



On November 7th, 2013 the [Migrant Mothers Project](#) hosted “Our Collective Strength”, a community event to raise consciousness on the intersections of violence against women, precarious immigration status and human rights. This event was generously sponsored by the Women & Gender Studies Institute Community Knowledge Alliance initiative and took place in the William Doo Auditorium and atrium at the University of Toronto. Over 70 people attended to network with student and community groups during the community fair, enjoy food prepared by Conscious Kosher Catering, and bear witness to the digital stories, poetry, and dance performance created by women living with precarious status in Canada and their allies.



Figure 1: Dancer Heryka performs a dance based on the story of a woman with precarious immigration status



Figure 2: Karin Baqi from Solidarity City and SALCO presents the history of precarious immigration status in Canada

“Our Collective Strength” represented the commitment of a group of academics, community service providers, and immigrant women who are working to create spaces for collective consciousness-raising. This event was part of the Migrant Mothers Project (MMP), a participatory action research project led by Rupaleem Bhuyan in the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work in partnership with a network of community organizations, legal advocates and activists who are advocating for the rights of women who live in Canada with precarious migratory status. The MMP is invested in mobilizing research and community knowledge to inform public debate, raise awareness about changes in immigration policy that pose risks to immigrant women, and foster creative strategies for policy and social justice advocacy.

While the MMP (which is largely a research project) has been conducting research (interviews and focus groups) and hosting community forums with service providers across Canada, “Our Collective Strength” was unique opportunity for us to feature the knowledge and stories of women living with precarious status shared on their own terms. Too often, academic and community based research struggles to enact

meaningful forms of community engagement with those who are marginalized from the process of academic knowledge production.

We are grateful to the student and community groups who took part in the community fair including: Imagine Clinic, Students Ending Rape and Sexual Assault, Toronto Rape Crisis Centre/Multicultural Women Against Rape, Solidarity City Network, and student projects from the WGS course—*Feminist Consciousness and Community Organizations across North America*.

We are also grateful for the support from Women & Gender Studies Institute, and their commitment to Community Knowledge Mobilization, which enabled the MMP to bring to life our years of building relationships of trust and creating space for developing our collective consciousness.

Response from “Our Collective Strength”

What a beautiful and inspiring event tonight! The women were absolutely extraordinary and their stories were both honored and celebrated in unique ways - the poetry, the films, the dance it was all so moving.



Figure 3: “Our Collective Strength” volunteers, members of the Solidarity City Network, and MMP Staff.

Visit us at www.migrantmothersproject.com to find out more about the project.