



NOW I CAN BE MYSELF! **Community Report**

Exploratory Research Into the Experiences and
Needs of Survivors/ Those At-Risk of Forced
Marriage and Service Providers in the Greater
Toronto Area *[excerpts from the original report]*

Prepared by:

Jennifer Gordon, M.S.W
Research Consultant

Submitted to:

I Do! Project
Toronto, On



i do!
PROJECT

The I Do!

Project

The I Do! Project is based out of the Greater Toronto Area and Waterloo Region, Ontario. We aim to raise awareness about Forced Marriage in Canada through education, training, research and support. Through our education and training initiatives, we are able to provide valuable knowledge and support to service providers and informal supports regarding Forced Marriage. We work through a preventative lens with groups and individuals, who are at-risk to identify warning signs of Forced Marriage and provide a platform for survivors to share their stories, needs and provide feedback to strengthen our collective ability to respond to these situations. We also engage in research, such as this project, to better capture and understand the shared and unique experiences of survivors and those at-risk face and to work towards creating a stronger system of support in our communities around Forced Marriage.

Laidlaw
FOUNDATION



SUPPORTIVE
HOUSING OF WATERLOO

The

Research

In December 2015, the I Do! Project received funding from the Laidlaw Foundation to conduct research exploring the experiences and needs of survivors of forced marriage and those at-risk. Over the next year the research team conducted interviews and focus groups with 40 participants gathering information about their experience accessing services and support and exploring ways to improve our communal systems of support for this particularly vulnerable population of people. The following report focuses on the themes of awareness building, prevention and training as it pertains to forced marriage. A comprehensive report is available on our website, idoproject.ca.

Forced Marriage

Forced Marriage can occur for many reasons, however it does not normally arise through a single act, but rather through a series of actions that are perpetrated over a prolonged timeframe (Anis et al., 2013). It frequently involves attempting to forcefully persuade an individual to marry another person by creating a form of psychological distress through guilt or the use of stigma (Anis et al., 2013)*.

*Anis, M., Konanur, S., & Mattoo, D. (2013). Who-If- When To Marry: The Incidence of Forced Marriage in Ontario. South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario: Toronto.

Research

Methodology

To complete this research a team of experienced community-based researchers was assembled. In addition, two advisory committees, a survivor's committee and a service provider committee, were developed to help inform the research and ongoing mentorship was provided by Dr. Ginette Lafrenière from the Wilfrid Laurier Faculty of Social Work. Dr. Lafrenière helped guide ethical research practice and worked with the research team to ensure their practices, procedures and methodology was of the utmost quality. This research was put through ethics review, through the Community Research Ethics Office in Waterloo, Ontario. Ethics approval was granted in August 2016. In addition, research team members completed TCPS2 training and received their certification in research ethics.

Participants were recruited using primarily a snowball sampling methodology and through referrals from our Survivor's Group and social service providers. Participants were primarily located in the GTA (several were located in Waterloo Region), or were currently living elsewhere but had accessed services in the GTA. A total of 40 participants contributed to this research:



- Individual interviews with survivors (21 participants);
- Individual interviews with service providers (2 participants).



- Focus group with at-risk youth (8 participants);
- Two focus groups for service providers (9 participants).

Due to the sensitivity and vulnerability of the research participants, further demographics were not collected through this research.

Research

Findings

THE EXPERIENCE OF FORCED MARRIAGE

Throughout this research, while each survivors experience was unique there were commonalities in how they described their experience of forced marriage and how that informed their service and support needs. Among the more talked about topics were: naming their experience, gender roles, feelings of isolation, and embracing their independence.

Naming Their Experience

Being able to understand their situation and putting a name to what they were experiencing was something participants struggled with. For many of the participants, whether they escaped a forced marriage 20 years ago or just months prior to participating in this research, it was clear that the term forced marriage is still a new concept and not having this terminology or being able to define and explain their experiences often led to confusion and misunderstanding and was a significant barrier to receiving help.

“It was just the isolation and without anyone to really talk to about this problem that I was having, and **I didn't even have a vocabulary to describe what I was going through.**” - Participant

“... if it had not been for the I Do! Project, I would have never recovered from this situation. Because **I would have no had access to the educational materials, to help me see what was really going on** and what the real social problems were. And that was a big part of my struggle. I did not know how to dig myself out of this issue.” - Participant

Gender Roles

It is important to note that many of the participants in this research identified as female and grew up in a value system that embraced traditional gender roles and had clear rules and expectations of women. Regardless of their exit from the forced marriage these values still played a role in their everyday lives and how they perceive themselves and how they felt others perceive them.

“I didn't go along with it. **I rebelled.** That's the biggest sin. To be a woman and try to have control over your own life.” - Participant

While a lot of forced marriage survivors who speak out identify as female, it is important to recognize that male identified people also experience this and that they too may be forced into a marriage. One participant talked about the need to expand beyond the women-centric narrative in forced marriage to be more inclusive to men who experience it as well:

“And to add onto the girls and boys thing, I feel like we shouldn’t do that because it kinda creates a barrier, like a emotional barrier plus a physical... but mostly an emotional barrier, because it creates like ‘Oh that’s a girl thing. This is a guy thing.’ Yeah, like and when we add – this is everybody’s thing.” - Participant

Isolation

Isolation was a shared experience among participants. In many cases, participants were left with very few supports in their lives, a large sense of guilt and shame for their decision to leave their forced marriage and finding peers to relate to that shared similar experiences was difficult. Sometimes this isolation can come from friends and family being in a different country, sometimes it was due to excommunication and sometimes it was just the overwhelming aspect of the situation causing participants to shut down and recluse for their own protection. Broken relationships were another reality for participants, that many of the relationships they had prior to their experience of forced marriage were severed due to politics around the forced marriage or the controlling nature of their partners.

With this, relationships with family were often the most complicated, as they were often the ones providing the most pressure around the forced marriage. This pressure was also linked to the greater communities expectations of their parents to marry their child off. Participants talked about parents being manipulative, pressuring and sometimes threatening and often by leaving or escaping their forced marriage this meant that they also had to sever ties with their family all together.

“I haven’t really talked to any of my relatives since then. They look down on me now because I didn’t do what the family told me to. They’re angry and they say they don’t want anything to do with me because I’m nothing to them now. I don’t exist anymore as far as they’re concerned.” - Participant

Of course there is this **feeling of not having succeeded** at something they had set out for me. The other is that my life is very different and it is hard for them to actually understand how it is different.” - Participant

“I wasn’t communicating with any family or friends because of the relationship I was in.” - Participant



“Coming back from that experience, despite having ups and downs, I stand up more strongly about my opinion. And I’m able to, sometimes when **I feel something isn’t right, I’ll dispute it** and I will stand my ground.” - Participant

“Even at the stage at that point where I am thinking you know, ‘what is going to help me out of this?’ I guess **lacking a direction because I have so many problems all at the same time** and my life has been totally upheaved for me. Every aspect of my life was rearranged by other people.” - Participant

“Mmm, probably in my confidence. That, maybe that, **I believe in myself** that I can do certain things. Yeah! That! Believing in myself!” - Participant

Embracing Independence

Participants shared about learning new skills and having to make decisions about their life as being something novel, but also scary for some. However, one of the most celebrated outcomes of escaping forced marriage for participants was being independent and in control of their own lives. The intensity of embracing and exercising their independence most definitely was experienced on a continuum and specific to each participant, most of the participants talked about the importance of key moments in their lives where they were able to, often for the first time, make their own decisions about their life with confidence.

SUPPORT NEEDS POST FM

Participants talked about a wide diversity of needs post their experience with forced marriage. Typically these needs focused on physical needs as well as emotional, social and spiritual. One participant summed this up:

Physical Needs

When it came to physical needs, these included things like housing, food, language support, income, ID and Status. Housing was a focus and a major barrier for participants and highlighted a divide between housing and shelter policies and the needs of survivors due to the complexity of their situations. Often participants had complex needs and for the first time in their lives were supporting themselves independently. This coupled with strains and struggles in accessing income, understanding the rental market and getting the proper

IDs often meant that participants needed extended shelter stays, when possible, and if not possible were required to hop from shelter to shelter staying for as long as they were permitted [for more information regarding shelter and housing please refer to our housing and shelter report].

Income support, Ontario Works and finding employment was an area that most participants felt they needed much assistance with. Many participants talked about their struggle to survive on an OW stipend and as such the importance of gaining employment. For some, in gaining employment they faced significant barriers around language, childcare, housing and identification. For others, the struggle came from having never been employed before or they were re-entering the workforce after a period of time away.

Identification and status were common barriers to accessing services, gaining employment and housing and, as such, in meeting their physical needs. Several participants also talked about their need to get status in Canada, particularly in the context of being able to get a job, medical help, enroll in further schooling, find housing and in some cases to be eligible for social service support.



“Uhh...basically everything. All of my physical needs such as housing, food and clothing. **Anything that I needed to look after my physical needs I needed support with.** I also needed emotional, psychological and spiritual support. Along with, um, financial support as well.”
- Participant

“I think it was like, three or four months only and they allowed me to stay there longer because I had no means of staying anywhere yet. I didn’t have a job. I didn’t have any IDs. Just because it was taking a while for all of them to be processed, so **they let me stay there at least six or seven months longer** than they allowed anyone else to stay.” - Participant

“I don’t have anything. I don’t have a status. I don’t have anything. So I need first to form those things. First I need to get my status here first, because without that, I was suffering a lot. I can’t work. I can’t do stuff. If I want to study, I can’t study because for every single thing they’re asking for the status, for driving, for every single thing, **wherever you go they’re asking for the status.** Even for medical health, like I had so many things going on with my body and I have to pay. It’s so important to me, so if I’m gonna get that, then I can start my life again,”
- Participant

“It’s just ... somebody
to talk to that if I am doing the right thing,
somebody to support me emotionally,
somebody who had been through the same thing
or **understood what I have been through**
or just to listen to me.” - Participant

Emotional/Social Needs

Participants talked about their emotional/social needs centering around validation of their experience, mental health support, and peer/social support. With mental health support participants focused on their needs to re-establishing and maintain their new lives after their experience of forced marriage. This was particularly an area of need as shelter services often had built in counselling supports, but once they were living independently these services were felt to be harder to obtain (geographically, financially and with wait lists). When it came to peer/social supports, participants talked about the positive impact that peers with shared experiences had on their journey towards recovering from forced marriage. They felt that these relationships validated their experience, were a great way to get first hand advice and that peers often also acted as personal advocates for participants.

When talking about physical, emotional and social support, participants talked about the need for more longer term support, highlighting their journey towards recovering being a process that can affect multiple generations.

“I think the first thing that I needed was probably shelter, and **just to be validated** that what was happening was disturbing.” - Participant

“Me and like my close friend our parents, or our moms to be specific, had a forced marriage so we know that, even though it’s been a lot of years afterward, **it still affects the kids and it affects the mom**, like the woman in the marriage if the woman is forced to do it. And it’s really funny because most people, you think of forced marriage as just happening in the moment, **but even after 20 years or 40 years it could still really affect people.**” - Participant

UNDERSTANDING THE CURRENT SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

Participants were asked about formal and informal support they received post their experience with forced marriage.

Formal Supports

Formal supports were defined as supports from organizations/agencies with funding and mandates to provide support. It became quickly evident while conducting this research that a variety of different formal services were used based on each participants needs and situation, all of which fit into the larger categories of: Emergency shelter, counselling and support, legal services, helpline and online resources and immigration, settlement and newcomer support services [for the complete list of services mentioned please refer to our comprehensive report]. For those whose experience of forced marriage was under 4 years ago, emergency supports were primarily accessed and for those whose experience was more than four years ago, counselling and long term supports were more mentioned. Elements that informed what formal services participants used were their location, their unique needs, formal referrals, word of mouth and in some cases a lack of other options. Participant's experience of these services varied based on the agencies approach, fit, understanding of the issue of forced marriage, and responsiveness.

“Hmm. Like what COSTI did for me. Setting up my life. I don't know anything around here. These guys literally explained stuff to us, they gave us money, they opened up bank accounts for us, they took us to the place for health cards. **They literally did all the settling that we were supposed to do for us.** So, without them I don't think I would really get my life together.” - Participant

“I think my real informal supports came in once I had reached the shelter and **I had found I made friends.** I was able to speak with counsellors, but more often it would be my roommates.”

- Participant

“Did I receive support from any formal agencies? Um, no... Because I wasn't really I guess you can say comfortable like speaking about my situation. **I was more comfortable with the survivors group and the I Do! Project** more so then... like I didn't really speak out to anybody else no.” - Participant

Informal Supports

Informal supports were defined as being part of the participants' social network. Participants were asked what sort of informal supports they utilized, which included: Friends, personal advocates, peers, faith leaders and family members. Unlike formal, informal supports appeared to be very specific to the participant. For example, while some had support from family members, others had been excommunicated from all their family or had not spoken to them in some time. Where some felt they were able to access their cultural community, others felt that word would get back to their family or abuser and they would not be safe. One important factor in any support accessed was that the support had to be removed from the survivor's family/situation and typically be outside of their cultural/religious group.

Unanimously, each participant's journey in searching for and receiving support was unique, had points of difficulty and points of breakthrough, and was emotionally driven.

EXPERIENCE OF SERVICES

It is important to understand where the strengths and weaknesses are in terms of support, particularly with reflection to the people and policies that animate this system. Participants talked about the current system of support in both a positive and negative lens, often experiencing both along their

journey. For participants not native to Canada, one of the largest barriers to accessing service was the fact that they were trying to understand and adapt to a whole new society, where they often experienced language barriers, while also attempting to access the support they need.

“Umm, the challenges? (Sigh) Basically, everything, being able to make sense of a totally different society that I was participating in, because, the society that I grew up in has different rules and has different social systems and it doesn't resemble in any way the world that I was cast into.” - Participant

“She didn't really have much experience when it comes to honoured violence. I don't think she knew how to handle it. So I think that's the reason why **my case was transferred to another person,** who is actually from my community, who is actually my father's friend, and they said that the reason why they had to move my case is because they felt that because she's a white woman it wouldn't work well with the community, and also she might not understand...” - Participant

“Same, all the same. **They were dismissive.** Not really believing me. If I didn't have the recording I wouldn't get any help. No one believes me when I say what happened to me.” - Participant

“I had a bit of an emotional release once I realized that the person at the other end of the line actually **did have a very good grasp of the social issue** that I was encountering of forced marriage.” - Participant



“I think I went through about three different counsellors before I found the right one... she actually went out and did her own research, and she read about it online to understand and how to provide me the counsel that would help me through my journey. But **it took three counsellors**. It was the third one, you know what I mean, so we’re still kind of behind the times still. We’ve come a long way but we still have a ways to go.” - *Participant*

Attitudinal and Knowledge Barriers

There are still strong perceptions among service providers and the larger community that forced marriage is a cultural or religious issue and not one native to Canada. This sort of rhetoric came into the everyday experiences of participants, such as with one participant when they were transferred workers, based on a decision to please the participants' cultural community as opposed to ensuring the participants safety and support:

The misconceived opinion that forced marriage is not an experience in Canada caused a number of participants to talk about feeling/being dismissed

by service providers in the community. This was, in part, contributed to a lack of understanding of and knowledge about forced marriage as well as disbelief that it is an issue happening in Canada.

Training for service professionals was evidently a need highlighted by participants across services but for those participants who had experienced support from someone who understood or sought to understand forced marriage the experience was uplifting and life changing.

Shelter & Housing

When it came to shelter and housing participants felt that shelters opened up access to supports in an easier and organized way. They shared about struggles in finding and moving into their own housing, but also the compassion expressed by shelters who let them stay longer than the mandated days. They also struggled with policies and processes around priority housing (for some of the survivors they were not eligible for the service due to their abuse happening out of the country), lacking ID, needing parental signatures, etc. Most participants struggled with this process in some way. For participants who had used shelter services they felt that the built in support at shelters had a positive impact on them, in many of these areas of needs and they wished for a better continuum of care post-shelter as they felt supports were hard to gain and maintain on their own. This was also complicated by services being scattered across the GTA and some participants feeling great concern over “running into” their ex or family, who also live in the same city. This often informed survivor’s decisions to access or not access support.

“So in terms of formal support I do feel like I was supported to the maximum extent possible at the shelter. After leaving the shelter, **it was harder to access support like counselling and therapy services**. It is extremely expensive in the city and they have wait times... I, my personal choice was feminist counselling was not available like very easily, so those were some of the barriers I experienced in accessing support services after I left the shelter and that is something that is very ongoing.” - Participant

“I think it was like, three or four months only and **they allowed me to stay there longer** because I had no means of staying anywhere yet. I didn’t have a job. I didn’t have any IDs. Just because it was taking a while for all of them to be processed, so they let me stay there at least six or seven months longer than they allowed anyone else to stay.” - Participant

“When I talked to people at the shelter, I would tell them can I, like, get housing? They’re, like, most of the time **if the abuse took place outside of Canada it would kind of be hard** for you so.” - Participant

Policy & Procedural Challenges and Triumphs

Participants talked about the trickle down of policies and processes and how that affected them in their situation. Some of the most talked about policy and procedural issues related to housing, such as issues around priority housing and abuse happening outside of Canada. Participants also talked about the length of time to get IDs and how things like housing and employment were often contingent on those IDs, there were concerns over breaking sponsorship rules when one participant fled her husband who was also her sponsor and there were some issues around processes, like new IDs being sent to their old address, or needing parental signatures to get on priority housing lists. One of the positive policy shifts that participants’ talked about was the criminalization of forced marriage in Canada, for several participants this was a catalyst for going to the police to report their experience.

“I left before I had any of my documents, any of my IDs, and I left my husband. I think the **biggest challenge I faced was to get those IDs.**

All of those IDs came to his address. It's hard because nobody is going to allow you to change your address unless you can show them a Canadian ID. I had my passport, but they wouldn't take that. This happens to a lot of women even if they have been in Canada for a while or they may have grown up here, they often might not have IDs. So not having IDs is a common barrier that I've kind of faced in accessing services and that can be very challenging.” - Participant

Turning Points

Turning points were identified as moments in the participants lives when they received support, advice, or made an important connection that they felt set their journey towards rebuilding their lives in the right direction. Participants talked about caring staff and accessing specific services but they often referred to moments where they themselves finally understood that they had experienced a forced marriage or finally came into contact with someone who was familiar with forced marriage. These situations were far and few between for most participants but they were very impactful.



“Actually, one day I was riding on the bus, and I saw the ad for the I Do! Project... And uh, I was really, you know, having a terrible day – I was crying in public, on the bus, when I saw this. And I looked up at the advertisement and thought ‘**wow, that was me. This is my problem**’. I didn't even have the words to articulate what circumstance I was in and I reached out and I phoned the number that I saw on the bus and I got in contact with the I Do! Project.” - Participant

SERVICE PROVIDER PERSPECTIVE

Service providers focused their analysis on the current context of support and care in the community to three areas, the narrative around forced marriage, the current systems capacity to support survivors and how to move forward in building capacity through things like training and awareness building.

Narrative

Service providers talked about how forced marriage as a topic is talked about (or not talked about). It was felt that forced marriage should be part of the conversation when people talk about domestic violence and intimate partner violence but that there shouldn't be assumptions that the experience is the same and that differences should be reflected on.

Service providers also saw a sort of 'othering' nature to the narrative of forced marriage. There is still the strong ideology that forced marriage only happens to specific subsets of women, which is not the case. In thinking that forced marriage only happens in particular communities the greater picture of diversity of people forced marriage affects becomes lost. This ideology neglects to encompass the diversity of experiences and the role of intersectionality and gender-based violence and their relationship to one another.

“Their **core experiences are very similar**. So it's making the connections to the similarities and also talking about the way it manifests itself a little differently in each case. They're both important.”
- Participant

“I think the other piece is around **understanding gender-based violence and intersectionality** and their relationship to one another. I don't think we talk about that enough, there isn't space to talk about these issues and their relationship.”
- Participant

“We could have the systems and structures in place, however, because we narrate it by using and saying woman abuse or intimate partner violence we may not see the relationship or understand that intimate partner violence is often a product of a forced marriage so then **how do we then connect the dots?**”

- Participant

Current System Capacity

In reflecting on the current systems capacity, service providers emphasized barriers to good service, which was rooted in practices that fell short of supporting survivors, bureaucratic processes, and the struggle around whose issue forced marriage is to respond to.

The lack of structural or systemic changes combined with no clear stream of funding coming into the GTA specifically for forced marriage has resulted in service providers experiencing the same barriers to providing support as outlined by many of the survivors participating in this research. Service providers talked about lacking the financial support needed to truly cover all of the needs of survivors, particularly since many survivors were starting their lives over from scratch. This reality highlighted the pieced together and informal support system that has developed among champions and champion organizations in the community that have taken on this work to the best of their abilities. These champions focus on providing direct support but also advocating around forced marriage with decision makers and planning tables. Service providers were critical that this reliance on champions is not the best approach to enhancing our support system. This issue was magnified at a higher level with decision makers as there was trepidation in the community sector being the ones showing the most investment in supporting survivors versus the province and whether systemic change can truly happen if this remains the case. But as long as this is so, there will be only a small number of organizations that articulate their experience in this area, their processes will largely be informal and there will be a continued need for change at a policy level.

Related to support being centered among champions in the community there were clear areas of struggle within the current support system in relation to identifying if a forced marriage had occurred. This issue was felt to be a combination of confidence levels and our social services lacking intake procedures that reflect on the diverse experience of forced marriage. Furthermore, those service providers who struggled to identify if a situation was a forced marriage often also felt insecure about their abilities to support that person, which led them to searching out "community experts" to provide the support needed.

“Forced Marriage is still living in the spaces that are **largely controlled by the community sector, the non-profit sector,** versus decisions, like policy makers seeing it as something they need to incorporate in how they do the work.” - Participant

“I wasn’t proficient enough in it [forced marriage] so we just figured, **‘hey, maybe that’s how they live their cultural portions of their lives’**, but later on as I got more involved and heard other people talk I realized.” - Participant

“From my perspective, one of the things that I’ve seen, especially over the past two years as I’ve been bringing up the conversation more intentionally and the I Do! Project did workshops and stuff like that... people are seeing the language and whether they’re participating or engaging or not it’s sitting with them and I’m being contacted for conversations more frequently. But as soon as I know that drops down, I see that drop down as well. Which means it’s not sticking, **it’s not put in a place that has enough power for it to have a longer term impact** or is not residing with people in any deeply meaningful way.” - Participant

“I think that we’re willing to work with what we have to support women. **We don’t necessarily get funded for forced marriage, we don’t usually have anything extra put aside to be able to support these young women**, but I think that we work very hard to work with what we have to support her in the best way possible depending on her needs. Those are some of the strengths. And we have a lot of community partners who collaborate with us and support us as well when we have such cases.” - Participant

Building Community Capacity

Among service providers there was a definite commitment to enhancing the capacity of themselves individually, their agencies, the general public, and the overall system of support for survivors of forced marriage. Service providers shared a number of suggestions around making the system stronger and better, such as education and training around effectively supporting survivors as well as prevention, and around the uniqueness of forced marriage amongst other forms of gender-based violence. They felt there were ways to remove barriers, such as

working with OW/ODSP and Community Housing around enhanced needs given the complexities of forced marriage situations and ensuring language services are always available. Service providers also talked about strengthening intake processes in order to better screen for forced marriage and working with survivors to audit agency policies with the hopes to be able to make recommendations on non-invasive policy/process changes. Service providers felt that within this, there was also a need to better understand why services did not work for survivors or were not used and to better address known gaps in services.

“There’s no avenue to say ‘I didn’t use the service but this is how it should be changed so I can use this service’. So if you’re the person with the forced marriage and are turned away, you keep looking at what is next. **You’re never brought back into the conversation of why didn’t this work for you.**” - Participant

“I forgot to mention is so much of what could happen is already happening, it just needs to be re-tooled and **there’s so much opportunity in being able to consult or engage with survivors** to understand how small changes that may mean nothing to the organization or to the system could do for this group.” - Participant

“I think training enhanced some of my sensitivity and awareness to tackle any preconceived notions or maybe limitations I might have had to the scope of this issue and to whom it affects. **It can affect anybody of any background, ethno-cultural backgrounds and especially religious background.** Some of the peers who came to speak at the training raised significant awareness about that. And, yeah, there’s more I could go onto but I think it helped enhance my sensitivities” - Participant



Recommendations

Support for forced marriage is still a relatively 'new' concept amongst service providers in the GTA and as such there are many opportunities to continue to work towards a stronger and more responsive community. A number of recommendations have come out of this research:

- 1 Developing better systems**—Focus on taking inventory of what is currently being done and looking for ways to enhance the service as well as developing stronger and more universal intake processes that identify forced marriage more accurately.
- 2 Housing**—Focus on addressing barriers to priority housing, highlighting ways that shelters fill in gaps in services to advocate for the financial means to support these processes, developing more responsive housing, with mentorship provided by Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW), a housing agency who is committed and working within the Forced Marriage arena, and work on developing a continuum of supports for when housing is obtained.
- 3 Service Navigation**—This includes developing a deeper understanding of how to better organize and share where services are available and build from existing models in other countries as well as exploring the possibility of paid staff positions to help survivors navigate services and create efficient roads of support in the community.
- 4 Training/Awareness Building**—Focus on enhancing training processes and opportunities for service providers and those in positions of authority. Focus on educating teachers/ staff in schools from a prevention angle and build general community awareness through campaigns such as that which the I Do! Project did on local transit.
- 5 Develop a Forced Marriage Entity in the GTA**—Explore what a funded specific agency or arm of an agency could look like that focused specifically on supporting survivors and building capacity among agencies for stronger and more responsive approaches.
- 6 Research and Build Knowledge**—Continue to engage in research to gain a stronger understanding of service use, the multi-generational impact of forced marriage, long term service needs and documenting informal processes as well as policy reviews at the agency level.



idoproject.ca