



Striving for Excellence

2016 Annual Report

METRAC
ACTION ON VIOLENCE





VISION: A safe Ontario for women. A Safe world for all.



MISSION : We work to end gender-based violence across communities, through education, research, and policy.



VALUES:

EQUITY: We promote justice and fairness for all individuals and social groups. We recognize how social inequality and unequal distribution of power can directly lead to marginalization and violence.

RESPECT: We value individual and social diversity and treat everyone with dignity and consideration. We foster a culture of respect within our organization and in all our activities.

SAFETY: Safety is a fundamental right. We recognize everyone's right to live free from the threat, fear and experience of all forms of violence, oppression and discrimination.

FEMINISM(S): Our organization and work are grounded in diverse women's movements that were and continue to be active in changing social conditions to end gender-based violence and discrimination.

EXCELLENCE: We strive for excellence in all of our activities, and challenge ourselves to do better. We are committed to maintaining high standards in our operations through regular evaluations and transparent and ethical practices.

INNOVATION: We are committed to participatory research, continued learning and the creation of new methods to raise awareness about violence against women and youth.

COLLABORATION: We foster teamwork and interdisciplinary partnerships. We work in consultation with and support diverse communities committed to ending gender-based violence on a local, provincial, national and international level.

METRAC



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Message from the Executive Director and Board Co-Presidents

This year's annual report highlights the steps METRAC is taking in its journey towards achieving organizational excellence and impact across Ontario.

In a single year, we initiated the implementation of a new Strategic Planning Cycle for 2016–2019, to move METRAC forward in the most effective way. We completed an evaluation of our Community Safety Audit; marked the 15th anniversary of the ReAct youth prevention program; co-launched several new legal information resources for Deaf women and women living with HIV; and faced the resignation of Andrea Gunraj, METRAC's Program Director, whose demonstrated contribution to METRAC for 16 years is beyond exemplary.

2016 was the Year of Program Evaluation at METRAC. We learned that React youth program's theory of change works in practice to successfully boost weekly Afterschool program participants' self-esteem; increase their awareness and knowledge of healthy relationships; and strengthen their problem-solving and communication skills. We gained these insights through our participation in a Canada-wide evaluation of Teen Healthy Relationship Programs funded and led by Canadian Women's Foundation and we thank them for their generous support.

Further, we conducted a limited evaluation of our Community Safety Audit Program, and while we are encouraged by the results that our Safety Audit is successfully addressing the safety needs of communities locally and globally, we are mindful that work is needed to strengthen and improve program elements and impact. We fully embrace this opportunity to restructure our Audit processes and tools, and we plan to improve our Safety Audit performance over the next few years.

Financially, METRAC is still recovering from the unmet projections of our 30th Anniversary Gala in 2015. During the year, 2-year operational funding from the Department of Justice ended. At the same time, we applied to Status of Women Canada and to Public Health Agency of Canada for project funding. Our current diversified funding portfolio includes: City of Toronto, the Law Foundation of Ontario, the Ontario Government (Ministry of Status of Women), Canadian Women's Foundation, Les Lois Shaw Foundation, Government of Canada Summer Jobs Program, private foundations, and social enterprise funds. This year, we worked to keep our operations lean, so that as many dollars as possible would be directed to programs. As a result, we closed the year with a small deficit of \$8,113.

This year we were able to hire 16 students through the Canada Summer Jobs Program funded by Employment and Social Development Canada. The students came mostly from the communities where ReAct programs are delivered. Students worked at a number of agencies and summer programs across Toronto as well as participated in workshops and leadership training for their own development. It was an exciting expansion of our work with young people and we hope to offer this again in the coming years.

Some exciting news at year-end was an announcement from Status of Women Canada. We were approved for \$322,000 to carry out The Due Justice for All (DJA) Project across Ontario. Our goal is to strengthen the legal system's response to women-identified survivors of sexual violence, through the development and implementation of an alternative justice pathway. The project is co-led by three organizations - METRAC: Action on Violence, Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), and WomenatthecentrE. Working collaboratively across multi-sectors, the DJA project will broadly engage stakeholders; gather historical data; draw upon evidence of promising practices; and utilize a court watch program to inform a pilot model to be tested in two communities. The piloted framework will allow for a coordinated response to uncover and experiment with justice options for survivors/victims; increase offender accountability; and, improve conditions for women who choose to report sexual assault. The project begins in January 2017 and will continue until March 2019.

We have achieved tremendous results this year because of our passionate, hardworking and talented team of staff and Board of Directors, volunteers and students, who exemplify a deep commitment to ending gendered violence. With the deepest appreciation, we acknowledge the distinguished commitment and work of Andrea Gunraj who left the organization in 2016. Other staff and team members who left during the year were Ransford Kissi and Sony Matthew, while at the same time we welcomed Marion Newrick as Interim Director of Programs and Administration. In 2016, we welcomed new Board members, Myra Reisler, Maia Rotman, and Emily Dixon. We thank Board Members Alana Boltwood, Tanya Humphrey and Amelia Martin who resigned from the Board, for their contributions and service, as well as all volunteers, students, and continuing Board Members, funders, donors, and community partners who have contributed to our mission, and have helped to build a resilient organization in 2016.

So much of what we do now, and what we aspire to do and be in the future, depends on our supporters - funders, donors, and community partners, who inspire us to work for change. Without your ongoing confidence and support, our achievements would not be possible. We extend our deepest appreciations and look forward to your continued support.



Wendy Komiotis
Executive Director



Caitlin Maxwell
Board Co-President



Michelle Mulgrave
Board Co-President

METRAC 2016-2019 Strategic Directions:

1

Strengthen METRAC's position as a provincial organization committed to reaching communities and areas with inequitable access to supports

2

Develop and embed a progressive anti-oppression (AO) Framework for guiding METRAC's internal and external work to achieve its mission

3

Build internal capacity in finances, technology, and human resources to achieve excellence in governance and operations

4

Demonstrate METRAC's effectiveness with respect to achieving its stated goals, objectives and outcomes

METRAC's Priority Communities:

We are committed to working with the most vulnerable communities of women to support their needs for safety, equity and access to justice. These communities include: immigrant, refugee and non-status women, youth (10-29 years), older women (55+ years), girls and women affected by human trafficking, women with disabilities and Deaf women, racialized women, Indigenous women (METRAC will work as an ally in support of the Framework to End Violence Against Indigenous Women), and LGBTTIQQ2S – Trans* and gender diverse people and Two Spirit people, including transsexuals, transitioned, transgender, trans men (FTM), trans women (MTF), genderqueer, genderfluid, gender nonconforming, third gender, non-binary, and intersex.

METRAC's Community Justice Program is leading efforts to increase access to justice across Ontario by providing current, clear-language legal information about the law, legal rights and the justice system. We reduce barriers to justice by providing legal information resources and training in shelters and crisis centres, ESL classes, settlement agencies, drop-ins, and through specialized online webinars for service providers.

93% of frontline service providers who received METRAC's legal information trainings, report that they are better equipped to educate women in their communities, on their rights and options under the law and offer the support they need.

61 communities across Ontario have received METRAC's legal information resources from Ottawa to Sault Ste. Marie, and many places in between, thereby addressing geographic disparities in urban/suburban/rural and remote areas.

METRAC is also closing the gap in access to justice for isolated groups of women known to be underserved, and experience higher rates of violence and marginalization, including Indigenous women, women who identify as Deaf, immigrants and refugees, young women, and more. We produce and distribute legal information in multiple formats and 14 languages, including American Sign Language, info graphics, large font and audio/video formats.

2016 Justice Program Highlights:

- Developed 4 legal information audio booklets for women with literacy or language challenges
- Held a successful launch of 2 new videos in American Sign Language (ASL) on family law topics related to Child Custody and Access, and the Victim/Witness Assistance Program, for Deaf women
- Co-produced a new legal information booklet, for women living with HIV and abuse
- Co-created 4 audio resources on the topics of Child Support and Spousal Support, for women who speak Tamil and Punjabi



Justice Program staff with members of The OAITH Steering Committee during a meeting to plan for a Provincial Training Day on the issue of Gender based Violence (Nov. 2016)

What participants of our legal education trainings and presentations say:

"I can use all the information in my case, and now that I know more I feel comfortable and encouraged with my baby."

"Thank you! I learned a lot and hope to pass this along to as many people as possible."

"Excellent choice of presenters, location, workshop well prepared and I would suggest everyone to attend if there is an opportunity."

Some partners we worked with:

Action Ontarienne Contre la Violence Faite aux Femmes, Act to End Violence against Women, Family Service Toronto, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Community Legal Education Ontario, Working Women Community Centre, Ernestine's Women Shelter, George Brown College, Juliette's Place, Law Society of Upper Canada, Legal Aid Ontario, Law Foundation of Ontario's Executive Directors' Network, Migrant Mothers Project, Nellie's, Newcomer Women Services Toronto, Ontario Justice Education Network, Osgoode Hall Law School at York University Madison Settlement Services, Pro Bono Students Canada, South Asian Legal Clinic Ontario, South Asian Women's Centre, Springtide Resources, Toronto Police Services, Women's Habitat, Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), YWCA Toronto, Sistering, North York Women Shelter, Skills for Change, FCJ Refugee Centre, Parkdale Community Health Centre, Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, Downsview Community Legal Services, Family Responsibility Office, Rose Family Law, Glenda S.Perry Law Office, Garfin Zeidenberg LLP, Family Law Service Centre, Toronto North

In 2016, **METRAC's Community Safety Program** focused on building its capacity to better address safety in neighbourhoods for diverse communities.

We concluded a limited evaluation of our Community Safety Audit facilitated by StrategiSense Inc., at the neighbourhood level, for the period August 2015 - May 2016. The Audit evaluation was designed to consult with relevant stakeholders with emphasis on identifying the factors that facilitate and limit success of the Audit, and making recommendations for strengthening the Audit in the future.

The evaluation reviewed data for the period 2010-2015, including an assessment of processes, activities, and outcomes; qualitative analysis on information collected through a documentation review and interviews; and quantitative analysis of archived Audit activity and satisfaction data gathered by METRAC staff.

Community Safety Audit Evaluation Highlights:

Further evaluation is needed to determine the overall impact of the Audit, however, preliminary findings are very encouraging.

METRAC's Safety Audit has been widely used locally, nationally, and globally to identify the safety concerns of groups and communities at higher risk of experiencing violence. The Audit is perceived by evaluation respondents to be effective in:

- raising awareness and thinking about issues related to violence and safety
- contributing to physical and environmental changes and community development to improve community safety
- fostering community empowerment and participation in civic processes
- increasing participant skills and confidence, toward the goal of making communities safer
- establishing and maintaining a long history of partnerships and collaboration between community leaders, politicians, and City of Toronto decision makers, as a critical factor for identifying and implementing recommendations to improve safety in urban areas

Audit stakeholders and the evaluator identified areas that would require attention in the future, include the following:

- increase resident engagement in the Audit process through higher participation of certain groups, particularly men and seniors
- enhance accessibility of the safety audit in languages other than English
- provide follow-up support with politicians, police, and local businesses, to help facilitate implementation of Audit recommendations
- explore options for sustainability through secured funding and staffing resources dedicated to ongoing implementation of Audit recommendations
- build upon the successful history of collaboration and partnership model of the Audit
- strengthen evaluation capacity of the Audit through training and dedicated resources.

Evaluation Recommendations:

A variety of recommendations have emerged from the evaluation that require prioritization by METRAC to determine what will be implemented, and over what timelines. Areas for consideration include:

- **Program Design and Implementation** - Redesign the Audit tools and processes to achieve innovation and increase program impact.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation Capacity** - Develop an evaluation framework inclusive of a logic model that attends to processes, outcomes, data gathering and scheduled monitoring and reporting.
- **Continued Improvement and Innovation** - Explore strategic partnerships to expand access to credible capacity and resources, and an international literature review to inform innovation and improvement.

In addition to the evaluation of the Safety Audit, during the year, our Safety Program reached approximately **1,438** people and delivered **45** trainings and presentations to **19** agencies and community groups.



Participants during the Rockcliffe- Smythe/ Junction Safety Audit Tour (Nov, 2016)

Some partners we worked with:

City of Toronto-Community Crisis Response Program (CCRP), Community Development Officers, Youth Violence Prevention Community Development Officer , Parks Ambassador; Councillor Josh Colle, Councillor Doucette, Councillor Nunziata, MPP Carolyn Bennett, East Scarborough Storefront, YWCA, Oakwood Vaughan Neighbourhood Partnership (OV NAP), AIDS Committee of Toronto, St Jamestown Safety Project, Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), Women in Toronto Politics (WiTopoli), Harmony Movement , TDSB Westview Centennial Secondary School

Established in 2001, **Respect in Action (ReAct)**, METRAC's violence prevention youth program, celebrated its 15th birthday of excellence and resilience in building peer leadership and engagement skills with thousands of young people in Toronto, Ontario, Canada and across the globe.

In 2016, ReAct engaged more than **3,682** youth and youth workers across Toronto.

ReAct has been designated a "blueprint model" by Status of Women Canada; heralded a promising practice by the School and Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008; and has been integrated into school programming in Ghana, West Africa.

Through a partnership with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and Canadian Women's Foundation, weekly afterschool groups are held in Toronto high schools facing high rates of poverty, lack of services, and social isolation. Youth learn about Healthy Relationships, Cyberviolence, Bullying, Challenging Gender Roles, and more. Program evaluation shows it leads to meaningful increases in violence prevention knowledge and skills.

This year is the first time ReAct has delivered structured weekly afterschool sessions in middle schools, thanks to the generous one-time funds from Les Lois Shaw Foundation.

More than **40** Toronto middle school students learned about the subject of Healthy, Equal Relationships for fostering gender equality and preventing gender-based violence towards girls and women.

2016 ReAct Program Highlights

ReAct Afterschool Program participants who were surveyed reported that "taking part in this program helped me to:

- Feel better about myself – **100%**
- Feel safer at school – **91%**
- Feel more comfortable being around people my age who look or sound different from me – **91%**
- Say "no" to things that seem wrong or make me uncomfortable – **100%**
- Better understand that all genders should have the same opportunities – **96%**

ReAct Afterschool Program participants who were surveyed reported that “because I took part in this program:

- I am better at solving problems peacefully – 86%
- I am better able to recognize what a healthy relationship is – 82%



These pictures are a sample reflection of our arts based evaluation in our afterschool programming at TDSB Oakdale and Winona middle schools (June ,2016)

Some partners we worked with:

Building UP, Covenant House, TD Learning Centre, Massey Centre, YMCA, White Ribbon, Ryerson University, Toronto Community Housing, Central Neighbourhood House, Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, Rexdale Hub, Delta Family Resource Centre, Woodgreen Employment Centre, Toronto District School Board, Toronto Public Health, The Wellesley Institute, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, SKETCH, CultureLink, Access Alliance Multicultural Health Centre, Dr. Ilene Hyman, Dr. Robin Mason, Simone Parniak, Dr. Paula Gardner (McMaster University), Bryce Peake (FemBot); Dr. Maria Belen Ordonez (FemTechNet), Dr. Carrie Rentschler (McGill University), Dr. Maureen Engel (University of Alberta), Dr. Sandra Gabrielle (Concordia University), and Dr. TL Cowan (Yale University), Dr. Suzanne Stein and Dr. Emma Westecott (Ontario College of Art and Design University).

Some schools we worked with:

Westview Centennial Secondary School, Lester B Pearson Collegiate Institute, Winona Drive Middle School, George Harvey Collegiate Institute, West End Alternative Secondary School, RH King Academy, Malvern Collegiate Institute, Riverdale Collegiate Institute, Robert Service Senior Public School, Bliss Carman Senior Public School, Runnymede Senior Public School, Northview Heights Secondary School, North Albion Collegiate Institute

Shaneen's Story, ReAct Participant

As told to Jessica Howard

In Grade 11, my social science teacher suggested I try the ReAct after-school program, because she knew I was interested in the issues it covered, like abuse and healthy relationships. I signed up and stayed involved through Grades 11 and 12.

Our facilitator talked about how we can start by dismantling stereotypes and trying to raise awareness. I learned a lot about standing up for myself and not following stereotypes. Just be who you are: you can love makeup, but you can also love dirt-bike riding.

We also talked about hyper-masculinity and how it's traditionally not OK for boys to show emotion, love or affection. There were boys in the program who would say, "Yeah, it's true, I have friends who feel they need to react in an aggressive way in certain situations," or that they were afraid of being called certain names. They agreed that gender stereotyping exists for men as well, and that was kind of amazing to hear.

I think one of the reasons the ReAct program is effective is because it's interactive. Every week, we would do something different: write poems, or maybe watch a video, or have a debate.

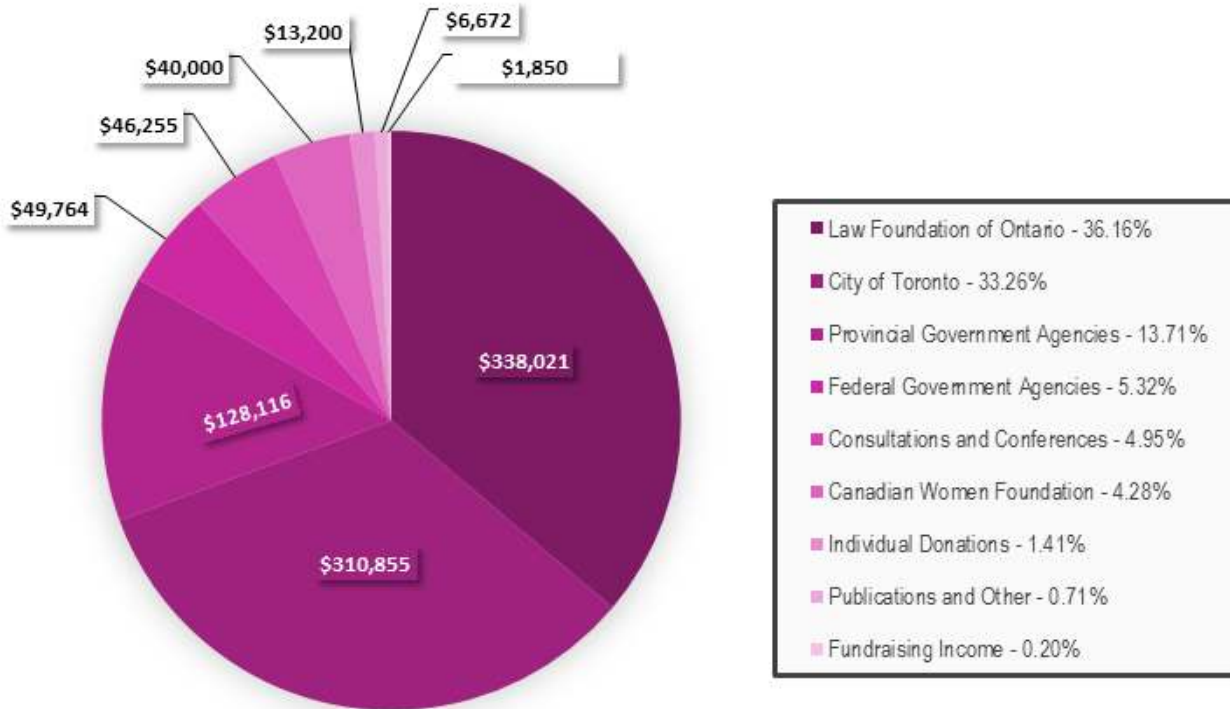
After two years in the program, my interest in social justice issues grew even stronger. I ended up getting a summer job with ReAct, doing research for workshops. The experience helped me come out of my shell, learn more about how to facilitate, and be a leader.

It made me think more about choosing a career path down this line—maybe social work or sociology. It's been a huge learning experience for me.

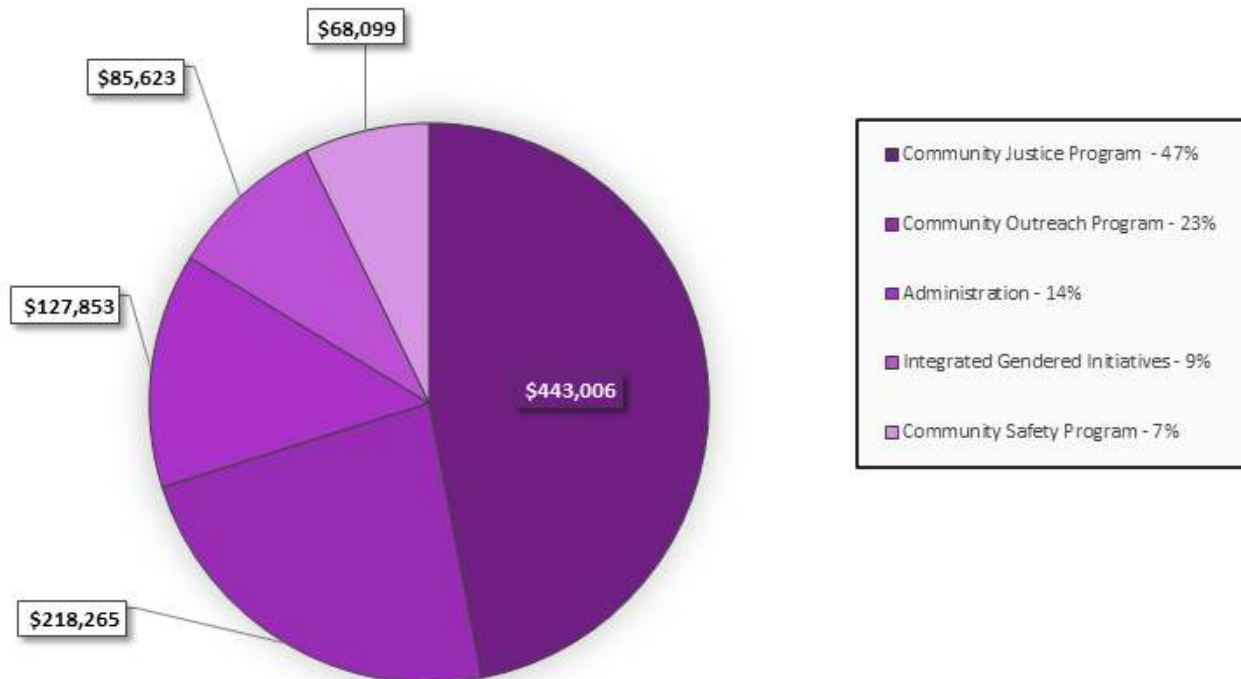


Photograph: Catherine Farquharson, documentographer.com

Where METRAC income comes from in 2016 (Amount of \$934,733)



How METRAC spent the money in 2016 (Amount of \$ 942,846)



Acknowledgements

Much of our excellence is owed to our team of staff, volunteers and supporters, and we thank you. We are also grateful to our members and community partners for your support. Finally, we extend appreciations to all funders and donors who played an important role in METRAC wellbeing in 2016 – we could not survive without you.

Funders and donors



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DALLA LANA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Our team

Silmi Abdullah, Legal Information Coordinator | Awo Abokor, ReAct Peer Facilitator | Baljinder (Kitty) Bhogal, Bookkeeper | Wendy DeSouza, ReAct Peer Facilitator | Linda Frempong, Safety Program Coordinator | Ray B. Garcia, ReAct Peer Facilitator | Gabrielle Ross-Marquette, Communications Coordinator | Joanna Hayes, Legal Information Coordinator | Ransford Kissi, Safety Support Manager | Wendy Komiotis, Executive Director | Chenthoori Malankov, ReAct Peer Facilitator | Jessica Mustachi, Safety Program Coordinator | Solomon Muyobokey, ReAct Peer Facilitator | Kenesha Lewis, ReAct Peer Facilitator | Anoodth Naushan, Summer Student/ReAct Peer Facilitator | Marion Newrick Interim Director of Programs and Administration | Lena Peters, ReAct Peer Facilitator | Jannette Saberon, Administrative Support | Talayeh Shomali, Justice Projects Coordinator | Jessica Silva, Research Consultant | Shequita Thompson, React Program Coordinator | Tamar Witelson, Legal Director | Stephanie Wong, ReAct Peer Facilitator

Board of Directors

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Volunteers

Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers who worked across the organization to strengthen our programming, services and projects. We appreciate all that you do.