated to continue. Third, they explained that matching of skills to jobs, fast tracking of foreign credentials, and reliance upon mentors from the community who already have training was crucial to integration into the workforce. Fourth, governments and sponsoring agencies need to educate refugees about Canadian culture and lifestyle, as there was no training given when they immigrated. Fifth, they emphasized that refugee students should attend school to continue to acquire better training for jobs. Parents are typically very supportive of this generally, but there are many stories of refugee students who were taken out of school to take care of younger children.

Lori Wilkinson

The third panelist, Lori Wilkinson, is the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Manitoba. Associate Dean Wilkinson specializes in immigration and refugee studies, with a focus on issues related to settlement, discrimination and health among newcomers to Canada. Her current research focuses on long-term labour market histories of teen or young adult newcomers to Canada as well as the identification of factors that influence successful integration. She has co-authored two books on research methodology and published pieces in the *Canadian Review of Sociology, Canadian*

Ethnic Relations and *Adolescent Behaviour*. She is additionally the current editor of the *Journal of International Migration and Integration* and the Executive Director of the academic and community think-tank, Immigration Research West that focuses on issues of resettlement and integration.

Personal Experiences & Refugee Scholarship

Lori's own experience as a child in Saskatoon where she was exposed to a large influx of what her teachers called "boat people" shaped her passion to study refugees. She started studying refugees in university and quickly became aware of the pervasive negative stereotypes about refugees. At the time she was writing her dissertation, there was a lot of speculation about "queue jumping" or ill-informed speculation that, due to trauma, refugees inherently suffered from mental illness. As a burgeoning academic on the topic of immigration from a sociological perspective she began getting calls from newspapers about refugees in gangs. She said that at that point she realized that there was a large amount of misinformation about and conflation of refugees and gang culture. These experiences led her to focus her research on refugee youth and their integration into the Canadian education system.

Refugee Youth: General statistics

Lori conducted three studies that she relied on for her presentation, two of which were exclusively on refugees. Looking at the data, it is apparent that refugees as a demographic are very young - over one third are under 15 when they arrive, and 60% of them are between infants and young adults (late twenties) in Canada and worldwide.

Why do we care about refugee youth in the school system?

The most important reason to care about the success of refugee youth in the school system is the existence of an age cap policy in all provinces which sets a threshold age at which youth are excluded from the school system. In Manitoba the age cap is 21; however, in most other provinces it is 19. Refugees are specifically affected by this policy as there are often significant gaps in their education. For educators it can be difficult to match refugee youth with classes that meet their educational level. There are quite a few cases of refugee youth not being able to complete their schooling in time before the age cap applies. There are some free educational programs for refugees to aid them in completing high school, but they are increasingly inaccessible due to oversubscription or lack of availability in rural areas. There are additionally issues with language, as many refugees do not know how to speak English when they arrive in Canada. According to Lori, 46% of English as an Additional Language (EAL) students drop out of high school. To make the situation more complex, much of the research on this topic tends to mix immigrants and refugees together, which does not allow those in the education system to fully appreciate and meet the specific needs of refugee youth.

Existing Theoretical Models

Lori articulated that the major theoretical debates on this topic are not very helpful as they concern two impractical models. The first is the mainstream absorption model, also known as the "success camp" of theoreticians, which suggests that if immigrants or newcomers obscure or abandon their culture they will become successful in Canada. Essentially the model posits that if they learn the language and assimilate into a traditionally Canadian school system, they will succeed. This model is the basis of Canadian legislation governing this issue. The second model, the underclass absorption model, is based on a highly racialized set of assumptions that immigrants and refugees will fail as they are inherently burdened with psychological and language problems. Lori does not agree with these models and believes that the key to accurate research is to look at the data and from that basis, address whether or not they are succeeding and if not, why?

Three Studies: Refugee Youth and 'Success'

The first study looked at 650 refugee families in Alberta living in rural areas for 5 years or less. It was discovered that a great many of the youth in question were not able to finish high school. The findings in this study suggest that the underclass absorption theories could explain these findings in the education system. The data showed that youth whose parents had been in a refugee camp were less likely to finish high school. Lori stated that this demonstrates that there are higher rates of social and cultural marginalization when there is a history of refugee camps in the youth's family.

The second study looked at education trajectories by immigration class. There were 7,500 people in the study, of which 2,500 were under the age of 29. This larger study controlled for all kinds of factors and attempted to look at how far behind in their education refugees and immigrants were, respectively. The data showed that 6 months after arrival all immigrants were behind but refugees were markedly farther behind in their studies. At the next interval, it was revealed that refugees were making significant progress and had almost caught up to the immigrants of other classes.

The third study looked at the experiences of refugee youth regarding bullying. This study revealed that the mainstream absorption model might be the best explanation for the disparities in bullying between refugees, immigrants and Canadian-born youth. This study looked at the children of 4,900 families across Canada between 4-17 years of age. They were interviewed at two different points in their education. Victimization rates for refugees were lower than the Canadian-born rate. Compared to the international rates, the numbers were exceptionally low. The most common form of bullying experienced was through rumors of having had their belongings stolen and refugee students were more likely to be bullied by a girl than a boy. As an

isolated class, however, refugee students were less likely than any other class in the study to bully others.

In her concluding remarks Lori stated that the sociological theories and scholarship around refugees is not very thorough or reliable. The data presents a mixed message about the actual state of affairs for refugee youth in the education system.

Panel I – Question and Answer Period: Definition of 'Success'

Question: One conference attendee asked why our culture was obsessed with success or failure and suggested that it can be very difficult to articulate what 'success' means to different people in different disciplines. He asked whether, besides the two 'pillars' of success and failure in an economic sense, there were any other indicia of successful integration beyond education and beyond income?

Answer: Finding a definition of success is very complex and difficult. There are different standards of success depending on the interviewee, as some view it simply as being safe and healthy in Canada. It can depend on what kind of life they were coming from and what their expectations are.

Success is often 'benchmarked' according to Canadian norms of success. The research concerning these benchmarks in Canada show that feelings of success are often a reflection of how valued an individual feels in their society. There are additionally differing ideas of success between generations as the second generation of an immigrant family is considerably more integrated than the first. However, it has also been observed that the second generation is far less happy than the first generation.

Small Group Discussion: Panel I

Group A: Sharing Information Between Academics & Advocacy Groups

In this group discussion the question posed was: how should information be shared between academics and advocacy groups? The first participant to weigh in stated that there needs to be a 'cultural broker' established between the fields of academia (legal academics in particular) and community organizations to be able to facilitate meaningful collaboration. It would help in alleviating the frustrations people experience because of these disparities between systems of research and practical involvement in the community. Another participant echoed this sentiment and stated that there is a need for academics to form their own channels of communication across the country as well. Oral history interviews were mentioned as an important educational tool for the public and academics alike.

Another participant articulated that academia should make a concerted effort through research to dissipate the pervasive negative stereotype that refugees, and immigrants more broadly, do not contribute to society. Another participant stated that organizations in Winnipeg are often underfunded and it would be useful if academics would focus on research that would be directly useful in gaining funding. More specifically, research that explores the great disparities in funding and the need for well-funded organizations aiding in settlement and education for newcomers would be beneficial.

Group B: Issue of Language and Use of Terms

In this small discussion group the emergent theme concerned the issue of language and the use of appropriate terms, i.e. refugee, asylum seeker and immigrant. There was significant concern expressed from the group participants about the stigma attached to the term 'refugee' and the need to change the language we use, as it may be harmful to the public perception of immigrants in general. The term refugee was articulated as being one of a permanent outsider status and of someone who is not integrated into Canadian society. One participant expressed that his own experience as a refugee in an English as an Additional Language (EAL) class actually segregated him from the other students.

Another participant articulated that many people, host families in particular, make the presumption that being a refugee is synonymous with being uneducated. There is a pervasive lack of agency that is thrust upon them as a demographic due to this misconception. Yet another participant stated that there needs to be a better understanding of the variations in needs presented in different groups of refugees. As long as this is not reflected in governmental policies there will not be any marked improvement in the programs to help them settle successfully in Canada.

There was a great deal of agreement with the observations that Stephanie Stobbe articulated in her presentation concerning family structures and differences in cultural values that pose difficulties to organizations attempting to receive and help integrate immigrant families. There were additional comments made about the need for more communication between the organizations helping to send refugee families to Canada and the organizations helping to receive families in Canada concerning needs such as specialized medical regimens or wheelchairs.

Another participant stated that ensuring the immigrants in question spoke English *before* coming to Canada would be very helpful in facilitating their entry into the workforce especially in family sponsorship situations where the need for another income earner is very important.

Group C: Rural Versus Urban Settlement Success

This discussion group focused on the resettlement of refugees in rural areas and the lack of resources, support and infrastructure in rural settings versus urban environments. One participant articulated that there are fewer educational opportunities and greater difficulty with transportation. However, another participant pointed out that many refugees come from rural settings themselves and are not necessarily comfortable in urban centres; therefore, we cannot assume that urban centres are the best for all newcomers. They went on to state that there is a real responsibility on newcomers to educate their local community on where they came from. In response to this, one participant articulated that regardless of location there is a serious deficit of organized programs for linguistic support, which is a crucial aspect to any measure of success in a new country.

Group D: Advocacy and Research

This discussion group concerned themselves mostly with the difference between advocacy and research. One participant stated that he found it problematic as a community organizer that many academics did not advocate after doing the research. He was further critical of academia for being so focused on research and publication. In response, another participant stated that from the academic perspective there is quite a bit of pressure to produce empirical, scientific and objective research while comparatively 'action research' is devalued. The funding in Canada is funneled towards hard science and the government values quantitative, not qualitative, research on which to base its policies.

Another community organizer articulated that there is a great cost to the NGOs (non-governmental organizations) to do all the organizing of the interviewees or subjects on behalf of the academics without any compensation. There is typically no money provided for interviewees, interpreters or childcare. People participating in research projects have to be compensated for their time and need to be involved in the outcome, engaged in what the research will mean ultimately and what goal their time is helping fulfill.

A participant with a legal background stated that one way of bridging the gap between advocacy 'on the ground' and academic research would be to fund more clinical programs for law students. While admitting this would not address all the issues, the participant argued that it would bring these issues to life in a meaningful way in the academic experience of students. In response to this, a participant with a similar background stated that the most difficult thing is that students and their advisors are still within the university system and may not be as independent to advocate as organizations like the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) would be.

Panel II: Academic research on refugees and community interests: views from the community

Chair: Shauna Labman
Panelists: Tom Denton, Bashir Khan, Dorota Blumczynska

Dorota Blumczynska

Dorota is the Executive Director of the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM). Before that, she was with IRCOM for 7 years as a volunteer, an English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher, and started its Asset-Building Program. Dorota herself is an immigrant, as she is Polish-Canadian. She has been in Canada for 25 years, and loves her Polish culture, but has also adopted and internalized the values of Canada.

Dorota emphasized that we must realize that certain words we use can carry associated stigma. There can be privileges and advantages associated with the word 'immigrant'. We must try to neutralize the word 'immigrant' as immigrants do not all have the same experiences. For example, she herself came from Poland, a country in civil war and under Russian occupation, and her immigration experience was therefore not all positive.

About IRCOM

IRCOM started as the South-East Asian Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (SEARCOM) and was mostly created to provide housing and support for "boat people." The organization then changed as both federal and provincial funds were provided. It became IRCOM to encompass a wider group of newcomers to Canada.

IRCOM is very unique in that it merges housing with support services on the ground. This means that once an individual transitions out of IRCOM House, integration is all the more possible, as immigrants and refugees are more equipped to integrate successfully because of the holistic supports, programs and services.

Aside from its other programs, IRCOM House in particular provides an ability to engage more intimately with newcomers. It puts the staff of IRCOM at a heightened obligation to ensure the protection and sanctity of this home. Because IRCOM staff work where the community lives there is a heightened level of trust. This has allowed for many positive things to come out of it, such as the mainstream community wanting to work with the new Canadian community more closely. Especially in recent years, a greater romanticism has emerged about working with the community. This 'do-gooder-ship', however, can also result in harm.

IRCOM's Mission and Objectives

IRCOM's mission is to strive to empower newcomer families to integrate into the wider community through affordable transitional housing, programs, and services. IRCOM's objectives include housing and programming, but also include being agents of change, building community, and developing as a learning organization. As an organization that is an agent for change, advocacy is a large part of its work. The building community objective means providing a place where individuals feel safe, loved, cared for, welcome, supported, respected and included. The objective of developing as a learning organization means always adapting and growing to meet the needs of staff, stakeholders, and community members. By working with newcomers, the community at large, educational institutions and other stakeholders, IRCOM can help to increase communication between people of different cultures and traditions, leading to greater knowledge, understanding and a more peaceful coexistence. There can be up to 20 countries in the organization's housing, and 300 people can live there at once, including families from opposing sides of conflicts, so there needs to be a way to exist peacefully in these circumstances.

Ways for the community to be involved

There are many ways for the community at large to be involved at IRCOM.

Practicum student placements

One way is through practicum student placements. Students can brings new theories, fresh ideas, unexplored solutions, and critical reflections on settlement, community development, social work, ethics, and practices already in place. Additionally, they can be an extra set of hands. There are, however, also challenges because there is a lot of engagement and work undertaken by the organization to have a student. IRCOM is run by 40 staff members and 100 volunteers and practicum students. More than 1,000 staff hours are spent engaging with practicum students (e.g. planning their course work, training them, supervising them, ensuring that the students understand the values with which they work). Many students come from fields that have different values than IRCOM. Students have to learn that the work they do is very much "in the grey", and not always black and white. All policies have to take into consideration the people they will affect, their experiences and cultures. There is a very fine balance of what people understand is acceptable in Canada and what is not. This balance needs to be considered before getting the authorities involved in some situations. Students need to work with the newcomers to engage with Canadian culture and allow them time to adapt.

Volunteer opportunities

Another way for the community to be involved is through volunteer opportunities. Volunteers offer unique skills that complement those of the staff and they have the time to dedicate themselves to one-on-one support of community members. The selection and interview process

has to be selective, as the organization must ensure that volunteers are not viewing their work from a charity or "saviour" lens, nor from an assimilation lens. There needs to be an understanding of the boundaries of the work and that they are dealing with people who are equals to them in every single way.

External facilitator engagements

Another way to engage the community is through external facilitator engagements. This challenges the community to understand a speaker unfamiliar to them, to familiarize themselves with community resources and to take ownership for their learning.

Research

Research support can provide meaningful opportunities for the community to be engaged, included, and be active decision-makers in the community. Research needs to be accessible. This means that participants should be compensated for their time and provisions should be made for interpretation, for cultural adaptation, and for childcare, meals, and transportation. Additionally, researchers must take a respectful stance in recognizing that often very personal questions are being asked. Research should also be relevant. There can often be a disconnect between what is communicated to IRCOM and what is communicated to the newcomers. Research permission can be requested, but the research does not always turn out the way it was initially described. Research should also have an impact. It should be communicated to the community in plain language, translated, communicated using different mediums, and interpreted in terms of what changes there could be, or lack thereof. People are frequently asked to participate in research, and spend a lot of time and emotion in expressing their opinions. When nothing changes it can be very frustrating. There needs to be communication with newcomers to reassure them that their thoughts are being heard, and to explain how their participation can potentially translate into change.

Tom Denton

Tom Denton is Executive Director, Sponsorship, at Hospitality House Refugee Ministry. He has had a long career as a lawyer, naval officer, business executive, founding publisher of the Winnipeg Sun and Executive Director of Winnipeg's International Centre. He has served on many community boards and was the first chair of the Winnipeg Arts Council and the Manitoba Immigration Council. Involved with the Metropolis Project from its inception, he served as a Governor of its Prairie Centre. He is a frequent writer and speaker on immigration policy. Over 35 years he has initiated private sponsorships of thousands of refugees.

Research agenda in Canada

For over 16 years, Tom has been part of the national and international Metropolis Project, which has an overarching focus on human migration and integration. This project involves many countries. Five centres of excellence were developed in Canada in universities. This research project is now winding up. There are still, however, proponents of the research agenda and sound research is still being presented in some areas.

There are currently problems with the shrinking research focus of Metropolis research in Canada. Previously, apart from general themes, research was undirected and more open to creative initiatives, but, over time, funders have placed a higher emphasis on integration. As a result, the Metropolis Project in Canada has become more introspective. Issues of human migration at the international scene were rendered largely irrelevant as topics of research. The Canadian government has kept immigration research/policy to themselves, for the most part.

Immigration issues for the activist

Toward the end of 2011, Tom spoke at Dalhousie Law School about 'immigration issues for the activist'. He prepared a handout with 29 issues, which could fuel debate and research projects, including labour market issues, humanitarian issues, elephant in the room issues, and analytical questions.

There are three current themes:

Ethics, compassion and politics

When discussing immigration issues, does one have to forget his or her own beliefs of compassion, personal feelings, convictions, or religion? Why does the government want us to leave these values at the door when entering the immigration room? Can we not have a better, more elegant and elevated means of discussion and structure in place?

Relevance of the second generation

We need research on this as hard data tends to shut out the accomplishments of second-generation refugees. The second generation is doing amazing things, but data rarely captures this. Where is the research from which useful conclusions can be drawn?

Entrepreneurial infusion

There is an unsubstantiated belief that newcomers often start new businesses. They are driven, but often lack credentials that would lead them to government jobs.

The future of research in Canada

We must focus on what kind of immigration nation we want to be – nation maintenance or nation building? We must also be more analytical. Canada has left the big picture in terms of research. We are now too concentrated on the smaller picture. We are out of the international realm. We must keep up-to-date with current events around the world, and how Canada is involved. We have to look at the larger, international picture in terms of the research agenda.

Bashir Khan

Bashir Khan practices immigration and refugee law in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He has acted as a lawyer before all divisions of the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada as well as before the Federal Court of Canada and the Federal Court of Appeal. He is a member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan as well as of the Law Societies of Manitoba and British Columbia.

Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) cases go public

Research gives credibility to the refugee advocate. In his personal experience, Bashir was able to invite public scrutiny of decision-making at the IRB. He received data on the IRB member assigned to his hearing. This member had an 87% rejection rate. He decided to invite a local journalist, Carol Sanders from the Winnipeg Free Press, to five of his IRB hearings. Sanders then wrote an article in the Free Press, entitled "When Hope Runs Out, The Luck of the Draw: Refugee Claims". This article was able to show the public that refugee claimants are not lying when they say they are not being heard. To do so, the article made reference to an academic study on rejection rates by law professor, Sean Rehaag, in 2013, entitled "Judicial Review of Refugee Determinations: The Luck of the Draw?" (2012) 38:1 Queen's L.J. In the study, Rehaag found vast disparities in refugee determinations in Canada. Around the world, 10 million people are refugees trying to escape war, famine, and/or abuse. Those who reach Canada get a single shot at making their case. They can be lucky or unlucky. The person hearing the case determines whether or not they will be able to stay in Canada. If they are lucky, they will get an IRB member with a strong acceptance rate. The stakes are high for refugee claimants as they potentially face persecution back in their country of origin. Academic research such as Rehaag's study therefore adds credibility to what refugees have said about their experiences and can assist advocates to prepare cases on behalf of refugees.

Refugee claims in Manitoba

In general, lawyers do not want to take on refugee claims. Legal Aid Manitoba does not issue Legal Aid certificates until after the claim is initially filled out. Unlike in British Columbia where a certain amount of hours for the preparation of refugee claims are covered through Legal

Aid, there is no Legal Aid coverage in Manitoba for the initial preparation of a refugee file (e.g. filling out forms, fact-finding). This preparation work can take 6-7 hours, and is mostly done with an interpreter. The Welcome Centre has paralegal staff that helps fill out refugee claims, but this assistance is limited.

Properly preparing the file is crucial. In fact, 80% of a refugee claim's success resides in properly preparing the claim. As such, a lawyer obtained through Legal Aid after the claim is filled out may be of limited help. Attempting to correct a claim once it is filled out can be problematic. The claimant's credibility may be questioned if the story is changed (even though this may, for example, be due to poor interpretation in its initial preparation). Compounding the problem, there are now shorter timelines for hearings (120 days in most cases), which means claimants do not always have time to get all the evidence they need and they can be rejected on that basis.

In his closing remarks, Bashir emphasized that we need to find a new solution to deal with refugee claims, and this could potentially be aided by involving students.

Panel II – Question and Answer Period

Comment: There are concerns about the propensity for a large number of refugees with disabilities being left behind and what the effects could be. This could be a large area of research. Society for Manitobans with Disabilities may be open to collaboration.

Question: How can academics help with those on the ground in terms of qualitative work, not necessarily empirical?

Answer: Practically, whenever someone is going to be deported, it is important to look to whether Canada is upholding obligations to the UN. Before being deported, people may complain to the UN that they were not heard. The UN has taken complaints very seriously but it takes several years to investigate. Academic Research and Academic Articles give a boost to and support the Refugee Advocate in showing the unfairness in the system to the public. Refugee Advocates, instead of sounding like left-leaning social justice activists with a bleeding heart on the fringe of mainstream society, are given credibility to their voice and cry for justice where academic articles tend to corroborate the problems that refugee claimants are facing in Canada. Academic researchers give credibility to the refugee advocates in Canada.

Comment: For organizations, the danger of complaining is a huge issue. Organizations that work with limited and diminishing resources face a difficult situation in which if they complain to the federal government that they need more resources, they risk the government declaring that the program does not work and should be shut down. Registered charities, like IRCOM, face threats

to their tax-exempt status if they resist certain government policies. Invasive federal audits may compromise the organization and the services they provide. Political advocacy can be a large problem. A charitable organization can only do 10% of its work in advocacy. Some charities, like IRCOM, are fortunate enough to have a broad and diversified base of funding beyond government sources. Individuals have to push back against some policies, but this is difficult, and there is a lot at stake. The government is playing this kind of game with the organizations – threatening and undermining.

Question: Government is sometimes seen as defending the Canadian perspective – but Canada is changing and there are questions regarding what it is really defending. The Canadian government and the population are out of touch. How can we deal with this using research?

Answer: Academics can sometimes have trouble not acting like an advocate, and conducting 'research-based advocacy'. Support should not only come from the people doing the work on the ground but also from the people doing the research.

Small group discussions: Panel II

Group A

In this small group, there was discussion about whether other organizations have also felt pressure from the government and if that has been part of the experience of people working in community groups. There was also discussion of the role of academics. Academics are privileged in the sense that there is tenure, funding does not depend on what you say publicly. Should there be a role for academics to speak the truth?

As employees of public institutions, there is a responsibility for academics to be public intellectuals, to be engaged in the arena and to make contributions. This is an important responsibility, and it also means that academics have to ensure respectful partnerships with community groups and communities. There was an impression that legal academics in particular have done a better job maintaining collaborative relationships in the community than academics in other disciplines. Sometimes academics will receive funding to do the research, get it done, and then leave. They will publish studies in academic journals, which are not read by the community at large. The academy perpetuates this system because of the increasing use of metrics for evaluating the work of academics. It is not only the fault of academics, but the work of the academy. This can be dangerous for younger academics, as they can be insecure when they are beginning their careers. Academics are increasingly under huge pressure from more senior peers to conform to a certain way of doing research that does not really work with collaborating with organizations. Work that is valued in this process is not collaboration with organizations, but rather publication in good journals. Activism is not seen as "good" in this area.

Even when organizing this conference, a common question was what would come out in terms of publications.

One participant suggested that there should be two levels: academics should publish in journals, but there should also be a responsibility to look at the community and see how changes could be implemented and how the research could realistically and practically be applied. This could help raise the profile of the institution if changes are implemented. There would be a cost to doing this, but if the institution can be appeased by the publications, then researchers would still be able to go to the ground and find a way to apply it. One participant had worked in the Disability and Employment field. He had gone to a training session where a brain surgeon was presenting. This presenter had "dumbed down" the information so that the audience could understand. Maybe we could do this for research about refugees so that it becomes accessible to more people.

The refugee and immigration organizations in Canada have done a very good job of creating documents that are available to the general public. The researchers themselves should be doing more to help these community organizations – academics should help to create a companion piece to the research that could be then disseminated to the public through these organizations. Additionally, there are different levels of organizations (e.g. community-based organizations with professionals, grass-roots organizations). The same documents might not be appropriate for all levels. Dissemination of information should be accomplished in different ways – oral, written, etc. Some other ways of disseminating information could be through webinars, conference calls, etc.

Participants also wondered whether community organizations were well-organized and talking amongst themselves. Are there actually networks and is this actually happening? There are so many changes within the refugee claim process – e.g. everything is online while many refugees do not have a computer. Getting information from the government is getting difficult and service funding is being cut. Maybe there is a problem in terms of the immigration sector and the cultural organizations not communicating.

There was discussion of the difficulty of knowing about the transition between provincial and federal governments. With the shift in the funding model, one concern is that this will increase competitiveness between organizations, which means that it can lead to less networking and talking amongst the organizations. We can look to Ontario in terms of a caution of eliminating organizations that the federal government does not like. At this particular conference, two participants made the decision to take a vacation day to participate so that they could speak as individuals and not be perceived as speaking for their organizations.

Certain organization decide not to receive funding from the government because it restricts the populations with which they can work, but this still leaves resource and funding challenges.

One participant with experience working with administrative agencies noted that members of administrative agencies cannot speak out if they sense interference from governments so they look to academics and lawyers to say something, to react to government interference. Another participant suggested that it would be great if there was an independent review regarding the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) because IRB members in different divisions are often far more executive-minded than the executive. They are there to support the government that appointed them.

Group B

The discussion began with the question of whether researchers could come to IRCOM with projects. IRCOM was open to this. The research would have to be relevant and IRCOM could play a significant role in helping them shape the communication coming out of that field. In the past, a lot of the work was thrust onto IRCOM. Results were not well communicated in some cases. Research often involves personal questions that come at a high cost to participants who need and deserve to see the results of their participation.

With First Nations communities and research, they have to be involved, they have Ownership, Control, Access and Possession (OCAP) of the data. This is a different model. IRCOM has never been involved in a project from the get-go, but it would be a good way to go about it. Language barriers are a communication barrier, not one based on intelligence or education. They have very skilled people at IRCOM. Often there are issues with interpreters. Interpreters have to be told not to summarize. This is a challenge from the research perspective and a common occurrence. It changes the dynamic of the interview. In some cases, IRCOM has had to relay some information into the community interpreters first, to run all the information by them, as it is being filtered through. One participant had a case where they needed interpreters. The interpreters would scare the women being interviewed by saying "you shouldn't do this, you are bringing dishonour to the community". Interpreters who do this, where people are being told not to say something, are constricting the voice of the people.

There is an opportunity within the MLRC to set out certain parameters to be able to access organizations like IRCOM.

Changes in federal government funding are an important issue to community organizations. It was observed that the federal government and community organizations had very different perspectives and that organizations feared federal funding cuts.

Funding is being taken from the provincial administration back towards the federal administration, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). What was neglected to be considered was that Manitoba was doing quite well in terms of administering funding. These

changes were brought about under the guise of equality between organizations. Under the new federal funding, it has now been communicated that child care organizations that provide for children have to create physical divisions between CIC funded children and non-CIC funded children. This creates a wall between the children.

Group C

In this group, there was discussion that IRCOM is lucky to have 30 separate funders. Diversity of funding allows them to work with CIC ineligible clients – refugee claimants. The number and sources of funding impacts how an organization can be classified and run. For example, if CIC funds a position, that person cannot be doing work that supports refugee claims. There was discussion on whether on the academic side, availability of funding impacts what academics research. This can be either in terms of the initial topic, or in terms of how the results are presented.

Successful settlement research must combine the settlement side and the academic side. This is particularly important as elections approach. There are tensions between wanting to be an advocate and conducting academic research. Is this something that is specific to legal academia? Does the researcher still have to be neutral? This is not necessarily a tension of academic freedom, but discomfort with the fact that the research reveals that the information coming from the government is either misinformation or manipulation. Responses from the minister towards this type of research have been to attack academics and claim that the research is biased. The government itself has polarized the debate to the point that it makes it difficult for academics to say truths without them appearing to be on the fringe or biased. Researchers may want to remain arms-length from organizations in order to appear neutral, but the partnerships would actually be beneficial. Alternatively, certain organizations are happy to outwardly and vocally support research. Knowledge dissemination is critical.

Group D

This discussion began with the observation that people being researched often do not see any changes after the research is completed. Perhaps researchers should tell the subjects of the research not to expect anything to change. They should have a mindset to be heard and help with the research, but not that they are necessarily going to see actual changes.

In some cases, academics have conducted research on institutions, not community members. The academic research on the Immigration and Refugee Board has revealed problems within the system including the quality of government appointees to the Board. We should get journalists on board. The public opinion does not seem to reflect the story that is heard from clients in this situation. There is also a concern that these IRB members have preconceptions.

The bigger picture is of people's attitudes. There are views from the public that refugees get more money than retirees, that they suck money out of the system. The myths about refugees are outrageous. Research can help educate the electorate/public about these issues.

There is a concern for the future of the settlement sector. It has recently come about that the government is imposing language requirements on spouses abroad coming to Canada. They have to know either English or French before they come. This risks dismantling the settlement sector. This change could justify shifting settlement capacities offshore, since we only want people coming in who are already speaking English and French.

In general, when it comes to refugees, we should be using more technology, like Skype. It was tried out with Bhutanese claimants to explain to them what to expect. We could use this to do the language training. Technology is relatively accessible for refugee claimants overseas. There are refugee businesses with internet cafes in camps. Cell phones are cheap.

Yet, there is a worry in the settlement sector that as more is outsourced to an overseas setting there is less funding in Canada. It will be cheaper to do that "settlement" work overseas instead of here. What are the losses and what is good about that? Why is it a competition? We should be working together.

Some participants asked how researchers could be harnessed by the community to address issues that need to be on the public agenda, such as climate change and the advent of eco-refugees.

Keynote Speaker: Louise Simbandumwe

A copy of Louise's presentation is attached.

Panel III: Academic research on refugees and community interests: Pathways to Partnership

Chair: Gerald Heckman
Panelists: Janet Dench, Sharry Aiken, Audrey Macklin, Sarah Marsden

Janet Dench

Janet Dench is the Executive Director of the Canadian Council for Refugees where she has worked since 1990 (as Executive Director since 1997). Through this organization and through others for which she has volunteered, she works for policies and programs that respect refugee

rights and welcome refugees and immigrants to Canada. Her main interests lie in international and Canadian refugee and immigration policy, and in NGO networking and advocacy.

"Cranky NGO Rant"

Janet highlighted the fact that NGOs and academics often have unaligned interests, and as a result, the partnerships are less than perfect. The differences cover everything from timelines to objectives, and it will take a conscientious effort to avoid these conflicts and capitalize on each party's independent strengths.

To begin with, academics often take a much longer view of issues, and are only finalizing proposals at a point when NGOs are expecting results. Operating on entirely different calendars is an obvious obstacle to effective coordination. Funding is another frequent barrier to functioning partnerships, and NGOs are essentially exploited at this stage of research. Potential funders are enthusiastic about having the name of an NGO attached to a project, and their attachment increases the chances of receiving funding, but the NGOs are not the drivers behind the resulting work, nor are they the recipients of the funding itself. While they are relied on for the supply of resources and in particular for access to clients, they are ultimately not included as active partners.

Academics and NGOs also differ when it comes to their conceptions of knowledge. For NGOs the most valuable knowledge can be intrinsic, stemming from experience, networking, and contacts. For academics, on the other hand, knowledge is only valuable when it is written down, accessible, and solidified. In addition, the purposes or objectives behind a project are often not well matched. In most cases an NGO will have a mandate or mission statement that it is trying to realize, such as alleviating poverty or providing a specific service. Research that helps reach these goals, whether directly or indirectly, is welcomed. Academics, though, will often have additional, and more individual, objectives, including consideration of what might further a career, and the motivation to produce more published material.

Finally, academics and NGOs often disagree about the importance of change. In the NGO world, everything is about change, and the focus is always on how change can be effected. Academics, conversely, are not always on the same page, and while the two sides can agree on problems and causation, there is little opportunity for furthering a discussion about developing successful interventions and strategies that can lead to beneficial change.

In spite of the many differences, there are a number of opportunities for NGOs and academics to share their separate strengths, potentially benefiting all parties in the longer term. Building on relative strengths across sectors is essential for success. For example, NGOs are in a better position to gather information on the ground, and have privileged access to people's lives and experiences. Being situated in such a manner enables an NGO to make specific requests and define a useful starting point for academic research. Academics, on the other hand, have the tools to provide analysis that is stimulating and worthwhile for NGOs, and that can be used to help inform division of resources, or in advocating for policy changes. That is, the NGOs' relationships in the field can take academic research and use it to implement change. What is critical, ultimately, is an increase in dedication to knowledge sharing, and recognition of the strengths that each party may bring so that all benefits can be actualized to their fullest potential.

Sharry Aiken

Sharry Aiken is an Associate Professor and Associate Dean in the Faculty of Law at Queen's University where she teaches international refugee law, international human rights law, immigration law and administrative law. Prior to her appointment at Queen's, Sharry practiced immigration and refugee law with Legal Aid clinics in Toronto and in private practice. A past president of the Canadian Council for Refugees and former editor-in-chief of *Refuge* (2001-2011), Sharry continues to be actively engaged in public advocacy on refugee issues. She recently represented the Canadian Council for Refugees and the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group in a constitutional challenge of immigration security certificate procedures at the Supreme Court of Canada. Sharry is a board member of the Canadian Centre for International Justice and an advisory member of the Sri Lanka Campaign for Peace and Justice.

Lessons from Previous NGO/Academic Collaborations

Sharry elected to speak about NGO/academic collaborations in her experience that have not worked out positively, and what can be learnt from those examples. She revealed that she found the transition from advocate to academic to be particularly challenging, and that it is a fallacy to posit that research is impartial while advocacy is partisan. In order to effectively engage in collaborative work, these biases need to be acknowledged and understood. She discussed two projects that are representative of some of the difficulties that can emerge.

Both projects were conceived as collaborations involving multiple institutions and researchers in Canada and internationally. Both aimed to foster connections between researchers and forge bridges between the academic community and NGOs. A great deal of money was allocated for bringing the various stakeholders together to present and discuss their research, but it led to little in the way of concrete contributions to applied knowledge or practice. While information was shared during the meetings, NGOs were typically left in the dark after the fact, receiving little to no follow up information on the research that was presented. There was discussion, but insufficient attention to meaningful knowledge mobilization for the NGO participants and little follow up sharing of knowledge and results apart from the conventional scholarly outputs of interest to the academics.

These experiences raise fundamental questions about how academics can and should collaborate with NGOs, and highlight the need to be more self-reflective when it comes to addressing the concerns of the community.

Ultimately these experiences reveal a need for academics to be able to wear a variety of hats, and fill a variety of roles in their communities. Those that are joining the academic field are grappling with external and self-imposed pressures with regard to what kind of academic to become, when the reality is that they should be able to do several things. The roles are not mutually exclusive; being an academic is a privilege and a responsibility, and academics should have the opportunity to be both scholars and activists.

Audrey Macklin

Audrey Macklin is a Professor of Law at the University of Toronto and Chair in Human Rights Law. She teaches, researches and writes in the area of migration and citizenship law, gender and culture, and business and human rights. Her work has explored gender-related persecution and refugee status, the securitization of citizenship and migration, privatisation of migration processes, the role of rights in migration law, and refugee status determination. From 1994-96, Audrey was a Member of the Canada's Immigration and Refugee Board, where she adjudicated refugee claims. From 2007 to the present, Audrey has been involved as an observer for Human Rights Watch at the Military Commission proceedings in Guantànamo Bay in the case of Omar Khadr, a Canadian citizen detained there by the United States. She also represented Human Rights Watch as amicus before the Supreme Court of Canada in two Khadr appeals. Audrey is a founding member of the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers.

Academic Interactions with Advocacy

Audrey spoke about her experience as an academic, and the resulting interactions with advocacy. She began by commending the University of Manitoba for encouraging the research of several academics in the area of migration and refugee law, and noted that Winnipeg is known as a leader in these areas, both within Canada and internationally. Winnipeg is also to be applauded for showing innovation and creativity in attracting and retaining immigrants.

Audrey's own work has not been done in collaboration with community organizations, and in her experience research typically only comes into contact with advocacy when the research reveals something troubling. The academic work itself is viewed as being more ambivalent, whereas work in advocacy is driven in terms of how things can change, and is therefore more interactive with normative theory. Academics occupy an interesting position in which they are empowered to speak up, and can provide a useful voice for community organizations. However, the more an academic speaks out about an issue, the more open he or she becomes to personal attacks, which can lead to being discredited and losing value both independently and to that organization. As a result, it is critical that other academics come forward and share in the task.

In addition to having a role in speaking out on behalf of organizations, academics are also in a unique position in terms of having the ability to provide background information and facts. Rather than being the spokesperson disseminating synthesized analysis, academics can also provide neutral information, and take on the task of educating the media about specific issues. Confidence has been lost in political advocacy, and it has become too reactive and litigation-driven. Those that are most skeptical about the state of the law are often lawyers themselves, and the current political climate has distorting effects on refugee organizations. Building relationships between academics, students, and practicing lawyers, and enabling further sharing of ideas and perspectives is particularly critical.

Sarah Marsden

Sarah Marsden is the supervising lawyer of the Law Students' Legal Advice Program, which provides free legal representation and advice to low-income individuals at multiple community clinic sites in the lower mainland of British Columbia. Her major areas of practice include housing, immigration and refugee law, workers' rights, and income security. Sarah's research interests include social welfare law, the legal rights of non-permanent migrants, and clinical legal education. Currently, she also teaches Social Welfare Law and Immigration Law at the University of British Columbia, Faculty of Law.

Lessons for All Partners

Sarah spoke primarily about her experience working with students in the Legal Advice clinic. She emphasized the importance of making sure that law students have opportunities to actually do things, rather than simply talking about doing things. Students in the Clinic encounter a number of issues relating to refugee matters, and are primarily involved in front-line projects. For Sarah, academic research and publishing opportunities are secondary to advocacy, and while research opportunities are appreciated, research itself is not the driver behind her work.

A number of recommendations were presented that should be accessible to all parties, whether grounded in academia or advocacy. To begin with, it is essential to study the law, and not the people. When conducting research, people should not be objectified, or considered to be the object of the study; the object is the institutional structure, and while information may come from individuals, those individuals need to be acknowledged and respected. Next, the importance of respectful relationships cannot be overemphasized. Parties should dispense with the pretense of neutrality, and instead encourage openness and transparency to help identify risks and limitations. It must be acknowledged that oppressive power relationships can arise in a number of ways, and it is important that partners deliver on promises to circulate and disseminate research results.

Finally, all involved must actively take on the role of ally. This involves always putting community interests first, and ensuring that people's needs prevail even if it means delaying or preventing research. Further, it involves encouraging academics to learn that they, in turn, learn on the backs of others. Careerism needs to be discarded, and all parties must be accountable for their choices and actions. Academics and advocacy are not a perfect partnership, but the partnership will be more rewarding when relative strengths and inabilities are acknowledged honestly. While all of this, taken at once, might seem to be demanding rather a lot, everything becomes easier as the work moves closer to actually serving communities.

Wrap-Up & Concluding Thoughts

Panelists and conference attendees alike expressed appreciation for having been extended the opportunity to come together in an academic setting to begin this critical conversation. The next step, for many, will involve bringing the academic representatives into the community to share knowledge with a wider audience. Ideas for next steps included producing a newsletter, or creating a blog space, to track and summarize changes and shifts in the jurisprudence, and other suggestions involved using class assignments to simultaneously contribute to the discussion and encourage students to make connections and become involved in community, as well as in academic settings.

It was also noted that many of the problems encountered today have been present for several decades. Increased efforts are needed to hear stories from all parties, and increased media attention and social engagement. Teaching should be utilized as a tool for spreading knowledge. There should be regular meetings, like this conference, that allow academics and community members to check in with each other. Ultimately, the partnership is fraught with difficulties, but it is also symbiotic in a number of ways, and continued dedication to strengthening these relationships will only facilitate projects in the future.

Appendix "A" – Conference Schedule

BUILDING CONNECTIONS: REFUGEE RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Hosted by the Migration Law Research Cluster at Robson Hall

March 28, 2014
Common Room
Robson Hall, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba
224 Dysart Road, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2

AGENDA

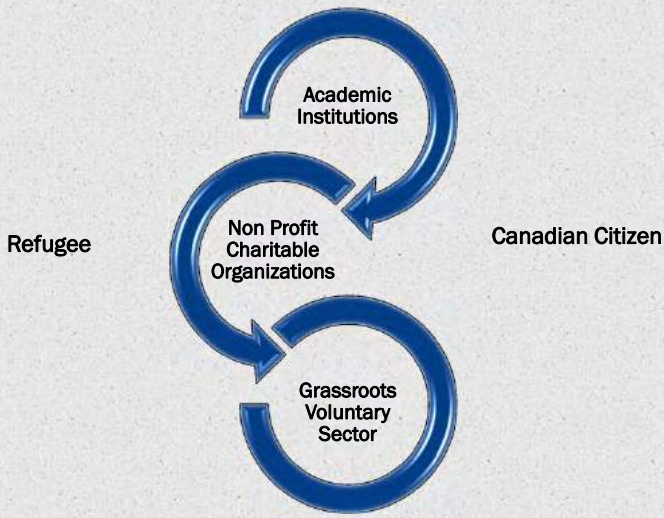
8:00am-8:30am	Registration (*with refreshments*)
8:30am-8:45am	Welcome Address
8:45am-9:45am	**PANEL I:** **Academic research on refugees and community interests: academic perspectives** *Chair:* *Amar Khoday* *Panelists:* Shauna Labman, Lori Wilkinson, Stephanie Stobbe
9:45am-10:30am	Small Group Discussion (*with refreshments*)
10:30am-11:30am	**PANEL II:** **Academic research on refugees and community interests: views from the community** *Chair:* *Shauna Labman* *Panelists:* Tom Denton, Bashir Khan, Dorota Blumczynska
11:30am-12:15pm	Small Group Discussion
12:15pm-12:30pm	Morning Debrief / Large Group Discussion
12:30pm-1:30pm	*Lunch*
1:30pm-2:30pm	**KEYNOTE ADDRESS:** **Louise Simbandumwe**
2:30pm-3:45pm	**PANEL III:** **Academic research on refugees: pathways to partnership** *Chair:* *Gerald Heckman* *Panelists:* Audrey Macklin, Sharryn Aiken, Sarah Marsden, Janet Dench
3:45pm-4:30pm	Small Group Discussion (*with refreshments*)
4:30pm-4:45pm	Afternoon Debrief / Wrap-up

Appendix "B" – Keynote Speaker: Louise Simbandumwe Powerpoint Presentation

Building Connections: Refugee Research & Community Outreach

Louise Simbandumwe
Immigration Matters in Canada Coalition

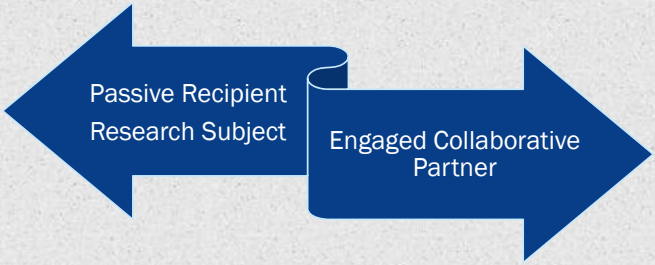
Transitioning Between Multiple Worlds



THE LAST PICTURE

Aligning Research with Community Interests

A Community Development Approach



A Community Economic Development Approach

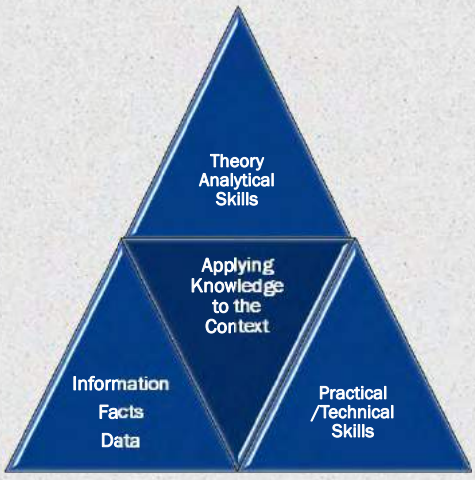
Building Community Connections

Examples from Experience

- Advocacy
- Skills Building
- Resettlement Support

How can students contribute to community work on refugee issues?

STUDENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO COMMUNITY WORK

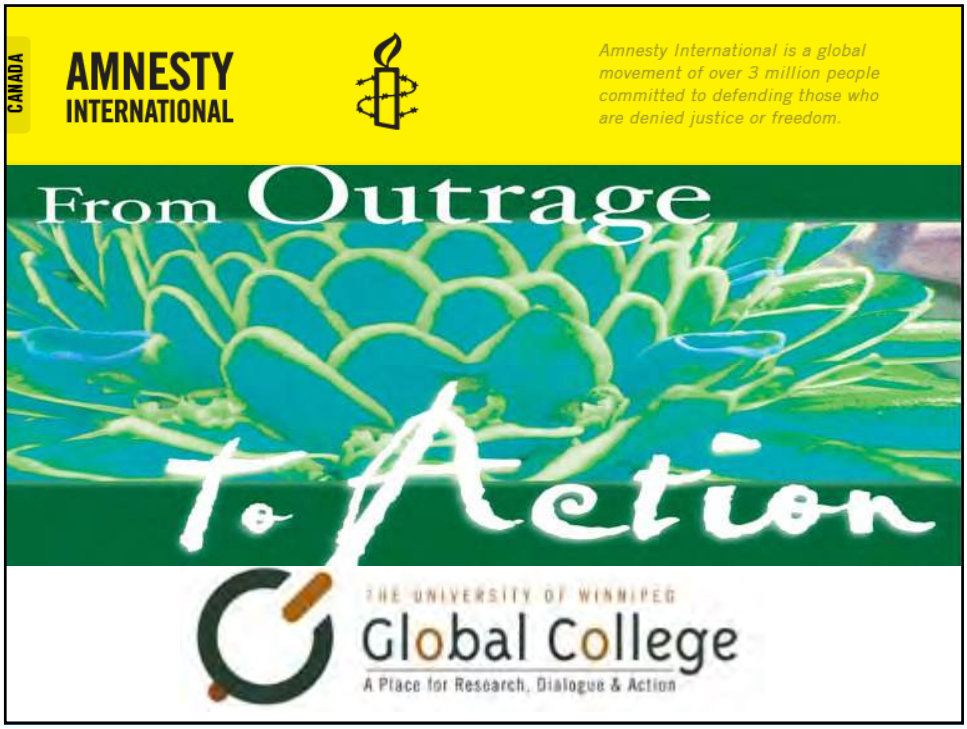


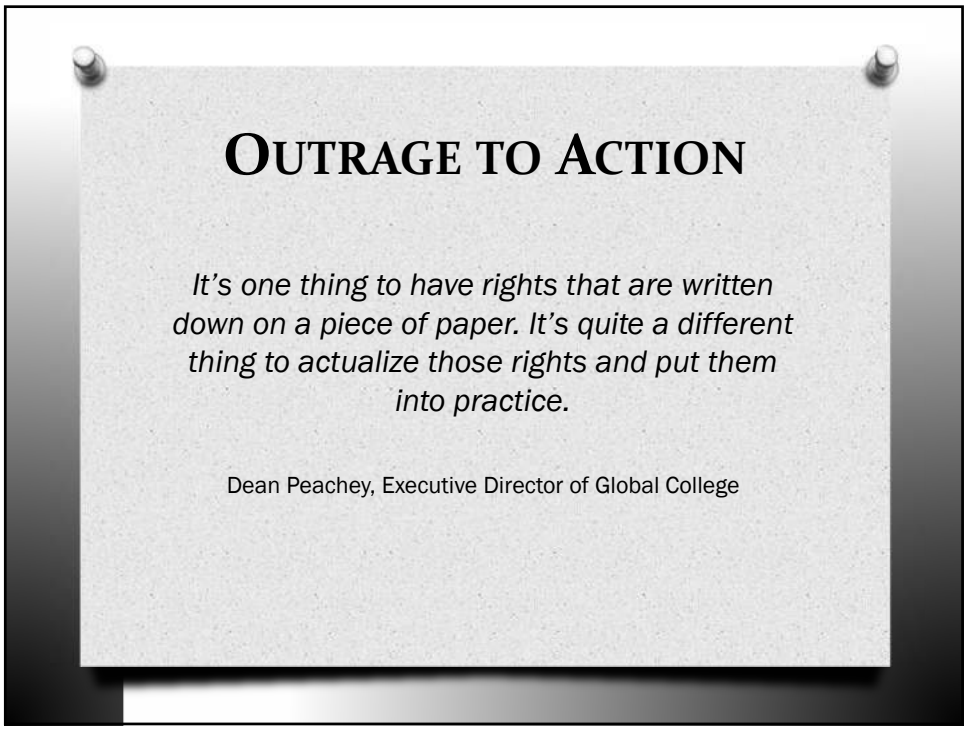
Student Placements

- Building a Partnership
- Finding the Fit
- Compensating the Agency

Research & Needs Assessments

- WIIFM (or my community?)
- Providing compensation for the cost to participants & for their expertise
- Compensating partner agencies for the use of organizational resources (or providing reciprocal support)
- Addressing barriers (food, transportation, child care, interpreters, etc.)
- Communicating the results


CANADA
AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL
Amnesty International is a global movement of over 3 million people committed to defending those who are denied justice or freedom.
From Outrage
to Action
THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG
Global College
A Place for Research, Dialogue & Action


OUTRAGE TO ACTION
It's one thing to have rights that are written down on a piece of paper. It's quite a different thing to actualize those rights and put them into practice.
Dean Peachey, Executive Director of Global College

Outrage to Action

- 50% students taking it as a 1.5 credit course
- 50% community members taking it as a free set of workshops
- Thematic components based on Amnesty International's campaign priorities
- Skills building components based on participant's priorities
- Homework for each class was an Activism Challenge

Outrage to Action

- Planned and delivered by Group 19 volunteers
- Payment for course donated to Amnesty International
- External guest speakers will receive an honorarium
- Food and supplies purchased from local social purpose enterprises

Letter Writing

Group Project on Human Trafficking in Canada

OUTRAGE TO ACTION

As a model of learning, the Outrage to Action workshops were great. I went from feeling like a powerless observer of abuses to a meaningful actor who could make change."

Lee Chitty, Chair, Amnesty International - Group 19

Community Driven Research on Resettlement Supports through Non Profit Agencies

Strengthening Families in Canada: Immigrant Men's Needs Assessment on Family Violence Prevention Education

- Research priority identified by immigrant and refugee women.
- Recommended by Women's Action Against Violence program participants:
  - ✓ Develop parallel domestic violence prevention education for men

Strengthening Families in Canada: Immigrant Men's Needs Assessment on Family Violence Prevention Education

- Partners
  - Sexuality Education Resource Centre
  - Mount Carmel Clinic
  - Klinic
  - Immigrant Women's Counselling Service

Strengthening Families in Canada: Immigrant Men's Needs Assessment on Family Violence Prevention Education

- Research Advisory Committee
  - Sexuality Education Resource Centre
  - Mount Carmel Clinic
  - University of Manitoba

Research Team

9 of 10 came to Canada as immigrants or refugees (one second generation Canadian)

- ✓ 7 Community Based Researchers (CBRs)
- ✓ 1 Research Coordinator
- ✓ 2 Program staff members from SERC

Literature Review

- Conducted by the research co-ordinator
- Supported by the Advisory Committee & research team

Focus Groups

- Training provided to CBRs
- Questions and format developed by research coordinator in consultation with CBRs
- Outreach strategy, time, date, location determined by CBRs
- Co-facilitated by CBR and researcher coordinator
- Supports
  - ✓ Interpreters
  - ✓ Honorariums
  - ✓ Refreshments

Results, Recommendations, & next Steps

- Analysis of focus group responses – research coordinator and CBRs
- Development of recommendations – research coordinator, CBRs and Advisory Committee
- Research findings disseminated at community celebration (3 page plain language version)
- Emails and addresses collected for ongoing communication on next steps
- Article published in the Journal of Community Psychology

Strengthening Families in Canada – Phase II

CD/CED PRINCIPLES

- Building on community strengths
- Provision of training and capacity building
- Employment and “Canadian Experience”
- Program dollars reinvested in community (child minding, food, interpreters, etc.)
- Priorities identified by community members
- Program delivery guided and implemented by community members

Resourcing Research to Support of Grassroots Activism

STOP VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND GIRLS ACTION GROUP

CREATING A HUMAN BILLBOARD

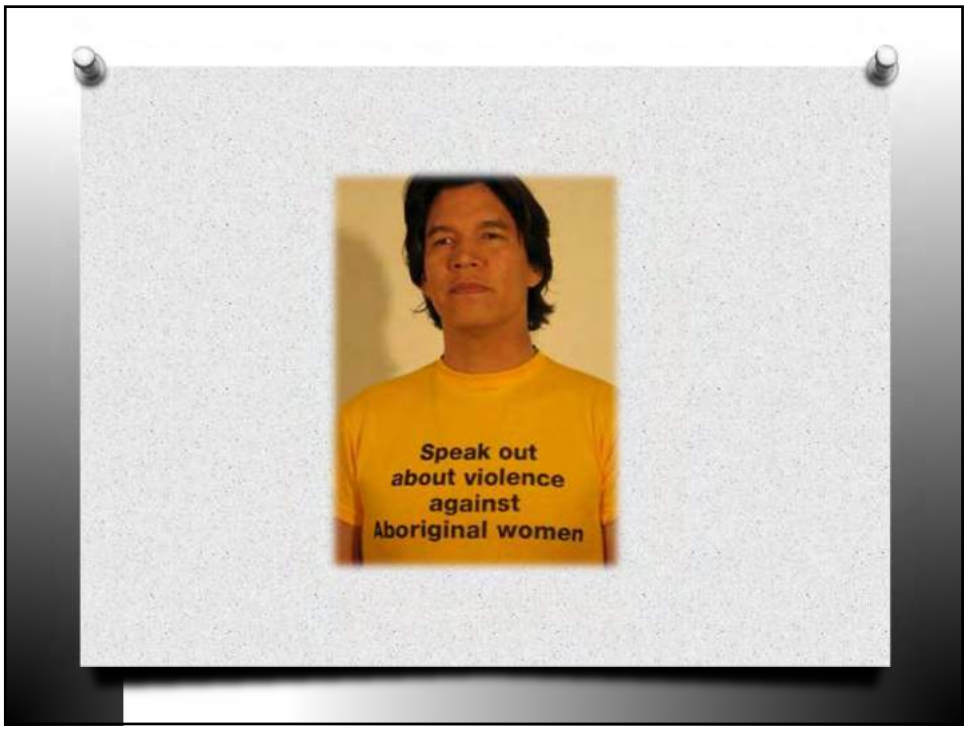
Deciding on Priorities

Key Messages, Locations, Call to Action

Polo Park

Regent & Lagimodière


someone's
daughter
is missing


Speak out
about violence
against
Aboriginal women


These women
are loved
and missed
everyday


someone's mother
someone's sister
someone's daughter
someone's niece

Broadening Impact by Building Connections

- Accessing financial resources
  - ✓ Arts grants
  - ✓ Research grants
  - ✓ Activism grants
  - ✓ Community development grants
- Accessing research resources
  - ✓ University
  - ✓ Non profit organizations
- Amplifying the voices of community advocates & family members
  - ✓ Advocacy through direction action
  - ✓ Conventional & social media
  - ✓ Academic publications
- Supporting local and indigenous businesses

Shaping the Future: Canada's Rapidly Changing Immigration Policies

The pace and scope of change in Canada's immigration policies in recent years can leave one breathless… When looked at in their entirety, immigration policy changes are reshaping Canada's future. It is difficult to believe that so much fundamental change has occurred during the past four and a half years and that more changes are slated to occur.

Naomi Alboim and Karen Cohl
The Maytree Foundation
October, 2012

Would You Have Let Me In?

Immigration Matters in Canada Coalition

A grassroots group of community members in Manitoba who care about the rights, wellbeing and treatment of refugees, refugee claimants, migrant workers and immigrants in Canada.

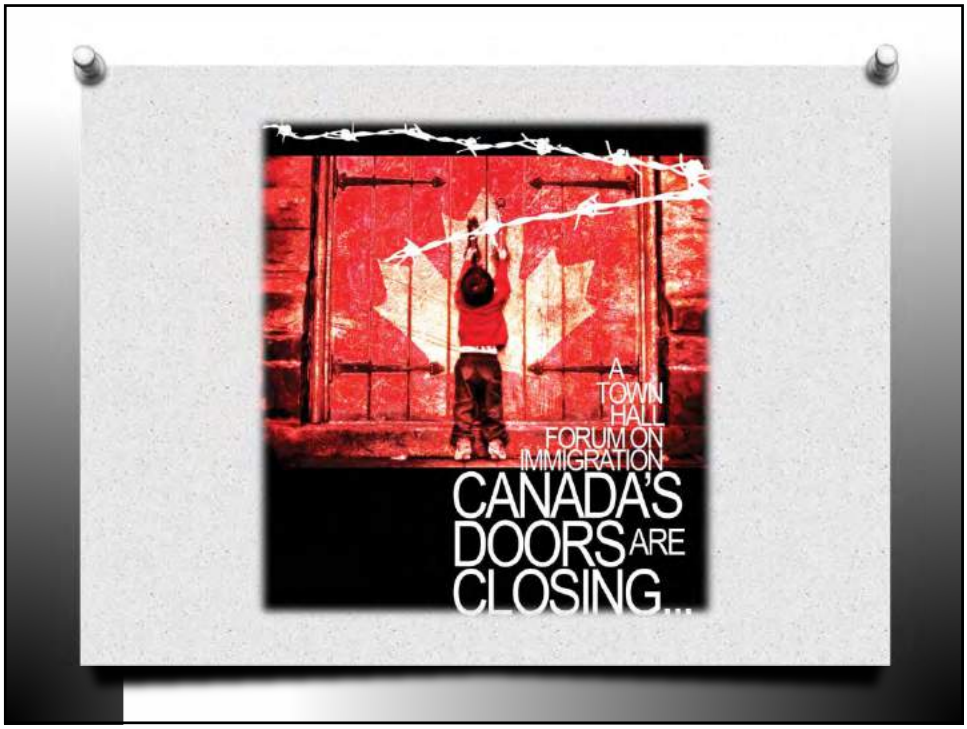
Goals

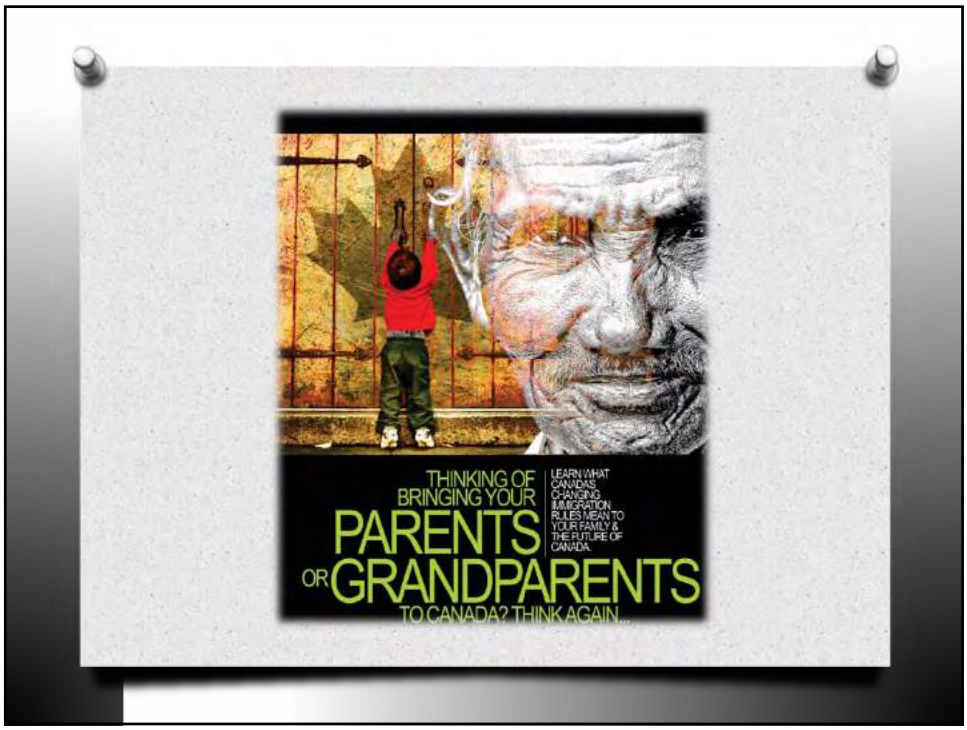
- Speak truth
- Raise awareness
- Work for change

Ensure that newcomer communities are welcomed as valued, full members of society.


STOP CUTS TO
REFUGEE HEALTH CARE
NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION: JUNE 17/2013 www.doctorsforrefugeecare.ca


Winnipeg Free Press
MDs slam refugee cuts


A
TOWN
HALL
FORUM ON
IMMIGRATION
CANADA'S
DOORS ARE
CLOSING...


THINKING OF
BRINGING YOUR
PARENTS
OR GRANDPARENTS
TO CANADA? THINK AGAIN...
LEARN WHAT
CANADA'S
CHANGING
IMMIGRATION
RULES MEAN TO
YOUR FAMILY &
THE FUTURE OF
CANADA

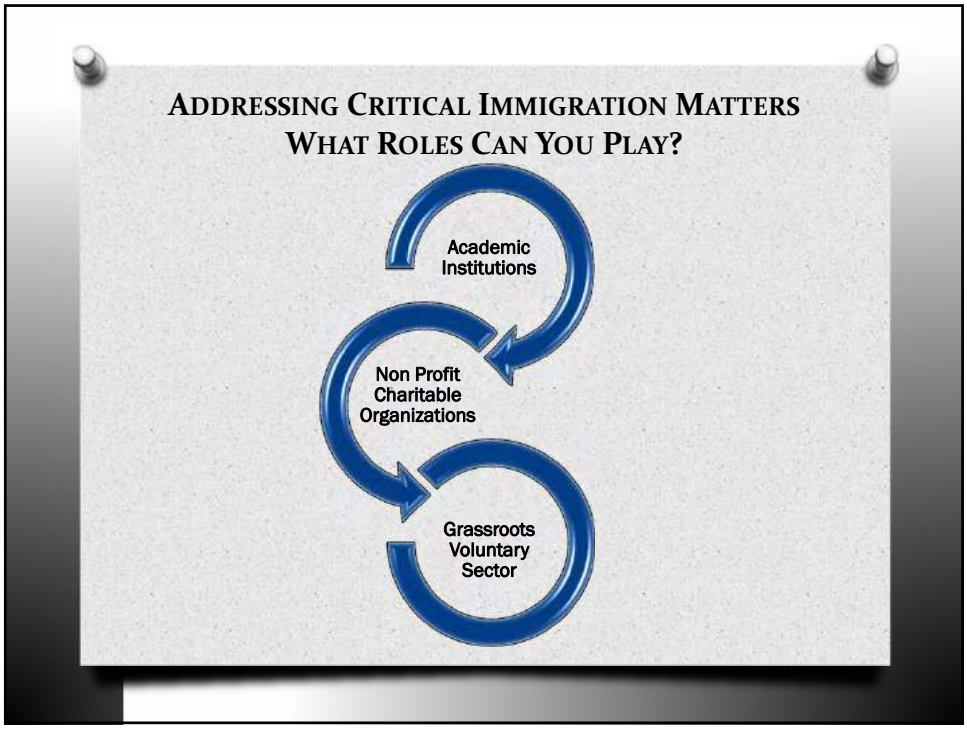
Some Critical Immigration Matters

- Comprehensive overview of changes to immigration policy and funding priorities
- Analysis of impacts on the most vulnerable
  - Entry into Canada
  - Path to citizenship
  - Access to services and supports
  - Social and economic inclusion
- Challenging divisive discourse

Silencing Dissent

A disturbing pattern has emerged of organizations and individuals being targeted for reprisal when expressing views contrary to government policy.

Statement by Amnesty International Canada – January 28, 2014


ADDRESSING CRITICAL IMMIGRATION MATTERS
WHAT ROLES CAN YOU PLAY?
Academic Institutions
Non Profit Charitable Organizations
Grassroots Voluntary Sector