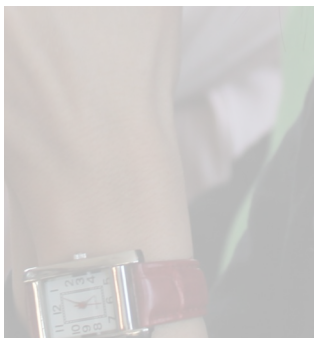




Annual Report

www.fcjrefugeecentre.org



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE

Walking with uprooted people

208 Oakwood Ave.
Toronto ON M6E 2V4
Tel.: 416-469 9754

info@fcjrefugeecentre.org



MISSION

FCJ Refugee Centre helps up-rooted people overcome the challenges of rebuilding their lives in Canadian society. With an open door approach, the Centre offers an integrated model of refugee protection, settlement services and education, including shelter for women and their children.

MANDATE

The FCJ Refugee Centre has a mandate to assist refugees and other uprooted people in re-establishing their lives and integrating into Canadian society by:

- Offering inclusive and timely counseling and support, including interpretation, referral to legal assistance, employment training, programs on Canadian culture and life, and other educational workshops
- Providing temporary shelter for women and children
- Collaborating with relevant organizations to deliver popular education about the protection of the human rights and dignity of up-rooted people.

MESSAGE OF THE CO-DIRECTORS

We are currently confronted with the most exclusionary immigration system since our doors opened nearly 25 years ago. We have witnessed a continued shift to impermanence, and a growing trend to commodify migrants, and consider them as disposable labour. The changes that continue to trickle down have set in motion a new Canada – one that continually excludes rather than welcomes refugees and other vulnerable migrant populations. For us to counter this, and continue to walk with uprooted people in this new landscape, we have needed to become stronger, more resourceful and more creative.

Looking back on 2014, we want to highlight the successes of our Centre during this year, rather than focus on the negative. And remember that we have so much more to celebrate as these successes happened against a backdrop of negative rhetoric and exclusionary policy changes. First and foremost, we celebrate the fact that our dedicated team continued to work diligently to provide a wide-range of services to refugees and other uprooted populations. In fact, we touched more lives in 2014 than ever before, as more than 5,000 people walked through our doors. And of course, we could not do this work without working collaboratively with our growing network of community partners. And we are proud to say that this network grew significantly last year. We not only continued our work coordinating the efforts of the Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network, but we also joined the committee of the LGBTQ+ Settlement Network (with whom we marched in the PRIDE parade with), and started the Toronto Precarious Status Youth Network. We also continued to grow our networks internationally as well. Just as one example we travelled to Bulgaria in the spring of last year, and completed a report on the situation on Syrian refugees.

We have also had great cause for celebration within our own small office. The FCJ Youth Network continued to welcome more members and participate in many different activities, including leading our annual anti-trafficking forum (which focused on how trafficking impacts youth), running the new Dance Steps, Life Skills program, and helping to organize the annual Youth Action Gathering for the Canadian Council for Refugees' Youth Network. In addition to this we started to work closely with the Inner-City Health Association, which allowed us to expand our in-house clinic and serve more precarious migrant people who face challenges in accessing appropriate healthcare. We also had our first graduating class of Uprooted U, which showed us how this program filled an important gap for newcomer students who cannot access Post-Secondary Education. We also celebrated Francisco's inclusion in the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, a much needed renovation of one of our transitional houses, a new van, and the list goes on.

All of these successes have made it clear to us that our feet are firmly planted in a wonderful and wide-reaching community of organizations and individuals that are proud to protect refugees and uprooted people – and we aren't going anywhere! We will look forward with this same positivity and courage, and hope that the next year is bright.

Loly Rico
Co-director
FCJ Refugee Centre

Francisco Rico-Martinez
Co-director
FCJ Refugee Centre



SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

One of the core services we provide is the transitional housing program for recently arrived women and their children. Through the year we provided temporary house to 30 women and children. A transitional housing worker visits the houses to build community offering support in the areas they need: support with medical appointments and other vital settlement needs such as opening a bank account, language classes, etc.



The recent and on-going changes to the immigration laws and procedures have left many women with precarious situations. When they fail their refugee claim they are left with no access to health care, no English classes, no work permit, no social assistance, etc. The number of residents in our houses in such situations has increased.

EMPLOYMENT AND LIFE SKILLS FOR NEWLY ARRIVED WOMEN

Through this program FCJ refugee Centre was able to develop and deliver essential skills and employment training for newly arrived women. At the end of the year we provided 15 sessions for the residents at the houses. The workshops were delivered every Monday at FCJ Refugee Centre. Beside the workshops, we also provided individual sessions for employment counselling and job search support. The program also allowed us to increase the capacity of volunteerism for newly arrived women.

We also organized a lot of fieldtrips with our residents and they were very happy to get exposed to new places such as the Maple Leaf Farm, where they were able to see how the maple syrup is processed. Also the trip to a cottage in Bancroft, a town located on the York River in Hastings. Also they were able to go to short fieldtrips like High Park, the Toronto Island, Harbourfront, etc.

ENGLISH CLASSES (*English Language Learning*)

Thanks to the contribution of volunteers we were able to keep open the English classes on Saturdays. The English teachers have helped the ELL program evolve to a more structured and stable program. In the last quarter of 2014, a teacher's feedback resulted in the implementation of a workbook which has been extremely beneficial to the administration of the program and efficiency of the class. We have also seen in the last quarter of 2014 an increase in volunteer interest, which is going to open the opportunity to use assistants and potentially develop sub-projects/programs within the ELL program.



“Even though I have only been attending English classes for a short time, I feel welcomed and supported. The fact of being here with no more family than my husband and kids it is very important that this organization make us feel comfortable like we are at home. I thank you for the support you gave me learning English.” Nelly



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE'S PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CLINIC

A lot of improvements happened at the FCJ Refugee Centre's Primary Health Care Clinic. After celebrating the second anniversary of the opening, we are proud to say that our clinic is receiving a trial period of funding from the Inner City Health Associates (ICHA). As a result of this funding, a new physician and a nurse practitioner joined our team and our clinic hours increased since the fall.

Primary Health Care team currently includes our primary physician, Dr. Jim Sugiyama, three volunteer doctors and one nurse practitioner. Currently, our Primary Health Care Clinic is open every other Saturday, with the exception of long weekends, from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

As part of the improvements we strengthen our partnership with CultureLink. Our Partnership objective is to provide internationally trained professionals with industry-specific experience in a Canadian setting. This initiative, known as the Mentoring for Professionals Program, provides internationally trained medical professionals with a volunteer opportunity to gain industry-specific experience through a mentorship relationship with a Canadian doctor in FCJ Refugee Centre's Primary Care Clinic.

We are in our second term of providing this program to newcomers and we are very excited for the new mentees involved in our program. Through 2014 we had 6 motivated and highly-skilled mentees who were assisting our Centre in providing health care services using our holistic health model approach to those who have precarious status and are unable to access health care in Canada.

In addition to their clinical responsibilities, our mentees are providing bi-weekly health workshops on various topics, such as Healthy Eating on a Limited Budget and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, in order to educate newcomers on ways of taking care of themselves mentally and physically. Being newcomers themselves, our program has also assisted the mentees in their integration in Canada as they are learning about the health care system in Canada and about the employment opportunities available to them in their professional fields. We look forward to the next term with our mentees.

ACCESSIBLE HEALTH FOR UPROOTED WOMEN PROGRAM

Thanks to the support of Catherine Donnelly Foundation we managed to provide a series of presentations focused on health issues. The project was successfully implemented for residents of our transitional houses and clients. As we were expecting, the primary beneficiaries of the Accessible Health for Uprooted Women Project were women and their children living in FCJ Refugee Centre's transitional houses and women who came to our agency looking for settlement services. The first phase of the project involved training the team, promoting the project and producing educational material. One of the most significant aspects during the implementation of this program was the strengthening of our Primary Care Clinic and Mental Health Clinic, with the participation of many volunteers, including internationally trained medical professionals. In addition we strengthened and expanded our network of healthcare providers for precarious migrant populations. Our contacts with organizations that provide healthcare to precarious migrants increased as they started to learn about our holistic response to health issues. We shared this information providing ongoing support for management, staff and frontline workers in various areas associated with health services.

YOUTH NETWORK

The Youth Network has witnessed a continuous increment in new members on a weekly basis. It has been an amazing start of the year so far with the youth as involved as always. The youth have been involved in a lot of activities through the year.



Devin K. MacDonald

Since coming to volunteer at the refugee centre I have come to some realizations. Before I came to the FCJ refugee centre, I thought that the reason to travel was to gain a sense of adventure. I now realize that many people leave their places of birth in order to flee from persecution. I used to think that applying for status in another country was as simple as checking boxes on a form. I now realize that doing this in Canada entails a complex process that is nearly impossible to navigate through without prior experience, let alone in a second a language. I used to think that the refugee system was fair and just. I now realize that newcomers to Canada are in a vulnerable and precarious situation that the system does not fully appreciate nor take into account. Having been born in a secure environment such as Canada, I will never fully understand the experience of the newcomer; however, my time at the FCJ Refugee Centre has been eye-opening and has helped me better appreciate the newcomer's situation.



With the generous support of the Law Foundation of Ontario, and ArtReach Toronto, the FCJ Youth Network focused their energies in “the Art Between Us” – an artistic and creative endeavour for newcomer and precarious status youth. This program provided an opportunity for members of the youth network to build on their previous experience and work to imagine new ways to access justice and achieve a more equitable participation in Canadian society.

The program involved several professional mentors and community leaders to facilitate knowledge sharing and skill development. The project culminated in several projects and public events, including the Seneca College Immigrant and Refugee Forum, the Canadian Council for Refugee’s Youth Action Gathering, as well as the production of an original song and several artistic pieces.

The youth delivered workshops at the SENECA College and U of T students on community development, focusing on the issue of Access to Education. This was an engaging and participatory workshop with the U of T students which built up leadership and presentation skills in the youth.

Another tool the Youth Network developed to create awareness about the barriers in education is the NO LEDGE film, launched at the beginning of the year. The film is addressed to everyone, but particularly to counselors, guidance and decision makers in the educational field. The film explores some of the barriers and impacts experienced by precarious migrant youth populations in accessing secondary and post-secondary education in Ontario. The FCJ Youth network also got involved with activities around the black history month and lot of other activities to understand the black history and celebrate the event. Areas ranged from spoken word to theatre to digital and media arts, and offered participants a unique mechanism to voice their concerns and raise greater awareness of issues that are impacting them. Not only did this program allow the group to continue to grow and welcome more youth, but also provided opportunities for wider community and social connection. Art has now become an integral part of the youth network, and offers an additional tool to respond to important issues, such as barriers faced in accessing education, employment and mental health.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUND

The Youth Employment Fund is a program that allowed FCJ Refugee Centre to connect youth with job opportunities at our Centre. Since this program was implemented, three members of the youth network were beneficiaries of this program. One of them is Treisy Rivera who shared with us her experience:

My name is Treisy Rivera. Over the last four months, I had the great opportunity to work at FCJ Refugee Centre under the Youth Employment Fund. I came twice a week for 15 hours and worked in the reception area assisting with client cases. This wonderful opportunity has given me a lot of knowledge and skills for my future career as a refugee lawyer.

UPROOTED YOUTH

With the generous support of the Counselling Foundation of Canada, the FCJ Refugee Centre launched Uprooted U in May 2014. This educational program was designed specifically to address the current gaps in access to post-secondary education for precarious status youth.

Our Uprooted U project is designed to offer post-secondary level education to precarious status youth who are barred access to higher education because of their immigration status or other intersecting obstacles. Classes offer students two hours of class time, in addition to external learning opportunities and the prospect of working with a mentor in their area of interest. Through the year we had 2 different groups of students and numerous enthusiastic professors eager to share not only their time, but also their expertise with our students.



The professors were recruited from the University of Toronto, York University and Seneca College, as well as among community experts, offering a different topic each week. These classes were accompanied by ongoing skills development in Critical thinking, reading, and writing. The students also had the opportunity to gain public speaking

Francois Régis Dushimiyimana

As a newcomer refugee you face a lot of obstacles, leaving everything behind to come to a new country, being new to the system and mostly being alone. But one of the biggest obstacles is access to education. I was very fortunate to be part of the Uprooted U program. I never thought that I would ever sit in a class and learn again. But being part of Uprooted U made me feel like I was in school again, sitting in class and learning again; having classmates and lots of homework and essays to write.



skills, offering presentations on the issue of access to education and Uprooted U to an undergraduate class at U of T and another at York. They are not only building their own capabilities, but are also raising awareness of this important issue.

While student participation has fluctuated, it is clear that for many of the students, Uprooted U has offered the opportunity to continue their education in a way they did not believe possible in Canada. As has been stated many times, having homework, even if they don't always do it on time, makes them feel like they are really in school and moving forward towards their dreams.

DANCE STEPS, LIFE SKILLS

The program was successfully implemented. Over the last year, newcomer youth have been exposed to various dance styles, such as Modern, Hip Hop, Ballet, Jazz, African Fusion, and Breakdance. In addition, the youth were provided with a space that recognized and appreciated their diverse cultural backgrounds as the youth were able to share their traditional dance styles, while developing their leadership and self-confidence skills. Most importantly, the youth were actively involved in building an inclusive and positive space – a space that they could call their own.

Through this program, the youth were also given the opportunity to showcase their artistic talents by performing at several community events, including FCJ Refugee Centre's Holiday Party and Black History Month at the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre.

IMMIGRATION HELP AND REFUGEE PROTECTION

The constant changes and new regulations experienced through 2014 have created a lot of confusion and frustration with the clients we serve. Due to the changes we have seen an increase in other types of applications.

We are seeing more international students, more foreign workers and an increase in services for clients with no status either in the sponsorship applications or in humanitarian applications. Citizenship and Immigration Canada overhauled the foreign students program without any warning to applicants, therefore we had a lot of clients who were eligible to change their status within Canada and found themselves unable to continue their status in Canada.

We then had the over haul of the foreign worker program which resulted in applications being submitted for a labour market opinion and being returned although submitted before the changes, because without warning they temporarily stopped receiving applications.

Clients were left with higher thresholds to meet and applications being 4 times as

expensive, making employers less likely to continue. The biggest hurdle we have had to deal with was the change of dependency age from under 22 to under 19. We have seen first-hand how families have been separated as their applications were not processed in time to be able to apply for their older children.

Through 2014 we have had the highest number of student placement and volunteers to the point that we had several days where the office was so crowded that we had to keep a waiting list for new incoming volunteers. Although the government seems to close the doors, the community support is outstanding and a good tool to use to continue helping to walk with uprooted people.

POPULAR EDUCATION

The FCJ Refugee Centre has held and participated in many empowering and educational workshops. We offer and participate in these workshops as a commitment to our social justice and championing the rights of the vulnerable populations. Through the year, we provided 76 workshops with a total of 2283 participants.

IMMIGRATION HELP AND REFUGEE PROTECTION PROVIDED DURING 2014

MONTH	REFUGEE PROCESS ORIENTATION	IMMIGRATION SERVICES: H&C, SPONSORSHIP, WORK PERMITS, ETC.	INTAKES AND GENERAL ORIENTATION
JANUARY	69	240	136
FEBRUARY	21	223	100
MARCH	44	194	109
APRIL	33	157	72
MAY	34	223	104
JUNE	39	224	126
JULY	23	217	117
AUGUST	25	131	55
SEPTEMBER	10	178	85
OCTOBER	1	105	55
NOVEMBER	16	134	77
DECEMBER	2	25	11
TOTAL	317	2051	1047



More than the half of the presentations were focused on the impact of immigration changes on vulnerable sectors in the different areas. The workshops covered a variety of topics including, the Refugee Hearing Process, Refugee Health Cuts, Access to Services, Sponsorship and humanitarian applications changes, Underserved Communities: LGBTQ+ Migration Population, Legal Rights, Anti-Oppressive Practice, etc.

Through the presentations we describe step by step every change that has been made so far, and their implications for vulnerable populations. Some of the most requested presentations were the Citizenship & Immigration Changes for Exclusion and Underserved Communities LGBTQ+ Migration Population.

Thanks to the support of UNIFOR we will continued providing information from a client-centered perspective, equipping individuals with the resources necessary to overcome the various barriers they face as newcomers.

READY TOUR

The Ready Tour was officially launched on Refugee Rights Day in 2014. Through the year, a total of 15 Ready Tours where organized and 153 refugee claimants benefited from the informative sessions. The refugees were from the following countries: Afghanistan, Nigeria, Tanzania, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Arabia Saudi, Syria, Mexico, Uzbekistán, Colombia, Uganda, St Lucia, Kenya, Eritrea, etc. Beside asylum seekers, Ready Tour also welcomed around 70 observers from service provider agencies, students and other organizations who work with refugees. To facilitate the promotion and registrations process we developed a website, registrations forms, flyers and evaluations.

*"I feel more relax after seeing the hearing room",
"The fact of knowing more about the documents I need to submit helped me a lot"
"I do not have a lawyer and this information helped me to be better prepared"*

NEWCOMER SETTLEMENT PROGRAM PROJECT

For third consecutive year FCJ Refugee Centre has been receiving some funding through the Newcomer Settlement Program of Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade (MCIIT). The program provides one-time project funding to pilot innovative service delivery models/approaches for newcomer groups with unique and complex settlement needs as well as newcomers in rural, remote and northern communities. The unique services FCJ Refugee Centre provides are fulfilling a unique composition of needs through this project, directed to vulnerable newcomers including non-status and victims/survivors of human trafficking. We have served more clients and provided more one-to-one services than anticipated. Given the population we serve, it is challenging to prioritize vulnerabilities.

Through this program we also provided numerous workshops to multiple service providing agencies to increase their awareness on barriers facing precarious migrants in accessing vital services as well as to share FCJ Refugee Centre's unique service provision model. Among the most demanded topics for workshops were human trafficking as well as the recent changes to the Canadian immigration and refugee law and policies.

BREAKING BARRIERS, GAINING ACCESS PROJECT.

FCJ Refugee Centre was appointed by the City of Toronto to develop tools that allow us to improve awareness and sensitivity of plight of non-status and precarious migrant populations among frontline workers in different areas in Toronto; enhance access and ease of service use for these populations. An important element of this project is to include the voice and concerns of the community. Responding to community needs, the FCJ Refugee Centre developed a training program for frontline workers in Toronto that serve non-status and precarious migrant populations. We started to do interviews, and focus groups with non -status populations in order to collect their experiences in accessing city services. We incorporated their point of view in the Breaking Barriers training that we are currently offering to the City of Toronto staff.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

FCJ Refugee Centre with the support of the Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network continue the promotion and implementation of the Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Model for Response. The Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Response Model is an integrated model of service provision and is based on collaborative efforts of all stakeholders providing response in Toronto such as non-government agencies, law enforcement, and community



members among others. Many stakeholders informed the development of the model including service providing agencies, community members, survivors, academics. Through 2014 we organized three roundtables which brought together multifaceted stakeholders to initiate a dialog for cooperation because no organization or agency can address human trafficking alone. With the financial support of the City of Toronto we are continuing our work on the human trafficking response model and its promotion in community agencies in the City. The project will run until the end of 2015. You can visit our BlogSpot for more information about the Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network and our latest events: <http://torontocounterhumantraffickingnet.wordpress.com/>

FINANCIAL REPORT

FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND DEFICIENCY YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2014

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014-15

Bonnie Moser FCJ
Lois Anne Bordowitz, FCJ,
Chair
Martha Crean
Mary Halder
Edward Hyland, Treasurer
Elizabeth McIsaac, Vice-Chair
Adela Crossley
Jessica Morales Molina
Indika Kottegoda, Secretary
Fidaa Shehada
Jehad Aliweiwi

	2014	2013
Revenues		
Donations		
Individual donations	\$ 24,985	\$ 15,397
Religious organizations (note 7)	124,520	95,770
Foundations	159,135	191,643
Government grants	242,663	160,331
Rent	57,133	67,001
Other	20,498	10,308
	628,934	540,450
Expenses		
Legal program	103,634	75,871
Popular education	96,505	102,592
Settlement program	174,243	144,524
Research and development	26,410	57,629
Administration	221,082	156,414
	621,874	537,030
Excess of revenues over expenses for the year	7,060	3,420
Deficiency - at beginning of year	(16,867)	(20,287)
Deficiency - at end of year	\$ (9,807)	\$ (16,867)