



POD Project Bulletin Issue 2
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Update on Expert Advisory Committee

When last month's bulletin was published, I was in the middle of establishing an expert advisory committee (EAC) whose role is essentially to guide the POD project. I am glad to announce that this committee is now in place. The committee is comprised of 18 experts in immigrant and refugee women's health and well being from across Australia. All the 8 States are represented on the committee as follows:

New South Wales (NSW):5 members; Queensland (QLD): 1; Victoria (VIC): 5; Australian Capital Territory (ACT): 2; Northern Territory (NT): 1; Tasmania (TAS): 1; South Australia (SA):2; Western Australia (WA): 1

Expertise has been drawn from organizations involved with the women from different socio-demographic backgrounds namely:- young women; women with a disability; Islamic women; and victims of domestic violence. The wide range of expertise will ensure that the broad range of issues affecting immigrant and refugee women is addressed.

Teleconferencing on key issues

The first teleconference was held on the 27th of October 2008. A total of 13 committee members participated. The main aim of the conference was to allow members to meet and speak to what they consider as key issues affecting immigrant and refugee women from their work. I also took time to explain the terms of reference for the EAC and to allow members to ask specific questions. The presence of the MCWH Executive Director (Adele Murdolo) at the conference was useful, as she assisted by clarifying policy-related issues. I recorded the teleconference proceedings with the permission of committee members.

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After sharing the preliminary findings from my literature review on the discussion paper, I invited contributions from committee members on what they thought were issues of concern for immigrant and refugee women. The key issues identified by members at this conference include, *inter alia*, immigration issues, domestic violence, and women's representation.

There was overall agreement amongst members on the dearth of national level data on issues affecting immigrant and refugee women. It was noted that available information is mostly in the form of scholarly articles and organization reports.

Different organizations offered to share some relevant resources from their own original work, and also from their networks. I will collate all incoming information, finalize the discussion paper, and circulate it to all members for comments. Members can expect the discussion paper by end of November 2008.

Upcoming events

- The second teleconference will be held on the 27th of January, 2009.
- The National Forum which was initially scheduled for February 2008, has been rescheduled due to a clash with other national conferences. The new date for the Forum will be agreed on at the teleconference in January.

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