

SPRING NEWSLETTER

FCJ Refugee Centre



NEWCOMERS DAY 2024



**REFUGEE RIGHTS DAY RALLY
+ MARCH 2024**





The FCJ Refugee Centre Anti-Human Trafficking team

SURVIVOR-CENTERED APPROACHES ENHANCE WELLBEING OF MIGRANT YOUTH IN ONTARIO

In Ontario, survivor-centered approaches are making a notable difference in the lives of migrant youth affected by human trafficking and gender-based violence.

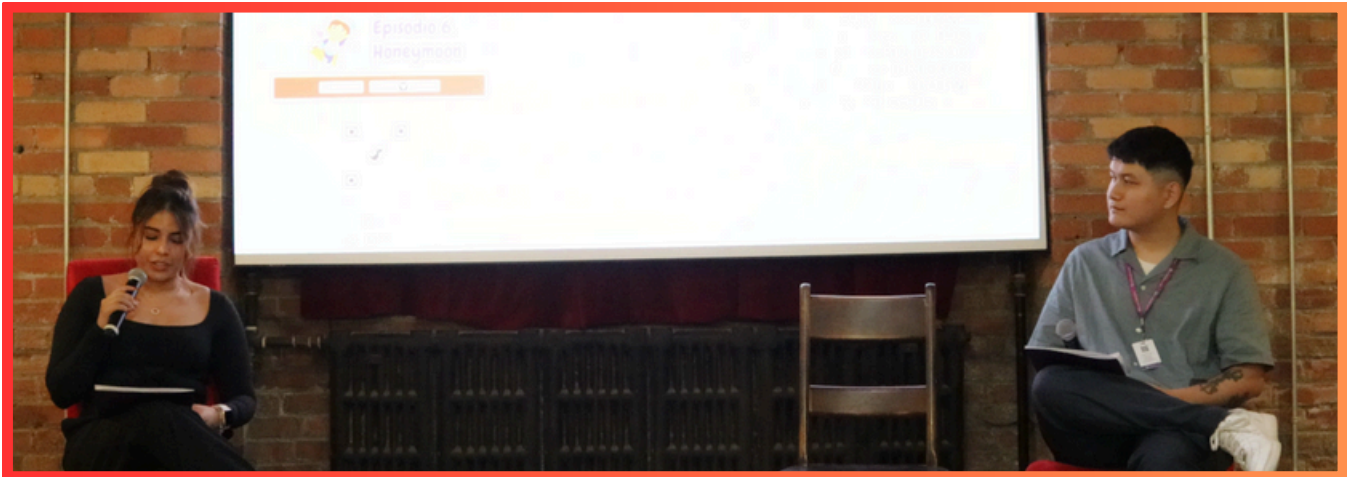
A recent study conducted by the FCJ Refugee Centre reveals the profound impact these approaches have on young migrants under the age of 25.

The study, involving 17 migrant youth participants, underscores the critical importance of empathetic, trauma-informed care. Many participants reported that while 53% found support services useful, a significant number did not receive any assistance due to language and cultural barriers. The lack of empathetic communication from service providers was highlighted as a major obstacle to effective support.

One of the most pressing needs identified was for basic necessities like housing and food security. The study emphasizes that addressing these needs is fundamental to fostering a sense of safety and stability among migrant youth. Unfortunately, inadequate follow-up from service providers left many participants feeling neglected and unsupported after their initial contact.

The research also pointed out specific challenges faced by young migrant women affected by gender-based violence. Cultural misunderstandings, mistrust of service providers, and inadequate follow-up care were significant issues that hindered their access to necessary support.





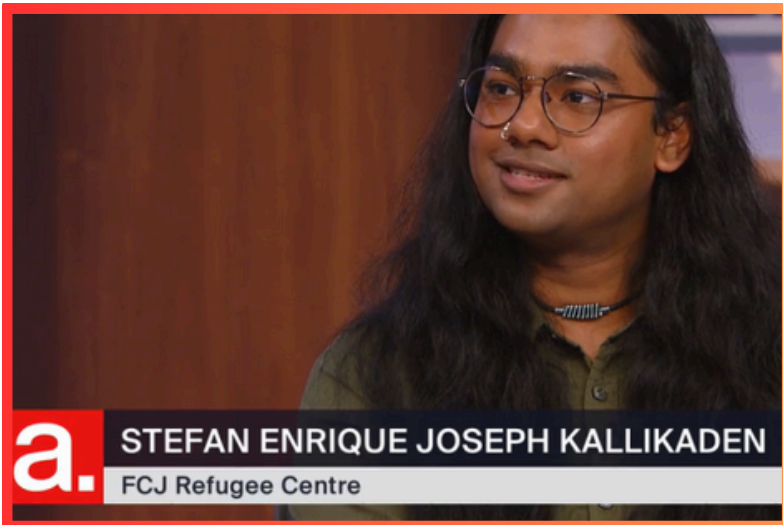
The FCJ Refugee Centre Anti-Human Trafficking team hosted the panel/workshop 'Building Safety & Support: A Survivor-Led Approach to Gender-Based Violence & Human Trafficking,' in which they presented two important survivor-led researches conducted by the Centre: 'Exploring the Impact of Survivor-Centered Approaches on the Well-Being of Youth Human Trafficking Survivors in Ontario: A Qualitative Study,' and 'Best Practices Report For Service Delivery to Women Who Have Lived Through Human Trafficking.'

To tackle these challenges, the study recommends establishing support groups and community activities to improve mental health and create a sense of community. It also calls for making services accessible regardless of immigration status and overcoming language barriers through initiatives like language classes. A holistic approach that addresses financial challenges and provides culturally competent, trauma-informed care is essential. Additionally, enhanced communication and collaboration between different organizations can lead to a more effective support system.

Survivor-centered approaches, which prioritize treating each survivor with dignity and building trust, are vital for addressing the complex needs of migrant youth. By focusing on empathetic, trauma-informed care and ensuring that services are accessible and collaborative, significant improvements can be made in the wellbeing of these vulnerable populations.

The FCJ Refugee Centre's study concludes that ongoing advocacy and refinement of support mechanisms are crucial for creating a supportive environment that promotes healing and resilience among migrant youth in Ontario.

IS ENOUGH BEING DONE TO SUPPORT CANADA'S "DREAMERS"?



Stefan Enrique Joseph Kallikaden, Youth and Access to Education Coordinator at FCJ Refugee Centre, talked about undocumented youth at the TVO program 'The Agenda with Steve Paikin.'
[Click here to watch it](#)

For over 20 years, countless individuals in Toronto have lived in the shadows of society, facing the daily challenges of being undocumented. Unable to work legally, drive a car, attend post-secondary education, or even see a doctor, these individuals navigate a world where basic rights and opportunities are out of reach. Their stories, often untold and overlooked.

Sarah Pole, Program Director – Childhood Arrivals Support & Advocacy Program (CASA), sheds light on the struggles of undocumented individuals extend beyond legal status to encompass everyday life.

Unable to work legally, she says, many turn to cash-based or under-the-table jobs to survive. Education becomes a challenge, with opportunities often arising through loopholes or oversight in the system. The constant fear of deportation looms large, shaping every interaction with authorities and limiting access to essential services like healthcare.

Despite these challenges, undocumented individuals demonstrate remarkable resilience and resourcefulness. They rely on support networks within their communities for both emotional and practical assistance. However, the psychological toll of living in constant fear and uncertainty cannot be overstated, leading to anxiety, depression, and PTSD among undocumented youth.



Education, a fundamental right for all children under the Ontario Education Act, remains a beacon of hope for undocumented youth. However, implementation varies, with gaps between policy and practice. Access to post-secondary education is further complicated by financial barriers, legal restrictions, and the fear of deportation.

Stefan Enrique Joseph Kallikaden, Youth and Access to Education Coordinator at FCJ Refugee Centre, emphasizes the importance of understanding each individual's long-term goals and supporting their educational aspirations. Initiatives like the Sanctuary Scholars Program at York University provide opportunities for undocumented individuals to pursue higher education.

The need for a regularization policy for undocumented immigrants is evident, providing clarity and security for those living with uncertain immigration status. However, concerns remain about the inclusivity of such pathways and the potential for exploitation or manipulation, especially among young people without familial support.

The need for a regularization policy for undocumented immigrants is evident, providing clarity and security for those living with uncertain immigration status.

In conclusion, the stories of undocumented youth in Canada are stories of resilience and perseverance in the face of adversity. As we continue to engage in dialogue and advocacy, it is crucial to amplify their voices, challenge societal stigmas, and advocate for policies that uphold their rights and dignity.

Only through greater awareness and action can we build a more just and inclusive society for all.

FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE ALERTS SENATE TO INCREASED PRECARITY FROM PROPOSED IMMIGRATION AMENDMENTS

For over 30 years, the FCJ Refugee Centre has been a vital resource for uprooted individuals in Canada. With its holistic and open-door approach, the Centre provides essential support to refugees, migrant workers, international students, and survivors of human trafficking, helping them access justice and rebuild their lives. Services include legal advice, assistance with legal aid applications, and transitional housing for women and children. As an active member of the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), the Centre is deeply involved in advocacy efforts, with Co-Executive Director Diana Gallego currently serving as CCR President.

Recently, Sharry Aiken, President of the Board of Directors representing the FCJ Refugee Centre, voiced significant concerns regarding proposed amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA).



Sharry Aiken, President of FCJ Refugee Centre's Board of Directors, spoke at the Senate of Canada about the proposed amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. [Click here to watch it](#)

These amendments, included in the Budget Implementation Act (BIA), could potentially undermine Canadian asylum procedures and increase legal uncertainties for vulnerable individuals.



Key Concerns and Recommendations:

1. Lack of Transparency and Safeguards:

- Concern: The proposed changes could be implemented without clear details on the process or adequate safeguards for refugees.
- Recommendation: The government should table the proposed regulations for public review and allow input through Parliamentary hearings.

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2. Efficiency Measures Leading to Delays:

- Concern: Streamlining measures might lead to backlogs and long delays, leaving claimants in limbo and unable to support family members entering Canada.
- Recommendation: Introduce regulations that provide sufficient time for claimants to access legal counsel and offer flexibility for missed deadlines. Establish transparent deadlines for the government's review process.

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3. Increase in Abandonment Proceedings:

- Concern: The amendments could result in more abandonment proceedings due to simple errors, increasing precarity for vulnerable claimants.
- Recommendation: Amend the requirement from the Minister "must" refer missed deadlines to "may" to align with current IRB processes.

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4. Designated Foreign Nationals (DFNs):

- Concern: The inclusion of DFN provisions, which impose automatic detention and restrict rights, contradicts the values of equal justice.
- Recommendation: Eliminate all references to DFNs from IRPA, following the repeal of Designated Countries of Origin provisions.

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The FCJ Refugee Centre remains steadfast in its advocacy to ensure the rights and wellbeing of uprooted people are safeguarded, promoting a fair and just immigration system in Canada.

WELCOMING OUR SUMMER STUDENTS

We are happy to introduce and welcome our talented summer students to the FCJ Refugee Centre. Get to know them!

DENISE ZHU

Denise Zhu is a 2L student at Osgoode Hall Law School with an interest in immigration, refugee, and family law.

Prior to law school, Denise completed her studies in English, Creative Writing, and the School for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities at Western University. She is one of two law students working at the

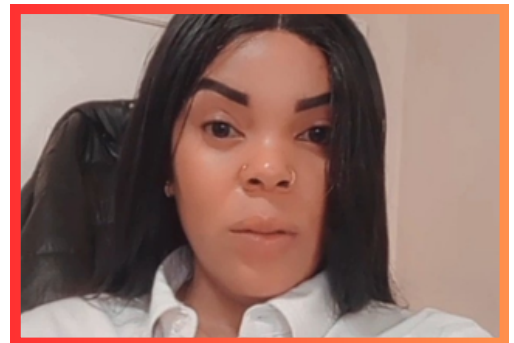
FCJ Refugee Centre this summer, where she supports the team with drafting Humanitarian & Compassionate applications, preparing clients for refugee hearings, conducting legal research, filling out Basis of Claim forms, and anything else they might need support with.

She is super excited to join the FCJ Refugee Centre community, learn, and help as many uprooted people as she can during her placement.



FAUSTINA NANAKPARO

Faustina Nanakparo is currently enrolled in a course at St. Stephen's Employment and Training Center, focusing on Customer Care and Customer Training. She has recently joined FCJ Refugee Centre as a summer student, where she supports clients on a daily basis with their intakes and refers them to the appropriate programs to receive the support they need.



NIAH

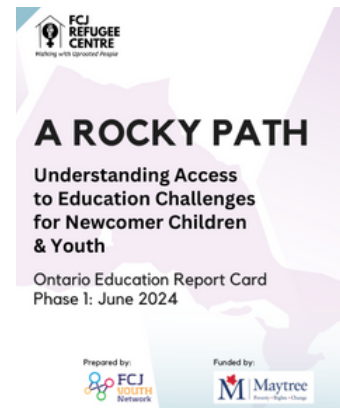
Niah is one of the two law students completing a placement at the FCJ Refugee Centre this summer. She has completed an undergraduate degree in Political Science and Economics, and is going into her last year of law school at the University of Ottawa this September. She hopes to pursue a career in immigration and refugee law. This summer, she is excited to be working at the FCJ Refugee Centre on drafting legal documents in support of H&C, refugee, protected persons, and temporary resident permit applications."

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Rocky Path: Understanding Access to Education Challenges for Newcomer Children & Youth

The FCJ Youth Network and Access to Education team are excited to announce the launch of *A ROCKY PATH: Understanding Access to Education Challenges for Newcomer Children & Youth*. This event aims to highlight the difficulties newcomer families in Ontario face in accessing education at all levels. It will also provide a platform to discuss actionable steps towards improvement.

- June 14, 2024



Webinar | Youth and the UN Sustainable Development Goals: Dialogue With Decision-Makers

Join us for the second webinar in this collaborative youth action and take the next big step towards a greener and more sustainable Canada! Led by passionate newcomer youth.

- June 20, 2024: 5 pm
- Online Via Zoom

Street Party

Don't miss out on our annual street party! Come and join us, meet new people, and have some fun. Enjoy amazing food and watch the talented performers.

- June 15, 2024, from 12 pm to 6 pm
- 208 Oakwood Ave, Toronto, ON M6E 2V4



Art For Everyone, Status For All: Art Show & Benefit

Join us for an amazing art show and help us fundraise for refugees! In the context of World Refugee Day (June 20), and with the theme "Art For Everyone, Status for All."

- June 28, 2024: 10 am to 9 pm (Opening Ceremony at 5 pm)
- June 29, 2024: 11 am to 6 pm
- 60 Lowther Ave, Toronto, ON M5R 1C7

WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS

SCHEDULE FOR REFUGEE HEARING ORIENTATIONS

A free program for refugee claimants

REFUGEE HEARING ORIENTATIONS

Every other Thursday, 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

JUN 6 **JUN 20** **AUG 8** **AUG 22**

JUL 4 **JUL 18** **SEP 5** **SEP 12**

You will learn:

- What a virtual refugee hearing is
- How to be prepared
- What to expect, who participates

A great opportunity to meet the RPD officers who will explain what is going to happen during your refugee hearing and how to be ready.

FCJ Refugee Centre

NEW ONLINE FORM TO BOOK WORKSHOPS AND WEBINARS

Responding to community needs, we provide workshops, virtual information sessions and webinars for front-line workers that serve vulnerable newcomer sectors, non-status and precarious migrant populations, and also for settlement agencies and for refugees.

To book a session with us please check the website:
<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/workshops>

Or fill out this form
<https://www.fcjrefugeecentre.org/workshop-request>




EMPOWERING REFUGEE WOMEN: FOSTERING RESILIENCE AND CREATIVITY THROUGH ART AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

We are thrilled to announce that the FCJ Refugee Centre has been awarded a grant by the World Day of Prayer offerings for the project "Empowering Refugee Women: Fostering Resilience and Creativity through Art and Recreational Activities." We sincerely thank the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC) for their continuous support and generosity.

This grant aims to empower refugee women in transitional housing through art and recreational activities, with goals of fostering resilience, creativity, and cultural understanding. These objectives will be achieved through workshops and events led by qualified instructors, providing a supportive environment for skill development and personal growth.



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