

**2022**



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

## **FCJ REFUGEE CENTRE**

# MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



The annual report is a time when we reflect on our work during the past year. It has been a time in which the whole society has been shaken with conflicts, health crisis and the increase of people forcibly displaced. But it is also a time to reflect on our success and challenges

One notable achievement is the increase in our staff members, which has been made possible by the strong support we have received from our funding partners. With this added support, our organization is now even more sustainable and better equipped to serve the community.

As a result of this growth, we have been able to expand our presence within the community and work more closely with different levels of government. We are grateful to have received funding from the city, province, and federal government, which has enabled us to be more present on the front line.

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, including staff turnover and exhaustion, we have continued to persevere and remain committed to our principles, values, and the services we provide to the community. I am particularly proud of the success stories that have emerged from our women's housing program, which has welcomed and supported many women through their journeys. Additionally, our anti-human trafficking program has been successful in obtaining permanent and temporary resident permits for many cases.

Moving forward, we are excited to continue building upon these successes and expanding our initiatives. Our Refugee Hub program, for example, has already diverted over 1,000 individuals from shelters, with 90% of these individuals receiving permanent housing. We are committed to continuing to serve those who come to us seeking support and assistance.

To our current and future clients, I want to reiterate that our door is always open, and we will continue to stand with you, shoulder to shoulder. Thank you for entrusting us with your needs, and we look forward to continuing to serve you.

Sincerely,

Loly Rico

## WALKING WITH UPROOTED PEOPLE

## ABOUT THE CENTRE

The FCJ Refugee Centre works through an intersectional anti oppressive lens, with an approach centered on increasing access to justice for marginalized newcomers to Canada. We have been a safe destination for vulnerable communities working primarily with refugee claimants, rejected refugee claimants and individuals with precarious immigration status who have few resources. In other words, our emphasis is on the most vulnerable who may not have access to the normal channels or how to navigate the immigration process, find the appropriate legal counsel, legal aid, financial support Our door is open to all people. Community members come to us at each step of their journeys towards the regularization of their status to help them make the most informed decisions and steps towards their status. It is our goal at every stage to inform them of the different avenues to regularization of status in Canada, mainly submitting a refugee claim or a Humanitarian and Compassionate application (H&C) or going through a family reunification and sponsorship process. We have been successfully increasing access to justice for individuals through our holistic model of wrap around service approach.

## 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





In all areas and departments of our office, we have had a successful year in providing necessary and important services to our community. Of all our achievements of the past year, perhaps the proudest note is that our doors remained open. There wasn't one day in which our community couldn't reach us; we made 'Count on Us' the motto for our organization last year - and it's a motto we have lived each day. Within our core program areas, Inland & Refugee Protection, Housing & Women's Programs, AntiHuman Trafficking, and Youth & Access to Education, we have seen tremendous success, and we are proud to highlight the following program achievements:

## INLAND & REFUGEE PROTECTION

Our inland protection program supported many people over the years to help them obtain permanent residency. We support our clients with individual immigration information orientations, work and study permit applications, information orientations for inland and port of entry refugee claims, applications for permanent residence for protected persons, information sessions regarding deportation procedures, support for Pre-Removal Risk Assessments, refugee claim appeals, humanitarian and compassionate grounds applications, and accompaniment to Immigration to support the request for Temporary Resident Permits for victims and survivors of human trafficking and labor exploitation. Over the course of 2022, we have completed 172 study and work permit applications, 47 applications for Permanent Residency, and followed up 311 applications. We have hosted both in person and virtually 1099 Refugee Protection Orientations, 30 orientations for Sponsorship and 379 orientation sessions for Humanitarian & Compassionate applications. We have supported 13285 clients both phone calls and walk-ins. These cases are representative of the varied cultural backgrounds of the growing community seeking an open door to regularization in Canada.

We continue to work with families hailing from Mexico, Nigeria, Colombia, Angola, El Salvador, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Jamaica, Afghanistan, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the Philippines. Finally, FCJ leadership continues to provide critical participation in the efforts of the Canadian Council for Refugees and the Ontario Coalition of Service Providers for Refugee Claimants. Our senior director regularly participates in regional community meetings with the IRB and the RAD to advocate for the community's needs. And perhaps more importantly, FCJ leadership, in support of the Canadian Council for Refugees, continues the tireless advocacy with the IRCC for the future efforts to offer regularization for non-status people. The Immigration and Refugee Protection area would not be able to provide this critical support without the funding provided by the Catalyst grant.

**Organizational Stability & Resource Development** The Catalyst Fund has supported Resource Development, a component of our operations that has become increasingly important as our team and our programs continue to grow. Organic Fundraising Model is one of the pillars of this division, where those involved in resource development are also directly involved in delivering services. Our Resource Development team took on a new look this year. Resource Development Coordinator has joined the team to design FCJ's resource development strategy and integrate sustainable model. In addition to our Resource Development Coordinator, our team now includes representatives from all areas of our core programming, under the supervision of the Executive Director and Senior Director. By designing and implementing a medium-to-long-term fundraising strategy adapted to the pandemic/post-pandemic era's constraints and opportunities, this funding helped FCJ Refugee Centre to close the gap between, our programming/infrastructure/equipment/technology needs and our revenue generation capacity, thus helping us guarantee new, solid foundations for our work and ability to meet our mission. Although humbled, we are also aware that this grounding has allowed us to have an incredibly stable financial year, where many others have suffered so deeply. The Catalyst grant gave us a solid foundation for achieving an operational financial surplus in 2022.

## HOUSING & WOMEN PROGRAMS

Our Housing and women programs last year witnessed great success in providing holistic services to vulnerable populations, specifically refugee and precarious migrant women. Despite facing complex intersecting barriers such as immigration status, language, socio-economic status, social isolation, and gender-based violence, the center continued providing essential services and support to women during the pandemic. The project had a significant impact on the community. It identified the need for social inclusion programming to reduce stigma and social isolation and increase mental health support. Women's voices and ideas were at the project's core through the center's popular education approach. The program also focuses on challenges faced by women in vulnerable populations, who navigate complex barriers such as immigration status, language, socio-economic status, social isolation, and gender-based violence. Despite the challenges faced during the pandemic, the center was able to provide holistic services to the community through in-person and virtual workshops, art workshops, youth meetings, family dinners, and self-check-ins. The project had a significant impact on the community, with increased attendance of peer-led learning sessions, and active participation in different programs offered by the center. The project also gave a voice to women.



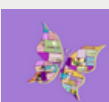
# ANTI HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Our anti-human trafficking team supports migrants who have experienced, or at risk, of exploitation for sex or labour. This includes victims of trafficking and Temporary Foreign Workers who faced abuse in the workplace.



FCJ refugee Centre is one of the few organizations that focuses on cases on International Labour Trafficking, that sees migrants recruited usually in their country of origin to work in Canada under false promises and coercion. Due to our work in this sector, and supporting victims of human trafficking, we have become a pillar of support for those with precarious status. In 2022 our anti-human trafficking team was able to support 366 unique clients who were victims of trafficking. We also have been receiving applications referrals from migrant workers support organizations but don't have more capacity also there a few resources for victims of trafficking and exploitation. The PR Pilot for Out of Status Construction Workers in GTA is another application support out of status workers with. This is a pilot program, that many workers are confused about. We have established a relationship with the Legal Advisor for this pilot at the Canadian Labour Congress. They help us to connect with potential candidates to ask questions and take a collaborative approach in supporting the client with their applications. We engage with many organizations in the Anti-Human Trafficking Sector, sit on various committees and support campaigns for migrant rights.

We continue to coordinate the Toronto Counter Human Trafficking Network that is made up of over 30 organizations with the same goal of eradicating human trafficking. We continue to meet once every two months to discuss emerging issues, events, program We have established mechanisms with important stakeholders to best support victims of trafficking. This includes Toronto Police, York Police, CBSA, IRCC and Victim Services. Now, law enforcement is inviting FCJ Refugee Centre to the table to discuss cases and strategize how to support victims. FCJ Centre Organized 7 Focus Groups with 77 migrant workers in Leamington, London, and the GTA. Four of these were organized in partnership with Legal Assistance of Windsor (LAW). From these focus groups, a report produced published February 2023 with the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking. We examined labour exploitation during the pandemic period. Anti-Human Trafficking Women's Program informational sessions have been part of some of the workshops delivered to the women in our transitional housing on a bi-monthly basis. These workshops range from information sessions, to mindfulness, and art motivation.



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## YOUTH & ACCESS TO EDUCATION

*“For me, the FCJ Youth Network has taught me many things. I’ve been able to socialize with people from different countries that have different cultures and practice my English. I’ve had a lot of fun with the people, also everyone is very kind” - Manuela, YN Member*



Youth have always been and continue to be the heart of the FCJ Refugee Centre. Our vision is to invest in Youth; to provide opportunities to amplify their voices, to provide platforms, increase engagement, and to work together to build a better world through advocacy and equity. Our Youth Network welcomes youth from all over the world 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 meet each week with the youth since the beginning of the pandemic. This team has provided tremendous support to some of our communities most isolated and vulnerable members. Throughout the year, we have worked together to provide education enrollment support to more than 90 families when children are waiting for enrollment or requiring additional support, as well as arts programming, book club, and other engagement activities. 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 at the post-secondary level.

We continue to establish relationships with academic institutions and community partners to cultivate relationships to attempt to expand the Access to Education Program to additional academic institutions. Our community programming has grown immensely in this last year. 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. Over 2022 Uprooted Junior has continued to offer weekly Art classes and summer book club to more than 50 children. Uprooted U has offered 2 semesters of classes, offering a unique and specially created Migration/Social Studies/Humanities course developed and facilitated by Dr. Tyler Correia. Around 25 students have participated in this program, while awaiting future postsecondary education options. 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.





# THE YOUTH ALLIANCE AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Is an integral part of building a space of solitude and support with FCJ Youth Network members. The Alliance, consisting of several youth with lived experience, working on building a toolkit of advocacy and resource materials outlining the signs and trends of human trafficking along with safe and trauma informed service providers and accessible tools to prevent human trafficking and support victims or youth at-risk of trafficking.

Aside from the monthly meeting, the Anti-Human Trafficking Youth team worked on integrating conversations and workshops on the topical areas of human trafficking as part of the Youth Network sessions. Some of the partnership prevention workshops hosted in 2022 were sexual health, sexual education, and health relationship workshops, and public health info sessions from Inner City Health Associates. Hosted a month-long social media campaign #StayAwakeCampaign consisting of content that raises awareness around the issue of Human Trafficking amongst precarious migrant youth.

During and after the pandemic, the immigration and refugee procedures have been under a lot of changes impacting vulnerable populations. The aim of the Public Education Program is to reduce these barriers to access to information for precarious migrants so that they can access up-to-date information in the immigration and settlement area.

Throughout 2022, we provided an average of 6 workshops per month comprising 77 webinars focused on immigration procedures and resources available online. In addition to these webinars, we also were very active providing informative sessions related to labour exploitation and Anti-Human trafficking. More than 2,000 participants benefited from the webinars, from those more than 1,000 individuals with precarious immigration status.

We continued our partnership with the Immigration and Refugee Board, coordinating the Refugee Hearing Orientations (Ready Tours), which has two stages: 1) The Pre-Ready Tour Orientation facilitated by FCJ Refugee Centre staff . During this session participants get familiar with Legal Aid, Ontario Works, ESL classes and other resources for refugee claimants. 2) The Refugee Hearing Orientation facilitated by officers from the Refugee

Protection Division, RPD. They talk about the steps to follow to be ready for the refugee hearing.





## VOLUNTEERS

Throughout the year we receive 200 requests to volunteer at FCJ Refugee Centre. Most of the volunteers allocated for virtual support specially for our English as a Second Language program. Our English classes take place online for beginners, intermediate and conversational groups, through the platform zoom, led by incredible community volunteers, retired teachers and students who offer enriched classes and content reaching a total of 335 students.

English teacher

## PRIMARY CARE CLINIC

Primary Care Clinic to meet the unique health needs of disenfranchised populations from diverse cultural backgrounds, FCJ Refugee Centre provides primary health care, mental health care, and self-care. The Primary Care Clinic of the FCJ Refugee Centre continued serving precarious migrants and non-insured people. We also continue supporting clients with IFHP (Interim Federal Health Plan) to connect with different clinics in the city to be able to get Family Doctor services. In essence, the program is designed to emphasize holistic health care, which is an integrated approach to health care that treats individuals as “whole.” In addition to primary health care, holistic care emphasizes emotional, psychological, and spiritual well-being as well. (Family MD, Psychiatric Assessments and Regular Immunization Clinics)

In addition, we offer several programs for women and youth that promote social inclusion, community building, healing, and resilience.



### Contact Us

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*We extend our deepest gratitude and heartfelt appreciation to our esteemed non-profit donors for their unwavering support and generosity. Your invaluable contributions have been instrumental in advancing our mission and empowering us to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve. With your steadfast commitment to our cause, we have been able to implement vital programs, provide essential resources, and create lasting change in our community. Your philanthropic dedication inspires us to continue our work, knowing that we have partners like you standing beside us. Together, we are making a profound difference, and we are profoundly grateful for your partnership.*

*We would like to extend our sincerest appreciation and admiration to our exceptional Board members, team, dedicated volunteers, and talented placement students. Your unwavering commitment, tireless efforts, and selfless dedication have been the driving force behind our organization's success.*

## FCJ Refugee Centre Board Members for 2023

- Lois Anne Bordowitz FCJ, Chair
- Susan Donohue FCJ, Member at Large
- Christine Gebel OLM, Treasurer
- Ann McGill FCJ, Member at Large
- Sandra Gonzalez Ponce, Member at Large
- Eusebio Garcia, Member at Large
- Tigest Gulbet, Member at Large
- Sharry Aiken, Member at Large
- Jihad Aliweiwi, Member at Large

## Federal Government Grants

- Canada Summer Jobs
- Dept. of Justice
- Women and Gender Equity (WAGE)
- Canadian Heritage Fund
- Ministry of Children Community and Social Services (MCCSS)
- City of Toronto

## Grants -Foundations and Other

- UNIFOR (CAW)
- Law Foundation
- Donner Canadian Foundation
- May Tree Foundation
- Catherine Donnelly Foundation
- United Way of Greater Toronto
- The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking
- Canada Helps (Various Individual donors)
- Blue Sea Foundation
- The Kiwanis Club of Toronto

- The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO) Chum Charitable Foundation
- St. Clair Multi Faith Affordable Coalition

## Religious Grants and Donations

- FCJ Sisters
- Basilian Fathers
- The Sisters of Joseph of Saulte Ste. Marie
- Sisters of Charity
- Sisters of Social Services
- The Daly Foundation
- Felician Sisters of St. Francis of Canada
- Our Lady's Missionaries
- Sisters of Providence of St. Vincent de Paul
- Visitation Province
- Loreto Ladies Colleges & School
- The Conn Smythe Foundation
- St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation
- Trinity St. Paul's United Church
- Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception





Current	Assets	
Cash	\$825,009	\$707,716
Short Term Investment	382,145	101,280
Accounts receivables	78,899	44,282
Harmonized Sales tax	355,504	36,159
Prepaid Expenses and other assets	11,126	3,026
	1,332,683	892,463
Capital Assets	124,277	3,026
	\$1,456,960	\$1,036,161

Current	Liabilities	
Account payable and accrued liabilities	\$34,532	\$50,306
Deferred revenues	672,120	470,752
	706,652	521,058
Deferred capital contribution	26,094	51,131
	732,746	572,189

Current	Net Assets	
Unrestricted	344,214	363,972
Internally restricted	380,000	100,000
	724,214	463,972
	1,456,960	1,036,161

