**Promoting Collective Action in Migrant Communities**

This participatory action research project explores collective civic actions organized by immigrant communities in the Greater Toronto Area to better understand (i) how and why immigrant communities organize; (ii) how collective civic actions impact immigrant and other communities; and (iii) what institutional factors enable or impede collective civic action among immigrant groups. Under the guidance of a community advisory committee, we designed case studies to investigate community organizing by the Tibetan community in Parkdale and by the South Asian Women’s Rights Organization (SAWRO) in Teasdale.

Between June and August 2019 we organized and facilitated focus groups with the Tibetan community and with South Asian women living in Teasdale and eleven interviews with key information who shared their perspectives on immigrant-led organizing in the GTA. We share our preliminary findings as knowledge exchange forum on November 2nd with leaders and community members from SAWRO and the Tibetan Community in Parkdale.

**What are the preliminary findings?**

In both communities, participants organized through pre-existing social networks. Most of the Tibetans came to Canada as refugees and maintain close ties through shared faith and links to the Tibetan diaspora who are exiled in India and Nepal. The “Free Tibet” Movement is the primary concern and shared sense of purpose which guides community efforts to retain Tibetan language and cultural knowledge, fosters a sense of Tibetan identity, and informs various activities to support freedom struggles in their home country. The South Asian women who organize with SAWRO, primarily entered Canada as economic immigrants. To address the isolation, poverty, and underemployment confronting South Asian immigrant women who often live in high rise apartment buildings in Teasdale, SAWRO goes door to door offering supports for obtaining decent work, child care, and access to education.

Both communities engage in a range of activities to build capacity within their communities to address individual and collective problems related to low-wages and precarious work, rising rents, increasing anti-immigrant sentiment, and intergenerational cultural dissonance. Both also organize actions to address economic insecurity including participation in the $15 and Fairness minimum wage campaign, the rent strike in Parkdale, and a strike at Ontario’s Food Terminal in 2017. In some cases, community members have lobbied their Members of Parliament to assist with family reunification, and to testify before Parliament about their experiences of economic and racial marginalization.

We are in the process of finalizing our analysis and will produce a visual report that highlights the transformative actions led by migrant communities in the Toronto Area.