



NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF RACIALIZED, REFUGEE AND IM/MIGRANT WOMEN

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE

PROJECT SUMMARY

The National Alliance of Racialized, Refugee, and Im/migrant Women (NARRIW) is a project initiated by OCASI – Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. Its objectives are to explore the need and feasibility of forming a national alliance of racialized, refugee, and im/migrant cis and trans women and nonbinary people, and to support the development of collective community power among grassroots community organizations across the country.

By collaborating on alliance-building activities, participating community members will have the opportunity to create a space to convene and organize around shared priorities, build connections and share knowledge, and reinforce community-led efforts for systemic change.

This project is funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE).

Key Activities: The project's objectives will be achieved through the following activities:

- Outreach to community leaders and organizations across Canada in English and/or French;
- Establishing an advisory committee (core group of members);
- Carrying out an environmental scan to assess and document the need and feasibility of forming a national alliance;
- Organizing virtual roundtables in 4 different regions and 1 national roundtable;
- Creating a project charter founded on anti-racist anti-oppressive practices, decolonial and intersectional feminist frameworks;
- Evaluation activities undertaken by an external evaluator.

Timeline: February 8th 2021 – August 7th 2023 (Note that project began on June 14th, 2021)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The purpose of the project Advisory Committee (AC) is to provide guidance and support to the Project Coordinator in assessing the need and feasibility of forming a national alliance. The AC established as part of this project is considered as an initial advisory body, which will evolve as the formal structure of the NARRIW is established.

AC members will play a critical role in the direction and decision-making process of the National Alliance project and use their knowledge, experiences and expertise to:

- Advise and assist with the strategic development and advancement of the project objectives;

- Collaborate and participate in the implementation of project activities and actions, such as the regional and national roundtables;
- Identify and/or share information and opportunities to foster collaboration and exchange among members.

Composition & Selection Process

The AC is composed of 12 members who are representative of the different communities across the country that the project seeks to engage and are affiliated with a community organization/group. One advisory committee seat is reserved for an OCASI staff person, other than the Project Coordinator.

Community members interested in joining the AC can nominate themselves by submitting an application. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis while there are seats available on the advisory and will be reviewed by the Project Coordinator and other AC members as those applications are received and accepted. Selections will be based on regional representation and other experiences or qualities deemed relevant to the composition of the advisory.

Members agree to participate on a voluntary basis for at least one 12-month term, with the possibility of renewal.

Meetings

The AC will commit to a minimum of 6 virtual meetings per year. Special meetings may be called for the planning and realization of specific project activities or actions. The Alliance Project Coordinator will organize the schedule of meetings, provide the virtual meeting platform, and chair the meetings. Meetings will be bilingual (French and English) to facilitate participation from both English-speaking and French-Speaking AC members. Documents will be accessible in both official languages and provided to participants in a timely manner.

Guidelines for Participation:

To fulfill their role, AC members are expected to attend and actively participate in committee meetings, and maintain correspondence with the Project Coordinator and other AC members as needed. Members who must miss a regularly scheduled meeting are asked to notify the members in advance. If they cannot personally attend, members have the option of sending a colleague to attend in their place with notice to the Coordinator.

In addition to scheduled meetings, AC members should expect to spend 2-3 hours per month or a reasonable amount of time per activity to carry out their responsibilities

Decision-making Processes and Accountability:

AC members will work collaboratively to accomplish the committee's mandate. When possible, decisions will be made by consensus. When voting is necessary, a majority vote will suffice. Quorum is reached at 7 members.

Members demonstrate accountability by attending and preparing for meetings, making timely decisions so as not to hold up project progress, and by acting respectfully and openly towards other AC members, community members, and the Project Coordinator.

Members who miss three meetings consecutively in a year without notice will be considered as resigned and a new member will be selected to take their place.

Conflict of Interests:

All members of the Advisory Committee are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The National Alliance of Racialized, Refugee, and Im/migrant Women project is founded on Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppressive practices, and intersectional feminist and decolonial/anti-colonial frameworks. These principles and practices are intended to inform and shape the process, outcomes, and relationships developed during the course of the project. They can be defined as follows:

Anti-Racist and Anti-Oppressive (ARAO) practices work to challenge, prevent, eliminate, and change the values, structures, policies, programs, actions, and behaviours that perpetuate racism and oppression, and in particular Anti-Black racism in our society.

Intersectional feminism asserts that gender equity cannot be reached without understanding how the systems holding power in our society exclude and oppress certain women because of their multiple and intersecting identities. In practice, intersectional feminism requires challenging and resisting the systems, institutions, and cultural traditions that dismiss the experiences of women on the margins, such as indigenous, Black and racialized, disabled, im/migrant, transwomen and LGBTQ2+ identified people.

Decolonial and **anti-colonial** frameworks acknowledge the violence and genocide perpetrated under colonialism and settler-colonialism towards indigenous peoples in Canada and in the Global South. Decolonialization is the intentional process of working to oppose, challenge, and replace colonial oppression in its many shapes and forms in our society and relationships. Committing to decolonial practices means acting in concrete ways to resist colonial oppression in solidarity and support of indigenous communities.

PROJECT COORDINATION:

The primary role of the Project Coordinator is to advance the project's objectives through the organizing, planning, and implementation of its key activities under the guidance of the Advisory Committee and OCASI. It is the Coordinator's responsibility to complete the deliverables requested by WAGE, such as the Environmental Scan Report, Communications Strategy and Final Report. The Project Coordinator will also liaise, support, and facilitate communication among community members, the advisory committee, external evaluators, and other relevant parties.

OCASI's Role:

OCASI is playing an organizing and convening role in this project. OCASI recognizes the important work being done by frontline service providers, grassroots organizations, and other community-led movements across the country working on gender and racial equity, and im/migrant rights. OCASI aims to support the convergence of these groups towards the building of a national alliance/network, which would eventually be self-sustaining and self-articulating.

AMENDMENTS/ MODIFICATIONS

Amendments or modifications to these Terms of Reference may be proposed in writing and adopted by vote after review by the Advisory