

**FCJ Refugee Centre Board of Directors
Public Statement, April 2nd, 2024**

**New Leadership Structure at FCJ Refugee Centre:
Loly Rico Stepping Down as Executive Director,
Assuming New Role as Founder**



Left to right, Carolina Teves, Diana Gallego, Loly Rico and Tsering Lhamo.

The FCJ Refugee Centre's Board of Directors is pleased to announce a series of changes in the structure of the organization's leadership team.

Loly Rico is stepping down as Executive Director and assuming a new role as Founder with a focus on advocacy and fundraising.

At the same time, Senior Director Diana Gallego and Associate Director Tsering Lhamo are assuming new roles as Co-Executive Directors. Associate Director Carolina Teves is assuming a new role as Senior Director, and is the third member of the new leadership team.

Diana Gallego will continue overseeing the Centre's Immigration and Protection programs and supporting resource development.

Tsering Lhamo will continue overseeing the Centre's Settlement and Integration programs and managing the Centre's finances.

Carolina Teves will continue overseeing the Communications and Public Education areas and will support the Co-Executive Directors.

With this announcement, the Board would like to express its deepest gratitude to Loly for almost 35 years of tireless and dedicated service to the community. Together with her late husband, Francisco Rico- Martínez, and the support of the FCJ Sisters, Loly helped establish FCJ Hamilton House Refugee Project - co-leading what became FCJ Refugee Centre and serving as the Centre's Executive Director when Francisco passed away in 2021.

We congratulate the new leadership team, Diana, Tsering and Carolina, and we thank them for their ongoing support of the Centre's mission and mandate. We also want to highlight that, with them, the organization will be led by three racialized refugee women, thus continuing the legacy of the Centre.

Sharry Aiken
President of the [Board of Directors](#)
FCJ Refugee Centre



Biographical notes

Loly Rico. Formally trained as a physiotherapist, Loly started working with Down syndrome children in El Salvador, becoming aware of how their human rights were abused, and how the tremendous needs of these children were not addressed by the government. Later on, she became more deeply involved in social justice in El Salvador. Upon arrival in Canada, through her own experience as a refugee she became acutely aware of the situation of refugees in this part of the world. In 1991, she and her husband, Francisco Rico-Martínez, founded the FCJ Hamilton House Refugee Project, with the invaluable support of the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus. Loly has a deep understanding of what is involved in setting up a safe environment for a vulnerable group, one that invites them to rebuild a sense of self, and gives them tools to regain lost confidence. In 2004, the City of Toronto awarded her the Constance E. Hamilton Award, for her unflinching commitment and contribution to women's rights and social justice. In 2022, she was one of the recipients of the YWCA Women of Distinction Awards, in the category of Refugee Rights. She has also received the YMCA Peace Medallion.



Diana Gallego. Diana is a Colombian-trained lawyer, with experience in advocacy, human rights and social justice. In 2002, Diana was forced to flee Colombia with her husband and son. This experience shaped a new commitment and led her into working with immigrants and refugees. Diana graduated in Community Work from George Brown College in Toronto, where she is currently a part time professor in the Centre for Community Services. She joined the FCJ Refugee Centre in 2015. In 2023 she was elected president of the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR). Within the CCR, she also serves on the Inland Protection steering committees, where the social and economic integration of refugees and family reunification are two of the main focuses of her advocacy. Diana has been part of the Canadian Council for Refugees for the last 17 years and is the first Amina Malko Fund recipient to become CCR President.



Tsering Lhamo. Tsering came to Canada in the early 2000s as a refugee claimant. She joined the FCJ Refugee Centre in 2017 as a student placement while pursuing her diploma in Social Service Worker from Seneca College. Tsering's work with migrants of precarious status is deeply intertwined with her personal narrative as a third-generation Tibetan stateless refugee. Tsering is currently Co-Chair of the Housing Network in the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR).



Carolina Teves. Carolina earned two bachelor's degrees from Universidad Centro Americana José Simeon Cañas (San Salvador), in Education and Journalism. She began work as a teacher of literature in high school. After completing her degree in Journalism, Carolina committed herself to a career in that field. She began working as a journalist with the university radio station YSUCA, focusing on human rights. She worked at the radio station for over ten years, and in 1999 she also took on a teaching position at Universidad Centro Americana to teach radio production: writing, editing, etc. In the fall of 2001, Carolina came as a refugee to Canada from El Salvador with her husband and three children. In 2003, she started her career at FCJ Refugee Centre, first as a volunteer, next as the receptionist, after that as Communication and Public Education Coordinator, and then as the Associate Director in Communication and Access to Education.



About FCJ Refugee Centre

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. Today FCJ Refugee Centre serves thousands of people every year and has a vital role, both locally and nationally, in supporting and advocating for refugees and other uprooted people.

