



FCJ Refugee Centre

Walking With Uprooted People

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



30
YEARS

Shoulder to Shoulder,
Side by Side
Walking with
Uprooted People
for more than
30 years



Message from Executive Director

I cannot begin this statement without expressing my deep gratitude for the outpouring of love and support our community has received over our 30 year history – but most particularly in this last year. The loss of our dear Francisco has been felt so profoundly not only as the Co-Director of the FCJ Refugee Centre, but as my life partner and love of my life. Francisco was also a father, a grandfather, an uncle, a brother, a mentor, and a true friend to all. Though we miss him every day, we continue on in the important work that we have collectively done for more than 30 years. And because of each of you, we have been able to continue walking with refugees and precarious migrants in one of the most challenging times any of us have ever faced. Despite the adversity we have faced as a community and a world, we take this time to celebrate our collective achievements as we look towards a brighter future for all who continue to build their homes here.

This has been a pivotal time in the fight for the recognition of all people living in Toronto and Canada – not only those with the privilege of immigration status. We see, that because of our collective dedication, passionate community, and ongoing advocacy, precarious migrants are finally being recognized and acknowledged in fundamental ways. From the Toronto for All Campaign, and the proclamation of August 24th as Undocumented Residents Day in Toronto, to Justin Trudeau's mandate letter to the Minister of Immigration including as a landmark priority the development of pathways to regularize status for undocumented workers in Canada.

Each of our core program areas has also enjoyed tremendous success. We welcome the return to in-person programming, with our weekly drop-in intake days now at pre-pandemic levels. Many of our programs which launched during the early stages of the pandemic continue on today, providing ongoing information to the community in adaptive, responsive ways. From our podcasts and webinars, to our hybrid methods of service delivery, we are taking the tools we have used and the experience we have gained over this time to provide more robust, informed and responsive support to our community.

We are incredibly proud to see our community reflected in our working family. Our team has grown to the largest staff team in our Centre's history, and in keeping with our feminist approach we are led by a group of women from diverse personal and professional backgrounds, and we are proud that our community see themselves represented in our staff when they walk through our doors.

We are grateful to all of our funders and community supporters, for making these achievements possible. We look forward to the future, with an ever-open door, and a commitment to community. We are proud to see that Francisco lives on through the legacy of his dreams and the passion instilled in each of us. We will continue, as there is much work still to be done.

Count on us, we're here for you.



Loly Rico
Executive Director

Francisco was a poet, a dreamer, and a friend to all. But he was also a tireless fighter, and the greatest advocate our community could imagine. All that he did was to advance access to justice for marginalized community members. The relationship between the FCJ Refugee Centre and the Law Foundation of Ontario was of the highest importance to him. Not simply because of the financial resources provided by LFO (though he was immensely proud and grateful for this funding), but more so because of our shared values, the freedom to allow us to do the work that we do, and the foundational grounding that Catalyst funding provided. This funding took us from daily survival to flourishing growth. With this funding, in each program area we were able to soar. Francisco did not recognize status, borders, or difference. Francisco saw people as friends, as family – but perhaps most importantly, Francisco saw Canada as one community; one in which we have a responsibility to show love and kindness to our fellow companions. In each encounter, Francisco saw the potential of the individual and sought to nurture and cultivate that potential so that each person could shine. In this team at FCJ Refugee Centre, there is not a single person who was not touched by his grace, his encouragement, and his nurturing. In the final weeks and days of his life, the Centre kept its doors open not out of duty, or professionalism, but out of the passion, determination and fight that Francisco cultivated in each one of us. Francisco worked every day to ensure that no one would be left without hope, or would find a closed door. In 2020, Francisco was invited to sit on the Board of Directors of the Department of Imaginary Affairs. As a visionary, and a dreamer, I can think of no organization better suited to him. In the recruitment process, Francisco shared his dreams, his vision of the future of Canada. We dedicate this report to Francisco's legacy:

"I imagine Canada as a rainbow made of all colours of humanity living together, where left and right will refer to the arms of a human being and not to destructive ideologies. Where breathing and drinking water is not risky... where nature will not be counting the years left for extinction... I see Canada as the place where a smiling and loved child will be the inspiration of our system... where every person's work will be its own and what mother earth produces will be picked up by equal hands and share free as common goods... where education and the determinants of health would be the basis for the public budget and resources for enforcement won't be needed any longer... I see Canada as a place where the utopia will be found as a daily reality, every evening, resting beside the sundown... where no one will be considered stubborn because this world wants to make it fair... the above is how I see Canada in five decades, even if now, it is just a utopia... I am just a dreamer who since my time of arrival, has kept looking for soulmates to make it possible."

Francisco Rico-Martinez

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 counselling 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 and Integration

For the last 30 years the FCJ Refugee Centre has been running a Transitional Housing Program for Women and Children. Through a holistic model the Centre provides direct settlement services to refugee women and their children. As part of our program we also provide housing to women who are victims of domestic abuse, survivors of human trafficking and those at risk due to their immigration status.

We continue welcoming the most vulnerable with our open doors approach. When we welcome new residents we want to provide them with a sense of home and belonging by giving them warm food, a place to stay and feel safe. Once they are settled in their new home we assist them with the various needs they might have such as access to financial assistance, access to justice (immigration/refugee protection), access to health care, food security, access to education and special programming for women on a monthly basis.

These services are achieved with the support of our Housing Coordinator and the Women's Program Support Worker. Another important aspect of this work is the maintenance of the houses. We had a part-time staff taking care of the three houses in order to ensure they are always in good shape and adequately equipped to welcome new residents.

Over the year, we supported more than 40 women and children living in our transitional houses. This includes 19 single women and 9 single mothers with children. Through the year we had 10 children living in our houses, receiving support and engaging in our Uprooted programming – free music, art and language classes for children and their mums.

In 2021, we submitted 148 Ontario works applications; this number is slightly reduced from previous years, due to the closure of the borders and increased populations ineligible for this support.



We were able to secure permanent housing for many single mothers with children, and we currently have women from Colombia, Mexico, El Salvador, Jamaica, Korea, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Venezuela, Philippines, Zimbabwe, Hong Kong, Republic of Congo, and Eritrea living together, engaging in workshops, sharing culture, cuisine and lived experience.

Over the year this team has submitted 148 Ontario works applications; this number is slightly reduced from previous years, due to the closure of the borders and increased populations ineligible for this support. However, we have provided support to 438 people through the provision of our COVID-19 Emergency Isolation Funding. This fund, provided by the City of Toronto, allows for financial support equal to that of Ontario Works, for undocumented Torontonians who have been affected by COVID-19. This emergency funding was a tremendous success not only in immediate relief, but also in recognition of this population as members of our Toronto community.

Primary Care Clinic

As always, the Primary Care Clinic of the FCJ Refugee Centre continued serving precarious migrants and non-insured people. The Inner City Health Associates continues to provide financial support to allow this work to continue. Over the course of 2021 we provided more

Settlement and Integration



than 650 medical appointments, (Family MD, Psychiatric Assessments and Regular Immunization Clinics).

Over this incredible time, we have coordinated several COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics onsite, providing more than 940 doses of the vaccine for people without OHIP living in Ontario.

The Primary Care Clinic of the FCJ Refugee Centre is working hard to build strong relationships with the Community Health Centres, Specialist Services and Walk-in clinics to continue growing our network and support for our Community. We also continue supporting clients with the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) to connect with different clinics in the City to be able to get Family Doctor services.

English Classes

Our English Classes were re-established, with enhanced offerings for beginner and intermediate students, and options for Introductory Classes and advanced conversation classes. We were hosting 12 groups; each one had an average of 15 students. This was possible thanks to the support of our volunteers. Participants are from the City of Toronto, as well as from Brampton, Ajax, St. Catharines, St Jacobs, Sudbury, Lemington, London, etc. The classes are free and open to anyone who cannot attend other institutions. Many of these students are mothers who are at home with their children and are looking for activities for them, as well as the opportunity to improve their English.

PRIMARY CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC 2021

- 532 medical assessments (virtual and in person in 2021).
- Mental Health Clinic offered 152 appointments in total
- 1 Regular Immunization Clinic which provides regular vaccines to children's without OHIP.
- Successful no charge referral of more than 32 patients to medical specialists
- Increased networks and connections to various health services
- We hosted 8 vaccination clinics providing the vaccine for 940 people without OHIP.
- More than 1500 patients supported by Clinic Coordinator in person or through virtual means.

Youth & Access to Education

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). Throughout the year, we have worked together to provide education enrollment support to more than 48 families, online school support for children waiting for enrollment or requiring additional support, as well as arts programming and engagement.

We have also seen more than 44 students referred to York University for Sanctuary Scholars—the Access to Education program for precarious migrant students - allowing these students to pursue their dreams of higher education and the chance at a future in Canada.

Over the year, we have seen more than 80 youth, and have seen our weekly youth network gatherings flourish and grow. We have implemented online group movie nights, games nights, participated in online work-



shops and classes, and professional development sessions. While dealing with the challenges of the pandemic, we recognized that young people were experiencing additional struggles due to educational barriers. Together we worked to ensure that each family gained rightful access to technological support (computers and tablets were to be provided by the school boards, but families with precarious status had increased challenges in accessing these supports). We also recognized the need to provide additional online support to children and families who may be dealing with diverse households, with various learning styles. Providing online tutoring from our staff and network of youth and volunteers has been incredibly valuable.

Our Uprooted Series is once again in full swing – offering free educational programming for children, youth and adults who are not yet able to access other community programs. During 2021, Uprooted Junior has continued to offer weekly Music, Art, English and French classes to more than 135 children. Uprooted U has offered 3 semesters of classes, offering a unique and specially created Migration/Social Studies/Humanities course developed and facilitated by Doctoral Candidate Tyler Correia.



Youth & Access to Education

More than 90 students have participated in this program, while awaiting future post-secondary education options. And our ESL programming has 17 weekly class offerings, of beginner, intermediate, advanced, and English conversation class options for students looking to improve their English skills.

We have also shared our expertise and experience to contribute to research in partnership with the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University on a paper focusing on Canadian Dreamers and the importance of opening the doors of academic institutions to all students, regardless of immigration status. Our ESL programs have been re-established, with enhanced offerings for beginner and intermediate students, and options for Introductory Classes and advanced conversation classes. None of these programs would have been possible without the foundation that has been built by the Catalyst Grant.

This pandemic has shifted the way we are able to facilitate the youth network, but we have continued to connect. We have continued our weekly Wednesday meetings, and have been able to meet in person when it is safe to do so.



Our Youth Network has been steadily growing, and we have continued to reach out to newcomer youth.

Most of the youth involved are ages 17-23. We have youth members from countries such as; Mexico, Columbia, St. Kitts, St. Vincent, Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Kenya. Many of our youth's first languages are Spanish and French, but we aim to never allow language to be a barrier to access our services.



Immigration Help & Refugee Protection

Through our inland protection program, we continue to support people in each aspect of their regularization, navigating pathways to permanent residency. This includes providing individual immigration orientations, the application and submission of work & study permits, applications for permanent residency, support with the filling of refugee claim documents (e.g. Basis of Claim), deportation procedures including Pre Removal Risk Assessments, Refugee Appeals, accompaniment to Immigration to support the request for Temporary Resident Permits for victims and survivors of human trafficking and labour exploitation.

Through 2021 we have seen a palpable shift in the nature of immigration support being sought by our community members. With borders closed to asylum seekers, there has been a continued increase in support for Humanitarian & Compassionate applications as opposed to the increased Refugee Hearing preparation support we have seen in recent years. However, immediately upon the reopening of the borders, we saw an acute and dramatic influx of clients seeking support.

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 team has been flexible in developing adaptive working conditions, providing immigration orienta-



tion sessions over the phone, through video-conferencing and through additional virtual means, and in person when safe and appropriate to do so. We have established safe and secure processes for the signing and submission of documents.

Throughout 2021 we had another record year in the submission of applications for permanent resident status. Over the course of this year, we have been representatives for countless cases, and submissions. As representatives, we have submitted 20 H&C applications, 5 PRRAs, 10 Refugee Appeals, and 90 Permanent Resident Applications. These cases were in so many ways representational of our community. These individuals and families came from various countries including El Salvador, Angola, Portugal, Nigeria, Afghanistan, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Brazil, Venezuela, Jamaica, Philippines, Mexico, Tibet, Guyana, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania. The cases had various immigration histories including previously rejected refugee claimants. Some were survivors of domestic violence and labour exploitation.

This demonstrates the breadth and scope of the work we do – we are here to support all people, regardless of background, or any individual circumstances. The cases also make up equally distributed cases of youth, single mums, individuals, seniors, and families .



Anti-Human Trafficking

FCJ Refugee Centre's Anti-Human trafficking team supports migrants who have been exploited or trafficked in Canada. We support them in regularizing their status and connect them to additional supports to address their needs. The Anti-Human Trafficking team supports migrant workers, predominantly from the Global South including Central America and the Caribbean. Over the last year we have been able to provide over 381 direct services to more than 150 clients. Many workers come to Canada under Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) or the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), while others come as visitors or under the false pretenses that they will have the authorization to work in Canada.

The predominantly represented countries we see include St. Lucia, Mexico, Philippines, Brazil, Guatemala, Jamaica, Columbia, Dominica, Trinidad and Tobago and South Korea. Depending on the case, we support workers with applications for Open Work Permits for Vulnerable Workers (OWPVW), Temporary Resident Permits (TRPs), Construction Pilot for Out of Status Workers Pathways to Permanent Residency, and Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds for Permanent Residency (H&C). This past year, we have supported workers with over 26 OWPVW applications, 23 TRP submissions (initial and renewals), 7 H&Cs, and 9 Construction Pilot applications. We also have helped in restoring worker status to those who had limited immigration remedies.

Our team also advocates for migrant workers' rights and for labour trafficking to be widely recognized as a true and prevalent issue in Canada. We support clients by facilitating communication between them and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) daily. We believe in the importance of keeping this communication open so we can directly advocate to all stakeholders involved in a case. For example, we



advocate for the workers to be considered as victims of human trafficking and for their right to remain in Canada.

Our Anti-Human Trafficking team has provided presentations on labour trafficking and labour rights to migrant workers, graduate and post-secondary students, Victim Services, hostel networks, larger public and organizations locally and nationally. We have reached 805 participants through our information sessions. This includes audiences in the Ugandan Dialogue Conference for Women and Children and our public Anti-Human Trafficking forum "Collaboration Through an Intersectional Lens: Are we on the right path?" Aside from these larger events, we are consistently providing information sessions to those within the sector. We have provided training on labour trafficking and possible immigration remedies to organizations such as; Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, Victim Services Durham Region, Sexual Assault Centre of Sarnia, Justicia, and various organizations in the Atlantic. Through our information sessions we are able to highlight the intersectionality between sex and labour trafficking, the vulnerabilities precarious migrants face and also inform workers of their rights and immigration options. Many of these applications can take years to process and see an outcome, but we are pleased to say we have had over 22 TRP approvals (initial and renewals), more than a dozen OWPVW approvals, as well as H&C, and Construction Pilot cases.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Webinars and Info-sessions have become one of the main components of our Public Education Program. We have continued to offer countless workshops, presentations and capacity building sessions throughout our community at partner agencies, shelters, and community centres.

We provided a total of 85 webinars and 3,628 participants benefited from the information provided during these sessions.

REPORT BY MONTH		
MONTH	WEBINARS	ATENDEES
JAN	1	156
FEB	5	306
MARCH	3	180
APR	10	1058
MAY	7	400
JUN	10	565
JUL	3	42
AUG	5	69
SEP	10	257
OCT	10	271
NOV	13	239
DEC	8	85
TOTAL	85	3628

An excellent good news during the year: the Immigration and Refugee Board-Refugee Protection Division (IRB-RPD) and Refugee Appeal Division (RAD) resumed the Ready Tours and RAD info-sessions, both of them in a virtual mode. The sessions are open for refugee claimants or rejected refugees. We also invited front line workers providing free services to refugee claimants waiting for their refugee hearing date.

We started to organize virtual informative sessions about the resources for refugee claimants before every Ready Tour, and also we keep an active participation



during the RAD info sessions providing information about our services to participants

We continued producing BORDERLESS VOICES and HOME IS HERE PODCASTS with key information for anyone who needs support. We produced 77 new episodes during the year. We also produced podcasts in other languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Turkish and Afrikaans.

PODCAST TOPICS 2021

Child Minding Program	Credential Evaluation for 7 countries
COVID Resources	Food Distribution and Income Security
English Classes	How to Get a Proof of Vaccination
Food Distribution Services	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness	Resources for Children: Free Music Classes
International Women's Day	Migrant Women's Counter HT Alliance
Youth Engagement Week	Youth Alliance Against Human Trafficking
Settlement & Integration Program	Anti-Human Trafficking Online Forum
Women's Workshops	Children's Immunization Clinic for Kids Without OHIP
Uprooted Youth Program New Semester	Access to Primary Care Clinic
The New Pathway to PR	Giving Tuesday Campaign
You do not need OHIP to get the vaccine	How to get the COVID Booster Shoot
COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic for Youth	Access to services during holidays
Child Minding Summer Class	Guide for refugee claimants during holidays
Anti-Human Trafficking Program	Women's Programs
FCJ Refugee Centre 30 Anniversary	Year Overview and Winter Holiday Message

Another active area was social media. YouTube was a key tool to share all the information sessions. We uploaded 64 videos with more than 6,000 views. In addition, we kept uploading content to our other platforms where the number of followers increased: on Facebook we now have more than 3k and on Instagram more than 2K.

A Big Thank You!

We are enormously thankful for the continuing support of our amazing community!

Thank you to our dedicated placement students, pro bono students, and volunteers. During these challenging times our friends, partners, and neighbours came together to keep supporting us. 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.

Grants –Foundations and Other

The Ontario Law Foundation
Chum Charitable Foundation
The Lawson Foundation
Canadian Women's Foundation
Donner Canadian Foundation
The Conn Smyth Foundation
Abundance
Corus
Second Harvest Food
Max Bell Foundation
Cooper Institute
St. Clair Multi-Faith Affordable Coalition
IKEA
United Way (Grant)
YWCA Canada
Christie Refugee Welcome Centre
OCASI
United Way of Greater Toronto

Government Grants

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

Religious Grants and Donations

Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ)
The Basilian Fathers of Toronto
Sisters of Social Service
Passion to Reach Ministries
Village Church
Christian Brothers
The School Sisters of Notre Dame
Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception
The Daly Foundation
Felician Sisters of St. Francis of Canada
The Peoples Church
Our Lady's Missionaries
Trinity - St. Paul's United Church
The Loretto Sisters (IBVM)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021-2022

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FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE
Statement of Operations
Year Ended December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
REVENUES		
Government grants (Note 9)	\$ 1,463,727	\$ 580,895
Donations:		
Foundations (Note 10)	505,922	429,247
Individuals	103,348	127,814
Religious organizations (Note 6)	46,955	120,628
Rent (Note 11)	52,964	58,214
Amortization of deferred capital contributions (Note 7)	33,456	44,861
Other	37,173	20,827
	2,243,545	1,382,486
EXPENSES		
Settlement program (Note 12)	1,282,996	579,435
Administration	316,205	201,243
Refugee protection program (Note 12)	165,650	170,206
Popular education (Note 12)	108,499	114,154
Development and fundraising (Note 12)	102,921	100,879
Amortization	84,616	64,288
	2,060,887	1,230,205
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	\$ 182,658	\$ 152,281

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