

ANNUAL REPORT

18 / 19

CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, CLAIRE ROQUE

What a year it's been! I write this on the heels of the 43rd federal election – an election where the CCR and our partners were compelled to ensure that there was respectful dialogue about refugees, and migrants. Our “Refugees Welcome” campaign encouraged all of us to think about what our values are as Canadians and what it means to welcome people into our society. This act of welcoming, though sometimes lost in politics, is at the core of who we are as Canadians!

Today, we are seeing many positive changes that were at the heart of CCR's longtime advocacy. This May, we finally saw countries being removed from the Designated Countries of Origin list, though there is still work to be done to eliminate the list! Refugee claimants are now able to renew their status documents, which may seem simple, but for refugee claimants and people that help them, this has a huge impact.

We cannot end the year without recognizing our tireless efforts on our advocacy to end the lifetime ban on excluded family members. That was a significant part of our Family Reunification campaign, and we kept pushing until we saw results.

For many of us, this success renewed our spirits to continue fighting for the rights of refugees and vulnerable migrants.

The needs continue to be immense, but not insurmountable if we can embrace the spirit of welcome with our fellow Canadians.

As my mandate comes to a close, I reflect on the many victories and challenges of the last two years, celebrating big and small successes. We have witnessed many positive outcomes of our advocacy, and we should be proud of our work, but we still have a lot more to do.

Initially, I became involved in CCR to learn how to help refugees that settle in small regions. Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would be the voice for many of them. I will forever be thankful for the opportunity to lead CCR. I am proud to be part of the CCR family then, now, and for many years to come. As a pan-Canadian organization, the CCR works for newcomers in big cities and small towns, by the mountains or by the ocean, but no matter the geography, we want a Canada that remains welcoming.

- Claire

WHO WE ARE

We're an independent non-governmental organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees and other vulnerable migrants in Canada and around the world, and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada.

We are an umbrella organization that brings together the refugee, newcomer and immigrant serving organizations from coast to coast. These organizations are our members.

We serve the networking, information-exchange and advocacy needs of our members.

CCR members are settlement organizations, churches, lawyers' associations, private sponsors, unions, and other organizations that work to protect human rights and welcome newcomers.

200
MEMBER
ORGANIZATIONS

40
YEARS OF
EXISTENCE



HOW WE WORK



Our members bring an issue forward

Members can bring issues forward in various ways. An issue can be anything that challenges our members' work and thus newcomers' rights on the ground, including anything from the impact of racism on newcomers to immigration detention.



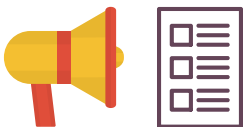
The CCR takes this issue on

Depending on the subject, it is taken up in one of our three working groups (**Immigration & Settlement, Inland Protection, or Overseas Protection & Resettlement**) or in one of our other committees or networks (**Anti-Trafficking Committee, the Youth Network, etc.**).



Understand and discuss the issue

Depending on the needs of the specific issue, it can be addressed in workshops during our bi-annual Consultations, webinars, virtual meetings or discussions between members.



Plan and act on the issue

Collectively, members decide how the CCR should act regarding this issue: pass a resolution, create practical or policy resources, bring attention to the issue in the media, launch a public opinion campaign, take legal action, or engage in a dialogue with government.



This leads to the **impact** of our work: changes in government policies and practices, changes in the practices of community actors, increased awareness of the issues, supporting CCR members to learn and grow, and bringing forward legal challenges .

OUR TEAM

from August 31, 2019

Executive Committee

President : Claire Roque, Windsor

Vice-president : Dorota Blumczynska, Winnipeg

Treasurer: Ricki Justice, Edmonton

Secretary : Jill Hanley, Montreal

Councillors : Akram Ben Salah , Moncton; Sabine Lehr, Victoria; Leslie Anderson, Toronto; Armin Boroumand, Montréal; Françoise Magunira, Toronto; Aleks Dughman-Manzur, Toronto; Saleem Spindari, Vancouver.

Working Group Co-Presidents

Immigration and Settlement: Amy Casipullai & Marta Kalita

Inland Protection: Anne Woolger & Mariana Martinez Vieyra

Overseas Protection and Resettlement: Fikre Tsehai & Kaylee Perez/ Michelle Ball

CCR Office

Janet Dench, executive director

Deborah Traoré, associate executive director

Claudia Cojal, office manager

Sandra Gasana, settlement policy director

Van Thao Dam Thi, project manager & fundraising coordinator (maternity leave)

Elvira Truglia, anti-trafficking coordinator

Juliana Cortes Lugo, youth network national coordinator

Bouchera Belhadj, communications agent, youth network

Aude Lecouturier, member services coordinator

Milen Minchev, communications coordinator

Amanda Siino, project coordinator

Chitra Ramsurn, administrative assistant

The team has evolved and we are sincerely grateful to Colleen French, Marisa Berry Méndez, Elizabeth Docherty, Leonie Tshimanga and Mutatayi Fuamba for their important contributions.

ACTIVITIES

Immigration and Settlement

This year CCR members identified a need for an online space for sharing resources on newcomer mental health that is geared towards front-line workers, not clinicians, so the CCR developed an **online page on refugee mental health** for members.

In July 2019, two new policies for **victims of family violence** were published by IRCC as a result of sustained advocacy efforts by the CCR over the years: an expedited Temporary Residence Permit (TRP), for a minimum of 6 months (including fee exempt work permit, Interim Federal Health Program coverage, dependent children in Canada) and an expedited process for permanent residence on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

The subcommittee on Migrant Workers Issues continued its work and held the **2019 Migrant Workers' Forum**.

Organized in collaboration with MOSAIC, one of our members in Vancouver, the forum was an important opportunity for migrant workers themselves, grassroots support groups, social service providers and migrant rights advocates to convene and share strategies and solutions.

2

NEW POLICIES

for victims of family violence are now in place for people without permanent status in Canada who are in situations of family violence.

110

PARTICIPANTS

attended the Migrant Workers Forum among whom there were 60 migrant workers, the majority of them from Latin America (Mexico and Guatemala mainly).

Inland Protection

After years of advocacy from the CCR and others, IRCC introduced **automatic work permits for refugee claimants** in October 2018. The IP working group also continued engagement on **Alternatives to Detention** with CBSA and advocacy with IRB, with a focus this year on children in detention.

Finally, after repeated promises, the government tabled May 7, 2019 a bill to address **CBSA accountability** (Bill C-98). The bill was not passed before Parliament rose for the summer and the elections but we will continue to advocate for it.

The CCR published through the year several **practical informations** resources like the one on **Anonymity and confidentiality before the Federal Court**, aimed at NGOs and lawyers, and one on **Refugee claim changes in Budget Implementation Act**.

Overseas Protection & Resettlement

Thanks to the sustained advocacy over several years, we saw some significant changes at IRCC this year. IRCC published new guidelines on **transportation loans**, allowing Government-assisted refugees (GAR) and Joint Assistance Sponsorship (JAS) refugees to be considered for a conversion of loans to contributions after arrival.

A major concern for private sponsors over the past year has been the government's Quality Assurance initiative: the CCR has worked hard with and on behalf of Sponsorship Agreement Holders to minimize the negative impacts.

This year, we also put a focus on workshops and advocacy about the **root causes of displacement, primarily relating to mining companies**. We also did advocacy relating to position of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise.

1

PILOT PROJECT

Following two consultations with the CCR, IRCC launched a pilot project to improve Family Reunification proceedings for refugees.

20 000

GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED REFUGEES

We continued our advocacy for Resettlement of 20,000 Government-Assisted Refugees annually.

Webinars & Virtual meetings

The CCR organizes regular webinars to respond to the needs of our members - they are also open to the public. Additionally, we host virtual meetings to foster information sharing and networking on a regular basis in response to the needs and important emerging issues identified by our members.

This year, we hosted 7 webinars and 19 virtual meetings.

This year, many important issues were brought forward, such as the **practical realities of sanctuary cities** in Canada, and the protection of trafficked persons. Through the support of the Youth Network, there was also a **webinar for youth** to build their fundraising skills.

Consultations

The Fall 2018 Consultation, held in Montreal, focused on the theme "**40 Years of Compassion, Courage and Resilience**". This Consultation marked an exciting celebration of 40 years of the CCR, with keynote speaker the Honourable Juanita Westmoreland-Traoré giving a historical perspective. We also held our Annual General Meeting.

The theme of "**Roots: Reconciling the Global with the Local**" was highlighted at our Spring 2019 Consultation in Victoria. Through the insights of keynote speaker Carey Newman Hayalthkin'geme, and workshops, participants deepened their understandings of how to build bridges between newcomers and the First Peoples of the land.



635

PEOPLE

participated in our virtual meetings and webinars on emerging issues in migration.

625

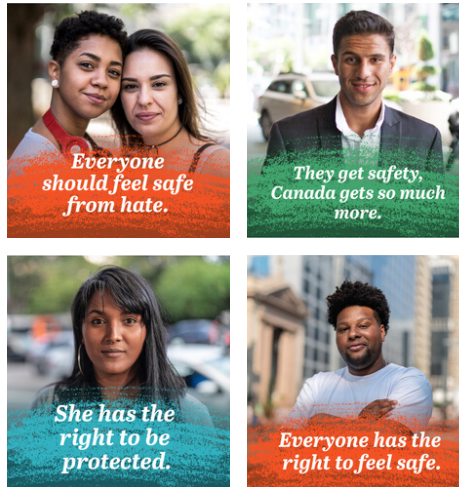
PARTICIPANTS

attended both Consultations, from 9 different provinces, coming from various sectors, including NGOs, government representatives, people with refugee experience, youth and representatives from UNHCR and IOM.

Public Opinion Campaign

Over the past summer, the CCR ran the **campaign “Refugees Welcome”** together with partners Amnesty International and the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers. The campaign aimed to proactively shift public opinion before the federal elections in October.

We sent an **open letter** to the federal leaders in June, asking them to respect the dignity and human rights of refugees and vulnerable migrants during the election campaign. **Shareable visuals** were also produced, namely 10 visuals and 3 videos in both English and French.



Legal Affairs

On May 10th 2019, the Supreme Court of Canada made a landmark decision in the **China case** which confirms that immigration detainees may challenge the lawfulness of their detention through habeas corpus. The CCR was an intervener in this case, arguing that people detained under the immigration legislation do not always receive a fair hearing by an impartial decision-maker.

International Affairs

On the international stage, the CCR participated in the **Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR)** and EXCOM. We were also engaged in the follow-up to the Global Compact on Refugees, including contributing to the **Three-year Strategy on Resettlement and Complementary Pathways**.

170

SIGNATORIES

More than 170 Canadian organizations from various sectors – credit unions, religious associations, trade unions, NGOs etc. signed the open letter.

14

LAWYERS

work on our Legal Affairs Committee to establish better legal protections for refugees and vulnerable migrants.

Anti-Trafficking

In the third year of a five-year initiative, in collaboration with our national **Anti-Trafficking Committee**, we continued to work towards policy change to protect trafficked persons in Canada. We advocated to strengthen Temporary Residence Permits and pathways to permanent protection.

With a focus on access to justice, we held events and produced resources to reinforce a community of best practice in legal service provision and rights-protection strategies. **We organized two in-person legal case study hacks** in Toronto and Vancouver and we also published 4 new **capacity-building resources** for legal practitioners and front-line service providers.



Youth Network

This was the first year launching six local branches with teams of nine newcomer youths respectively to develop their leadership skills and mobilize newcomer youth. The branches led successful **local consultations** on what they would like newcomer youth's journeys to Canada to look like. Youths envisioned the changes they would like in their communities, and the tools they needed to better engage other youths and decision makers at these meetings.



Branch leaders further built their skills at a training in Toronto in June 2019. The Youth Network led trainings for organizations on **youth engagement** at the Consultations, and supported the branches.

240

PARTICIPANTS

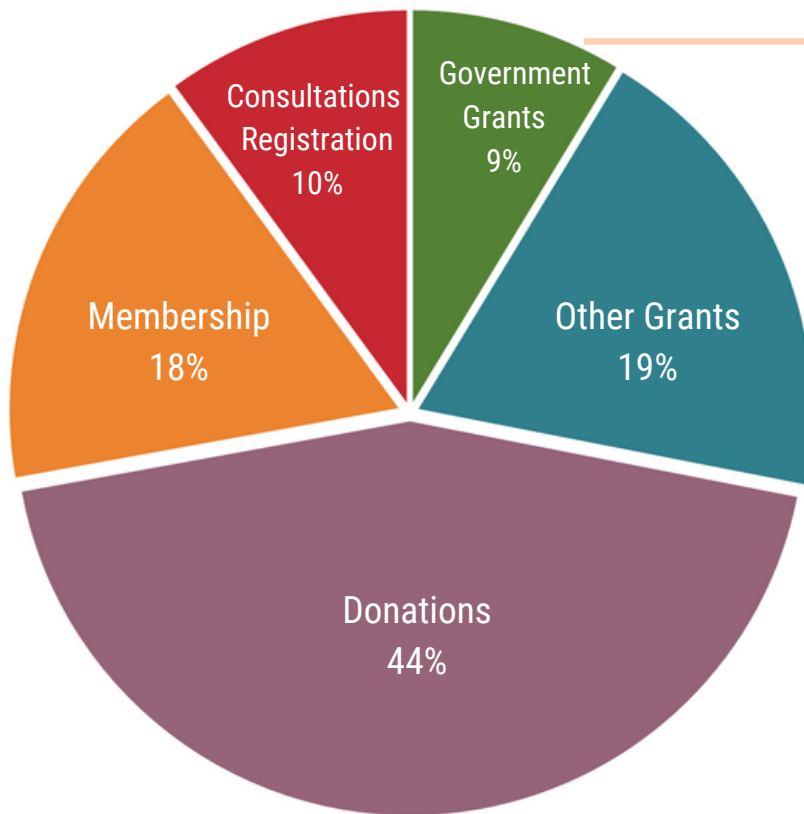
Anti-trafficking and migrant rights advocates, service providers, legal practitioners, policy makers, people with lived experience participated in our National Forum, anti-trafficking workshops, and trainings.

6

LOCAL BRANCHES ACTIVATED

In the last year, the Youth Network successfully activates branches in Toronto, Sherbrooke, Winnipeg, Vancouver, Edmonton and Fredericton

OUR FUNDING



Government funding accounts for a small percentage of our special project funding, with 5% of our total budget being from IRCC for the Youth Network.

Grants support many of our special projects. The McConnell Foundation, about 8% of our total funding, supports the Youth Network. The Canadian Women's Foundation and the Canadian Bar Association fund our Anti-Trafficking program, for around 3% of our total funding.

What's next at the CCR

The CCR is excited to be the **NGO Chair for the Annual Tri-partite Consultation on Resettlement (ATCR)** for the 2019-2020 year. The ATCR, now in its 26th year, brings together UNHCR, governments and NGOs of resettlement countries, to share information and strategize in support of resettlement. As Canada is chairing this year, there will be Working Group Meetings in Ottawa in February, culminating in the ATCR itself in Geneva in June 2020.

In July 2017, the CCR, Amnesty International and the Canadian Council of Churches launched a legal challenge at the Federal Court on the Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States. In July 2018, our lawyers finalised the presentation of supplementary evidence and the case was heard in November 2019. We are now awaiting a decision.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Highlights

Statement of operations for the year ending August 31, 2019

REVENUES	2019	2018
Grants		
Governments	165160	109 905
Other grants	75985	103 420
Donations	395 482	303 548
Interest	1 465	1 346
Publications	-	360
Membership fees	151 710	121 060
Fundraising events	1 171	28 772
Conference registrations	85 711	124 946
Total	876 684	793 357

EXPENSES

Salaries and benefits	398 129	330 339
Conference expenses	82 289	142 466
Executive committee	10 428	7 382
Working Groups	50 305	26 099
Syrian Refugee Support Fund	6 700	75 000
Public education & networking	66 775	52 639
Administrative expenses	86 044	68 515
Fundraising	32 754	31 213
Total	733 424	733 653

Balance sheet at August 31, 2019

Assets	1 924 417	1 841 743
Liabilities	121 470	152 232
Net assets		
Endowment Fund	1 510 511	1 540 258
Internally restricted	39 750	20 000
Unrestricted	262 844	139 334
Total net assets	1 934 575	1 851 824

Change in net assets

Balance at the beginning of year	1 699 592	1 502 917
Excess of revenues over expenses	143 260	59 704
Variation of Endowment Fund	-29 747	136 971
Balance at end of year	1 813 105	1 699 592



We extend our deepest appreciation and gratitude to all our donors, volunteers, organizations, foundations and governments who supported our work and give hope to many refugees, vulnerable migrants and newcomer youth.

This year's financials demonstrate how necessary our donors are to sustaining the work of the CCR, and our independence.

Copies of full audited statements including notes are available from the CCR office.