

July 2019

# **Families on the Move, Families in Canada 2019**

## **Satellite Event Report**

Written and Compiled by: Kerri Claire Neil

Communications and Outreach Coordinator, On the Move Partnership, Memorial University



# Acknowledgements

Nora Spinks and Sara MacNaull of the [Vanier Institute of the Family](#) inspired, guided, and supported this event. Thank you for giving us a chance to be part of Families in Canada 2019.

Additional financial and in-kind contributions were provided by the [On the Move Partnership](#), [Memorial University](#), the [Canadian Institute of Public Safety Research and Treatment](#), the Military Family Resource Centers in Gander, Goose Bay, and St. John's, and the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program.

On The Move is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, InnovateNL (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador), the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and numerous universities and partners.



Families in Canada 2019 is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program

# Acknowledgements

The Families on the Move Steering Committee members helped formulate the program for Families on the Move, recruited panellists and registrants, and presented, chaired, and guided sessions. Our speakers inspired and focused our discussions, and volunteered their time and expertise to generate meaningful conversation about families on the move.

Kerri Neil and Janet Oliver provided extensive logistical and other types of support for the event and Kerri is the lead author on this report.

Bojan Furst took photos, John Duff and his crew provided technical support, and Jochen Koerner helped with planning.

Madeline Bury, Grace Chisholm, Celestine Muli, Riley Pike, and Pragadeesh Ravichandra took notes and helped with registration.

Students Shannon Bedford, Madeline Bury, Sadia Chowdhury, Kerri Neil, and Abdullah Saif shared their research at the poster session.

To hear directly from speakers, check out recordings of the full event on YouTube. [Link to Day Two is here.](#)

[To learn more about the national conference, check out their website here.](#)



**Families  
in Canada  
Conference**

**Conférence  
sur les familles  
au Canada**

# Families on the Move Steering Committee

- Rochelle Côté, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Memorial University
- Tony Fang, Stephen Jarislowsky Chair in Economic and Cultural Transformation, Memorial University
- Kathy Hawkins, Manager, InclusionNL: Employer Support Services, Empower: The Disability Resource Centre
- Barbara Neis, Project Director, On The Move Partnership, Memorial University
- Rose Ricciardelli, Professor, Department of Sociology, Memorial University
- Christopher Sheppard, Executive Director, First Light St. John's Friendship Centre
- Gail Wideman, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Memorial University



STEPHEN JARISLOWSKY CHAIR IN CULTURAL  
AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Introduction	6
Event Overview	7
Panel 1: Lived Experience of Families on the Move	8
Panel 2: Researchers Studying Families on the Move	15
Panel 3: Serving and Supporting Families on the Move	19
Panel 4: Positive Collaborations for Research, Service and Support for Families on the Move	22
Policy Solutions	25
Wouldn't it be great if...?	28
Conclusion	29
Appendix A: Steering Committee Members	31
Appendix B: Speaker Biographies	35
Appendix C: Student Posters	39
Appendix D: List of Registrants to the Forum	46



# Introduction

On March 27-28, Memorial University participated in the pan-Canadian Vanier Institute of the Family's **Families in Canada 2019 Conference** by co-hosting a satellite conference called Families on the Move. This unique and inclusive pan-Canadian event brought together diverse leaders from across Canada who study, serve and support families for two days of research, knowledge-sharing and engaging conversation focused on the conference theme:

**“THINK BIG: How can we use “Big Data” to inform and inspire big ideas to optimize family well-being in Canada.”**

The Families in Canada Conference 2019 allowed delegates from across Canada to:

- connect to people who study, serve and/or support families in Canada in the government, research, non-profit and private sectors;
- collaborate to share interdisciplinary research and cross-cultural/cross-sectoral insights on families in Canada;
- create and cultivate new resources for those who study, serve and support families in Canada, including a Canadian Family Researchers Network.

---

The **Families on the Move Satellite Conference** engaged individuals with lived experiences of mobility-related challenges as mobile workers, immigrants, Indigenous Peoples, military personnel, veterans, public safety personnel, survivors of domestic violence, and people with disabilities. It also engaged those who study, serve and support these groups and their families.

The rationale for Families on the Move was that geographical mobility is an integral part of daily life for all families and, for all families, synchronizing the diverse and divergent mobilities of individual family members related to work, school, community involvement, recreation, and other activities can be challenging. It is, however, particularly challenging for families with members with disabilities who face mobility challenges, those with members who currently or in the past have had to access work far from home (as with mobile workers, military, veterans), families that move frequently for work (as with military and some police-engaged families and those fleeing domestic violence), those who access education or health care far from home (as with Indigenous, Inuit, and rural families), and for recent immigrants and refugee families seeking to settle in new places like Newfoundland and Labrador. Given this, Families on the Move sought to spark conversation on commonalities and divergences in the mobility experiences of these groups based on lived experience, research, and observations by those who serve and support them. The hope was to begin to identify potential policy issues – including those shared across these diverse groups -- and to identify new areas for research and collaboration in the future.

## Event Overview

Over two days, participants from government, academia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the community at large came together to discuss what mobility meant to them; how it shaped their access to or delivery of government services, how it informed their research practices or collaborations, and how it created opportunities and challenges for their families.

The Conference opened with greetings from Her Honour The Honourable Judy M. Foote, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador and Dr. Gary Kachanoski, President, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Elder Emma Reelis provided an opening and closing prayer. The event was hosted by Dr. Barbara Neis, Project Director, On The Move Partnership.

The sharing of rich knowledge, and the mixture of diverse voices, created unexpected synergies and taught us valuable lessons that could be utilized in our lives, our research, and in serving and supporting families on the move. Acknowledging that each participant at our event was an expert in their own lives, the unique cross-section of groups represented ensured that the conference was educational for everyone.

This report captures key elements of the presentations and the conversation that took place at Families on the Move. We have assembled some key takeaways from the event. While not every idea is captured here, we sought material that spoke to over-arching themes and best practices and to the particularities of the challenges and experiences of the diverse groups of participants.

Did we miss something in this report? Let us know by adding your reflections to the conference with the hashtag #FAM2019.





## Panel 1: Lived Experience of Families on the Move

To center the expertise of mobile families, we began the conference by hearing from a panel with lived experience of being on the move. Whether it is mobility for work, school, or safety, associated challenges shape our everyday lives including our needs for and access to support and services. This panel gave voice to those with direct experience of different forms of mobility and immobility. They helped us understand how mobility has affected them and their families. In preparing their presentations, they were asked to reflect on/respond to the following questions:

- What is your lived experience of mobility and immobility? How has this experience shaped you and your family including needs, challenges and options?
- In what ways has this mobility or immobility impacted your access to support including family, community and public services?
- How have you addressed these challenges? What kinds of supports and services could help you and others address them more effectively?



**A**bir Zin Alabdin is a refugee from Syria, where she taught English and math. She arrived in St. John's in January of 2016 with her husband and five children. When she first arrived, she and her family were most concerned about the language and cultural differences. To their pleasant surprise, they found the culture very similar and the people very friendly, but language was a big challenge, and three years later, meaningful employment is still out of reach. Today, Abir and her family are living on social assistance, a situation Abir attributes to issues around foreign credential recognition.

*“Most of the people who come here, our friends, they're handyman. They learned their jobs from their parents or their grandparents, but they don't have any certificates, but here, they're not allowed to work without certification.”*

The requirement for workers to have certain credentials to enter certain fields poses a major barrier for newcomers, and especially refugees, who either learned their trade as an apprentice or left their certificates behind as they fled their home countries. Because the province of Newfoundland and Labrador does not have programs to allow for alternative credential assessments, these newcomers are forced to go back to school and learn their trade all over again.

*“So you have men, the father, who will be 40 year old, he doesn't have time to go back to school and get certificate and he can't support his family. They have to live on the welfare until their kids grow up and can support them, but we don't want to be helpless.”*

To address this, Abir suggested government consider programs to help newcomers have their credentials assessed through other means so that people can get started working right away. She explained how she wants to stay in Newfoundland, and give back to the community that has done so much for her, but without a good job, this feels impossible.

*“We really appreciate what the government give us and we want to help, and we want to be independent. If we could have meaningful work and contribute to the community, we would feel helpful for the community, not hopeless.”*

---

**M**aria Ana Arro is a Filipina and a permanent resident of Canada. She migrated to St. John's on her own via the 'Temporary Foreign Worker' program and, after several years, she transitioned to permanent resident and was then able to sponsor her husband and two children to join her.

No longer working for the same company, Ana shared the exploitation and abuse she experienced as a Temporary Foreign Worker in St. John's. She described how she was forced to rent a home from her employer where she shared a room with another woman and had no privacy, and how she was denied sick leave when she was ill, bereavement leave when her father died, and regular breaks at work.

*“When I was working for my first employer, in the fast food restaurant, I got a very serious cold and I fainted at work – I hit my head - I was denied the paid sick leave I needed.”*

While there are rules in place to protect temporary foreign workers from such exploitation, Ana and her coworkers were never interviewed about their experiences. Her employer even passed a workplace standards review because it was based on information provided by her employer. When Ana took a complaint about a breach of her contract to the Labour Standards Board, she was told there was nothing they could do.

*“They took advantage of our lack of knowledge and there were no agencies in the city that stepped in to help us.”*

Aside from the exploitation that she experienced from her employer, Ana and her coworkers were also subjected to racism and sexism in the workplace. Ana described an experience where a customer wouldn't accept food that had been served by a woman wearing a headscarf, and another where she had to call the cops on a man after he assumed, because

she was a temporary foreign worker, she would do anything for money and tried to solicit sex. Associated with this is the deskilling of immigrants in Canada. Ana's husband, for example, is trained as a doctor, but is working as a server in a fast food restaurant.

*“We encounter racism and sexism in the workplace – from co-workers, managers and the general public. I tell my co-workers all the time – ‘we can't let ourselves be pushed around.’”*

One challenge that Ana described as a migrant worker was being away from her family for extended periods of time. While she has since been able to sponsor her husband and children to come to Canada, when she first moved here, she was separated from them for several years. Because of the time difference, communicating with them was difficult. To keep the family together, Ana described how her daughter had





photocopied pictures of her to put around her son's crib so that he would remember her.

While she was unable to access formal government supports, Ana acknowledged the support she had received from groups like the Organization of Filipinos and Canadians in Newfoundland and Labrador and the Philippine-Newfoundland Women's Organization. These groups allow members to speak their own language and to share their experiences and she described them as invaluable to empower her and other migrant workers to advocate for their rights, but still, more support is needed.

*“We need our organizations to be better resourced and for more money to be put in place to protect new immigrants from employer abuses, and racist and sexist work-place harassment. We are doing what we can – and when we are supported properly – it will make our province better for everyone.”*

---

Bukola Boluwade is an Early Childhood Educator from Nigeria who moved to Canada with her family in 2014. She first moved to Winnipeg with her husband and three children when her husband got a job as a post-doctoral fellow at the university. At the time Bukola was given a temporary work permit, which constrained her ability to find employment and apply for permanent residence. When her and her husband's work permits were set to expire, she looked at options for going to school. This was a difficult decision for her, as she felt that she was well qualified to work rather than return to school, but it was a necessary step to stay in Canada.

*“It appeared as if I had no choice even though I have almost reached the peak of my teaching career as an administrator before leaving my country. The thought of starting all over again just because of having to stay was very painful.”*

As her husband continued his postdoctoral work in Winnipeg, Bukola moved to St. John's with her three children to get her Masters of Education at Memorial University. While she received some financial assistance from her husband, Bukola struggled to make ends meet and could not afford childcare. Being a full-time student, unable to work, and caring for three children by herself proved extremely difficult, and Bukola felt isolated and alone in the new city.

*“While I am grateful for various supports provided, my social and emotional needs were not really addressed. I struggled with isolation in pursuit of excellence in an academic environment that is different from what I am familiar with.”*

During her studies, she met with the director of Relationships First in the Faculty of Education. She described this encounter as transformative, as it changed her perception about herself and others. With her new perspective and the emotional support she received from the Center, she was able to successfully complete her program.

*“I got healing for every hurt and regained my worth and identity by putting on a new lens.”*

Now, she is advocating for more spaces in St. John's for newcomers to receive socio-emotional support. This support could take the form of an "Immigrants Interactive Circle," a space for immigrants to foster connections, build relationships, and share their experiences. Bukola also suggested a more flexible immigration system for families in Canada and possibly modify the language test for an international student graduate to become a permanent resident as ways to ease the experience of immigrants who want to stay in Canada.

---

Julie Brocklehurst is a writer, an advocate and the mother of a child with a disability. Her son, Brennen, is 14 years old, has cerebral palsy, and uses a wheelchair for mobility. When she first learned that she had a child with a disability, she explained how she was not prepared for the diagnosis and was worried about the life her child would have.

*"At that time, I viewed a wheelchair as something that held people back, as a symbol of restriction – a barrier to leading a full and active life. I have come to learn that my son's wheelchair is in fact his freedom. It gives him the chance to leave his bed, to leave our home, and experience the world with everybody else."*

Julie no longer sees the wheelchair as a barrier but described the infrastructural barriers that constrain the use of a wheelchair in St. John's. Private homes are often a challenge, as few people live in homes made accessible; family activities, such as trick-or-treating, are impossible.

*"We live in a gem of an old city that cherishes its historic architecture and old buildings. And they are beautiful! But they are often completely inaccessible."*

These barriers mean that Julie has to do considerable planning to leave the house including mapping out how she and her son will get around. Still, Julie has hope that these manmade structures can be unmade or remade so they are accessible. She described the positive work that organizations like Inclusion NL have done to make events more accessible and how the City of St. John's offers equipment to allow people in wheelchairs to use the trails in the winter.

*"I want my child and everyone else's children to live in a province and environment where everyone feels included, safe, and connected to other people. Ideally, we would create a community of people who all have the capability to lead active and productive lives."*





**D**iane Fulford works at the St. John's Military Family Resource Centre and has been a military spouse for 31 years. She is a mother of 3 children and has moved 11 times in Canada and Europe. She described this mobility as making her and her children more resilient and adaptable to changing environments. It taught them to not always fear the unknown but rather, to embrace it. She explained how it was important for their health and well-being not to see moving as a problem but to treat it as an adventure and opportunity to learn about different cultures and places.

*“Where he went, we went... My children are very resilient and we have taken it as an opportunity to learn about new cultures and life experiences”*

Still, there were challenges to moving multiple times. Not having family supports was difficult and with every move came a new school with a different curriculum, the need to make new friends, and the anxiety of not fitting in, as well as challenges with continuity of care, and the difficulty of finding employment in a new town.

*“With all of those moves, I wasn't able to transfer my work. Every time I moved, I started over again, reinvented myself. With all the jobs, I felt like I was settling. Finding a job in my skill set was not always possible.”*

The Military Family Resource Center was an invaluable service during these transitions, as they provided supports to assist with the move. Diane suggested a standardized curriculum across Canada and improving access to healthcare for people who move with the military would also have helped ease the transition.

**H**eather McDowell has been a military spouse for 26 years, and described the toll that having a partner on the move had on her family. Her family's first posting was in Winnipeg, Manitoba, far away from family on the East Coast. When her partner was deployed overseas, Heather was left a single, stay-at-home mom who was unable to work because the cost of childcare was too high.

*“Long distance phone plans didn't exist so calling family was limited. Your friends became your family. A friend and I would touch base every day when our husbands were gone away. The Army was a life, not just a job.”*

Several years later, the family moved to Greenwood, Nova Scotia, where they began to put down roots. Heather was able to find a career she enjoyed, and became involved in the community. When her husband was moved to another city, the family decided to stay in Greenwood to let their kids finish school, and lived apart for several years. Eventually, he was moved to a closer community and became Heather's “weekend husband.” At this point, her kids had all moved to other towns in Nova Scotia to attend postsecondary education or find work, and when her husband was moved to Goose Bay, Heather followed him. This was a challenge, however, as it meant leaving her family and friends behind, and the couple struggled to sell their house in Greenwood. Now, living in Goose Bay, Heather described the challenge of moving away from her family again and the stress of the unknown, but managed to end on a positive note.

*“The challenges when I first got to Goose Bay was leaving my children in Nova Scotia and our house was still for sale and empty. With just a little over a year left in Goose Bay the challenges are: where will we go, will I get a job, can we afford a house, adapting to the city life. But for now, I remind myself to enjoy the rest of my time in the Big Land.”*

---

Susan Onalik is an Inuk woman and mother from Nunatsiavut studying Political Science and Sociology at Memorial University. In her presentation she discussed her experiences moving from a northern Indigenous community to a diverse urban centre, and how difficult and detrimental it could be to navigate a city, its programs, and services as a visible minority when faced with racism and discrimination.

*“Mobility has always been a part of my life. I was put into foster care as a young child and moved to St. John’s to access better housing with my own young child. Finding housing was a challenge as a visible minority.”*

As a student and mother of a child in grade school, Susan has found the material that is taught in public and postsecondary schools that relates to Indigeneity is often outdated, misguided, and misinterpreted. This means it is often left to the individual to provide corrective information, and challenging that information can be stressful and exhausting.

*“My uncle was brought in for a knee surgery and I got a call that he needed to be put into restraints because he was withdrawing from alcohol. He hadn’t drank in 40 years. He had had a stroke but they assumed he was an alcoholic.”*

To correct this, she argued, it is essential for everyone to have understanding and training in cultural diversity. She explained how the material needs to change to better represent true Indigenous world-views and ways of being, knowing, and doing, so students are not indoctrinated with the wrong (and often discriminatory or stereotypical) information at an early age. This could help reduce the discrimination that Indigenous people face as they move for school or work across Canada.

*“There are resource centers for Indigenous people but they’re busting at the seams. They need more funding.”*



## Panel 2: Researchers Studying Families on the Move

This panel brought together researchers who are studying the lives of differently mobile groups. In preparing their presentations, they were asked to speak to one or more of the following questions:

- What groups are you working with?
- What have you learned about patterns of mobility/immobility in their lives
- How are these affecting families?
- How and in what ways do access to supports and services currently mediate these effects? What gaps have you identified in these and how might they be addressed?

Dr. Sulaimon Giwa, Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at Memorial University, broke down a common misconception that not all families on the move are heterosexual. Sulaimon is researching the experiences of racialized LGBTQ+, many of whom are immigrants. Sulaimon has found these immigrants are isolated from their communities, and that service delivery is disconnected. One reason is that immigrants are assumed to be heterosexual, and receive settlement assistance as such, which may make them hesitant to reveal their sexual identity and reach out for help or information on how to connect with the local LGBTQ+ community. To address this problem, Sulaimon is working on building relationships between different service providers to help them work collaboratively in serving the needs of the racialized LGBTQ+ community.

*“Sexual identity can be a factor in the outmigration for newcomers.”*

Brenda Grzetic, Senior Policy Analyst for the [St. John's Status of Women Council](#), discussed how mobility, or lack thereof, can be a strain on women's exit strategies for leaving abusive relationships. Based on the findings of their [Domestic Violence @ Work](#) study, Brenda found that domestic violence follows women into the workplace, and can trap them in part-time and precarious jobs, which makes it difficult to save money and to leave. For women in rural areas leaving requires a vehicle, which can be expensive, and leaving their community can mean losing their support networks.

*“Domestic violence affected individual's work choice and about 70% didn't report to the police.”*

---

Dr. Verl  Harrop is the Director of the [Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network Atlantic](#) and Co-lead of the [National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education - Atlantic Region](#). Based in Fredericton, they recently began a community-driven research project with [Under One Sky Friendship Centre](#) to deepen their understanding of urban Indigenous homelessness. They found that the urban Indigenous population was hidden in plain sight and many Indigenous people were living in poverty. This systemic poverty had a profoundly negative impact on housing, as many families were living week to week and could face an insurmountable crisis at any moment. For those without a home, being on the move is not a choice, but a daily part of their life. Moving from couch to couch, shelter to shelter, can mean an inability to possess material comforts and always having to plan where your next move will be.

As Dr. Harrop noted, homelessness is not just having a roof over your head, but can include the loss of language, culture, and community caused by moving from your home and is experienced by many urban Indigenous

peoples. Friendship centres, such as Under One Sky and First Light, help address such homelessness by providing opportunities for not only physical shelter, but emotional support and space to participate in cultural practices.

*“Urban migration and population decline has raised housing prices and Indigenous peoples are more likely to experience homelessness. Homelessness is not just a roof over your head, but loss of language and culture, and that's why friendship centres are so important.”*

---

Denise Hillier is Director of Clinical Services at [Stella's Circle](#). Her work includes collaborating with the government to offer a wide variety of counselling-based services to women incarcerated in the Clarendville Correctional Centre for Women. Like many prisons in Canada, the Clarendville Correctional Centre for Women is located in a rural area of the province, a one hour to five day journey depending on where the family is from. Combined with the shame and stigma of not wanting to be seen in prison, this distance means women do not receive many visits from their family and connect with them mostly through telephone and mail. Through these telephones, women have talked their children through childbirth, or shared a hot chocolate and sang them to sleep. As Denise explained, these connections to family are vital for reducing recidivism and improving reintegration in the community, and have inspired Stella's Circle to start new programs aimed at building those connections.

The Storybook Project was initiated in 2018 as a way to connect mothers with their children. The project worked with 25 incarcerated women who recorded a story book and hand delivered copies to their children. By having a



shared storybook these mothers were then able to read the same book as their child over the telephone, which fostered the feeling of being together.

*“Family connections reduce recidivism so we need to help families stay connected. We can do more with technology and improve programs that address that.”*

**D**r. Dana Howse is a Post-Doctoral Fellow with [SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Research](#) and the Department of Sociology at Memorial University researching the impact of injury on those who engage in employment-related

geographical mobilities. As she explained, the impact of injury on these workers and their families is multi-layered, as it includes both recovery and return to work. Dana found that when commuting long distances for work, an injury can leave a worker stranded far from home. This can leave them far from their families, who may have to travel and spend weeks in another region caring for them, costs not everyone can afford. If they choose to recover at home, they can be disqualified from employer benefits or find the services necessary to recovery may not be at hand. Dana spoke to several workers who had to drive three to seven hours to attend appointments or rehabilitation programs in other communities. Returning home can also come with costs, such as private healthcare services, traveling home, and the lost wages of not working.





The return to work is not always easy either. For mobile workers who have organized their lives around a certain routine, modifying that schedule can throw off the routine they have established to maximize family time. Furthermore, the return to work may not necessarily mean returning to the same work site, especially for injured workers who are put on modified work plans. These new work sites can be further from home, requiring longer distances of travel and less time at home taking care of responsibilities, which can exasperate the work required of a spouse.

*“Return to work affects not only individuals but their families; the former don’t get to see their family as often because of extended travel and time away from home.”*

---

Dr. Delores Mullings is Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Memorial University. She discussed how not all families in Canada age in the same way and how immigrants experience different levels of exclusion through health care and retirement as they age. Pushed out by environmental destruction, capitalism, and the remnants of slavery, immigrants have been moving to Canada from the Caribbean for more than a century. While those who moved were some of the region’s most educated, when they arrived in Canada those skills were often devalued, and many were forced into low-wage jobs. This structural racism prevented many from succeeding economically, being socially mobile, entering the housing market, and saving for retirement. As they age, they are struggling to support themselves.

*“More first generation immigrants are going into home care, where they can experience racism and cultural insensitivity. We find these racialized seniors are not getting the proper care.”*

## Panel 3: Serving and Supporting Families on the Move

This panel gave voice to those who serve and support families dealing with mobility and immobility. As mediators between families and government, they shared their knowledge about:

- a) mobility-related family life challenges they have identified among the groups they support and serve;
- b) strategies they have developed to help these families deal with these challenges; and
- c) recommendations for future policy change and research. They were asked to reflect on the following questions when preparing their presentations:

- For the groups you work with, how does mobility impact their families including their needs for and access to services and supports?
- If you could change one thing related to available supports and services for (im)mobile families what would it be?
- What, if any, are the gaps in existing knowledge about mobility and families among the groups you serve and support?



Kimberley Elms, a Social Worker and Family Liaison Officer with the [Gander Military Family Resource Centre](#) and Transition Group 9 Wing Gander, discussed the work that she does with the organization. The role of the Military Family Resource Center is to help families with the transition to a new community by connecting them to local services and peer support groups. Moving to a new town can be isolating and services, such as childcare or healthcare, may not be readily accessible. This struggle is amplified for family members with special needs seeking specialized care services who are often left on wait lists until they have to move again. For the spouse, finding employment can also be a struggle, as differences in certification requirements may prevent them from pursuing their chosen occupation, or they may face fewer opportunities to practice their skill in a new community.

*“The whole point of the Military Family Resource Center is to bridge the gap in service deliveries for military families. We’re an NGO that does a lot with very little, which is why we need to collaborate and share information with other NGOs to improve and streamline services.”*

Suzy Haghighi is a Social Work Coordinator with the [Association for New Canadians](#) where she facilitates an empowerment group for refugee women and offers solutions-focused counseling services. Suzy explained that for refugees, migration is not a choice and many have spent several years living in temporary camps without the ability to work, put their children in school, or practice their religion freely. Once they arrive in Canada, their worries don’t end right away, as they must transition to a new life with few resources to help them





resettle. Newcomers need access to affordable housing and public transit to begin to rebuild a life in their new community, but for refugees arriving in St. John's that can be a challenge and many become isolated in their homes. Not only do they have to learn a new language to communicate with new neighbours, they often face problems with credential recognition and struggle to find employment in their area of expertise. Programs like "Mommy and Pals" create space for newcomer mothers of young children to connect with each other and reduce the social isolation of being a stay-at-home mom in an unfamiliar city.

---

*"Refugee families do have incredible strength and resilience but they still face challenges when they arrive."*

---

As Vanessa Horlick, Shelter Lead at [First Light St. John's Friendship Centre](#) explained, the Shanawdithit Shelter is unique in that it offers a shelter to all genders for a wide range of reasons, thus removing barriers for Indigenous people in St. John's seeking a warm bed and place to rest their head. The shelter not only provides space to rest, but offers support and programs to help people transition into the community. This can include cultural support, peer support groups, and daycare for children. However, even with these programs and resources, many people who use the shelter still face barriers with the transition, primarily due to lack of affordable, accessible housing and transportation.

*"Our clients face barriers like affordable housing and transportation"*

Shelley Langford is the Parent Program Coordinator for the [Tree House Family Resource Center](#) in Deer Lake. Home to an airport, Deer Lake has become a hub for families that work in the fly-in, fly-out employment sector, but as Shelley explained, the opportunity to move to Deer Lake comes with challenges as well, including leaving social supports and lack of childcare. As a spouse of a mobile worker, she understands the struggle that commuter families face and developed the "[Home Again, Gone Again](#)" program to help families adjust to this new work routine.

---

*"Many people are moving to Deer Lake for access to the airport but leaving their support network, which is a real struggle."*

---

Inspector Sharon Warren, Police Officer with the [Royal Newfoundland Constabulary](#), discussed some of the challenges of working on the move. Police officers must be able to communicate with head office, but when operating in remote contexts, cellphone and even radio services can be weak and officers are left to fend for themselves. When stationed in remote areas, police officers also have to choose whether to bring their family with them, and not everyone does. Speaking from experience, Sharon discussed how she was stationed in the Northeast Avalon while her husband was stationed in Labrador and the two lived in separate homes.

*"We're putting junior officers in rural areas, sometimes against their will. We support them in their move but it can be a struggle for families who don't always move with their spouse."*



## Panel 4: Positive Collaborations for Research, Service and Support for Families on the Move

Despite overlaps in our fields, academics, service providers and those with lived experience often operate in silos, disconnected from each other. As this conference aimed to show, learning the experiences of others can help inform our understanding of the world and to identify shared issues, research gaps, and service and support opportunities. For this panel, presenters were asked to discuss positive collaborations, or teams that have been working together to address issues. Panel participants were asked to reflect on the following questions as they developed their presentations:

- What positive collaboration are you involved in?
- What inspired the collaboration?
- What have you learned from the collaboration?

---

Kathy Hawkins, Manager of [InclusionNL: Employer Supports and Services Program](#) of [Empower, The Disability Resource Centre](#), has been working with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on policies to make provincial ferries more accessible for people with special needs. She explained how the partnership has included accessibility reviews of the province's ferries and training crew members on how to be inclusive. While Kathy acknowledged that there are challenges



with making a heavy, metal boat accessible given the current design and structure, this challenge is being overcome by focusing on what can be made available and presenting that to the passenger so that they can make an informed decision.

*“We’ve travelled the province to review ferry services and provide disability awareness training to crews. The onset of disability starts around 40 & many crews are nearing that age, so it was an opportunity to start that discussion for them too.”*

---

Gregory M Lagacé, Manager of Community Development and Outreach with the [Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services](#), asked the audience, “Why collaborate?” The question was meant as a tool to help partnerships start a project with a shared vision by reflecting on what is the motivating factor behind engaging in the partnership. This is important for creating shared goals, and for maintaining passion, as when excitement wanes, that ‘why’ can be used to reflect on what brought members together in the first place. Without collaboration, organizations are at risk of duplicating services or creating programs that leave out marginalized groups. Collaboration can be an incredible tool to help organizations, government, and academia work together on shared goals, but must be built with trust to be effective.

*“Non-collaboration is the greatest threat to a project’s success.”*

---

Barbara Neis is the Project Director for the [On the Move Partnership](#), a national partnership with research projects and affiliations across Canada. On the Move is studying extended mobility for work, ranging from long daily commutes through

interprovincial mobility to international labour migration. The project also includes those who are mobile within their work, including truck drivers, seafarers, and airline employees. As the project clues up, Barbara shared some lessons learned, including making sure that the project is connected to people on the ground, rather than coming in top-down, and ensuring the research is sensitive to a particular place and the diverse issues that can exist there.

*“We have been collaborating with Fort St. John, a town with many mobile workers. That collaboration allowed us to share our research and have a dialogue with service providers on the ground and to produce a report that can be used by other service providers addressing these issues.”*

---

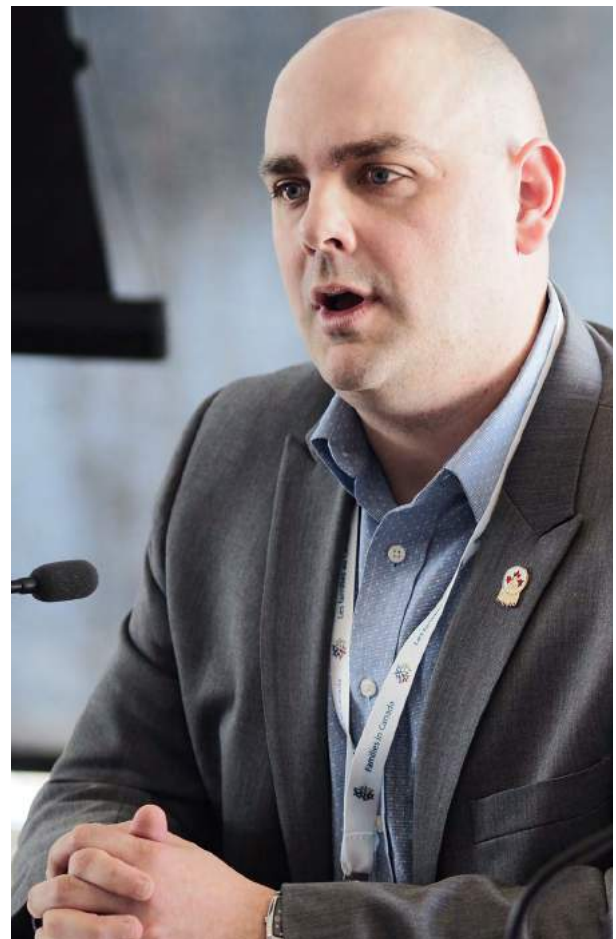
Constable Brad Squires is the Indigenous Policing and Restorative Justice Officer with the [Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#) (RCMP) and discussed his work building positive collaborations with the Indigenous population in St. John’s. As many Indigenous peoples travel to St. John’s for school, work, or medical reasons, this mobile population can be particularly distrustful of the police because of the role of institutions such as the RCMP in committing genocide against Indigenous peoples across Canada. Brad discussed how when he began his new role he wanted to acknowledge that history and work to rebuild trust with the community. He began by reading the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to learn more about the issues Indigenous peoples face, and policies that would help rectify them. His next step was to reach out to [First Light St. John’s Friendship Centre](#) and to establish relationships that would allow him to work alongside those he would be serving. He described being nervous at first, engaging with a community that he was new to, but found the organization welcoming,

and the experience rewarding. As he explained, federal organizations traditionally operate in silos, but his experience collaborating with the community has helped earn him the respect and trust of that community, which is vital for effective service delivery.

*“Please don’t let your fear of the unknown stop you from reaching out to new organizations and partners. They want to help.”*

Dr. Dorothy Vaandering is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and Director of [Relationships First: Restorative Justice Research-Resource Centre](#). The vision of the centre is to create institutional cultures of belonging based on building relationships first. To build collaboration and relationships, Dorothy has been involved in a project to bring Relationships First to the public education system by putting children in dialogue circles. By moving furniture and creating a circle of chairs, the circle makes space for everyone and allows children to include each other in authentic ways by finding commonalities. By having an item that is passed to the person speaking, Dorothy describes how everyone is given space to share and acknowledge the person who just spoke. The circles are ended by telling the children how much the teacher learned from them. Dorothy suggested adults need to muster the courage to create circle dialogues in their own organizations to improve relationships and build trust.

*“We’ve learned that we need to start small, from the roots to plant seeds, and that we need to listen to others, which means we as managers need to talk less.”*





# Policy Solutions

While many challenges associated with diverse mobilities across these different groups were discussed at the conference, participants also put forward some suggestions on ways to address these challenges.

Some solutions were quite specific, such as the need for cultural sensitivity training among healthcare professionals and improved oversight of employers utilizing the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, while others were broader and encapsulated challenges faced by many different people.

This section focuses on the broader solutions with the potential to help address challenges that cut across the groups in attendance. These solutions include implementing affordable, accessible childcare and transportation, and building infrastructure based on the principles of universal design.



## Childcare

Constraints on access to affordable childcare was a challenge identified by multiple groups as limiting the ability of women to study or work. This challenge could be amplified by mobility that resulted in de facto lone family situations for extended periods. Some women discussed having to give up their careers to take care of their family because they could not afford childcare.

*“In my own case when I was studying, I struggled with childcare for my daughter. I know a family who can’t work right now because they don’t have a place to put their child. They need to work to survive.” – Breakout Session*

While lack of availability of childcare was discussed as a problem in urban areas, it was identified as an even greater challenge in rural areas, where there were fewer places offering the service. There was also a gap in services that allowed for alternate work arrangements as childcare facilities are generally based on a “9 to 5” full-year schedule. This can make it difficult for workers with overnight schedules or those seeking part-year arrangements for those working in the fly-in, fly-out employment sector.

*“I don’t think there’s someone in a refugee camp that’s thinking, St. John’s, NL, better look into daycare in advance. Let’s think about community solutions where we depend on each other.” – Breakout Session*

Some people shared best practices they had heard of in other places. For example, McGill University has a babysitting co-operative, which provides childcare and training for caregivers such as First Aid. There was also discussion of Quebec’s provincial childcare plan, which allows families to access childcare at a low day rate.

## Transportation

Constraints on mobility in their host communities was identified as a key challenge for those in the types of families on the move that were the focus of the conference. Access to accessible, affordable transportation is essential for commuting to work and school, accessing services, and for attending social functions, all key elements of family life.

At the conference, many people raised concerns about the lack of access to appropriate, affordable public transportation, both in urban and rural areas. This challenge increased the cost of travel as people were forced to buy their own car or rely on expensive taxis. While St. John’s has a public transit service, it has been slow to connect to growing bedroom communities around the city center, and can still be inaccessible for families with members who work late nights or are travelling with several young children. St. John’s also offers a “Go Bus” for people with disabilities, which has filled an important gap in service delivery in the city. However, neither of these services are available in rural areas resulting in serious struggles for families living there.

Access to transportation is also a safety concern. Being unable to access public transit can put people in precarious situations including, for example, having to walk or take a cab alone late at night. For women escaping domestic violence, transportation is essential for preparing an exit strategy.



## Universal Design

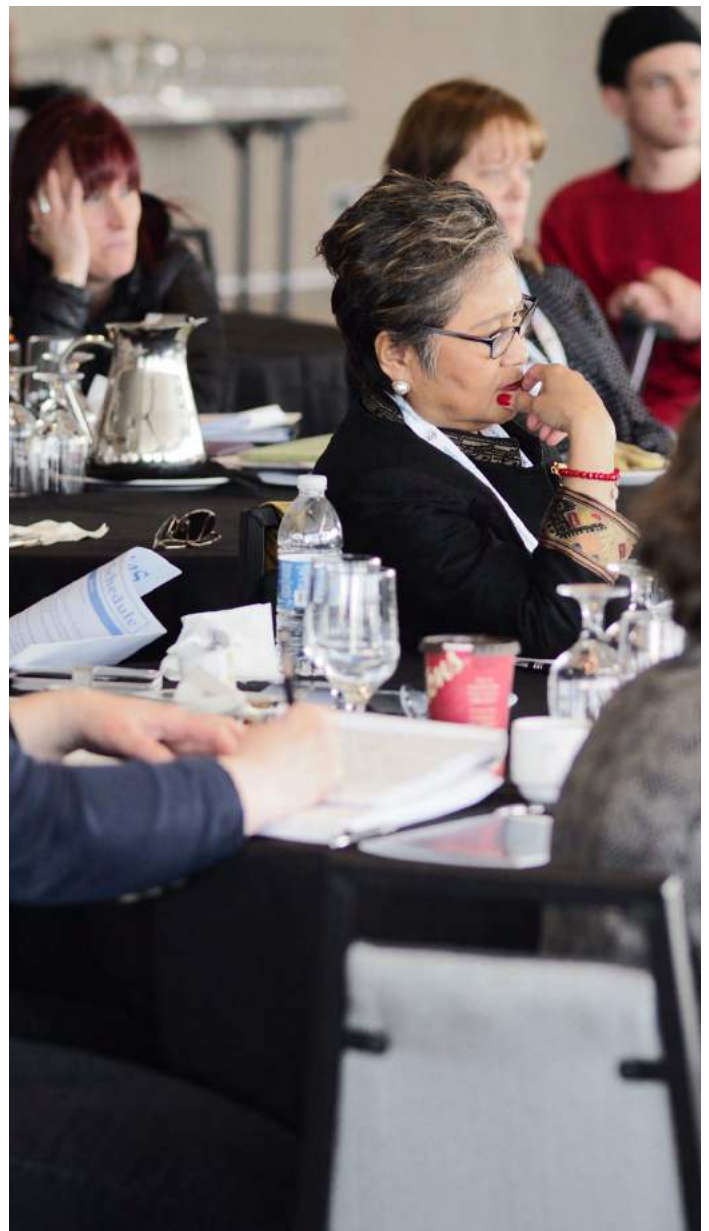
One solution suggested for urban and rural transit issues could be car and bike shares, where people have access to a shared vehicle that can be used when needed. Applying a universal design model to transportation where transport facilities and services are designed to accommodate the widest range of potential users, including people with special needs, would mean accessible, affordable public transit for everyone, reducing the need for specialized services for people with disabilities. This could include a range of options such as accessible public transit and ride sharing. Such a policy would eliminate barriers faced by different groups and allow families to participate more in their community and economy.

*“The people who are most vulnerable struggle the most with problems that we all face. Instead of seeing us as different groups we can work together.”*  
— Breakout Session

While the concept of universal design is often associated with people with disabilities, conversations at the conference brought up applying a universal design approach as a solution to a wide range of policies and services that would ensure no one fell through the cracks. Given barriers to inclusion are multi-layered, applying universal design can meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

Participants expressed a need for easier access to information and supports that could be made available to everyone and cover a wide range of needs. Universal design could include creating service hubs that are one-stop family resource centres, or building platforms that include information on a wide-range of services available in different regions or cities.

*“Some of those organizations are not friendly to collaboration, and I’m thinking specifically to research. The research setting is not always conducive to cross-cultural, community collaboration thanks to administrative barriers. We need to look at those barriers, talk about them, and build those capacities into administration—like universal design, for example, the thought that a person with cerebral palsy is going to need what other people need.”* — Breakout Session



# Wouldn't it be great if...?

Reflecting on the discussions during the two days of the conference, this closing session provided an opportunity to reflect on future possibilities by asking participants to finish the sentence, “Wouldn't it be great if...?” The session provided a space for positive contemplation and speculation intended to help push the conversation forward and identify next steps.

Below are some of the ways participants completed the question, “Wouldn't it be great if...?”

- all emergency services were treated the same?
- all organizations had multi-year funding?
- governments respected their time and their efforts? It makes it more expensive to fund things year-to-year and it stops organizations from being advocates as to not alienate the government.
- we could provide collaborative services to meet needs as they arise? Duplication is rampant and we could alleviate that by becoming more specialized and more open with other services. If we're communicating as organizations, our clients have to spend less time expressing their needs and telling their stories, and more time receiving services.
- we could see past labels like immigrant, permanent resident, temporary foreign worker, come from away, international student, mother, father, and see people as people and address their needs as such? But, how do we do that while leveraging services for those who are disproportionately impacted by identities like gender and Indigeneity to impact policy?
- the government took on the initiatives of the NGOs?
- people knew the services that were available to them, were able to access them, and felt comfortable doing so?
- people knew those services were theirs?
- the university could listen to and provide services for international students including ones their families really need, like better language services or facilitating social networks with local people?
- families were part of the conversation all of the time?
- we had a website for community services?
- those who were most affected by policies were sitting around the table when trying to design solutions?
- governments reached out to the university for advice on the latest research and if academia facilitated practical distillation of information on what is needed?
- public education was free?
- public transit was accessible to everyone?
- we could have had decision-makers present for the whole conference?
- we could develop a mechanism to link organizations with researchers, with questions coming from the community?

# Conclusion

What is family? Family is love, care, and support. Family is dynamic and ever-changing. Now more than ever, the four walls of a household cannot accurately capture the portrait of a family, many of whom are adapting to a new, long-distance way of life. Now more couples are choosing to live apart<sup>1</sup> and multi-generational households are becoming more common.<sup>2</sup> With changing families, government needs to consider the policy needs of these families, and how they can best be supported.

*“This interactive session is important so we can hear from families, know what the problems are, and allow them to express their needs so they can live happily here.” – Breakout Session*

Overall, the potential benefits of collaborating across different sectors and groups was the biggest takeaway from the event. Many groups were surprised to hear that they were facing similar issues, and felt that they could work together to create common solutions. There are also some barriers to collaboration including lack of awareness of available resources, competition around funding, and the limited resources given to NGOs to build relationships with other organizations. This could be overcome by sharing resources, multi-year funding, building a centralized database that includes information on all services available, and having events like this one, which bring all groups to the table to discuss common barriers and solutions.

Many connections were made during these two days due to the potential synergies

that can come from bringing together such diverse groups around the common theme of families and mobility. Some participants felt that there was a need to create more space for conversation and discussion as the room was filled with people eager to share their insights and get to know each other more.

While we organized breakout sessions and long nutritional breaks to create that space, the demand for more time to connect should be considered for future events. To build on this event, a potential next step would be to take the time to identify challenges that everyone is experiencing and to build solutions together. This could include an implementation plan where we as a group could take responsibility for items on a list, such as applying for grants and each taking ownership over different parts of a project. This strategic doing activity would build on connections made and address needs identified by different groups.

*“Thank you all for your vision for collaboration.” – Breakout Session*

The most positive feedback we received was for the panel of people talking from lived experience. As conferences tend to focus on research findings and policy initiatives, the voices of those with lived experience can sometimes be diluted or absent from discussions. Hearing from those who have been most affected by policies, and who can speak directly to the issues, ensured that those concerns were prominent in the discussions and reflections supported by the conference.

*“I think it’s really important right now to make the connections between the real life experiences of people, and what we are doing as academics.” – Breakout Session*

1 Tang, J., N. Galbraith and J. Truong. 2019. Insights on Canadian Society: Living alone in Canada. [Statistics Canada](#).

2 Statistics Canada. 2019. Family Matters: Adults living with their parents. The Daily, February 15. [Statistics Canada](#).





While efforts were made to bring a wide variety of sectors and groups to the event, there were some gaps in attendance. There were few representatives from the government, either bureaucrats or politicians, and participants expressed interest in having those with the power to make a difference attend and listen to their concerns. Participants were also largely women and while women still tend to take primary responsibility for family lives on an everyday basis, having more access to male perspectives was identified as important for hearing their concerns and ensuring they heard the concerns of others. Other satellite conferences affiliated with the Families in Canada 2019 conference also had children on their panels, a unique perspective that was absent from our event. Ensuring that the whole family is present could have offered a different lens that would have allowed a more holistic view of the family.

In organizing the event, we learned that there was a lack of ongoing research and thus research expertise on families in general in Newfoundland and Labrador. Given that government institutions can be hesitant to change policies, having solid research to back up claims is important for swaying public opinion, identifying the need for policy change, and increasing the likelihood that changes will be effective. Having more research on families could improve policies around all of the different kinds of families discussed at the conference and other types of families less affected by extended/complex mobilities. In light of this, it is significant that the Vanier Institute will be launching a Family Research Network, and we hope that national networks such as this will fuel more research on this and other important topics that affect the health and well-being of families in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Canada as a whole.



# Appendix A: Steering Committee Members



**Dr. Rochelle Côté** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Memorial University. Her research focuses on issues surrounding Indigenous social mobility, relationships with settler societies, and the role of networks and culture in fostering ethnic inequalities. She has just completed a cross-national study of the link between networks and successful urban Indigenous business in Canada, the U.S. and Australia. Her current research documents the invisible histories of Indigenous Peoples in St. John's, NL with plans to host a database through First Light: St. John's Friendship Centre.



**Dr. Tony Fang** is the Stephen Jarislowsky Chair in Economic and Cultural Transformation at Memorial University. Currently he sits on the World Bank's Expert Advisory Committee on Migration and Development. He is dedicated to publishing cutting-edge research on the Canadian, and Newfoundland and Labrador economies. His areas of research interest encompass issues of high performance workplace practices, retirement policy and the ageing workforce, education, immigration, innovation and firm growth. @JChair\_NL



**Kathy Hawkins** is currently the Manager of InclusionNL: Employer Supports and Services Program of Empower, The Disability Resource Centre. As Manager, Kathy provide supports and services to employers interested in creating more inclusive workplace environments for current and new employees with multiple types of disabilities. Also in this capacity, Kathy has worked collaboratively with the Dept of Transportation and Works - Marine Services to increase accessibility and inclusion within our provincial ferry system.



**Dr. Barbara Neis** (Ph.D., C.M., F.R.S.C.) is John Paton Lewis Distinguished University Professor at Memorial University. Based in the Department of Sociology, she is also the Co-Director of the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Research. In 2018, Professor Neis was awarded (jointly with Dr. Christina Murray of UPEI) the Vanier Institute of the Family Mirabelli-Glossop Award for distinguished contribution to the work of the Institute.



**Dr. Rosemary [Rose] Ricciardelli**, Ph.D., is a Professor of Sociology, the Coordinator for Criminology, and Co-Coordinator for Police Studies at Memorial University. She is an Associate Scientific Director of the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment (CIPSRT) and the Co-Director for Relationships First-Restorative Justice Centre at Memorial University. Her additional affiliations and appointments include: an Associate Scientist at Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health, an affiliate scientist with Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, and a research fellow with John Howard's Society of Toronto and Crossroads Day Reporting Centre.



**Christopher Sheppard** is Inuit and a beneficiary of the Nunatsiavut Government and was born and raised in the Inuit community of Postville, Nunatsiavut. In 2017, he was elected President of the National Association of Friendship Centres. Mr. Sheppard started with the Friendship Centre Movement as a member of the Aboriginal Youth Council in 2008 and has served in a variety of capacities on the NAFC Board of Directors Executive Director First Light St. John's Friendship Centre.



**Dr. Gail Wideman** is a faculty member in the School of Social Work at Memorial University. Her academic and practice expertise emphasize community development and engagement; and in particular, the capacity of synergistic multi-sector, and multi-disciplinary partnerships to effect social change. Gail is also a military parent. The application of community engaged scholarship to understanding best practices regarding service provision and support to military personnel, Veterans, and their families has a deep personal significance.



# Appendix B: Speaker Biographies

## Lived Experiences of Families on the Move

**Abir Zin Alabdin** is a refugee from Syria who arrived to St. John's in January of 2016 with her husband and five children. Abir taught elementary school aged children English and math in Kuwait. She is an avid volunteer with the Multicultural Women's Organization of NL and also offers community supports to newly arrived families.

**Maria Ana Arro** is a Filipina and a permanent resident of Canada. She currently works in St. John's, Newfoundland where she lives with her husband and two children. Ana is a member of FIL-CAN (Organization of Filipinos and Canadians in Newfoundland and Labrador) and PWONL (Philippine-Newfoundland Women's Organization). She came to St. John's directly from the Philippines to work for a fast food restaurant (multinational chain) based in St. John's. She was hired as a Swing (Shift) Manager. She migrated on her own via the 'Temporary Foreign Worker' program and, after several years, sponsored her husband and two children to join her in Newfoundland.

**Bukola Boluwade** is a Nigerian and married with three children. She has many years of remarkable teaching experiences and with notable personal and social skills, she successfully pioneered three schools as an administrator before moving to Winnipeg in 2014. Last year, she obtained a M. Ed. CTLS (Memorial) with research interest in Restorative Justice in Education. She is also a member of Relationships First - Restorative Justice, NL and a certified Early Childhood Educator. Her life and practice is committed to the honor, respect and worth of all.

**Julie Brocklehurst** is a writer, an advocate and a mother to a young boy with a brain-based developmental disability. She created her blog, 'Tiptoeing Through', as a place to share some of her thoughts and experiences in raising a child with special needs. Her blog has become a resource for other parents, offering support and bringing hope and encouragement to the disability community. Julie was previously the Executive Director of the Cerebral Palsy Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, and she is involved with many other disability-related organizations, both locally and on a national level.

**Diane Fulford** works at the St. John's Military Family Resource Centre in the Welcome, Information and Referral position. In this role, Diane has significant exposure and experience of the challenges and unique nature of military family life. As a military spouse for 31 years, mother of 3 children and 11 moves in Canada and Europe, Diane is well versed on lived experience of transition and mobility of family.

**Heather McDowell** has been a military spouse for 26 years. She has two grown children who do not live with her now. As a family, they have experienced two deployments, 14 months of training away from home, 4 years of IR, and now lives in an isolated posting. Her two children have lived on two bases, her husband has lived on six bases, and she has lived on three bases during the past 26 years. This is the life she chose. It has come with many challenges but together as a family they make it work.

**Susan Onalik** is an Inuk woman and mother from Nunatsiavut. She has spent over ten years working in Indigenous community development, supporting individuals, families and groups in various areas of service and advocacy. Susan is currently studying Political



Science and Sociology at Memorial University. She credits Traditional Indigenous Knowledge as the foundation and key to success and wellness in all areas of learning and growth.

## Researchers Studying Families on the Move

**Brenda Grzetic** is a strong advocate for women working in all occupational areas and is author of the book “Women Fishes These Days” about women’s experiences working on fishing boats in Newfoundland and Labrador. She is currently Senior Policy Analyst with the St. John’s Status of Women Council where she is researching the impacts of domestic violence in NL workplaces and developing resources to assist both victims of violence and employers.

**Dr. Sulaimon Giwa** is Assistant Professor of Social Work at Memorial University. His research examines racialized LGBT+ experiences, social justice and human rights, migration and resettlement, and critical race transformative pedagogies and theories.

**Dr. Verlé Harrop** was Director of the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network Atlantic Research Centre (UAKN Atlantic) 2012 – 2019. Under a SSHRC Partnership Grant, the UAKN Atlantic funded 29 community-driven research projects designed to deepen our understanding of the needs and aspirations of urban Indigenous populations. Presently, Dr. Harrop and Sylvia Moore, are co-leads of the National Centre for Collaboration in Indigenous Education (NCCIE) Atlantic Region. Dr. Harrop’s primary research interest is supporting community-driven research in urban Indigenous environments.

**Denise Hillier**, MSW, RSW, is Director of Clinical Services at Stella’s Circle with responsibility for clinical services in three programs; the Just Us Women’s Centre, Emmanuel House and the Community Support Program. Denise is involved in several community/government

collaborative committees, including NAVNET which addresses system barriers impacting those with complex needs and committees to review alternatives to segregation in provincial prisons. She is a facilitator of Compassion Fatigue and the Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR).

**Dr. Dana Howse** is a social science and health researcher with interest in the social relations of work and health, workers’ compensation, return to work (RTW), work mobility, and disability policy. Her postdoctoral work with the Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy examines how work disability policies and programs support or hinder Canadians with physical disabilities to engage in work-related travel. Dana is also involved in a study of mobile workers’ experiences of RTW, including impacts on their families.

**Lynda Manser** works primarily in family research and knowledge translation. As part of the National Defence policy, Strong Secure Engaged, she has been conducting research on the current needs of military families and models of family resilience to develop the Comprehensive Military Family Plan. She also oversees several portfolios including military family research, assessment of community needs, mental health, child and youth services, and supports to special populations.

**Delores V. Mullings** (BA, BSW, MSW, PhD) is an Associate Professor at Memorial University in the School of Social Work. She is a member of a large extended family and is the mother of two living children. Delores’ community-based experience is working primarily with and for women who are survivors of partner assault, street involved and/or homeless. Her scholarly interests are aligned with the concept of Anti-Black racism and the theoretical orientation of Critical Race Theory through which she explores the health and social needs of older Black Caribbean Canadian adults.

## Serving and Supporting Families On The Move

**Kimberley Elms** is a Social Worker and Family Liaison Officer with Gander Military Family Resource Centre and Transition Group 9 Wing Gander. With a Bachelor of Arts from Saint Mary's University and a Bachelor of Social Work from the University of Manitoba along with countless professional development courses and training, Kim has almost 20 years working in the both traditional and non-traditional Social Work settings. Her role with CFB Gander is to support families of uniformed members, veterans and their families and families of the fallen.

Born in Iran, **Suzy Haghighi** immigrated to Canada in 2005 and has lived in NL since 2008. At the Association for New Canadians she facilitates an empowerment group for refugee women, offers solutions focused counseling services, and collaborates with government and community agencies to ensure the culturally appropriate provision of services. She serves on the Board of Directors at First Light and Thrive. She is also a graduate student in the MSW program at Wilfrid Laurier University.

**Vanessa Horlick** has been working at First Light since 2016 and has worked as the shelter lead since June 2018. Vanessa is passionate about working to ensure individuals and families receive the highest level of support they need. She will continue to aim to improve the programs and services offered. Vanessa is a single mom who lives in St. Johns with her two children, Ethan who is 13 and Liam who is 8.

**Shelly Langford** is the Parent Program Coordinator with The Tree House Family Resource Center in Deer Lake. One of the main roles of her position is to offer support sessions to families who have a parent who travels for work. She brings a unique perspective to this role as a child of a parent who commuted for

work, a spouse of a commuter and a mother who has experienced the same struggles as the families she services.

**Inspector Sharon Warren** joined the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary in 1988. She has worked in many different roles in the Northeast Avalon Region including in Operational Patrol Services, Operational Support Services Division, and the Criminal Investigation Division. Inspector Warren is presently assigned as the Officer in Charge of East District Operational Patrol Services, Northeast Avalon Region. Inspector Warren has been awarded for her exceptional service on many different occasions, most recently she was given the YWCA Women of Distinction Award in 2018.

## Positive Collaborations for Research, Service and Support for Families on the Move

**Kathy Hawkins** is currently the Manager of InclusionNL: Employer Supports and Services Program of Empower, The Disability Resource Centre. As Manager, Kathy provides supports and services to employers interested in creating more inclusive workplace environments for current and new employees with multiple types of disabilities. In this capacity, Kathy has worked collaboratively with the Department of Transportation and Works - Marine Services to increase accessibility and inclusion within our provincial ferry system.

**Gregory M Lagacé** joined the National Defence Team in 2007 to lead and direct Soldier On, a program he created during his employment with the Canadian Paralympic Committee. After 11 years with Soldier On, he made the decision to join the Military Family Services team to oversee the implementation of the Seamless Canada initiatives of the Department of National Defence.

**Dr. Barbara Neis** (Ph.D., C.M., F.R.S.C.) is John Paton Lewis Distinguished University Professor at Memorial University. Based in the Department of Sociology, she is also the Co-Director of the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Research. In 2018, Professor Neis was awarded (jointly with Dr. Christina Murray of UPEI), the Vanier Institute of the Family Mirabelli-Glossop Award for distinguished contribution to the work of the Institute

**Constable Brad Squires** has been a member of the RCMP for 10 years. He has served in large municipal detachments and rural detachments in B.C and Newfoundland and Labrador. Brad is currently an officer with the Indigenous Policing and Restorative Justice section in St.John's, NL. He resides in his home town of St.Philip's with his wife and 2 children.

**Dr. Dorothy Vaandering** is an associate professor at the Faculty of Education, Memorial University, and the director of Relationships First: Restorative Justice Research-Resource Centre. After an extensive career as a Primary-Elementary educator, she now researches the implementation and sustainability of restorative justice in education. At the core of her work is establishing relational, dialogic networks that create space for the voices and needs of those most affected. She has published widely in various academic and professional journals, and is co-author of The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education.

# Appendix C: Student Posters



## Introduction

### Newfoundland as an Island Case-Study

- NL has a high percentage of mobile workers, who work in areas away from home for an extended period.
- Mothers are often forced to head lone parent families while their partners are away.<sup>1</sup>
- Partner absence has been shown to have detrimental effects on mothers.
- Some studies have linked mobile work to increased maternal stress and household workload, conflictual couple relationships, and an expectation for mothers to complete all of the parenting duties.<sup>2</sup>

### Parenting Sense of Competence

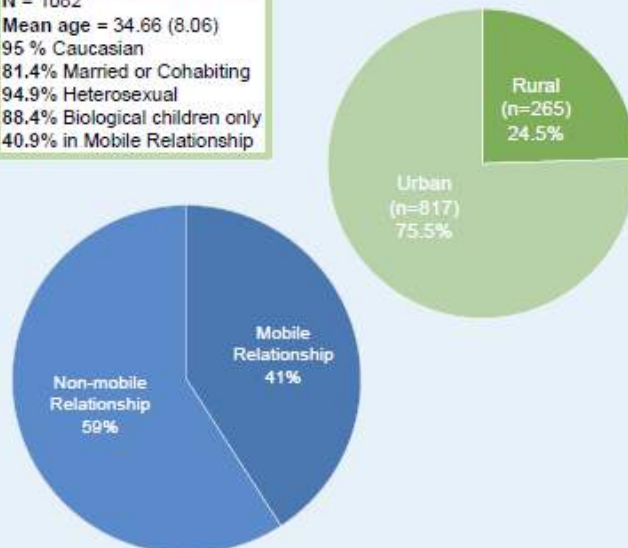
- Parenting sense of competence is intertwined with parenting satisfaction, skill, and overall outcome for the family.<sup>3,4</sup>

### Objectives

- Identify and quantify demographic differences between mothers with and without a partner involved in mobile work.
- Predict parenting sense of competence (satisfaction) with demographics, mental health, and family variables as predictors.

## Participants

N = 1082  
Mean age = 34.66 (8.06)  
95 % Caucasian  
81.4% Married or Cohabiting  
94.9% Heterosexual  
88.4% Biological children only  
40.9% in Mobile Relationship



## Methods/Measures

- Measures included: A socio-demographic questionnaire, the Outcome Questionnaire- 45 (OQ-45), the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS), Quality of Co-Parental Communication Scale (QCPC), and Parental Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC).

Chi-Square test of Independence compared mothers with/without a partner involved in mobile work on key variables.

Stepwise Multiple Regression was used to predict PSOC.

Satisfaction with the following blocks:

- Demographics (only those with significant correlation to PSOC): Mothers age, Education, Household Income, Maternal Health, and Child Health.
- Mental Health: OQ-45 Total Score
- Family Characteristics: CPRS (conflict and closeness subscales), QCPC (conflict and closeness subscales).

## Results

### Location

- Significant difference between mobile and non-mobile mothers  
 $\chi^2 (1, N = 1082) = 37.36, p < .001$

### Urban

- Non-mobile mothers were 2.42x more likely urban

### Rural

- Mobile relationship mothers 4.93x more likely rural

### Employment

- Significant difference in employment status  
 $\chi^2 (1, N = 1082) = 7.16, p = .007$

### Mobile vs. Non-mobile

- Mothers in a mobile relationship were 1.41x more likely to be not working outside the home.

	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t
Age	-0.076	1.370	0.074	2.284*	0.063	2.003*
Household Income	0.097	2.343*	-0.020	-0.569	-0.013	-0.404
Education	-0.540	-1.398	0.009	0.288	0.013	0.423
Maternal Health	0.231	5.887***	-0.032	-0.917	-0.036	-1.073
Child Health	0.182	4.232***	0.126	3.436***	0.101	2.945**
OQ-45			-0.598	-19.514***	-0.498	-15.156***
QCPC					0.017	0.474
Closeness						
QCPC Conflict					0.005	0.135
CPRS					0.114	3.744***
Closeness						
CPRS Conflict					-0.254	-8.381***

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .0005$

	Mobile Relationship			No Mobile Relationship			
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	t
Child Health	4.38	0.84	437	4.37	0.89	632	0.26
Personal Health	3.63	0.87	437	3.70	0.92	632	-1.16
Produce	2.72	0.57	437	2.68	0.61	632	1.05
Exercise	3.65	1.98	437	3.51	1.98	632	1.11
Sleep	3.12	1.04	437	3.06	1.03	632	0.94
Social Support	3.51	1.11	437	3.64	1.11	632	-1.91*

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ . \*\*\*  $p < .0005$

## Discussion

### Mobile vs. Non-Mobile

- Mobile work has a long history in NL, which may explain some of the non-significant in social variables (social support, OQ-45, CPRS).
- Urban/Rural: History of fishing in rural communities
- Employment: There is some literature to suggest that mothers in a mobile relationship may have to stop their employment to support their family in their partner's absence.
- Health: Significant difference in self-reported satisfaction with social support. No other health differences.

### Next Steps

- See if differences exist outside of the dominant discourse.
- Consider the assumptions typically placed on these populations (differences between urban/rural and prevalence of mobile work in NL compared to other places).

### Parental Sense of Competence (Satisfaction)

- Child health, mental health (OQ-45), and quality of relationship with (biological) child predicted parental sense of self-competence (satisfaction).
- Model explains 45.3% of the variance with a large effect size (Adjusted  $R^2 = .446$ ).
- Parenting sense of competence satisfaction was higher in:
  - Older mothers
  - Mothers with healthier children
  - Mothers with better mental health (low score on OQ-45)
  - Better child-parent relationships (low conflict, high closeness)

**Next Steps:** See if relationship persists across different family structures and investigate ways to increase competence.

### References

- Memorial University Harris Center. (2016). Vital Signs: A province-wide check-up of quality of life in Newfoundland and Labrador communities for 2016. Community Foundation of Newfoundland & Labrador.
- Pini, B., & Mayes, R. (2012). Gender, emotions and fly-in fly-out work. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 47(1), 71-87.
- Coleman, P. K., & Karraker, K. H. (2003). Maternal self-efficacy beliefs, competence in parenting, and toddlers' behavior and developmental status. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 24(2), 126-148.
- Johnston, C., & Mash, E. J. (1989). A Measure of Parenting Satisfaction and Efficacy. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 18(2), 167-175.



# Mobility & mobile imperatives in fisheries exit:

## A case study of the Lobster Enterprise Retirement Program

Madeline Bury, Memorial University

MEMORIAL  
UNIVERSITY



### Background

The Lobster Enterprise Retirement Program (LERP) retired 266 lobster licenses across Newfoundland between 2011 and 2013 in an effort to reduce capacity on the South & West coasts of the island. While some fisheries retired with their licenses, many went on to other work in Newfoundland or elsewhere.

A gendered fishery: While involvement along kinship lines is not unusual, more women have entered the boat in the last 30 years as a method of consolidating fishing income in the home<sup>1</sup>. Despite making up 20% of active harvesters, only 3.7% of license holders are women. 67% of women fishers are stalled at the apprentice level<sup>2</sup>.

A gender-blind policy: Policy that does not address the patriarchal dividend almost necessarily reinforces it<sup>3</sup>. By offering buyback benefits only to license holders, the LERP creates a situation in which one partner (the license holder) retires officially, the other (crew) is retired by proxy.

A context of mobility: The availability of work outside the fishery may be a draw to leave<sup>4</sup> but this work is selectively available and dependent on professional status<sup>5</sup>. The segmented and gendered labour market in many areas of rural Newfoundland makes finding work after exiting the fishery challenging and complicated, and many on the south coast must work away.

### Research Questions

This poster aims to situate the desires, constraints and mobile trajectories of recently retired lobster harvesters in a broader narrative of gendered mobility. To that end, it will address:

- 1) How was mobility a factor in decisions to exit the fishery? What kind of mobility was prioritized in decision making?
- 2) What were the mobile implications for harvesters who exited the fishery through the LERP?

### Methods

Data were collected as part of the author's MA thesis and funded as part of the SSHRC/CFI and NL Research Development Corporation funded Partnership grant On the Move <http://www.onthemovepartnership.ca/>.

Institutional ethnography provided theory and framework: "...to discover just how our everyday worlds are put together within social relations beyond the scope of our experience"<sup>6</sup>.

Interviews with LERP retirees, including those retired by the retirement of their partners (N=11)

Key informant interviews with program organizers and facilitators at the Food, Fish & Allied Workers Union (N=2)

Analysis of documents from the conception, operation and subsequent analysis of LERP (N=14)

### Results

Staying in the province was a central priority in their life after harvesting, whether retiring fully or going on to other work:

"He was born here, he'll die here" (Mary)

"I can go wherever I want, been living life beside salt water. It feels better" (Mark)

Local work was an important motivation for many harvesters to sell, but only when the work was local and full time:

"I took the job but I didn't take the buyout that year, I kept my license and then I got into it and it was okay, so when the buyout came along I decided to let my fishing enterprise go" (Chris).

"We certainly wouldn't have let it go without, without him having a job" (Nancy)

While local work motivated men to leave the fishery, women's work was of secondary priority in retirement decisions:

"You continue on with the work and well, I'll put in, like say put in applications and hopefully get work somewhere else" (Nancy)

"well it was a good thing, cause he was getting up in age, but what was I gonna do then? ... I was jobless, hey?" (Christine)

Local work was available through strong personal connections to men who hire:

"the general manager of the [aquaculture] company is a distant cousin of mine, and he kept pushing me to come in this way" (Chris)

"yeah well when we come back well they wanted me to go work from that. I went to work with them, right?" (Tim)

### Discussion

Whether going into full retirement or leaving for other paid work, staying in Newfoundland and preferably in their home community was a priority for many.

The availability of local, full time work is a serious draw from the fishery, especially when jobs are similarly mobile (require some local or regional travel, may require boat work). Mobile jobs were particularly appealing to the men in this sample.

These coveted jobs were typically available only to men through personal connections to local employers.

Not only are women not offered these jobs at the same frequency, their employment came after the decision to sell a license had already been made.

The types of jobs acquired locally were unanimously demanding and required strict time commitments, which prohibited some women from searching for work altogether.

### Conclusions

Local work offered a viable alternative to fishing, and may be preferable to the fishery for some, but these local jobs are available on a gendered basis and are not structured for female workers (either in pursuit of them or working them). Offering buyback benefits, retraining options and job supports to non-license holders may help more women access local, viable employment after leaving the fishery.

### References:

1. Grzebić, B. (2004). Women fishes these days. Black Point, NS: Fernwood.
2. PFHCB in Neis, B., Gerrard, S., & Power, N. G. (2013). Women and Children First: the Gendered and Generational Social-ecology of Smaller-scale Fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador and Northern Norway. *Ecology and Society*, 18(4).
3. Neis, B. & Manesch, M. C. (2005) Moving Forward in Changing Tides: Gender, fisheries and globalization (Neis, B., Binkley, M., Gerrard, S., & Manesch, M. C., Eds.). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Pub.
4. Johnsen, J. P., & Vik, J. (2013) Pushed or pulled? Understanding fishery exit in a welfare state context. *Maritime Studies*, 12 (4), 1-20.
5. Teh, L. S., Hotte, N., & Sumaila, U. R. (2017). Having it all: can fisheries buybacks achieve capacity, economic, ecological, and social objectives? *Maritime Studies*, 16(1).
6. Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people*. Walnut Creek (California): AltaMira Press. (p.32)



# Together we move, move towards our future: Assessment of the provincial supports and well-being of lone-parent families in Newfoundland

Sadia Chowdhury<sup>1</sup> (schowdhury@mun.ca)

Dr. Vicki Hallett<sup>1</sup> (vshallett@mun.ca)

1- Memorial University (www.mun.ca) Department of Gender Studies

St. John's, NL, Canada.

Date: March 27, 2019

## Abstract

Family is one of the earliest organizations in the world. Its types and sizes have been shifted quite comprehensively by the course of time. Worldwide one of the major ongoing shifts in family pattern is the lone-parent family. In this proposed study the context of constructing a lone-parent family, the support and services they receive at provincial level and the experiences and recommendations based on these services will be explored. In collaboration with the Single Parent Association of Newfoundland (SPAN), this study will employ a small scale survey and in-depth interviews with SPAN clients. These clients may be single mothers, single fathers, single grandparents and/ or any other legal custodians who are involved in primary care and custody of the child. Data will be analyzed with an interdisciplinary feminist lens to identify the demographic and social variation among clients and whether these variations affect the services and supports they receive. The concept of mobility, especially for the student lone-parents and new Canadians in NL, will also be explored here. Moreover, this proposed study will also investigate the effect of such mobility on lone-parent families and their well-being. Findings from this study will help to assess the clients' needs and satisfaction for SPAN and will also help to revise their services according to their clients' needs.

## Objectives

The objectives of this proposed work are

- to explore the strengths and weaknesses of SPAN to address the needs of lone- parents
- to explore the options for including LGBTQ and Indigenous lone-parents
- to learn the experiences of SPAN clients
- to recommend services or changes in services based to client's feedback.

## SPAN Services

- Information and referral
- Crisis intervention
- Food and clothing distribution outlet
- Single parent employment support program (SESP)
- Peer support
- Back to school project
- Christmas support

## Methods

Data will be collected employing a mixed-method research. A small scale survey will be conducted to understand client's experiences, expectations and suggestions regarding SPAN services. In-depth interviews will be conducted with SPAN staff to explore their perceptions on SWOT. Having an understanding of clients' needs and feedback to improve their services, SPAN will be able to revise their services accordingly.

Sample themes of survey questionnaire:

1. Background information
  - a. Age
  - b. Gender
  - c. Self-identification: Indigenous/ LGBTQ+/ New Canadian
  - d. Education
  - e. Number of children
  - f. Income range
  - g. Duration of lone- parenthood
2. Knowledge about SPAN
3. Source of information
4. Positive experiences
5. Negative experiences
6. Any challenges in getting services
7. Affiliation with other social services, if any
8. Recommendations

SWOT analysis framework:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

## Introduction

According to the Statistics Canada (2017) census profile 2016, the total number of lone-parent families in Canada is 1,612,805. Among these, 24,250 lone-parent families are from Newfoundland and Labrador. Most lone-parent families, at the national and provincial levels, are headed by females (Statistics Canada: Census profile 2016).

Operational definition of lone-parent:

- Single mother/ father: Does not cohabit with any partner.
- Single grandparent and/ or
- Any other legal custodians who are involved in primary care and custody of the child.

## Expected Results

- As an organization, internal strengths and weaknesses of SPAN will be identified.
- Perceived external threats and opportunities to provide services to the lone- parents will be explored.
- Impact of clients' background and accessibility and availability of SPAN services will be assessed.
- Challenges and strategies to overcome these challenges to receive services from SPAN will be identified.
- Perceptions and attitudes of both SPAN staff and clients towards including LGBTQ and Indigenous lone- parents will be explored.
- Potential collaborations will be created with organizations that work for new Canadians, Indigenous people, LGBTQ+.
- Recommendations for better services based on clients' experiences and needs as well as expanding SPAN community network will be provided .

## Conclusion

- SWOT analysis will help SPAN to do a self-assessment to improve their capabilities and competencies to provide services to lone- parents.
- Although SPAN provides services to the lone- parents from Newfoundland, the understanding of variations among clients will help them to revise their services.
- Options for including LGBTQ+, new Canadians and Indigenous lone-parents will be helpful for marginalized people to get services.
- Thus, SPAN services will be more accessible to wider communities.

## References

- Statistics Canada: Census profile 2016. (2016, May 30). Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/tdp-pdp/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&g=E&g1=10&g2=PR&g3=Code2=01&g4=Data=Count&g5=SearchText=Newfoundland%20and%20Labrador&g6=SearchType=Begin&g7=SearchPR=01&g8=514&g9=1&g10=household%20and%20marital%20status&g11=1&g12=1>
- Single parent association of Newfoundland. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.envision.ca/members/templates/template7.asp?ID=2470>
- Westhues, A., Lafrenie, J., & Schmidt, G. (2001). A SWOT analysis of social work education in Canada. *Social Work Education: The International Journal*, 20 (1), 35-66.





# Temporary Foreign Worker Program: Canada's Segmented Labour Market

Rather than filling an "acute" labour shortage, the undesirability of temporary, rural, low-skilled, low-wage, seasonal and live-in work suggests that these jobs are rejected by Canadian citizens, who are refusing "3D jobs" or jobs that are dirty, dangerous and demeaning. Instead of addressing the underlying economic issues, Canada is recruiting a migrant labour force that can be exploited for corporate profit.

## Canada's Weak Migrant Rights

The federal government has publicly committed to protecting the rights of migrant workers in Canada. This includes labour standards, human rights and social security benefits. However, the prevalence of the TFWP in jobs that are disliked by Canadians is evidence of these workers' captivity.

Migrant workers face significant barriers accessing these protections because of their

- legal status,
- short stay and
- weak language skills.

The government has put significant resources into helping employers access this flexible labour supply but limited resources into the oversight of the program to ensure that it protects the rights and interests of TMWs.

This has served to create a precarious labour force as migrant workers are offered little protections within Canada and are thus disciplined into complete compliance.

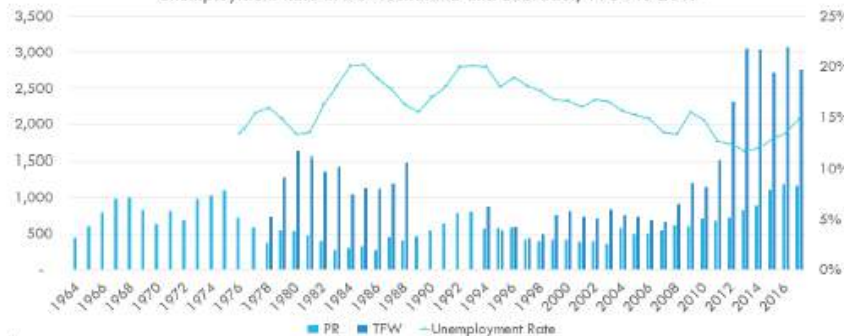
## Canada's Segmented Labour Market

Evidence that Canada prefers this system of a segmented labour force is shown in:

- The different processing times for permits as requested by employers versus workers.
  - In the past decade, Canada has issued Expedited and Accelerated Labour Market Opinion/hire temporary foreign workers in 20 business days (HRSDC et al., 2012).
  - Meanwhile, processing times for TFWs trying to change employers have been described as taking "months" (Tilson, 2009: 24) and put workers at risk of deportation.
- Gaps in regulations that disadvantage migrant workers
  - McLaughlin and Hennebery (2013) found migrant workers who suffered health problems while in Canada were often unable to access workers compensation and were deported for getting injured on the job.
  - Nakache (2013) found that migrant workers did not qualify for EI because of their short contracts and their employer-specific work permits prevented them from being "available for work" (79).
- Unfair complaint process
  - If a migrant worker complains about their employer and their employer is found to be at fault, the migrant worker's visa becomes void and they have to apply for a new one. The long processing time usually means workers are forced to return home.
- Exploiting Canada's Place in the World System
  - By targeting lower-income countries, the TFWP utilizes Canada's position in the world system to extract low-cost, obedient labour. This macro-control mechanism allows Canada access to a disciplined labour force without having to allow these workers rights of Canadian citizenship that process applications for employers to.

## Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada

Population of Permanent Residents and Temporary Foreign Workers vs Unemployment Rate in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1964 to 2017



Low-wage temporary foreign workers are hired primarily in the following industries:

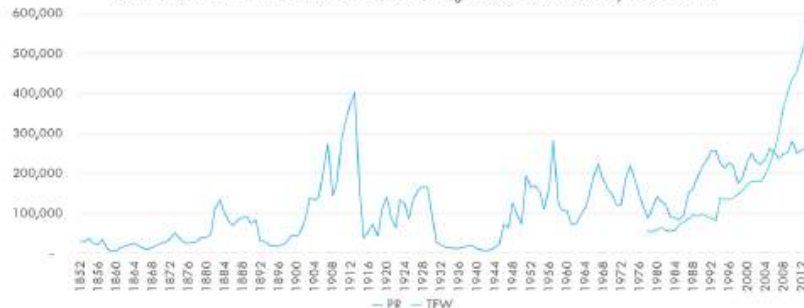
- Agriculture
- Live-in care work
- Meat and seafood processing
- Low-wage service sector work

These workers generally come from low-income countries and arrive in Canada indebted to recruitment agencies.

High-wage temporary foreign workers generally work for multinational corporations, are highly skilled and operate senior management or senior professional positions. These workers are highly mobile and from high-income countries.

Many international students transition to work visas after their studies. These workers are often targeted for permanent residence by provincial immigration programs.

Annual Flows of Permanent Residents and Foreign Workers in Canada, 1852-2015



## Policy of Employer Control

In the TFWP employers have considerable control over their workers, which makes these migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation.

This includes:

- Control over where workers live, often in remote areas and transporting them to and from work.
  - Until 2014, live-in caregivers, generally women, were required to live in the same residence as their employer, thus eliminating the barrier between private and public life (Elgersma, 2014).
- Control over which workers are granted permanent residence, and access to citizenship.
  - High-wage workers may apply for PR immediately but LICs must work 3,900 hours (about two years) before they are eligible to apply
  - A regulation of the SAWP requires workers to prove that they have dependents to qualify to ensure that they will return home
- Control over how long they can stay in Canada
  - Basak and Belanger (2016) found that migrant workers in the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) had been deported for getting sick, refusing unsafe work or raising complaints.
  - Fear of deportation forces workers to agree to employer requests outside the work contract (such as lower wages, working overtime, working in unsafe conditions) as their stay in Canada depends on satisfying their employer (Siemiatycki, 2010).
- Control over public service delivery
  - Employers must register their workers with provincial health insurance
- Control over access to information about their rights
  - Employers are responsible for education workers on their rights (Foster et al., 2015). Byl (2010) found that most migrant workers who were eligible for EI did not apply because they were unaware of the program.

These policies allow employers to monitor their employees and socially isolates workers from their community.

## Social Isolation As A Control Mechanism

Social isolation is a controlling mechanism that deters migrant workers from learning about and advocating for their rights

- The TFWP is constructed to make migrant workers socially isolated from their community. This is done by
  - Hiring racialized workers that are visibly different from the community
  - Housing them in rural areas with poor public transit
  - High turnover of temporary migrants prevents the creation of a social network within the workplace and can create more individualized relations between labour and management
- Hiring workers with weak official language skills
- By nature of being "temporary" the TFWP prevents social cohesion (Foster and Taylor, 2015). It discourages migrant workers from feeling a sense of belonging in their community and creates conflict by differentiating between citizens and non-citizens





# Accessing Child Health Services & Social Supports: Experiences of International Graduate Student Parents in Newfoundland & Labrador (NL)

Abdullah Omar Saif & Dr. Martha Traverso-Yepez (Supervisor)  
Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN)

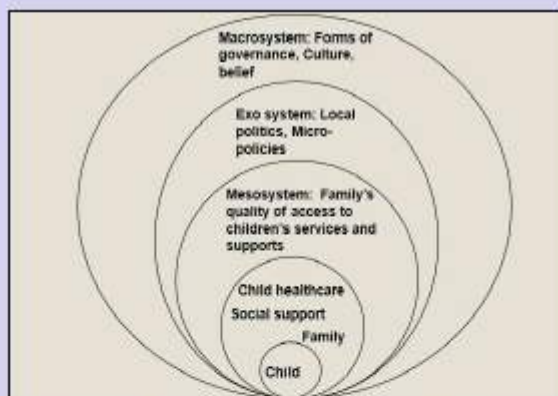
## BACKGROUND

- 119% growth of international students in Canada between 2010-17. Recognition that they contribute to the Canadian economy and help to create new jobs.
- Currently, more than 1400 international graduate students are studying at MUN, and many of them have families with children.
- Not much information about their experiences regarding access to child medical care and other social support services.
- Accessing help and supports can be very challenging for a non-native population like the international students with children.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To identify the barriers to and facilitators for accessing child health services and social supports among the international graduate student parents in NL.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

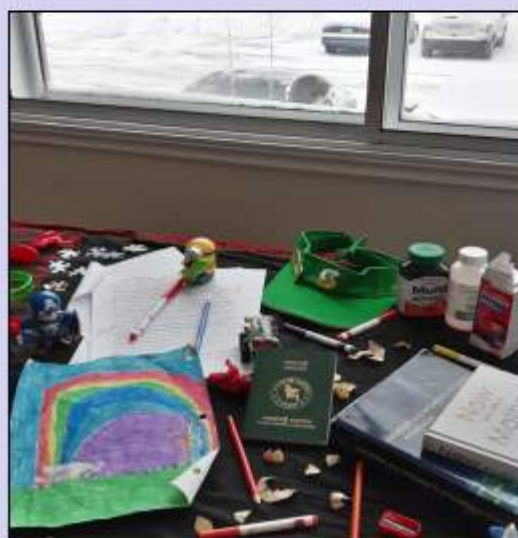


*Influences to access using an ecological approach (adapted from Bronfenbrenner, 1979)*

## METHODOLOGY

- Qualitative study
- In-depth interviews using semi structured questions, inquiring different dimensions of access.
- Inclusion criteria: International graduate student with children, living with their families for at least one year in NL.
- Recruitment through advertisement
- Data analysis: Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA).
- Present status of the research: Ongoing

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WITH CHILDREN NEED MORE SUPPORT



*Unique life challenges of an international graduate student parent (Photo: Courtesy of a participant)*

## BARRIERS & FACILITATORS

Facilitators	Barriers
Welcoming & caring health professionals and social support providers (when available)	Lack of social interaction with other children
Peer support in parenting; Welcoming health professionals; Living near the campus	Wait time
Adequate resource allocation in medical & childcare facilities	Lack of programs targeting children; Expensive health insurance; High cost of childcare
Culturally competent health and social service providers; Canadian spirit of inclusiveness	Feeling of 'otherness' among foreign student parents

## IMPLICATIONS

- ✓ A broader understanding of newcomers' access to child healthcare & social supports in NL.
- ✓ Identifying areas for improvement.



## Introduction

Majority of North American adults who meet criteria for mental illness during the course of their lifetime are parents.<sup>1,2</sup>

Maternal mental health illness impacts the family above and beyond the impact of paternal mental health illness on the family.<sup>3</sup>

Maternal mental health in Canada:<sup>4</sup>

- Depression: ~20%
- Anxiety: 24%
- Psychosis: 0.1- 0.2%

The availability of healthcare services for mothers within developed countries is impacted by:

- Location: rural vs urban.<sup>5,6</sup>
- SES of area.<sup>5,7</sup>

## Objectives

Explorative provincial cross-sectional study aiming to:

1. Capture the experience of mothers coping with the broad spectrum of mental health in Newfoundland and Labrador
2. Examine maternal healthcare service utilization and needs in NL
3. Develop an understanding of the variables that impact mothers' utilization of healthcare services for both themselves and their children

## Methods

Women with at least one biological, adopted, and/or step child completed an online survey

**Measures included:** A socio-demographic questionnaire, the Outcome Questionnaire- 45 (OQ-45), and Parental Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC).

### Analyses

**Correlation tests** were used to assess the relationship between mental health and use of healthcare services

**Chi Square tests** compared access and need for services between mothers with and without clinically significant psychological distress

### Participants

N = 1082

95 % Caucasian

94.9% Heterosexual

75.5% Urban

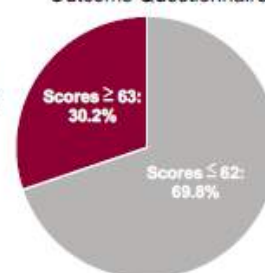
Mean age = 34.66 (8.06)

81.4% Married or cohabiting

88.4% Biological children only

24.5% Rural

Outcome Questionnaire



## Results

Correlation			
Variables	N	R	P
Overall OQ score & Total number of children services accessed	1009	.130	<.001
OQ scores > 63 & Total number of children services accessed	292	.129	<.05
Overall OQ score & Total number of adult services accessed	1003	.280	<.001
OQ scores < 63 & Total number of adult services accessed	698	.166	<.001

Chi Square (Child = $\chi^2(10) = 18.99, p < .050$ ; Adult = $\chi^2(9) = 67.367, p < .001$ )		
Number of services accessed	Comparison	Effect Size
None of the services listed	OQ < 63: OQ > 63	CS = 1.60 AS = 2.15
1 service	OQ < 63: OQ > 63	CS = 1.480
3 services	OQ > 63: OQ < 63	AS = 1.5
4 services	OQ > 63: OQ < 63	AS = 5.5
7 services	OQ > 63: OQ < 63	CS = 1.76
8 services	OQ > 63: OQ < 63	CS = 4.188

## Results

### Service Use

- Services most mothers reported using for their children:
  - General practitioner (84.2%)
  - Dental services (56.2%)
  - Hospital emergency ward (45.8%)
- Services most mothers reported needing and not having access to
  - Youth health and wellbeing information (38.5%)
  - Other psychiatric/behavioural services (27.3%)
  - Other medical specialist (26.2%)
- Services most mothers reported using for themselves:
  - Parenting info from phone/internet (18%)
  - Other counselling services (16.1%)
  - Parenting education course (10%)
- Services most mothers reported needing and not having access to
  - Adult mental health services (35.3%)
  - Other counselling services (28.7%)
  - Relationship counselling (21.3%)

## Next Steps

- Consider current availability of services in rural and urban NL
- Examine population characteristics in relation to service access
- Examine gender induced barriers to access to healthcare

### References

1. Hinder, Siebel, Nicholson, Henry, & Katz-Leavy. (2006). A survey of programs for parents with mental illness and their families: Identifying common elements to build the evidence base. *The Journal of behavioral health services & research*, 33(1), 21-38
2. Nicholson, Albert, Genshenson, Williams, & Siebel. (2009). Family options for parents with mental illnesses: A developmental, mixed methods pilot study. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 33(2), 106
3. Kahn, Brandt, & Whitaker. (2004). Combined effect of mothers' and fathers' mental health symptoms on children's behavioral and emotional well-being. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 158(9), 721-729
4. Bruce, Beland, & Bowen. (2012). Mother First: developing a maternal mental health strategy in Saskatchewan. *Healthcare Policy*, 8(2), 46
5. Alderdice, & Newham. (2016). Global maternal mental health: Where you live matters. *J. of reprod. & infant psych.*, 34(1), 1-2.
6. Skinner, & Sifton. (2007). Rural/urban differences in barriers to and burden of care for children with special health care needs. *The Journal of Rural Health*, 23(2), 150-157.
7. Orrego-Aguayo, R. E., et al., (2016). Depression treatment delivered at the point-of-care: A qualitative assessment of the views of low-income US mothers. *J. of reprod. and infant psych.*, 34(1), 35-48.





## Appendix D: List of Registrants to the Forum

[Cecilia Abuque](#) (Philippine Newfoundland Women's Organization Inc.)

[Abir Zin Alabdin](#)

[Nourin Ali](#) (Memorial University)

[Kara Arnold](#) (Memorial University)

[Ariel Arro](#) (Organization of Filipinos and Canadians in Newfoundland and Labrador)

[Maria Ana Arro](#) (Organization of Filipinos and Canadians in Newfoundland and Labrador)

[Shannon Bedford](#) (Memorial University)

[Peggy Blake](#) (Gander Military Family Resource Centre)

[Bukola Boluwade](#) (New Dimensions Child Care)

[Julie Brocklehurst](#)

[Lisa Brushett](#) (Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador)

[Madeline Bury](#) (Memorial University)

[Cheri Butt](#) (Women in Resource Development)

[Xin Chen](#) (Memorial University)

[Grace Chisholm](#) (Memorial University)

[Sadia Chowdhury](#) (Memorial University)

[Rochelle Côté](#) (Memorial University)

[Emma Duke](#) (Public Legal Information Association)

[Kim Elms](#) (Military Family Resource Centre/ Transition Centre)

[Tony Fang](#) (Memorial University)

[Yan Fu](#) (Memorial University)

[Diane Fulford](#) (St. John's Military Family Resource Centre)

[Bojan Furst](#) (Harris Centre, Memorial

University)

[Sulaimon Giwa](#) (School of Social Work, Memorial University)

[Rob Greenwood](#) (Memorial University)

[Brenda Grzetic](#) (St. John's Status of Women Council)

[Marilyn Guay Racicot](#) (Le Gaboteur)

[Suzy Haghighi](#) (Association for New Canadians)

[Sharon Halfyard](#) (Memorial University)

[Verlé Harrop](#) (NCCIE)

[Joan Harvey](#) (Goose Bay Military Family Resource Centre)

[Kathy Hawkins](#) (InclusionNL: Employer Support Services, Empower: The Disability Resource Centre)

[Denise Hillier](#) (Stella's Circle)

[Vanessa Horlick](#) (First Light)

[Dana Howse](#) (Memorial University)

[Alison Keats](#) (Goose Bay Military Family Resource Centre)

[Melodie Kelly](#) (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador)

[Greg Lagacé](#) (Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services)

[Shelley Langford](#) (The Tree House Family Resource Center)

[Lynda Manser](#) (Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services)

[Heather McDowell](#) (Goose Bay Military Family Resource Centre)

[Holly Moores](#) (Goose Bay Military Family Resource Centre)

[Celestine Muli](#) (Memorial University)

[Delores V. Mullings](#) (Memorial University)

[Kerry Murray](#) (NL Federation of Labour)

[Kyekue Mweemba](#) (YWCA St. John's)  
[Kerri Neil](#) (Memorial University)  
[Barbara Neis](#) (Memorial University)  
[Jenne Nolan](#) (St. John's Status of Women's Centre)  
[Susan Onalik](#)  
[Hazel Ouana Alpuerto](#) (Philippine Honorary Consulate)  
[Jessie Peace](#) (Memorial University)  
[Camellia Penney](#) (Memorial University)  
[Riley Pike](#) (Memorial University)  
[Melissa Ralph](#) (NL Families Separated By Work Facebook Group)  
[Pragadeesh Ravichandra](#) (Memorial University)  
[Emma Reelis](#) (First Light)  
[Rose Ricciardelli](#) (Memorial University)  
[Abdullah Saif](#) (Memorial University)  
[Emily Saunders](#)  
[Chris Sheppard](#) (First Light)  
[Mary Shortall](#) (NL Federation of Labour)  
[Brad Squires](#) (Royal Canadian Mounted Police)  
[Dorothy Vaandering](#) (Memorial University)  
[Sharon Warren](#) (Royal Newfoundland Constabulary)  
[Gail Wideman](#) (Memorial University)  
[Jun Zhang](#) (Memorial University)  
[Qi Zhang](#) (Memorial University)  
[Zhen Zhu](#) (Memorial University)



#FAM2019  
@VanierInstitute  
[www.familiesincanada.ca](http://www.familiesincanada.ca)