



Economic Security for  
Women with Precarious  
Immigration Status:  
*Ensuring Labour Rights for All*

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# 3 inter-related projects

- ✦ 'Learning to be an Immigrant Worker'
  - ✦ Baltodano, Hanley, Jordan, Shragge, Singh, Steig
- ✦ Ongoing work on access to social rights for migrants with precarious status
  - ✦ Oxman-Martinez & Hanley
- ✦ Post-doctoral project on organising for the rights of undocumented migrants
  - ✦ Hanley

# Presentation Outline

- ✦ Research collaboration with the Immigrant Workers' Centre
- ✦ Context for Immigrant Work
- ✦ Defining Precarious Status
- ✦ Immigrant Women's Work Experiences
- ✦ Defending Labour Rights
- ✦ Policy Implications
- ✦ Organising Implications

# Immigrant Workers' Centre

- ✦ Origins

- ✦ General activities:

- Popular education
- Individual advocacy
- Collective advocacy
- Campaigns
- Research

- ✦ Research collaborations

# Context for Immigrant Women's Labour

Feminisation of migration	Feminisation of poverty
Over-representation in low-paid jobs and unemployment	Sending countries increasingly dependent on remittances
Reversal of trend of upward mobility	Increasing 'flexibility' of labour demand
Increasing ethnic and racial diversity	Cutbacks to social prgms supporting integration

# Defining 'Precarious Status'

- ✦ Responds to Canadian economic prerogatives
- ✦ Does not confer the permanent right to remain in Canada
- ✦ Imposes dependency on a 3rd party, usually employer or family member

# Precarious statuses of Immigration & Refugee Protection Act

## Majority women:

- ☀ Sponsored family members
- ☀ Dependent refugee claimants
- ☀ Dependent immigrant
- ☀ Live-in Caregiver Program
- ☀ Trafficked

## Other forms:

- ☀ Work visas
- ☀ Student visas
- ☀ Refugees (accepted or claimants)
- ☀ Undocumented (smuggled, visa expired, rejected refugee claim)

# *Precarious Immigration Status increases Women's Economic Insecurity!*

Majority of women enter Canada with such a status	Shapes eligibility for social benefits
Shapes coverage from labour protections	Fear of 'being a burden' on Canadian society
Fear of 3rd party intervening in status	Type of employment can block access
Difficult to unionise	Gendered experiences
Increased social isolation	Fear of losing employment





# Experiences in the Labour Market: Problems & Resistance

- ✦ Domestic work becoming human trafficking
- ✦ Gendered discrimination
- ✦ Age discrimination & shoddy unions
- ✦ Good unions & factories closing



# Defending the Labour Rights of Women with Precarious Status

- ✦ Limitations of Labour Standard and Health & Safety protections
- ✦ Limitations of Employment Insurance & Workers' Compensation
- ✦ Immigration Risks
- ✦ Employment Risks

# Policy Implications

- ✦ Revision of Labour Standards, Health and Safety Acts & their implementation
- ✦ Revision of eligibility for EI and workers' compensation
- ✦ Revision of immigration categories

# Organising Implications

- ✦ Popular education
- ✦ Individual advocacy
- ✦ Collective advocacy
- ✦ Policy campaigns
- ✦ Research