

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE
Walking with uprooted people

MESSAGE FROM CO-DIRECTORS

THROUGH OPEN DOORS, BUILDING BRIDGES
TO A MORE EQUITABLE SOCIETY.
ONE UPROOTED FAMILY AT A TIME

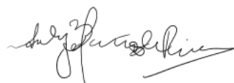
At this time, we have few words to offer you. This has undoubtedly been a year of momentous change, and so at this time we feel it is more important than ever to allow our work speak for itself. We invite you to read this report, to see all that we have achieved together.

True transparency – about our successes and our challenges – is how we say thank you. Thank you for your solidarity. Thank you for your commitment. Thank you for continuing to walk with uprooted people.

As always, count on us. Our door is open.



Francisco Rico-Martinez
Co-Director



LolyRico
Co-Director

MISSION

FCJ Refugee Centre helps uprooted 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.

SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION

Our Settlement and Integration Program has been busier than ever. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we continued to offer our services, moving to remote service delivery.

Through remote work practices we've fielded more than 12,000 phone calls; each of which were connected to a service, referral or other form of support.



HOUSING & WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

Through our housing team, we have continued to make connections with landlords and other housing workers in the community, developing best practices and supporting clients at the highest level. We have conducted numerous workshops with our Women's Program, empowering the development of skills to integrate and navigate life in Toronto in a holistic way.

Throughout the year, we have supported more than 50 clients to access emergency shelter, transitional housing and permanent housing.



First Entrepreneur Skills Meeting online. Maria Alejandra Ramirez and Elizabeth Ibarra facilitating the meeting.

Many of these clients have been single mums, with young children. Similarly to the rest of our community, the women in our houses and women's programs are diverse and we celebrate the cultures and traditions they bring with them. Many of these women are from Jamaica, Zimbabwe, Bahamas, Colombia, Mexico, Nigeria, India, Mozambique, El Salvador, Republic of Congo, Hungary and Cuba.

Over the course of 2020, we have had 28 women, and 7 children living in our Transitional Houses – many if not most of

these women have fled circumstances of gender persecution, including domestic violence, human trafficking and sexual assault. Many of them are working to regularize their status in Canada through asylum claims and Humanitarian & Compassionate applications. While dealing with precarious status, the ability to have a safe home is literally life saving.

We also provide programs for women to develop financial literacy and microskills through our Women's Program Coordinator, and participate in arts and culture programming.

SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION

PANDEMIC
RESPONSE**PANDEMIC RESPONSE:****FOOD DISTRIBUTION AND
SECURITY INCOME**

This year, we can think of no greater value than “Our Door Is Always Open”. This has been a year in which we have been given the opportunity to showcase tangible support for our community, in greater ways than ever before.

This has been a landmark year for the recognition of all people living in Toronto – not only those with the privilege of immigration status. All people have been devastated by the impact of Covid-19, but none more so than precarious migrants – most of whom are racialized, and face various forms of discrimination. One of our landmark achievements has been in the provision of emergency supports to precarious migrants. With the help of many supporters, we have had the opportunity to provide food and income security

**ENGLISH AS A SECOND
LANGUAGE CLASS**

Language is one of the main barriers for precarious populations, for whom English is not their first language. Since we moved everything on-line, a big part of this group of English students are mothers who were at home with their children, looking for activities for their children and for themselves.



As part of our COVID-19 response we unified efforts to provide support to precarious migrants that do not have access to the emergency benefits.

1,100 individuals and almost 400 families received food baskets and emergency item kits on a weekly basis.



We collected and distributed art supplies for non-status children and we were so happy to find support letters from other kids in each of the art bags.

**RENT ASSISTANCE AND
GROCERY CARDS**

We delivered more than 800 grocery cards of \$100 (monthly) each distributed to households across the GTA. We supported 330 families by providing rent supplement.

**VIRTUAL COMMUNITY COOKING
CLASSES**

A professional chef provides the online cooking classes. using items from the same food distribution bags that families were receiving. Community members learned new recipes, encouraged a reduction in food waste, and connected with each other.

VIRTUAL ENGLISH CLASSES

Before the pandemic we had an English Class on Saturdays. Since last summer we switched to online classes, with the participation of 40 students. Since then, the number continued growing. So far we have 250 students.



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE

SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION

PANDEMIC
RESPONSE

Education enrollment support to more than 50 families, online school support for children waiting for enrollment or requiring additional support, as well as arts programming and engagement.

More than 32 students were referred to York University for the Bridging Program to Access to Education for precarious migrant students

YOUTH & ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Youth have always been at the heart and the core of all that we do at the FCJ Refugee Centre.

Our vision is to invest in Youth; to provide opportunities to amplify their voices, to increase engagement avenues, and to work together to build a better world. Our Youth Network welcomes youth from all over the world, many of whom are living in Toronto with very limited family or financial support, and navigating immigration processes while dealing with numerous systemic barriers due to race, age, socio-economic status, and of course immigration status (or lack thereof).

We continue to make contact with academic institutions and community partners to cultivate relationships in order to attempt to expand the Access to Education Program to additional academic institutions. We have continued to offer countless workshops, presentations and capacity building sessions throughout our community at partner organizations, shelters, and community centres.

PRIMARY CARE & MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

The clinic has remained standing during this pandemic. We have seen clients dealing with mental health issues, domestic violence situations, family separation challenges, etc. Through our open-door approach, we've been able to continue supporting them. We have managed to ensure that patients continue with medical care without interruptions as well as with constant medication for those in need of it.



UPROOTED U
Uprooted U was a 12 week course, led by a PhD student at York University – providing an introductory university level course to students who are waiting for the next step in their academic journey.

Over the year, we have seen more than 80 youth, and have seen our weekly youth network gatherings flourish and grow.



VIRTUAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES
MONTHLY FAMILY DINNERS: Even when we've been separated by the Pandemic, we've had our dinners by dropping off specially home made meals, delivering ingredients to cook meals together, and coming up with inventive cooking challenges.

PRIMARY AND METAL HEALTH CLINIC

Our Primary Care Clinic has seen 515 patients. The Mental Health Clinic supported almost 170 patients this year through a combination of in person and virtual appointments.



FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE

IMMIGRATION HELP & REFUGEE PROTECTION

We keep supporting people in each aspect of their regularization, and pathway to permanent residency.

Through the year we have seen a palpable shift in the nature of immigration support being sought by our community members.

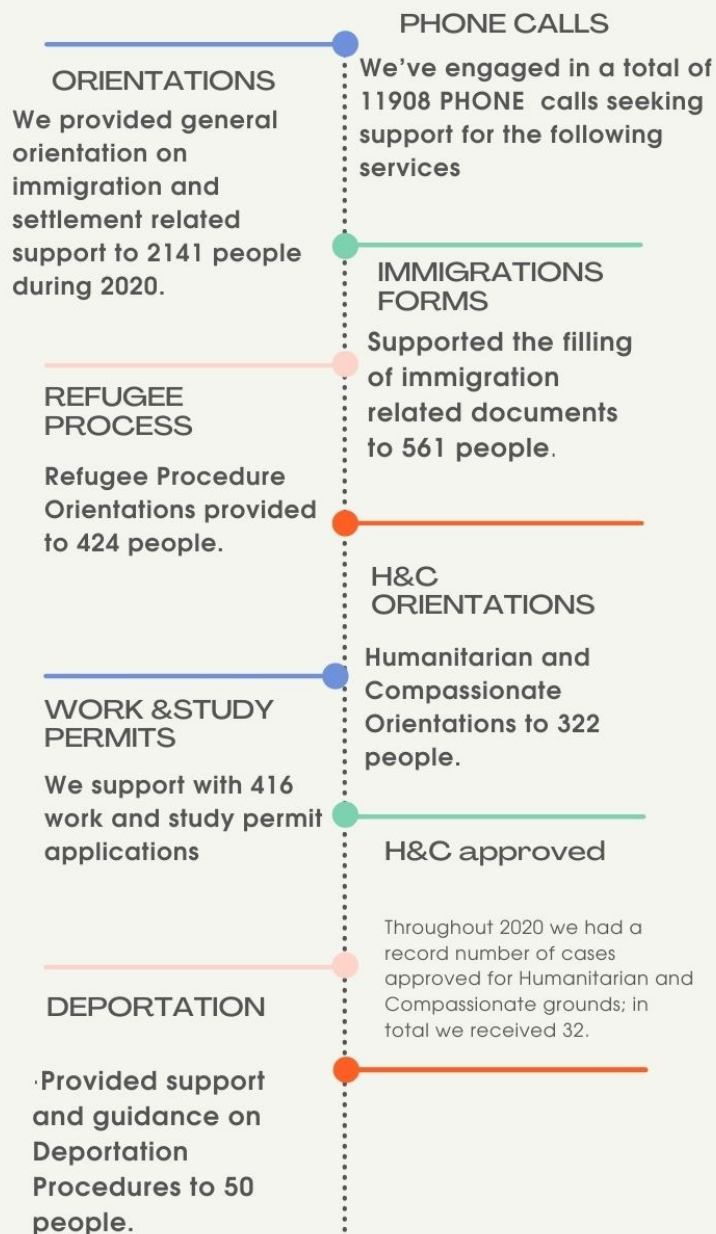
There has been an acute increase in support for Humanitarian & Compassionate applications as opposed to the increased Refugee Hearing preparation support that we have seen in recent years.

This is no doubt due to the shifting immigration regulations including the closing and opening of borders, and the reduction in travel. But we have also seen the ways in which our community members who hold some form of uncertain or precarious immigration status have been working tirelessly throughout the pandemic, while receiving so little in return.

Our inland protection team continued to provide immigration orientation over the phone, through video-conferencing and through additional virtual means. Through the year we established safe and secure processes for the signing and submission of immigration forms and documents, and preparing various immigration applications

Through remote work practices we've fielded more than 12,000 phone calls, each of which were connected to a service, referral or other form of support.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE



IMMIGRATION HELP & REFUGEE PROTECTION



SUCCESSFUL STORIES OF HUMANITARIAN AND COMPASSIONATE (H&C)APPLICATIONS

"Katrina" is a woman who came to Canada more than eight years ago, to work as a live-in caregiver, first working with young children, and then giving her love and professional expertise to supporting an older couple in their home.

She did all this with a family of her own in her home country, but always working towards a better and brighter future. After years of applications being denied for medical grounds due to the medical condition of one of her children, she came to the FCJ Refugee Centre for support.

Her story is one of inspiration because in spite of all the hardship, and personal tragedies, she has had to endure, she has not given up hope. She came to Canada with the zeal to work hard and provide not only financial support to her three children in her home country, but also to make herself an independent woman.

While she is thriving and continues to work to support herself, in May 2020, after fighting for so many years, she has received a positive decision for her Humanitarian & Compassionate Application.



ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING

For our Anti-Human Trafficking Program, we have had an exceptionally busy year, supporting 314 cases of human trafficking, with a focus on international cases of labour exploitation.

We have provided support to victims and survivors of labour and sexual exploitation, and have acted as representatives, liaising with Police, OPP and CBSA when clients are feeling particularly vulnerable and exploited.

We continue to provide information and support on the immigration and refugee process, along with ways to identify and support a survivor of human trafficking, in cases of both labour and sexual exploitation. We have continued to build capacity with other organizations, specifically in rural areas of Ontario to support the diverse needs of human trafficking survivors. This work has not been halted by the pandemic. As with all other program areas, we have transitioned to providing support through phone and video conferencing, and providing information to community members and partners alike.

Our work has been instrumental in creating more awareness around labour trafficking and supporting communities that are often excluded from human trafficking discussions, such as migrant workers and international students. We have also increased capacity to identify cases of human trafficking and labour exploitation within each program area in our office, as we see these challenges becoming more and more pervasive. It has always been our goal that the FCJ Refugee Centre is a place that provides holistic, wrap-around service to all people. The importance of identifying exploitative practices, and signs of human trafficking are so critical for all of our staff, volunteers and students so as to provide the highest level of support and care to this vulnerable population.



A MIGRANT WORKER STORY

Among the cases we supported through 2020, this is a case of a worker from St. Vincent and the Grenadines who was working in a farm located in PEI. This worker was facing inhumane living and working conditions. The workers were sleeping on mattresses on the floor in an environment infested with bugs and without a proper heating system. The washrooms and laundry room were also not fully functional. When the pandemic hit, the workers had no possibility of maintaining physical distancing, therefore the worker decided to leave. Since all airports and train stations were closed, the worker shared with a colleague a series of taxis from PEI to Toronto, paying more than \$1,500 each.

Once in Toronto the worker connected with the FCJ Refugee Centre. He had a Closed Work Permit and was not allowed to work for any other employer besides the original one. At the Centre we assisted him to apply for an Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers. His application was approved and now he can work for any employer in Canada for a period of 1 year.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Webinars and podcasts become one of the main components of our Public Education Program. Since the pandemic started, we have provided webinars on different topics for anyone who needs information.

Through 2020 we provided 71 external workshops and public orientations on immigration and refugee options, and on settlement and migrant protection issues, to a total of 4,385 individual participants and attendees.

Due to the pandemic and the unforeseen challenges and changes, we had to adapt much of our service model. Not only in terms of our one on one client service support, but also in our relationship with community partners and those to whom we provide public education. Our team immediately transitioned to provide the necessary information to the community through a series of webinars and through online means, so as to continue uninterrupted supporting all of our peers in the community .

BORDERLESS VOICES PODCAST

We started to produce BORDERLESS VOICES PODCAST with key information for anyone who is in need of information. Our first Podcast was dedicated to the Inland Refugee Claims under COVID-19 and was published on May 1st. Through the year we produced 37 podcasts on different topics .During all this period we have been producing material related to the impact of the COVID-19 and resources like such as the topics below:

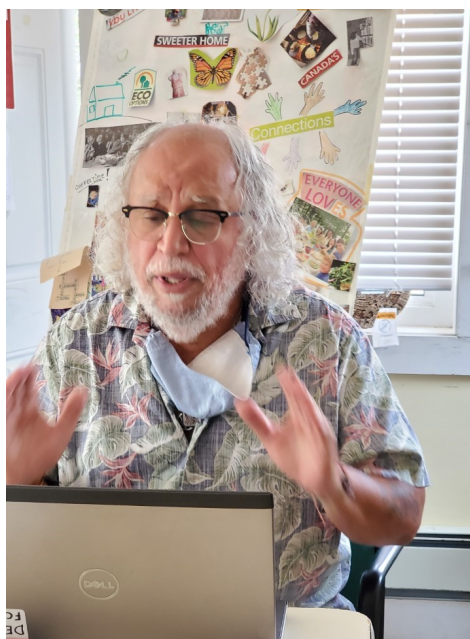
- COVID-19 and Workers' Rights
- How to be prepared for your refugee hearing,
- How to apply for Legal Aid
- Government Benefits for Temporary Status Workers
- Emergency assistance during COVID-19

VIDEOS: YOUTUBE CHANNEL

We published 32 videos from the webinars provided during 2020 and we produce one promotional video during our Open House thanking all our supporters. The total of views through our YouTube Channel through the year is over 4K views (4,131 views)

PUBLICATIONS

Through 2020 we produced 4 newsletters, the annual report and 6 other documents with updated information related to immigration and settlement resources for vulnerable populations. Our communications and social media expanded, and our website reflected an increment in the traffic of visitors.



WEBSITE TRAFFIC

Views (page views): 86,120

Visitors (users): 33,449

We are enormously grateful for the ongoing support of our incredibly dedicated placement students, pro bono students, and volunteers. During this difficult time, friends, partners, and neighbours come together to donate food, arts & crafts supplies, toiletries, etc. Your donations are making a difference to a non-status migrant, family, child, youth, that was not left behind... it had been making a difference for that borderless humanity that we are dreaming to build... Your donation is making an immeasurable difference in the lives of all non-status people enriching our community.

FCJ Refugee Centre's work is made possible by the generous support of foundations, businesses, religious groups and churches, government agencies, community groups, labour unions, and individuals. The FCJ Refugee Centre is grateful to our current and recent donors. We wish to thank and acknowledge you, including those who wish to remain anonymous, for joining us on our journey to improve the lives of newly arrived immigrants and their families.

THANK YOU

Religious Grants and Donations

FCJ Sisters
 Basilian Fathers
 The Sisters of Joseph of Sault Ste. Marie
 Sisters of Charity
 Scarborough Missions
 Sisters of Social Service
 WICC
 Congregation of Notre Dame, Visitation Province
 Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
 The Daly Foundation
 The School Sisters of Notre Dame
 Felician Sisters of St. Francis of Canada
 The Redemptorists
 Christian Brothers
 Our Lady's Missionaries
 Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
 Sisters of Loretto

Government Grants

Federal Government:
 -Canada Summer Jobs
 -Dept. of Justice
 Ministry of Children Community and Social Services (MCCSS)
 City of Toronto

Grants –Foundations and Other

Law Foundation of Ontario
 United Way of Toronto
 Chum Charitable Foundation
 The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking
 Metcalf Foundation
 The Conn Smyth Foundation
 Carrot Social Justice Foundation
 OCASI- Atkinson
 OCASI -WES
 Turtle House Art/Play Centre
 York University
 St. Clair Multi Faith Affordable Housing Coalition
 Canada Helps
 Give Foundation
 IKEA

FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE
Statement of Operations
Year Ended December 31, 2020

	2020	2019
REVENUES		
Government grants (Note 9)	\$ 580,895	\$ 427,357
Donations:		
Foundations (Note 10)	429,247	247,660
Individuals	127,814	48,821
Religious organizations (Note 6)	120,628	146,600
Rent (Note 11)	58,214	80,593
Amortization of deferred capital contributions (Note 7)	44,861	47,804
Other	20,827	22,902
	<u>1,382,486</u>	<u>1,021,737</u>
EXPENSES		
Settlement program (Note 12)	579,435	387,073
Administration	201,243	148,564
Refugee protection program (Note 12)	170,206	152,442
Popular education (Note 12)	114,154	110,590
Development and fundraising (Note 12)	100,879	74,197
Amortization	64,288	62,833
	<u>1,230,205</u>	<u>935,699</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	<u>\$ 152,281</u>	<u>\$ 86,038</u>





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