PS492 - Final Report

Grassroots Organizations and Member Impact: A Case Study of the Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo

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Introduction

Grassroots organizations are local political organizations that seek to influence conditions not related to the working situation of participants while utilizing the activity of participants as a primary resource (Gundelach, 1979). In numerous studies on organizational impact, it has been suggested that members' placement satisfaction during the first twelve months of involvement does not always guarantee commitment continuity (Davis, Hall & Meyer, 2003), which indicates that the benefits of engaging in community organizations are also accompanied by costs (Chinman & Wandersman, 1999). Although research surrounding member engagement has been plentiful, there has not been a focus on grassroots organizations specifically.

This study was conducted in partnership with the Coalition of Muslim Women of KW (CMW), a non-faith-based organization located in Kitchener, Ontario, managed solely by Muslim women but open to all women who share similar values. Programs and services that are offered by the CMW aim to build communication and understanding between Muslim women and the broader community, while also providing members with opportunities for growth and development. Through qualitative interviews with members of the Coalition, we sought to identify strengths of the organization leading to membership retention, areas for improvement, and how the organization has impacted members both personally and professionally. As a partner in this study, the CMW was able to explore components of their organization that have positively contributed to members' experiences, as well as any areas they might be able to improve on. This ultimately will help the organization to better serve their members and broader community. As research interns at the Centre for Community Research, Learning and Action (CCRLA), we were

able to apply our knowledge of community psychology to the study, which we hope will benefit the CMW and the broader community.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact that the CMW has had on the personal and professional development of its members. Specifically, the main objectives of this study were to explore members' experiences with the CMW, as well as the aspects of the Coalition that are keeping members involved. This allowed us to transfer knowledge and deliver something tangible to the community partner. The goals of this study were to contribute to research on Muslim women's coalitions and other grassroots organizations, as well as the experiences of being a part of a coalition. Furthermore, this study also identifies strengths for membership retention as well as any areas for improvement.

Membership in Grassroots Organizations

Volunteering in Community Organizations

Types of community organizations. Community engagement encompasses social participation, such as being involved in informal activities like visiting neighbours, as well as civic participation, where individuals and groups become involved in formal volunteering, vote, and sign petitions (Lai & Hynie, 2010). One sphere in which individuals can participate in their communities is through volunteering in community organizations. Historically, community organizations have been spaces where people could present concerns, experience a sense of community, and collectively make an impact (Hughey & Peterson, 1999). Meanwhile, volunteers are needed for their skills and labour to help these organizations achieve their goals (Deville, 2007; Wandersman, 1981). Generally, contributions from community organizations are only

made possible through volunteers who actively advocate for causes, pay membership dues, donate, and participate in meetings and events (Deville, 2007). Such spaces use strength in numbers and membership to influence stakeholders and create change (Deville, 2007). Although volunteer opportunities are largely determined by the organizations that seek help, the roles for volunteers are determined by organizations' needs as well as volunteers' abilities and interests. As such, involvement in community organizations can benefit volunteers by helping to foster a sense of autonomy when negotiating to determine the purpose and scope of their involvement (Christensen & Brudney, 2018).

Grassroots organizations are a type of community organization that differs slightly in that they involve the public and develop action and ideas mainly at the local level (Deville, 2007). Leaders in grassroots organizations can improve their perceived impact by encouraging communication within agencies, involving their volunteers in action-focused goals, and developing effective strategies for both leadership and change implementation (Wells, 2009). However, it is crucial that organizations and stakeholders refrain from taking complete control over decision making to ensure that volunteers maintain high levels of satisfaction (Feinberg, Alexander, & Ward, 2009). To thrive, grassroots organizations, and community organizations more broadly, need to be able to attract members of the public and then ensure that they are providing reasons for them to remain involved.

Why people volunteer. While volunteers often stay in their roles because of altruistic intents, they also value being involved in making meaningful decisions. However, these opportunities are rarely provided, with the focus often being on consultation (Neysmith & Reitsma-Smith, 2000). More research is needed to determine whether organizations are

providing opportunities for meaningful decision making and, if not, how this can be better incorporated into their organizational structures. Other reasons for remaining involved include volunteers' interest in building strong relations with others, developing meaning in their lives, and gaining employment-related skills. Furthermore, organizations can provide opportunities for training, personal support, and activities that directly benefit one's professional development (Studer & Schnurbein, 2013). Through opportunities offered by community organizations, volunteers can network and apply skills towards paid employment at respectable wages. Volunteers' perceptions of engagement in organizations have also been shown to positively contribute to individuals' psychological well-being because a sense of engagement fosters a sense of satisfaction (Vecina, Marzana, & Marta, 2013). Finally, newcomers to Canada who participate in community organizations can benefit by having opportunities to interact with members of the broader community. This may help create social bonds for populations who could otherwise feel disconnected from Canada (Handy & Greenspan, 2009).

Demographic characteristics of volunteers. Oftentimes, older and more educated women are likely to volunteer in community organizations (Deville, 2007). This increase in volunteering among older adults in Canada can explained by the fact that adults over the age of sixty-five are the fastest-growing group of individuals and longer life expectancies allow for more opportunities to volunteer (O'Hagan, 2012). Brown & Ferris (2017) also found that networks of association, along with norms of trust and reciprocity, often manifest in the form of unpaid work in community organizations and that charitable giving increases with people's level of education.

Women in Canada are more likely to volunteer because, unlike their male counterparts, some women view volunteering as primary occupations (Wong, Mook, & Handy, 2017). The authors explain that women are more likely than men to volunteer in formal organizations due to societal, role-related norms. Such norms generally shape women to exhibit more caring behaviours, demonstrate greater empathy, and make themselves more available to volunteer efforts - something which is additionally supported by our society's division of labour. However, in a study of nineteen Baby Boomer women, Seaman (2012) found that some women consider volunteering during retirement only if its benefits outweigh the costs. Moreover, in a study based in the United States, Brown and Ferris (2007) found that although women were more likely to volunteer, both women and men volunteered a equal number of hours. The current study may help contribute to this area by showcasing how women at the CMW feel about their community engagement in the CMW.

Membership Retention

According to Davis, Hall, and Meyer (2012), organizations would be more successful in membership retention if they understood what motivates individuals to join and continue participating. Research has also suggested that volunteers' experiences in organizations can affect their satisfaction with the organization itself (Deville, 2007). The commitment of volunteers to community organizations is often proportional to how positively they perceive those agencies (White, 2005). Furthermore, these perceptions can be influenced by volunteers' sense of self-efficacy, progress in accomplishing personal goals, and various other member expectations (White, 2005). Studies have shown that potential volunteers are more likely to become committed when meetings prior to their involvement demonstrate an organizational

environment that can contribute to their personal or professional development (Wandersman, 1981). For example, some organizations provide recruits with opportunities to become leaders in respective communities or obtain scholarships from their organization (Deville, 2007).

Location safety and accessibility also factor into determining whether volunteers remain active in community organizations (Nesbit, Christiansen & Brudney, 2018). For example, at its inception, the CMW provided free childcare and transportation for all who participated in the organization. As a result, the CMW was successful in retaining its membership, with over fifty per cent regularly participating in group activities (Mazhar, 2012). Since then, the organization has agreed to always have paid child care for Coalition meetings. The CMW recognizes the diversity of its members in terms of financial circumstances, and so child care services are fully funded by voluntary donations, without additional fees from those who utilize such services. Studer and Studbein (2013) have also found that membership retention is higher when organizations have many objectives, large, pre-existing membership pools, and evidence of their worthiness through an extended existence and operations. To ensure that members are actively involved and persevere in organizations, generally, the benefits for a member must outweigh the expenses (Chinman & Wandersman, 1999). Resource challenges are usually the most problematic capacity-building issues in these organizations (Akingbola, 2013). Therefore, organizations and their members must balance benefits and costs in order to arrive at a state of reciprocity, whereby organizations acquire sufficient resources, but members feel that the benefits of their involvement exceed the costs.

Membership Retention for Immigrant Communities

For many organizations, the recruitment and retention of immigrant volunteers is a key area of interest. This is because the diversity in Canada is increasing such that, as of 2006, one in five Canadians are foreign-born, and that number is rising (Smith, 2012). This population trend can help explain how social events that focus on diversity, such as cultural festivals, have helped grassroots organizations attract new Canadians as volunteers (Smith, 2012). As of 2012, the immigrant population accounts for 20% of the Canadian labour force and 70% of the labour force growth (Fuller & Martin, 2012). In addition, immigration practices in Canada are such that those admitted are often better educated than their domestically-born counterparts. However, even with all of this, immigrant populations generally work fewer hours for lower wages, are at higher risk of unemployment, and often experience a downgrade in their occupation when compared to their country of origin (Fuller & Martin, 2012).

Research has shown that immigrant and visible minority populations often face significant barriers to community involvement due to social exclusion, leading some authors to suggest that community engagement and community diversity may be inversely related (Lai & Hynie, 2010). Kazemipur (2011) highlights some of the contexts that shape the immigrant experience in Canada, including struggles with loan applications, having low confidence in the job and housing markets, as well as high levels of mistrust in private and public institutions. The author goes on to say that while the immigrant population can add to Canada's overall community engagement, they may not volunteer formally or donate because they are not exposed to such activities. Barnes and Sharpe (2009) suggest that the declining rate of volunteering in

Canada may be due to organizations restricting volunteers from participating in meaningful work and that immigrant volunteers have even more potential to be demotivated by such practices.

Research has begun detailing initiatives that community organizations can implement to promote volunteering among the immigrant population. In a study conducted by Deville (2007), volunteers who were also immigrants showed an appreciation for another community organization's multicultural centre. The specific organization coordinated yearly keynote presentations on concerns that various ethnic groups face and published literature related to multiculturalism. Another study claimed that immigrants' challenges are usually associated with the lack of formal recognition in Canada for home country credentials and accreditations (Handy & Greenspan, 2009). When organizations consider language and cultural barriers, it can help to further improve the retention of immigrant volunteers as well as improving volunteers' employability through increased access to Canadian professional credentials and accreditations (Handy & Greenspan, 2009). According to Lai and Hynie (2010), community organizations win immigrants' support when they provide opportunities for social bonds in communities. Opportunities like these can make it possible for volunteers to form relationships and connect with the broader community. They also suggest that locations with English language services could remove major barriers for immigrants, and that offering childcare and employment services can act as motivators for involvement. The CMW seeks to address some of these components by offering services which which aim to engage and empower women of diverse backgrounds, offer skill development programs, and connect their volunteers with resources in the community (CMW, 2014). As such, more research is needed on how community

organizations seeking to engage diverse groups can continue to address some of these barriers to promote membership retention.

Muslim Organizations and Resources

The CMW strives towards facilitating a just and peaceful community for Muslim women by improving communications between them and the larger community (CMW, 2016). This approach can improve volunteers' sense of self-worth by providing opportunities to gain skills which may assist them in becoming leaders within the broader community. Hamdani (2006) found that Muslim organizations play active roles in organizing events that place aspects of Muslim culture within a larger Canadian cultural context. These organizations facilitate events such as town hall meetings and other activities that allow volunteers to engage in civic activities such as signing petitions or sharing knowledge about Muslim practices, such as veiling (Birani, 2007).

The CMW was established in 2010 through a community forum as a way for volunteers to talk about their concerns (Tait, 2010). The organization formed in response to a recognized need to build communication and understanding between Muslim women and the broader community (CMW, 2016). The Coalition has since worked to build credibility within the Region of Waterloo and is supported by local charities, community service agencies, local funders, and the municipal government. More recently, the CMW implemented the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan to address community needs, elected 13 board members, and appointed a paid coordinator (CMW, 2017). The Coalition is now at a new location, owned by Family and Children's Services in Kitchener, Ontario, which has allowed the CMW to gain resources, such as additional funders, sponsors, and donors, as well as space for additional programs and staff. These resources enable

its members to achieve personal and organizational goals. Members of the CMW are empowered through educational workshops and shared experiences that strategically enhance public knowledge about Muslim culture (CMW, 2017). As a result, women involved with the CMW can participate in town hall meetings, where they can interact with politicians and with the public.

Research Questions

Members are recruited by community organizations based on what they can offer the organization to help achieve their goals. There is a reciprocal relationship between the two parties since involvement can create a diverse environment while providing members with a sense of community. In many grassroots organizations, members are encouraged to become involved by communicating to the organization their thoughts and ideas. Members may become more committed to an organization if they feel that their involvement can contribute to their own personal development through leadership or scholarship opportunities offered by the organization. When members feel they can actively contribute to an organization and are satisfied with the outcomes, the benefits outweigh the costs of participation, leading to continued involvement. If community organizations take that extra step to account for language- and cultural-barriers, it could assist in improving membership retention while also providing members with the opportunity to create social bonds with the broader community.

Since the CMW was the only one of its kind at its inception , there was a lot of potential for the present study to learn more about the impact of involvement in a group like the CMW since research in the area of member retention and engagement specific to Muslim coalitions is sparse. With this in mind, this study explored the following research questions: (1) In what ways,

if any, has the CMW impacted the personal and professional lives of its members?; and (2) What has contributed to members' continued engagement?

Methods

This study sought to examine the impact that the CMW has on the personal and professional development of its members. This study was conducted in partnership with the CMW, and the end goal was to produce knowledge that will be transferred to the community partner. The main objectives of this study were to explore participants' experiences of being a member with the CMW, how these experiences have impacted their personal and professional development, and what has led to their continued engagement.

Research Design

This study had a phenomenological design, which is when a study focuses on participants' experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell et al., 2007). It is context-specific and focuses on participants' lived experiences. As outlined above, the study aimed to obtain a richer understanding of participants' experiences of being a member with the CMW, how these experiences have impacted their personal and professional development, and what has led to their continued engagement. Employing a phenomenological design was the best way to focus on and explore those experiences.

Researcher Standpoint

Throughout the process of this research study, it was important that, as researchers, we reflected on our locations in society and potential sources of bias that may come from our life circumstances. Two of us were female, and one of us was male. While one of us was an immigrant, the two of us who conducted interviews were born and raised in Canada. In addition,

two of us were Caucasian, while one of us was Asian. Furthermore, all of the researchers are middle-class, and have been privileged enough to have the means and support to attend a post-secondary institution. Therefore, while our social locations and identities are diverse and varied, our economic status, ethnicity, and gender privilege us in many ways.

As researchers conducting community-based participatory research, we understood the importance of reflecting on our social locations at every step in the research process. We all experience privilege in different domains, and in this way, we unintentionally uphold and benefit from systems of power and oppression that are in place in society. It is possible that this privilege could have resulted in research that also reinforces these systems of oppression. By reflecting on the power dynamics that exist in society and our roles within them, we worked to become more aware of our own biases and reduce their influence on this research.

Our participants were all women, and were primarily Muslim. Many were also immigrants, and from a variety of ethnocultural backgrounds. Though two of us are women, none of the researchers are Muslim. There are a variety of domains in which our social location and identities differed from those of our participants. In this way, we were approaching the CMW as outsiders. We understood that, as outsiders, we could not fully understand the lived experiences of our participants. However, we have spent the past eight months taking the CCRLA's PS492 course, where we have been trained in working with marginalized communities and developing awareness of personal privileges, power differentials, and issues of inequity. Through this course, we also attended multiple lectures on the topic of anti-oppressive research and ethics in community-based participatory research.

Participants

Participants in this study were members of the CMW, aged 18 or older. Since all members of the CMW are female, and are predominantly Muslim, our participant population was composed of predominantly Muslim women from a variety of ethnocultural backgrounds. Participants represented a cross-section of the CMW in terms of length of membership. The membership categories were: less than a year (two participants), 1-3 years (two participants), and 4+ years (one participant). These categories were designed to ensure that when collecting data regarding experiences with the Coalition, member retention, and community engagement, there were a variety of experiences from participants who have spent varying lengths of time being engaged with the CMW. In total, we collected data from five participants, with at least one participant in each membership category.

Participant Recruitment. Board members of the CMW agreed to assist with identifying and recruiting potential participants who met the selection criteria outlined above. The CMW sent emails out to all of their members giving general information about the study and asking them if they would like to participate (See Appendix A for the recruitment materials). For the purposes of our study, we chose to have the CMW contact potential participants first because they know and trust the board members, and thus, might have been more willing to participate. Interested members contacted Uzma Bhutto, board member of CMW, whose contact information was given in the email. When potential participants were identified, their contact information was passed onto Alexandra Branco, who then asked them how long they have been a member and categorized them based on length of membership.

Sampling Strategy. In this study we used a purposive sampling method. A purposive sample is a type of non-probability sample in which expert knowledge of the population is applied in order to select a non-random series of elements that represent a cross-section of the population (Lavrakas, 2008). This was done in order to collect data from a cross-section of the CMW member population in terms of length of membership, as outlined previously. This was done at the request of the CMW.

Sample Size. In this study, we included five participants, which was deemed sufficient given that the CMW has roughly 40 members and we were still able to obtain representation from each category of membership. Thus, the researchers and community partner both felt that this number of participants resulted in enough data to provide strong insight into member experiences, membership retention, and community engagement within the CMW.

Data Collection

This study utilized qualitative methods in order to provide rich insight into participants' experiences as members of the CMW. In this study, two different methods were used. The brief demographic survey provided us with descriptive data. The semi-structured interviews provided us with qualitative data. Aside from these two components, data regarding length of membership will also be collected at the time of participant recruitment.

Brief Demographic Survey. Before the interview commenced, participants were given a brief demographic survey, which collected information regarding participants' age, ethnocultural background, and highest level of education. This information allowed the researchers and the community partner to gain insight into the demographic that participated in this research (See Appendix B for the brief demographic survey).

Semi-Structured Interview. One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were 15 to 45 minutes in length and were conducted by Melissa Chan or Alexandra Branco (See Appendix C for the interview guide). They were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. Participants had the option of an in-person interview, at the Family Centre, or an online interview, via video conferencing software, Zoom. The interview asked participants to share their experiences with the CMW, how those experiences have impacted their lives, and what keeps them engaged.

Analysis

Demographic data was used to gather descriptive information regarding the demographic that participated in the study. Interview data was de-identified and transcribed by Melissa Chan and the CCRLA research assistant, Ola El Maki. Following transcription, we moved forward with thematic analysis, which is a common analytical tool used to identify, analyze, and report themes or patterns from data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We started with an initial round of descriptive coding, began making connections between codes in our axial coding stage, and used our axial codes to identify overarching themes. Since we were not entirely sure what participants' experiences would be, thematic analysis allowed us to minimally organize the data, but still enabled us to analyze it in rich detail (Boyatzis, 1998 as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, we were able to select recurring themes that came up in the data to better understand participants' experiences.

Rigour and Trustworthiness

The quality and trustworthiness of our research data was established using the four criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in Amis & Silk, 2008), which are

credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility ensures that the research findings are plausible, and can be confirmed through prolonged engagement in the field and member checking (Amis & Silk, 2008). In this study, credibility as ensured by constant collaboration between and consultation with research team members, mentors, and the community partner throughout the research process. We also engaged participants in member checking by allowing them to approve their interview quotations before use in the research findings. If they did not deem the quotation to be accurate, they had the opportunity to request that it not be included in the findings or any deliverables. Transferability ensures that the research findings are applicable to other contexts, and that readers can interpret it within other contexts (Amis & Silk, 2008). In this study, we demonstrated transferability by carefully detailing the contexts from which the data are being gathered, and suggesting the significance of the findings. For example, the CMW is a Muslim women's coalition, but it is largely considered a grassroots organization, and concepts of member retention and community engagement explored in this study can be applied to many other community organizations. Dependability ensures that findings are replicable and that any decisions made during analysis are clearly justified (Amis & Silk, 2008). We demonstrated dependability by carefully documenting our procedures throughout the research process. Finally, credibility ensures that the researchers actively reflect on their social locations and biases that could potentially influence the research (Amis & Silk, 2008). We ensured credibility by regularly reflecting on society, our place in it, and how we contribute to or are involved with power dynamics and systems of oppression. In addition, we reflected on these issues in the CCRLA's PS492 course, through assignments and activities.

Research Ethics

We explored a number of ethical considerations in the design of this study. Muslim women are considered to be a marginalized group, and since none of the researchers are Muslim women, we were entering this community as outsiders that cannot fully understand the lived experiences of the participants. Since we interviewed Muslim women, we only used female interviewers. This was done in order to maintain cultural sensitivity and ensure that participants were as comfortable as possible. In addition, potential participants might have had children they needed to care for. Therefore, the CCRLA offered to fund childcare for participants who may have required it during the interview. Furthermore, there were both in-person and online interview options to ensure that participants could choose the setting that was most comfortable for them. Participants also had the opportunity to approve or decline their quotations for use in any deliverables or publications that came out of this study. This was asked in the informed consent statement that participants read and signed before the short demographic survey and interviews (See Appendix D for the informed consent statement). The informed consent statement also asked participants if they consented to having their interviews audio-recorded. Participants were compensated for their time in the form of a $10 Tim Horton's gift card, which was funded by the CMW. Finally, there were no consequences associated with participating or not participating in this study; participants could choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

Participants' names were not recorded with the data to keep their identities and participation in this study confidential. Consent forms were coded with a pseudonym and stored separately from the collected data. For the purposes of our study, we chose pseudonyms that are popular in the Middle East to ensure that we remained culturally sensitive. To do so, we

conducted a web search on Google and randomly selected the first few female names that came up. Pseudonyms were then connected with participant names on an encrypted document. Any hard copy data were stored in secured files at the Centre for Community Research, Learning and Action (CCRLA) office, K214A-232 King Street, in a locked filing cabinet. Any digital copies of data were stored in an encrypted USB key or encrypted document. The CMW does not have access to any raw data, and future PS492 cohorts will only have access to de-identified data. The hard-copy and digital data is to be destroyed by the director of the CCRLA after seven years.

Results

A total of five participants were recruited and interviewed, with at least one participant in each membership category. There were two participants in the less than a year category, two participants in the one to three years category, and one participant in the four or more years category. Thus, we were able to obtain representation from a cross-section of participants in terms of length of membership. It is important to highlight once again that the names connected to quotes used below are pseudonyms. As mentioned previously, participants had the chance to preview quotations that were used - four of the five participants agreed to have quotations in this report. However, the four participants who approved their quotes still represent a cross-section in terms of membership length.

Demographics of Participants

The brief survey provided us with demographic information with regards to the participants' age, highest level of education, and ethnocultural background. Participants' ages ranged between 24-64 years old, all of the women who participated in this study had a college degree or higher, and ethnocultural backgrounds varied between Eritrea, Iran, and Pakistan.

How Involvement has Impacted the Lives of Members

After conducting a thematic analysis of the data, eight overarching themes were identified. With regards to how being involved with the CMW has impacted the personal and professional lives of its members, themes that emerged included: diversity, networking, professional development, safety, and sense of community.

Diversity. Members felt that the CMW is a diverse environment where they are able to meet people from all walks of life, whether it be within or outside of the CMW. When asked about the benefits of being a member of the CMW, one of the participants, Farah, said:

> "I guess, making connections and seeing different views from different people, from different countries. Most of the women that are involved in the programs are, they are very active, they are very very active in their countries, so they are still active here. So, I can see their perspective, and can learn from them, and we can share our ideas. The diversity is very good."

Having a diverse membership pool allows for members to learn from each other while being active in their community. Tea and Tales with Muslim Women is an event that the CMW runs in which Muslim women from various ethnocultural backgrounds are able to share their experiences with members of the broader community. Participants acknowledged that although many of them are Muslim, they come from varying ethnocultural backgrounds and thus have different stories to share about their personal experiences. It is at events like Tea and Tales where members of the CMW are also able to branch out and learn more about different faiths. For example, Mira, shared the following:

> "Through Tea and Tales, a couple of our sessions were in the faith communities. [I learned about] their approach toward their faith, and sometimes I had no idea that that approach existed in the Christian faith… I told [a member of the Christian faith community] how much I admire their way of approaching spirituality and the way they share that with their children...We observed their Sunday program there, and it was so moving, and so, it is like learning and understanding in both ways. Most of the time, you know, you get the feel that, well, we are all kind of saying the same thing, but maybe we use different wording, right?"

In addition, being involved with the CMW allowed members to learn more about other community organizations in the Kitchener-Waterloo community. For participants who were newcomers to Canada, they especially enjoyed having the opportunity to connect with members of the broader community through partnerships that the CMW has with surrounding community organizations, and eventually get involved with those organizations as well.

Networking. A few of the participants were recruited to the CMW through a family member or friend who was already involved with the CMW and had a positive experience, while others became aware of the CMW through their involvement in other community organizations that the CMW collaborates with. Participants have made social connections with other individuals within the CMW who share similar interests and values. Farah acknowledged that her involvement with the CMW has allowed her to make "lots of good relationships and friendships". Since all who become involved with the CMW agree with the organization's values and mission, the CMW also creates a space for its members bond with each other. In addition to making social connections, members have also been able to make political connections with

Members of Parliament for Waterloo region through the CMW. Participants feel that making those political connections through the CMW has been valuable because it makes it easier to approach the politicians to raise concerns in the future.

Professional Development. The CMW offers programs and workshops to members to help them further develop existing skills. A program mentioned multiple instances by participants was the Emerging Muslim Women Leadership Training Program. This program provides women with the opportunity to develop leadership skills with a goal of taking on more active and established leadership roles within the Kitchener-Waterloo community, as well as within CMW. Helen mentions how "the leadership workshop and these kinds of things really help me with finding my job and yeah, whatever things that they hold, they usually take you somewhere, you know?". Participants value having programming that is tailored to benefit Muslim women because it provides them with tangible skills which may help to improve their chances of finding employment. Although some participants valued that sort of training for professional development, others felt that they already had existing skills that have helped them obtain their current employment. In addition to leadership programs, the CMW also offers training to their volunteers and members before they take part in events. For example, one participant mentioned how the CMW teaches tangible skills such as answering difficult questions, avoiding debates with people, and conflict resolution - all of which can be applied to professional settings.

Safety. Participants feel safe at the CMW because it is a place they can go to when they are seeking a friendly face to talk to. To quote Helena when asked about the benefits she's experienced from her involvement with the CMW, "it's just having that space that you know,

you can share, whatever opinions you have, things like that". The CMW has become a safe place for members to openly share their opinions without judgement. More importantly, the CMW also promotes a sense of safety outside of the organization through programming like Allies Against Islamophobia and the Understanding Islamophobia workshop, both of which allows members of the broader community to listen to experiences of islamophobia and learn more about the issue. Participants acknowledged the importance of the work the CMW has been going in terms of creating a space for Muslim women to share their encounters with islamophobia. Mira shared:

> "They network, they communicate, and to take away the cloud of, again, I'm going to say Islamophobia and prejudgement. The environment we are now in, politically… it's not a healthy environment, and it's very much contributed toward… fear. So, what the Coalition is doing with taking away that fear and having opportunities for Muslim women to introduce themselves and their abilities to [the broader community], it's very valuable and it's, I think, one of the best things that they do."

By creating a platform for Muslim women to speak out and reach the broader community, the CMW promotes a sense of safety for its members.

Sense of Community. Participants reported experiencing a sense of community through their involvement with the CMW. Participants shared how they were able to bond over similarities in culture, faith, and values with other volunteers and members within the CMW. In addition, participants expressed that they also felt a sense of community outside of the CMW through events that allowed them to connect with the broader community. The Salaams Canada Campaign was brought up by a few participants as a way to connect with members of the community. Volunteers and members of the CMW baked cookies for the Salaams Canada event

and handed them out in light of the Quebec City mosque shooting. Mira said the following about the event:

> "Another great experience was Salaam cookies...this is a way we want to say to the community to wish peace, health, and happiness as a Muslim, and, you know, we are part of this community that want to live in peace with everyone else and in harmony. So I think that was...a very beautiful and very simple way to connect with the community at large."

By providing the opportunity for volunteers and members to reach out to the broader community, the CMW fosters a sense of community and keeps their members satisfied.

What Keeps Members Engaged

Overall, participants valued the work the the CMW does, believes that their needs are being met as members, and plan on continuing their involvement with the CMW. Participants value how the CMW empowers their volunteers and members through a variety of avenues. In addition, many strengths of the organization were identified by participants, with few suggestions for improvement.

Empowerment. The CMW is comprised of strong women of diverse backgrounds, which makes participants feel empowered. Being involved with the CMW provides members with the chance to be themselves and contribute to the community in their own unique ways. For example, Mira talks a out what engaging with the CMW means to her:

> "The chance to meet and get acquainted with other women in different, but also the same ways...You could put thoughts together, you could put ideas together, and you find people, they're kind of saying the same thing, but this will also encourage you to, when

> you have a idea to present it, to be louder, to express yourself. And definitely self confidence is one of the important aspects of being part of the Coalition. I see, you know, from different age levels, we have youth who are just in high school, and then we have moms that dedicate their life to for their children, they're housewives, and then we have women from all different aspects of engineering or social work or different [careers], and when they come together they act as a team. They all have something to contribute."

Furthermore, it is also evident that the CMW is empowering its members in the way that they support them. For example, another participant goes on to mention how the CMW supports each of their members and wants everyone to succeed. In addition, members are also able to take part in projects or events that result in positive changes in the way Muslim women are perceived in society and the empowerment of all women. Farah shared how she thinks that the CMW creates an "active environment" and went on to mention that she stays involved with the CMW because "I can see the positive changes and especially in the views… I could hear 'Oh, now we think differently about you guys [Muslim women]', so that's very important for me". Overall, the CMW fosters an environment of empowerment in the way that the organization has a diverse membership pool, provides ongoing support for members, and is always seeking to make an impact in the community.

Strengths. One of the most valuable aspects of the CMW that members found to be rewarding were programs that are tailored to benefit Muslim women, for example, the Emerging Muslim Leadership Training Program. Through this program, the CMW provides a great way for women to further develop leadership skills. Helen mentions how:

> "They [the CMW] also holds leadership workshops, yeah, those are very good… It was more targeted towards Muslim women, so I did benefit a lot from that...it's these kinds of events that are targeted to this group of people."

For many members that are new to Canada, they know first-hand how difficult it can be for Muslim women to find a job. With the help of the CMW and this program, Helen was able to eventually find a job - something that she believes is attributed to the skills she has been able to learn through her involvement. In addition to tailored programs, participants also expressed how they valued programs such as Tea and Tales with Muslim Women and Understanding Islamophobia. Both of the events empower members of the CMW in the way that they create a platform for Muslim women to share their experiences and make connections with the broader community. Mira talked about the importance of these programs especially for one of her friends who had an encounter with islamophobia, "I see how much those projects, those events, those programs help people to, you know, recover, have hope, have self-confidence". Mira was able to see, first-hand, the impact that the CMW has on the lives of, not just herself, her friends as well. Overall, participants believe that the CMW is doing the most that they can to support the needs of their members and volunteers.

Areas for improvement. Participants found their involvement to be valuable and had few suggestions for improvement including making events more accessible in terms of scheduling as well as public transportation, providing opportunities for more meaningful engagement, and having a broader range of programming. Participants expressed that although the Family Centre is a great place to hold events and programs, the biggest barrier to attending programs is that the location is not the most accessible via public transportation. As a result,

participants become restricted as to how often they can attend programs, especially when they are held at the Family Centre. In addition to transportation, another barrier that members experience is the timing of events. With full-time jobs, and sometimes even children to take care of, attending events can be very difficult for members to fit into their busy schedules. Many participants also felt that they wanted to contribute more to the CMW, in more meaningful ways on top of setting up events. Being a member of the CMW, participants have expressed that they want to be able to do more than just set up for events and clean up afterwards - they want to know what more they can do for an organization that does so much for their community. Finally, it is worth mentioning that although programs the CMW offer are valuable for their members, there is a need for a broader range of programming to include workshops for varying career paths. When asked about if the CMW has impacted her professional life, Farah said: "If I change my field... because I'm in science. But, I really like to do like, if I was activist and I'm trying to be activist socially too so… in that aspect, yeah, for sure it would". By broadening their range of programs for different career fields, it may provide members with the ability to develop skills specific to careers that they are interested in.

Discussion

Based on the above findings, we can conclude that our study supports existing literature on community organizations and membership retention. Studer & Schnurbein (2013) found that community organizations impact volunteers and members through improved connections to the community, professional development and leadership, development of strong social networks, personal support, and sense of well-being and empowerment. Our findings indicate that members of the CMW were also impacted in these ways through their involvement. For example,

professional development was identified as a theme under our primary research question. Professional development occurs through workshops and other programming that the CMW runs, particularly those geared towards the development of leadership skills. In addition, networking was identified as a key theme emerging from our research data. Participants had the opportunity to develop social, political, and familial networks through their involvement, and were also prompted to join the CMW by members of their social or familial networks. For example, Helen stated that her involvement with the CMW "is a good opportunity to meet new people and build kind of a network." Finally, empowerment and safety emerged as key themes that keep members involved with the CMW and impact their lives. Members identified the CMW as a safe space where they feel understood and heard, as they receive personal support from other members. For example, Mira described a scenario in which a community member shouted islamophobic comments at a young Muslim woman while she was walking down the street. Feeling scared and upset, she turned to the CMW for support:

> For that moment it was a recovery, empowering, and feeling appreciated when she [was] connected with a program through the Coalition, to have a voice and to have a place to share her experience and what happened to her, and hear from others that this is not right, what happened to you wasn't right and it should not happen to anyone else.

In a frightening time for this young woman, the CMW offered a safe, open, and supportive space for her to share her experiences and receive validation from the other members. In addition, members indicated that they feel empowered by their participation in CMW's activities, as they feel they are affecting meaningful change. For example, Farah described her desire to facilitate change in her community:

> I wanted to make some changes. Also, I wanted to be active in the area because I was in university and most of my connections were kind of students, professors...I wanted to deal with the problems that people have outside university...So, I found that it's good opportunity to be part of the [CMW].

For many participants, like Farah, being a member of the CMW provided them with opportunities to affect meaningful change in their communities, which empowers them.

Additionally, Handy & Greenspan (2009) found that members of community organizations benefit by having opportunities to connect with the broader community. Building communication and understanding with the broader community is a large part of what the CMW does, and our findings indicate that this activity positively impacts the personal and professional lives of its members. For example, sense of community emerged as a key theme that impacts the lives of CMW's members. This sense of community is created both within the CMW and outside of it, by connecting with the broader community. In addition, connecting with the broader community and affecting meaningful social and political change were identified as key components contributing to the empowerment of CMW's members. Mira described how building understanding in her community contributes to a personal sense of fulfilment:

> There are things that I gain personally, and there things that I hope I could offer to the community. So, for me, the personal gain is that sense of fulfillment and sense of being part of a team that shares and is working towards the same goal to make a better society and better understanding.

Many participants, like Mira, feel building understanding and communication with the broader community positively contributes to their personal lives.

Alternatively, our findings contradict some of the existing literature on community organizations and membership retention. Salami et al. (2019) reported that it can be problematic when immigrants rely on the same ethnocultural communities when they are small and lack social capital. However, our findings indicate that the CMW has a great deal of social capital. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines social capital as "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups" (Keeley, 2007, p. 103). Social capital is divided into three major categories: bonds, bridges, and linkages. Bonds refer to links between people based on a sense of common identity, such as family, close friends, and people who share culture, ethnicity, or religion. Bridges refer to links between people that extend beyond a shared sense of identity. Finally, linkages refer to links between people or groups at different levels of the social ladder (Keeley, 2007, p. 103). While linkages were not examined within our study, our findings indicate that members of the CMW experience both bonds and bridges. Bonds are observed as links between CMW members and volunteers, as participants expressed the value of the connections they've made with other members and volunteers of the CMW based on gender, ethnicity, culture, and religion, as well as other shared aspects of identity. For example, Mira stated that "being a woman is one of the key things that keeps us together." For Mira and other participants, the strong connection between CMW's members can be partially attributed to shared aspects of their identity, such as gender. Conversely, bridges are observed as links that CMW members and volunteers forge with the broader community. Participants expressed the value of their connections with the broader community and opportunities to connect with people of different backgrounds and religions, and how these experiences have positively impacted their lives. For

example, Mira described an event where she had the opportunity to connect with individuals in the broader community: "I had the opportunity to sit at the same table with members of city council and leadership of another faith community...it created such an open environment for people to get to know each other better." Through its events and other programming, the CMW regularly facilitates opportunities for its members to forge connections with members of the broader community, of all different backgrounds, religions, and identities. Therefore, while the CMW is a relatively small organization, our findings do not support literature that argues that organizations such as the CMW lack social capital.

In addition, Chinman & Wandersman (1999) found that some community organizations experience free rider problem with their volunteers. When members of a community organization have the opportunity to reap collective benefits from the work of others without participating themselves, it is arguably in their economic self-interest not to participate themselves. However, our findings suggest that this problem is not experienced within the CMW to any significant degree. Members are extremely motivated and eager to participate and contribute to the work that the CMW is doing. For example, Alena provided a vivid analogy to describe the value of each CMW member: "I feel like we are one body…each one of us represents an organ from our body...I don't imagine myself or this Coalition without one of them. So, all of them are very valuable to me." Participants, like Alena, described the CMW as a unified team, and all members provide meaningful contribution in their own way.

Recommendations

Based on our findings, we identified a number of recommendations for the community partner to improve membership retention. Our findings indicate that there are a number of things

that the CMW is currently doing, and should continue to do, that are beneficial in terms of membership retention. The CMW currently places large focuses on the empowerment of women, as well as building communication and understanding with the broader community. Empowerment emerged as a key theme contributing to members' continued involvement, as members feel empowered as Muslim women due to the support they receive from other members and volunteers at the CMW and their participation in CMW events and programming that affect meaningful change within the community. In addition, sense of community, networking, and safety all emerged as key themes in the ways that members are impacted by their involvement with the CMW, all of which were heavily connected to building communication and understanding with the broader community. For example, programming such as Tea and Tales with Muslim Women contribute to sense of community by connecting with the broader community, and also promotes a sense of safety by facilitating open dialogue with the broader community about social and political issues that are faced by Muslim women. Therefore, we recommend that the CMW maintain its focuses on the empowerment of women, and building communication and understanding with the broader community

Furthermore, we recommend that the CMW continue events that were reported as being very meaningful or impactful to members. For example, programming such as the Salaams Canada Campaign, Allies Against Islamophobia, Tea and Tales with Muslim Women, and A Day of Dialogue with Muslim Women were events and workshops that participants reported most frequently as positively impacting their lives, making them feel that they are engaging with the broader community, and affecting change in meaningful ways. Therefore, we recommend that the CMW continue these events and potentially even offer them more frequently.

Additionally, we recommend that the CMW continue running workshops that are geared towards Muslim women. For example, participants expressed the value of leadership workshops that the CMW offers, as well as opportunities for developing leadership skills. These workshops positively impact members' lives, particularly in the professional domain.

Our findings also indicate that there are a number of things that the CMW may be able to do differently in order to improve membership retention. Participants indicated that The Family Centre is not a highly accessible location. For example, it is not close to their work or home, or is not accessible by public transit. The literature suggests that location accessibility is a factor in determining whether members remain active in community organizations (Nesbit, Christiansen & Brudney, 2018). Therefore, we recommend that programming be held at additional locations in the KW region. One way this could be done is by leveraging community partnerships to find additional, more accessible locations for events and other programming. Furthermore, participants indicated that scheduling conflicts were a barrier to their involvement. Therefore, we recommend providing variation in the scheduling of programming to that they do not always take place at the same time of day or time of week that certain members may be unavailable.

Significance

The findings of this study contributed to knowledge surrounding membership retention, which can be applied to other organizations that are similar in structure to how the CMW operates. Results from this study also provide the CMW with tangible components that have been positively contributing to members' experiences, as well as areas that they can improve on, thus, helping the CMW better serve its community and members. In addition, the researchers were able to contribute to the foundational knowledge on grassroots organizations and Muslim

women's coalitions, which can assist in creating a model for other Muslim coalitions to be established nationwide.

Limitations

This study was restricted in scope to one agency, and this limitation is due to time and resource constraints. The narrow scope of the study may limit how generalizable the findings are to other community organizations and forms of community engagement beyond the CMW. In addition, the sample size was relatively small (five participants), and all participants are members of the same organization. Members were also all female, and the vast majority are Muslim. Due to these similarities among participants, it is likely that they will have similar experiences, and it will be more challenging to generalize the findings to other organizations that are not primarily composed of Muslim Women. Since members of the CMW come from varying ethnocultural backgrounds, it was also possible that some members chose not to participate due to language barriers. However, the purpose of this study is to explore member experiences with this very unique organization and provide insights into member retention and community engagement, and the research is being conducted to provide knowledge for use by the organization itself. Therefore, generalizability to other settings is not a priority.

Knowledge Transfer

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this study was to explore participants' experiences of being a member with the CMW, how those experiences have impacted their personal and professional development, and what has led to their continued engagement. The end goal was to give something tangible to the community partner, CMW, in order to transfer the knowledge we produced for the organization. There are a number of deliverables we completed

for the CMW. Firstly, we created a PowerPoint presentation for their use, which will highlight the study's key findings. In addition, created an infographic that summarized the most important results from the study. It is a more visually digestible and succinct version of the PowerPoint presentation (See Appendix E for infographic). In addition, we provided the CMW a number of research documents, including a research proposal and a final research report. Finally, we presented our findings at the Research Day Conference on April 25, 2019.

Conclusion

Despite this study's limitations, our findings provide preliminary insight into the aspects of the Coalition of Muslim Women of KW that contribute to the personal and professional lives of its members, as well as components that contribute to members' continued engagement. Diversity, sense of community, networking, professional development, and safety were identified as key mechanisms by which the CMW impacts the personal and professional lives of its members. Additionally, strengths of the CMW, empowerment, and areas for improvement were identified as factors that keep members involved with the CMW's activities. Evidence-based recommendations emerged from these findings which we believe, if implemented, will strengthen membership retention and member engagement within the CMW. Furthermore, this study adds to existing literature on membership retention and member engagement in grassroots organizations. As other Muslim women's coalitions and related organizations begin to form in Canada and internationally, our findings provide insight into the factors that contribute to their success.

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Appendix A (Recruitment Materials)

Dear members,

The Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo (CMW) is working with a group of student researchers from Wilfrid Laurier University to explore the impact of this coalition on its members.

We are looking to recruit members of varying lengths of membership:

- Less than a year (1-2 members)
- 1-3 years (4-6 members)
- 4+ years (8-9 members)

You would be asked to complete one interview that can be in-person or online, which would take approximately one hour to complete. You will be able to share your experiences on the CMW and your involvement. As a token of appreciation for your time, you will be given a $10 Tim Hortons gift card. Furthermore, if you require child care during interviews, please contact us as this may also be arranged. Attached is the recruitment poster with details of the study.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Uzma Bhutto at cmw.kw.info@gmail.com

We hope to hear from you soon!

Wilfrid Laurier University
- Department of Psychology -

Grassroots Organizations and Member Impact: A Case Study of the Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo

LAURIER *Inspiring Lives.*

CCRLA

Coalition of Muslim Women Kitchener-Waterloo

We are looking for members of CMWKW, aged 18+, to participate in a study regarding the impact of the CMWKW on the personal and professional development of its members and identifying aspects of the organization that keep members engaged.

You would be asked to complete one interview that will take approximately 1 hour to complete.

A token of appreciation of will be provided for your time ($10 Tim Hortons gift card!), and child care services can be arranged.

Join our study!

For more information, please contact Uzma Bhutto at cmw.kw.info@gmail.com

This study will be conducted by Alexandra Branco, Melissa Chan, and Dragos Petrus, under the supervision of Dr. Ciann Wilson

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research and Ethics Board (REB #5960)

Appendix B (Brief Demographic Survey)

1. How old are you?
    a. 18 - 24 years
    b. 25 - 44 years
    c. 45 - 65 years
    d. 65 - 85 years
    e. 85 and over
2. What is your highest level of education you have completed?
    a. Elementary School
    b. High School or equivalent
    c. Vocational/Technical School (2 year)
    d. Some College
    e. College Graduate (4 year)
    f. Master's Degree (MS)
    g. Doctoral Degree (PhD)
    h. Professional Degree (MD, etc.)
    i. Other
3. What is your ethnocultural background? (i.e. Pakistan, Somalia, Iran, etc.)
    a. _____

Appendix C (Interview Guide)

First, I want to thank you for your participation in this project. The goal for today's meeting is for us to pull together in one conversation as much as possible about your experiences with being a member of the Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo (CMW).

For this interview, I want to emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers; I'm just interested in hearing about your experiences and thoughts. All your comments will remain anonymous and this interview is confidential. You are free to end the interview whenever you want, and are welcome to skip questions.

I will be audio recording today to make sure my notes are accurate. It will not be heard by anyone outside of this project and the digital file will be password protected. As we discussed in the consent form, if you consented to it, I will be using quotes in reports from this research. Before we begin, do you have any questions or comments?

I am now turning on the audio recorder.

Opening Question #1: How long have you lived in Waterloo region?

Opening Question #2: How long have you been a member of the Coalition?

Key Question 1: Can you tell me a little bit about how you got involved?

Probe: What motivated you to become a member of the Coalition?

Follow-up: Were you a volunteer with the Coalition before becoming a member?

Key Question #2: What, if any, are some of the benefits of being a Coalition member?

Follow-up: Of the services/resources you mentioned, what is most useful to you?

(IF NOTHING) What are some of the other reasons that keep you involved?

Follow-up: Are there any events/resources/services available to Coalition members that you haven't accessed yet?

Key Question #3: In what capacity, if any, have you been involved with the coalition's programming and events?

Follow-up: What were your experiences? What was the most impactful experience?

Key Question #4: How has being a member made an impact on your life? Explain.

Probe: Personal (friendships, community, etc.), professional (work opportunities, network opportunities, etc.), other

Follow-up: Have you learned anything from your involvement with the Coalition?

Key Question #5: Do you think the coalition has had an impact on your ability to build relationships or make connections in your community? How so?

Key Question #6: Has your involvement with the coalition facilitated your involvement in any other aspects of the community, or other community organizations in Waterloo region?

Follow-up: What other organizations are you involved with?

Key Question #7: What keeps you involved with the Coalition?

Follow-up: Are there members of your family, friends, social supports that are supportive of your engagement in the coalition?

Follow-up: Are there members of your family, friends, social supports who aren't supportive of your engagement in the coalition? Explain.

Key Question #8: Is there anything that you would like to see CMW offer to better support your needs or goals? Explain.

Follow-up: Are there ways in which the CMW can better support you?

Key Question #9: Are you currently planning on renewing your membership when the time comes?

Follow-up: Are there any barriers or challenges you've faced related to your membership? If so, could you describe them?

Ending Question: Is there anything else you want to share or discuss about your experience with the Coalition?

I am now turning off the audio recorder. Do you have any questions or comments off the record?

Appendix D (Informed Consent Statement)

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY, PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Grassroots Organizations and Member Impact - A Case Study of the Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo

RESEARCHERS

This study is being conducted by Dr. Ciann Wilson, along with undergraduate students Alexandra Branco, Melissa Chan, and Dragos Petrus in the department of Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University.

INFORMATION

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Alexandra Branco, Melissa Chan, and Dragos Petrus under the supervision of Ciann Wilson, PhD. This project is being completed in partial fulfillment of the field placement portion of the PS492 Applied Community Psychology program at Wilfrid Laurier University. In this study, we are interested in exploring the impact of the Coalition of Muslim Women on the lives of its members and identifying aspects of the organization that are keeping members engaged.

This study will include approximately 10-15 members of CMW between the ages of 18+. We are recruiting through the CMW. Participants for the interviews will be chosen with the goal of gathering data to get a cross-section of members based on length of membership. Selected participants will participate in semi-structured, one-on-one interviews conducted by Alexandra Branco or Melissa Chan. You will be asked a series of questions about your experiences of being

a member at the CMW and your engagement. All interview data will be audio recorded and then transcribed to text and de-identified before the files are destroyed.

RISKS

There are no foreseeable physical risks associated with participation in this study. As this study requires that participants share their feelings, thoughts and experiences, there is the risk of a loss of privacy and reputation. Please only provide information that you are comfortable sharing with the interviewers. Since interviews will be conducted at the Family Centre, participants may risk having their identity and participation in the study known by the organization. Furthermore, participants may risk talking about something that may be distressing. These feelings are normal and should be temporary. Please know that you are free to skip any question or procedure and/or withdraw from the study at any time. If you experience any persistent negative feelings as a result of participating in this study, please contact the researchers and/or a local mental health care facility. To find local resources in Canada, visit http://www.cmha.ca/mental-health/find-help/.

BENEFITS

As a participant in this study, you will contribute to the development of knowledge in community psychology, specifically the area of membership engagement, community involvement, and membership involvement. You will also learn about the research methods used by community psychologists. Participants are likely to benefit from having a safe space for them to share their experiences of being a member of the coalition, as well as any other information they wish to share with the interviewers. The knowledge that will be gained from the research may provide the CMW with tangible components of their organization that have been

working, as well as any areas where they might be able to improve on. This might contribute to the organization's ability to serve its community and members. As the researchers, we benefit by contributing to foundational knowledge on grassroots organizations and familiarization with Muslim women's coalitions. Since the CMW is the only Muslim women's coalition in Canada, findings might assist in providing a model for other Muslim coalitions to establish nationwide.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Once collected, the researchers will ensure your data are confidential. Only Alexandra Branco, Melissa Chan, Sharmalene Mendis-Millard, Dragos Petrus, Sarah Ranco, and Dr. Ciann Wilson will have access to the data collected during this study. All data will be securely stored in Sharmalene Mendis-Millard's locked filing cabinet in the Centre for Community Research, Learning and Action office (K214 - 232 King Street) at Wilfrid Laurier University. Electronic data will be stored on a password-protected USB key and hardcopy data, including consent forms, will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. Your personal information (i.e., phone number and email address) will be stored separate from your data and will be deleted by Dr. Ciann Wilson or the associate director of CCRLA by May 1, 2026. Dr. Ciann Wilson will transfer hardcopy data to an electronic file and destroy the hard copies by May 1, 2026. The associate director of CCRLA will destroy consent forms by May 1, 2026. Once all audio recordings have been fully de-identified and transcribed to text, they will be deleted, likely by March 31, 2019. The anonymous data file will be maintained for 7 years and may be analyzed in the future as part of a separate project (i.e., secondary data analysis). Should the data be reanalyzed, other authorized researchers working with Dr. Ciann Wilson or future CCRLA students/colleagues may be given access to the data. Data will be presented in aggregate (e.g., means) in any

publications resulting from this study. With your consent, the researchers may use your de-identified quotations in publications and presentations that result from this research. You may still take part in this study if you do not consent to the use of your quotations (please refer to the consent section below).

COMPENSATION

As a token of appreciation, you will receive a $10 CDN gift card. If you choose to withdraw from the study, you will still receive the same amount of compensation.

Any compensation received related to the participation in this research study is taxable. It is the participant's responsibility to report the amount received for income tax purposes and Wilfrid Laurier University will not issue a tax receipt for the amount received.

CONTACT

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board (REB #5960). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Jayne Kalmar, Research Ethics Board Chair, Wilfrid Laurier University, 519-884-0710 ext. 3131, REBChair@wlu.ca.

If you have questions at any time about the study, the procedures, or your compensation (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study), you may contact the one of the following student researchers, Alexandra Branco (bran4340@mylaurier.ca), Melissa Chan (chan0437@mylaurier.ca), Dragos Petrus (petr5090@mylaurier.ca) or the supervisor, Dr. Ciann Wilson, 519-884-0710 ext. 4911, ciwilson@wlu.ca.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may skip any question or procedure, or completely withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose to withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed. Your data cannot be withdrawn once data collection is complete because data are stored without identifiers.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

The findings may be published in peer-reviewed journals, presented at academic conferences, and/or made available through Open Access resources. The results will be part of Alexandra Branco, Melissa Chan, and Dragos Petrus' class project and will be presented at the Wilfrid Laurier University mini-conference conference on April 2019. You may contact the researchers to request an electronic copy of the results, which will be available by April 25, 2019.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

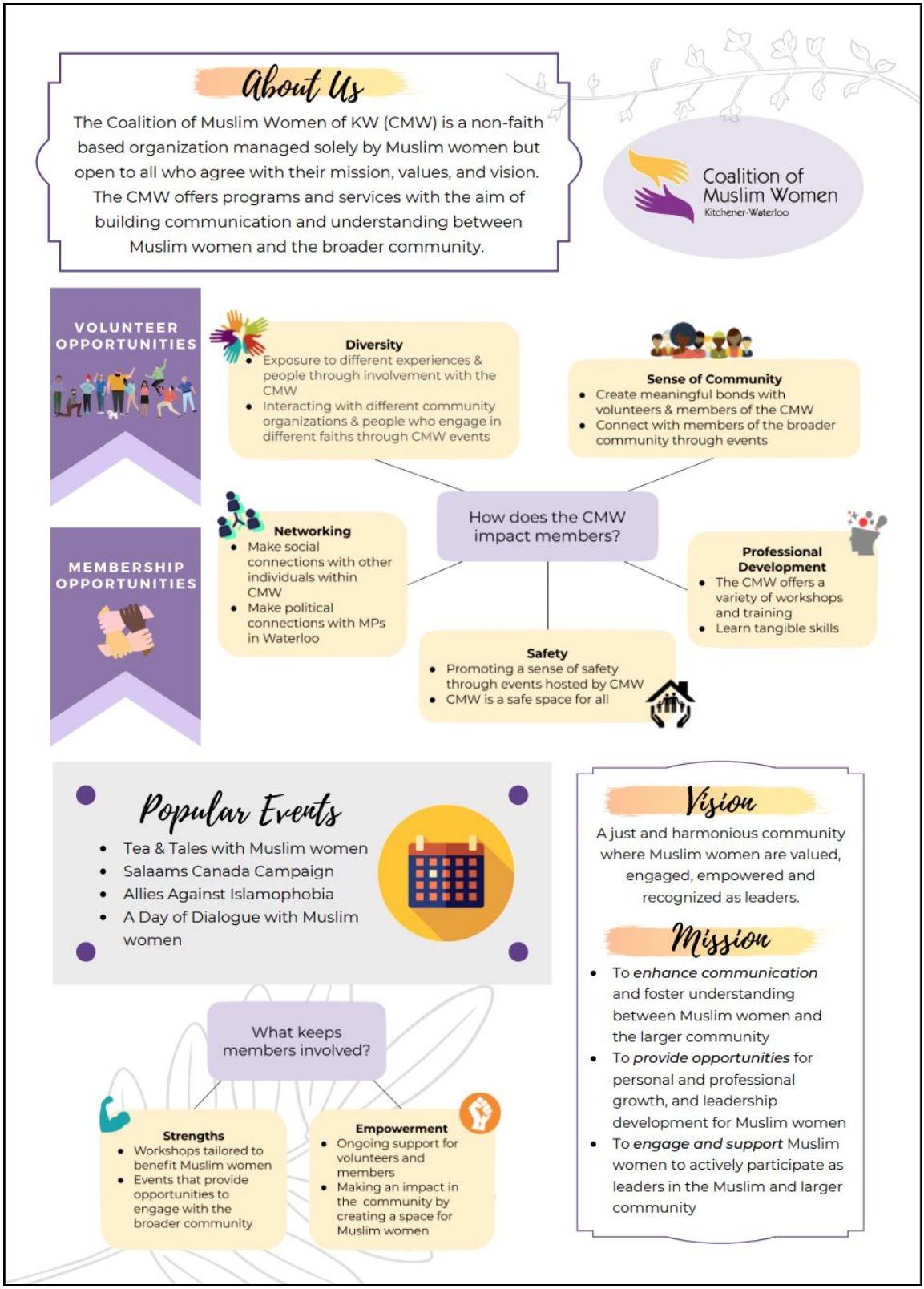
Researcher Signature: _____ Date: _____

CONSENT FOR QUOTATIONS

Please check the appropriate box

- ❑ I allow the researchers to use my de-identified quotations from the interview without my review.
- ❑ I allow the researchers to use my de-identified quotations, but I would like to review them before publishing. If you choose this option, the investigators will send your transcript via email. Confidentiality of data cannot be guaranteed while in transit over the internet. Please provide your email address: _____
- ❑ I DO NOT allow the researchers to use my quotations from the interview.

Appendix E (Infographic)



Bridge with the Broader Community

At CMW, you can connect with members of the broader community through events that are open to all.

Develop Skills

The ***"Emerging Muslim Women Leadership Training Program"*** provides women with the opportunity to further develop leadership skills with a goal of taking on more active and established leadership roles within the Kitchener-Waterloo community, as well as within CMW.

Members value having programming that is tailored to benefit Muslim women and believe that programs like these greatly impact their professional lives.

Experience

SOCIAL CAPITAL

Members experience ***bridging*** with the broader community through events as well as ***bonding*** with other volunteers and members at the CMW through shared aspects of identity

UNIFIED TEAM

Members are extremely ***motivated*** and ***eager*** to participate and ***contribute*** to the work that the CMW does. Everyone is able to provide meaningful contribution in their own way.

Feel Empowered

The CMW currently places a large focus on empowering women and strengthening the voices of Muslim women in the community.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the following organizations for their support

CCRLA LAURIER Inspiring Lives. LSPIRG