



Canadian Council for Refugees Spring 2015 Consultation
Home, Dignity: Human Rights
May 21-23 2015, Winnipeg
Conference Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Council for Refugees' Spring 2015 Consultation was held the 21 - 23 May at the Radisson Downtown hotel in Winnipeg, on Treaty One territory and the homeland of the Métis nation. Over 300 participants from across Canada attended the Consultation, with a strong local attendance from Manitoba, and delegates from every single province.

The Spring 2015 Consultation provided a space for learning, experience-sharing and networking among people involved in refugee protection, the immigrant and refugee serving sector, and refugee resettlement across Canada. The theme for this Consultation was *Home, Dignity: Human rights*, reflecting – among other things – the preoccupation with housing for newcomers as a key concern and a crucial prerequisite for settlement.

This Consultation continued to employ the successful new program format we have experimented with since Spring 2014, including five parallel caucus sessions held on Friday morning that, for the most part, were open to government. The Closing Plenary and general meeting are now combined, and start and end earlier than usual.

Thirty-five sessions were offered during the three days of the Consultation, consisting of two plenary sessions, three orientations, one training session, three two-part working group meetings, one joint strategy session, seventeen workshops, and eight caucus sessions. The program included three to five concurrent sessions in any given time period, apart from the times when participants met in plenary. Workshop streams focused on (a) immigrant and refugee settlement and integration, (b) refugee resettlement and overseas protection and (c) inland refugee protection.

The Working Group meetings held during the Consultation were once again divided in two parts, on Thursday and Friday, which gave participants the opportunity to become familiar with the functions and key issues of the working group, and then discuss emerging issues and share information, best practices and initiatives with others from across Canada. They also offered an

opportunity to prepare resolutions to be presented at the General Meeting held as part of the Closing Plenary, and to develop strategies for action to address issues emerging from the discussion. A new resource on the principles of anti-oppression was introduced to the conference kit in Winnipeg: it was presented at the beginning of the working group meetings. The handout included an explanation of different types of privilege and an exercise on how to be aware of this, as well as tips for a more inclusive Consultation.

CCR member organizations and volunteers from Winnipeg formed a local organizing committee (LOC) to host the event and successfully ensured that logistics were looked after and that a welcoming team of volunteers was ready to respond to the needs of participants. The Consultation was made possible thanks to the time, dedication, and hard work of the staffs of MIIC Welcome Place, IRCOM, MIRSSA and others, and the team of dynamic and helpful volunteers they recruited and coordinated. The LOC organized successful social events both Thursday and Friday evenings. On Thursday a cocktail reception was sponsored by MIIC and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, and on Friday participants enjoyed a three-course meal, entertaining performances from local dance troupes and musicians, and dancing.

At this Consultation, the CCR benefited from the in-kind contributions of Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council Inc., New Journey Housing, Local Immigration Partnership Winnipeg, Manitoba Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Sector Association, Canadian Race Relations Foundation, IRCOM, Rainbow Resource Centre and Accueil francophone.

The CCR gratefully acknowledges financial support for the Consultation from The Winnipeg Foundation, Government of Manitoba (for the Friday evening dinner), Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada/Canadian Lutheran World Relief, Anglican Diocese of Rupert's Land, CUPE locals 2348 and 2343, and The United Church of Canada - Conference of Manitoba & Northwestern Ontario.

II. EMERGING NEEDS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

Through workshops, caucus sessions, plenaries and the written feedback we received on the Consultation, a number of emerging needs and priorities in the refugee protection and newcomer settlement sector have been identified.

Youth Stereotyping and Radicalization

Concerns about youth radicalization were highlighted. On the one hand, the threat is real and we need to explore effective ways to limit the risks for vulnerable newcomer youth. On the other hand, many youth feel that the main challenges that they are facing are rather ones of stereotyping: they see society viewing them as potential radicals or members of criminal gangs. Youth engagement was recommended as the best way forward.

CBSA

The consultation provided an excellent opportunity to engage with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) on a number of issues, including treatment of children, intersection of CBSA activities with violence against women, improving communication between NGOs and CBSA at the local level. CCR will be following up on a number of these issues.

Gender analysis

A workshop presenting a gender-based analysis of immigration policy changes raised awareness of an area that deserves more attention. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act mandates a regular gender impact analysis: several participants were interested in the CCR's suggestion of providing a complementary analysis that takes a deeper look at how changes have had differential impacts based on gender and gender identity.

Refusals of privately sponsored refugees

Many participants involved in the private sponsorship of refugees expressed interest in pursuing a CCR project to analyze private sponsorship refusals. Some felt that negative decisions have too rarely been challenged. There were particular concerns about refusals based on local integration as a durable solution (in countries where refugees face significant hardship and dangers) and on the basis of credibility.

Inter-faith initiatives

The faith-based dialogue pursued through several conferences focused this time on local inter-faith initiatives. There was considerable interest in finding ways to share success stories and resources from local initiatives across the country.

Family reunification issues

A session on family reunification highlighted the many recent changes to the rules and new barriers to family reunification. Given that many settlement workers have limited knowledge of family reunification rules and procedures, it was suggested that the CCR offer a training session on this topic. (A webinar is being planned for the fall).

III. SUMMARY OF THE PLENARIES

Some presentations are available online for CCR members at <http://ccrweb.ca/en/fall-2014-presentations>.

Opening plenary

Following a welcome from Dennis White Bird, representing the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and from the Honourable Erna Braun, Minister of Labour and Immigration of Manitoba, participants heard some key updates on CCR activities since the last consultation from the CCR President and representatives of the Youth Network.

The keynote speakers gave reflections on the theme Home, Dignity: Human rights, from the perspectives of a faith leader, an Indigenous person and someone who has lived the refugee experience. Professor Aimée Craft spoke about Indigenous struggles to maintain their home and identity in the face of colonization. Bishop Susan Johnson highlighted “Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmations for Faith Leaders”, underlining the moral obligations to welcome newcomers and protect refugees, common to all faith traditions. Muuxi Adam commented on the newcomer experience, noting the pressure that newcomers are under to please so that they will be welcomed and supported (which is why they smile wherever they go).

Resource persons:

Dennis White Bird, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

Honourable Erna Braun, Minister of Labour and Immigration, Manitoba Government

Loly Rico, CCR President

Alex Garcia and Najla Kanaan, Youth Network Representatives

Professor Aimée Craft, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba

Bishop Susan Johnson, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada

Muuxi Adam, Community Development Coordinator, film maker and founder of Humankind International

Moderators: Rita Chahal and Boris Ntambwe

Closing plenary and General Meeting

The closing plenary offered an opportunity to recap the highlights of the consultation and conduct the General Meeting. One resolution, on Islamophobia and discrimination targeting newcomer youth, was adopted.

Participants also heard from guest speaker, James B. Wilson, Treaty Commissioner, Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba. He gave an engaging presentation about his work as Treaty Commissioner, which includes promoting relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples. Developing stronger connections with refugee and immigrant communities is a priority. Among the topics discussed was the need for improved opportunities for newcomers to Canada to learn about Indigenous Peoples and the Treaties, and the possibility of organizing events making the connection between World Refugee Day (June 20) and National Aboriginal Day (June 21).

Co-chairs: Loly Rico and Jim Mair

IV. SYNTHESIS OF WORKSHOPS

Note: a number of presentations from the workshops are available to CCR members online at <http://ccrweb.ca/en/spring2015-presentations>.

Collaborating to address trafficking in persons: Manitoba's experience

This workshop focused on the province's experience addressing trafficking in persons, and organizations and agencies' collaborative approach in assessing and responding to trafficking in communities across the province.

Cpl. Gabe Simard explained his role as First Nations Community Liaison and presented on the education and awareness-raising strategy employed by the RCMP across Manitoba on human trafficking, and shared some of the material used in their work. One of the challenges expressed by Cpl. Simard was gaining the trust of First Nations communities due to historical factors.

Rebecca Cook shared the strategy employed by the Manitoba Government, Tracia's Trust, launched since 2002, which focuses on combating sexual exploitation (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/traciustrust/index.html>). In 2011, the provincial government expanded its strategy to add a number of components, including human trafficking, offender accountability and protection elements for victims. The provincial strategy involves: Prevention/Awareness, Intervention, Legislation, Coordination, Community mobilization, Research and evaluation. The legislation presented as having a positive impact on the identification and prevention of trafficking included:

- Child and Family Services Act amendment in June 2005 to increase offence provisions in the Act for offences related to causing a child to be in need of protection, including for sexual exploitation and interference with a child in care.
- Mandatory reporting on child pornography across MB established in April 2009.
- Worker Recruitment and Protection Act (WRAPA) came into effect in April 2009, targeting dishonest model and talent agencies, and aimed at improving protection of foreign workers wanting to work in MB who might be vulnerable to trafficking.

Legislation has been accompanied by a continuum of services particularly intended for youth and aboriginal women and girls, focusing primarily on sexual exploitation.

Dianna Bussey presented on the work of the Trafficked Persons Response Team, established in 2008 to meet the immediate and long-term needs of trafficked persons it comes into contact with in Manitoba. The response team began by focusing on internationally trafficked persons and expanded to include those trafficked domestically. In establishing protocols and roles, they have worked to create a balance between knowing who to contact, by knowing what other agencies can offer through their existing services, and developing face to face relationships. Members of the response team include federal and provincial government departments, different levels of law enforcement, community and settlement organizations, and shelters.

Regarding the response team's operation process, when an NGO or law enforcement identifies a trafficked person, the team members are identified based on the needs of the person and support is then provided. Short and long term resources are considered; however, providing long-term support has proven particularly difficult. Identification of a variety of resources was mentioned as being the most significant activity of the team, including seeking out different types of

shelters, counsellors, translators, and other services, which takes time but is also the most helpful as connections are created. Resource agencies do not need to be team members, but many are. One of the most significant lesson learnt and recommendation provided around their work was regarding the importance of establishing relationships, as this will be crucial in opening doors.

The discussion following the presentations focused on newcomers in vulnerable situations. The presenters clarified that while their work has centred extensively on trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and on domestic trafficking, they are aware that other forms of trafficking, including trafficking of non-citizens with precarious status, may be taking place but they have not been able to identify such cases in part because of difficulties in coming forward.

Workshop outcomes included a commitment to continue to collect information on access to Temporary Resident Permits for trafficked persons across Canada, including on CIC's practices around the issuing of permits and challenges. The CCR has published a report on access to TRPs: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/trafficking/temporary-resident-permit-report>.

Resource persons:

Dianna Bussey, Director, Salvation Army Correctional & Justice Services, Winnipeg
Rebecca Cook, Regional Team Coordinator, Manitoba Family Services
Corporal Gabriel Simard, RCMP First Nation Community Liaison

Moderators: Marta Kalita and Rita Acosta

Building Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

The CCR recognizes the Indigenous Peoples of Canada as its original inhabitants, and that refugees, migrants and the Indigenous Peoples of Canada may share similar experiences with injustice due to persecution, oppression, colonization, discrimination, stereotyping and exclusion. CCR membership has made a commitment to initiating dialogue and striving to build respectful relationships with Indigenous Peoples in order to learn about issues of common interest and discuss potential strategies and solutions. This workshop was organized as a moderated panel discussion to explore ways in which CCR member and ally organizations can go about building links of solidarity with indigenous communities.

Participants discussed the stereotypes and misconceptions about Indigenous people among newcomers, and how these notions are rooted in colonialism and patriarchy, and are reinforced through tools such as the Citizenship Guide. The exclusion and genocide of Indigenous peoples through residential schools, forced sterilization of Indigenous women, and other campaigns was reviewed, and the need to build solidarity between oppressed and excluded peoples while recognizing the role that immigrants and refugees play in Canada's ongoing colonial project was acknowledged.

In the second part of the session strategies for building solidarity were discussed, and the multiple sites and sectors in which Indigenous peoples and newcomers can engage with each other were identified. There was opportunity for a facilitated exchange between resource persons/panelists and workshop participants. The conversation included ideas of how to address myths and misconceptions, and suggestions on how different groups (e.g. students) can engage in

different ways. Participants were given a copy of existing CCR resolution on Indigenous peoples, and encouraged to explore building a relationship with Indigenous groups and movements in their local community.

Resource persons:

Leah Gazan, University of Winnipeg

Diane Redsky, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, Winnipeg

Damon Johnson, President, Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg

Abdikheir Ahmed, Immigration Partnership Winnipeg

Moderators: Noëlle DePape and Amy Casipullai

Inter-faith conversations: promoting learning, understanding and tolerance

Our work with refugees in Canada takes place in not only a multi-cultural, but also a multi-faith context. This workshop shared information on inter-faith work being done at the grassroots level in communities, and multi-faith conversations that are happening nationally.

Presenters identified activities bringing people together from different faiths to do things while learning from one another, including:

- Dialogue groups
- Cooking workshops/cookbook publishing
- Story-telling
- Youth documentary
- Manitoba multi-faith leadership breakfasts
- Ad hoc advisory committee to the Lieutenant Governor to deal with inter-religious conversation (including Cree, Baha’I, Hindu, etc.)
- Leadership institute (includes youth) with visits to one another’s places of workshop
- Muslim women’s council
- Multi-cultural tea-fest
- Canadian inter-faith conversation

Respondents (Jewish and Muslim) identified work with newcomers within the context of their faith, underscoring the importance of opportunities for inter-faith connections.

Participants then brainstormed possible actions for the CCR, and important points to keep in mind. Here are some of the salient points made:

- Sponsors need to be sensitive to the power dynamic of their relations with newcomers
- We need to learn through face-to-face conversations/activities, not presentations and not (only) social media
- CCR could pull together tools and resources and make them available to people, share information about these initiatives, including case studies.
- Be open to action from within the community, not top-down. Could CCR be a focal point for small, rural communities?
- Right now the Muslim community is the target: CCR could do an action for whatever community is the current target of distrust, oppression, to be in solidarity.
- CCR could look at child and family services – children being removed from refugee families (numbers are growing)

- CCR could be part of the Canadian Inter-faith Conversation as an affiliate member www.interfaithconversation.ca

Resource persons:

Paulina Grainger, Arts & Outreach Coordinator, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
Shahina Siddiqui, President, Islamic Social Services Association, Winnipeg
Rev. Dr. James Christie, Professor of Dialogue Theology; Director, Ridd Institute for Religion and Global Policy; Chair, Project Ploughshares

Moderators: Rob Shropshire and Rebecca Walker

Private sponsorship of refugees training

This training workshop aimed to provide a concise A-Z overview of how refugees can be privately sponsored to Canada, what special initiatives exist and what some common challenges and best practices are. Participants gained an understanding of logistics such as application processing, the cost of sponsoring, types of sponsorship and eligibility, global and sub-caps, and information on groups of 5 and SAHs.

As a result of the workshop, RSTP can look forward to an increase in calls from participants who want more information and clarification. A number of people didn't know or understand the cap system and how dramatically the number of new sponsorships has dropped as a result.

Resource person:

Nadine Nasir, RSTP Trainer

Moderators: Jim Mair and Khwaka Kukubo

Dialogue with the Manitoba government: Reducing Risks for Low Skilled Migrant Workers

This session offered an opportunity to hear from and dialogue with representatives of the Manitoba government, especially in relation to low-skilled workers. Participants heard about the Worker Recruitment and Protection Act (WRAPA), which is seen as a model across Canada for reducing risks for low-skilled migrant workers. The impact of labour recruitment laws on potential situations of trafficking was explored, and participants heard about opportunities for low-skilled workers to become permanent residents through the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. A community respondent spoke to the gaps and challenges that are still seen on the ground.

Some suggested actions included writing to provincial governments to adopt the best practices of provinces such as Manitoba, and to update the CCR's migrant worker report cards, and see where the recommendations may have been heeded.

Resource persons:

Jay Short, Manager Special Investigations, Employment Standards, Manitoba

Vera Ciriviri-Gjuric, Manager, Integrity and Quality Assurance, Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program

Respondent: Diwa Marcelino, Migrante Manitoba

Moderator: Loly Rico

Refugee Protection Division: Issues and trends

This workshop explored decision-making trends at the Refugee Protection Division (RPD), including no credible basis findings and their implications. It also looked at procedural fairness issues, including the challenge of obtaining reasonably-requested postponements in the context of the RPD's own regular last minute cancellations of hearings for administrative reasons. Participants had an opportunity to participate in direct consultation with those charged with implementing the IRB's mandate.

Karen Michnick gave an overview of statistics related to her Division's caseload, as well as emerging initiatives such as the Ready Tour. She reiterated the independent nature of RPD decision-makers but noted that the RPD is constantly training members on issues like no credible basis. She welcomed the constructive comments made during the discussion, in particular the attention given to the conditions in which claimants are living, which she felt should be considered by the RPD.

Eunice Valenzuela presented on concerns facing claimants living outside the Toronto area. Ben Liston presented statistics and legal background on current issues at the RPD such as the increasing trend of no credible basis/manifestly unfounded decisions. Finally, Ghezae Hagos Berhe gave an overview of his organization and a summary of the issues facing claimants in Winnipeg. Attendees welcomed his presentation on Winnipeg, which was not well-known information.

Resource persons:

Karin Michnick, Assistant Deputy Chair, RPD Western Region

Ben Liston, Refugee Law Office, Toronto

Ghezae Hagos Berhe, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, Winnipeg

Eunice Valenzuela, Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support, Kitchener

Moderator: Salvator Cusimano and Claire Roque

Centralized Processing Office – Winnipeg (CPOW)

The purpose of the workshop was to give participants an opportunity to better understand the role and functioning of the Centralized Processing Office Winnipeg, which processes applications to privately sponsor refugees. It included a focus on applications from Groups of Five.

Government speakers reported that processing times have been significantly improved as the backlog has been cleared and all applications are in process. At the moment SAH and Group of 5

applications are processed on a first come first served basis, with the exception of applications for Syrians, which are given priority. Government reported seeing major errors in G5 applications.

Resource persons:

Anastasia Chyz-LeSage, Acting Director General, CIC Western Region

Elisha Kapell-Seguín, Director, Immigration, CIC Western Region

Nadine Nasir, Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP)

Moderators: Jim Mair and Adeena Niazi

Radicalization and Stereotyping

Young newcomers routinely face stereotyping, often according to their country of origin or religion: they are seen as members of street gangs or drug abusers. A new phenomenon of youth radicalization has made the headlines in the media.

This workshop explored the issue of “radicalization” in Canada, framing the issue as one of youth marginalization. The marginalization of youth of colour was explored from historical and present day perspectives in the Canadian context. Shahina Siddiqui discussed the reality of youth joining radical Islamic movements, including the sensationalization of this phenomenon and how Islamophobia has been propagated by the media.

Alex Garcia shared his experience working with a young person who came close to becoming “radicalized”. He shared his response as a youth worker, and discussed possible warning signs.

The group then discussed youth engagement as a strategy to overcome marginalization, and in turn radicalization, with an emphasis on how to engage Muslim, refugee and newcomer youth. Participants shared experiences of what had worked for their organizations and what hadn’t when working with that demographic. The audience asked questions and shared tips about meaningful engagement with Muslim and refugee youth.

A resolution was developed coming out of this workshop. It can be seen here:

www.ccrweb.ca/en/res/islamophobia-and-discrimination-targeting-newcomer-youth

Resource persons:

Shahina Siddiqui, Islamic Social Services Association, Winnipeg

Alex Garcia, Maison des jeunes Côtes-des-Neiges, Montreal

Moderators: Ibrahim Absiye and Najla Kanaan

Caucus: Navigating the System

This caucus session explored interventions by front-line workers to help refugees and other newcomers navigate the intricate systems they interact with (e.g. health care, schools, social workers). Participants were encouraged to share best practices and brainstorm around common challenges.

Common challenges identified included:

- Boundaries for staff
- Privacy concerns for agencies -can we share basic information and how can we do it more efficiently?
- Waiting time from referrals to service is sometimes very long.
- Strategy of multiple referrals to access services sooner
- Multiple referrals: can be good but sometimes leaves clients confused
- Family doesn't always know who is helping them – especially when family members may have different needs
- Different services - i.e. youth within a family have access to other programs
- Competing for numbers - agencies need to respond to funders and so it creates a competitive environment to record client numbers
- Clients build trust with a worker/agency, especially for francophone clients accessing other services where there may not be bilingual staff
- Children - school systems cannot share information, privacy issues when needs are identified
- Privately Sponsored Refugees - might be outside the settlement service provider network and therefore they and their sponsors may be unaware of the range of services available
- Need to know what services are being provided and by whom
- Challenges around accessing interpreters when they are needed
- Clients may get incorrect advice from friends and communities rather than trusting the system
- Medical system can be inflexible and rigid - need to be able to advocate
- Getting claimants or TFW's into the services is the first hurdle – then they face the same challenges as others

Best strategies were shared and discussed. These included:

- Taking a cultural/holistic approach with clients – the use of community members as cultural brokers (can be a challenge for people from same community but also an asset in terms of helping interpret the systems)
- Team approach with schools and service providers – need to work more closely together and overcome how information can be shared in the clients' best interest
- Sharing staff between two organizations often makes it easier to build trust and understanding as the staff already know the clients
- Sharing information with other service agencies - like child care centres who may have refugee children but are not aware of services available for the families
- Partnership with CFS – advocate for client and accompany to CFS
- Parenting programs can help empower clients to navigate the systems
- Partnership with French Schools (in Anglophone majority provinces) has been very positive - partnerships and relationship building is important
- Important to sensitize and inform school staff as they are often a first point for new families

- Using an empowerment approach with clients is important so they know how to advocate for themselves with service providers as soon as possible

Caucus leaders: Traicy Robertson and Claudette Legault

Global Resettlement Needs

This workshop aimed to highlight global needs for resettlement and Canadian selection of refugees overseas: who is considered, and who is forgotten, who is coming, who didn't make it, why and what problems and challenges exist for forgotten populations.

Michael Casasola of UNHCR gave an overview of updated global resettlement needs and regional distributions, as well as an overview as to how the need for resettlement is determined, and how populations and cases are prioritized. He also addressed some common challenges faced during resettlement, and talked about the process of referral to Canadian visa offices for the purpose of resettlement to Canada.

Erol Kekic spoke about the US refugee resettlement program, and about the involvement of his organization overseas.

Tom Denton talked about resettlement to Manitoba, emphasizing the importance of private sponsorship. He expressed concern over the limits on allocations, and felt that Canada could do much more.

Dr. Tesfagiorgis presented on the Eritrean community's experiences of sponsorship, and the impact of overseas selection priorities, restrictions and delays.

Resource persons:

Michael Casasola, Resettlement Officer, UNHCR Ottawa

Erol Kekic, Director, Immigration and Refugee Program, Church World Service, New York

Tom Denton, Executive Director, Hospitality House Refugee Ministry, Winnipeg

Dr. Mussie Tesfagiorgis, Geezrite Catholic Organization in Manitoba, Winnipeg

Moderators: Sharmarke Mohamed and Jennifer Mpungu

Children and CBSA

This workshop aimed to identify practices of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) that have an impact on children throughout their process of claiming asylum, and to compile information and suggestions for a document to serve as a basis for encouraging CBSA to develop a policy on children.

An overview of the international law context was given, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Canada's obligations to meet international treaty requirements and how Canada's Charter of Rights is aligned with these.

The speaker from UNHCR gave a presentation on two pilot projects in the Greater Toronto Area for unaccompanied minors involving pro bono designated representatives and an early intervention protocol at Ports of Entry in partnership with CBSA, regional child welfare agencies and Red Cross First Contact program. It was noted that a 1998 UNHCR report on the Rights of the Child identified gaps in Canada's policies such as the lack of a national guardian program and lack of assessment tool to define best interest of the child.

Nazrin Azar from Refugee Law Office spoke about children in detention in Toronto and discussed several issues including the psychological impact of being detained and seeing parents in distress, limited access to education and recreational activities or fresh air, loss of the school year, and potential separation from a parent through foster care by Child Welfare as an alternative to staying with the detained parent.

In the area of removals, examples of custodial parents being removed with pending H&C and the issue of leaving children behind with family or friends or in the care of Child Welfare were discussed, noting that there is not a consistent application as some officers are sensitive to these issues and others are not. It was also acknowledged that not everybody has access to H&C because of legislative timeframes.

Information collected during the workshop is being formulated into a policy paper that will be shared with CBSA to develop a policy on children. Representatives of CBSA in attendance were agreeable and interested in working with CCR on this issue.

Resource persons:

Rana Khan, UNHCR, Toronto

Nasrin Azar, Refugee Law Office, Toronto

Rick Goldman, Committee to Aid Refugees, Montreal

Jennie Stone, Neighbourhood Legal Clinic, Toronto

Moderators: Debbie Hill-Corrigan and Rivka Augenfeld

Settlement Services: The challenges and benefits of data collection and reporting

There are important benefits to effective data collection, reporting and analysis that inform services to clients, prove the success of programs, and support funding applications. This workshop will explore current practices, strategies, and challenges around data collection, reporting, evaluation and research from the funders', settlement service providers', and academic's perspectives, as well as the outcomes of data collection through such systems.

Martha Justus of CIC provided an overview and history of iCARE and a projection of what iCARE will become in the future. She reported that iCARE will be an important part of the 2017 Treasury Board evaluation of CIC and the National Settlement Program, and argued that iCARE makes service providers more accurate in their data collection. There was a request from participants that CIC provide training to SPOs on how to use and interpret iCARE reports, and Ms. Justus said she would be interested in doing this.

Lori Wilkinson from University of Winnipeg presented her research findings on refugees in Western Canada. Participants felt there was a need to have research on refugees in Eastern Canada similar to what Lori has done in the West.

Both of these presentations are available to logged in CCR members at:
ccrweb.ca/en/spring2015-presentations

Jean McRae provided a service provider perspective on iCARE.

Resource persons:

Lori Wilkinson, University of Manitoba and Director, Immigration Research West

Martha Justus, Director - Strategic Research, CIC

Jean McRae, Intercultural Association of Victoria

Moderator: Craig Mackie

Beating the Chill: What we can say and do

Fear and uncertainty are silencing voices in newcomer communities. They are giving rise to negative stereotypes leading to islamophobia. They are pressuring organizations serving newcomers not to criticize government policies or engage in advocacy. This workshop explored the ‘chill’ of fear and uncertainty, and discussed what can be done to counter the negative stereotypes, assumptions and trends.

The Winnipeg Free Press published a strong article based on the workshop: Hiding from chill of mistrust: Immigrants, agencies fear government retribution, Carol Sanders, 23 May 2015, <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/hiding-from-chill-of-mistrust-304801331.html>.

Resource persons:

Abdikheir Ahmed, Winnipeg

Amy Casipullai, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), Toronto

Louise Simbandumwe, SEED Winnipeg

Moderators: Noelle DePape and Jill Keliher

Challenges and Hope: Refugee initiatives in the absence of durable solutions

There will never be enough resettlement spaces for all refugees in need of a durable solution. The panelists in this workshop discussed a variety of projects in different world regions which protect and assist refugees.

The workshop explored the challenges and the hope of engaging with and supporting refugees’ efforts to create their own future(s) in a world of continuing crisis and conflict. Fikre Tsehai spoke about Syrian refugees in Jordan and the work of his organization, while Matt Fast focused on Dadaab refugee camp and work of his Winnipeg based group Humankind International supporting education in the camps. Mary Purkey talked about her organization’s work with refugees at the Thai-Burma border.

Resource persons:

Fikre Mariam Tsehai, Canadian Lutheran World Relief

Matt Fast, Humankind International

Mary Purkey, Mae Sot Education Project

Moderator: Gloria Nafziger

Violence against Women in the immigration Enforcement Continuum

This interactive workshop with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) focused on issues pertinent to Violence against Women (VAW) in the Immigration Enforcement context. The session focused on identifying gaps, problems and potential solutions related to the treatment of women at the port of entry, during arrest and detention, and also for women facing deportation who have experienced domestic violence.

Resource persons discussed the continuum of violence and how encounters with CIC and CBSA can perpetuate the victimization of women with precarious status. There was a review of CCR's discussions to date with CBSA and recommendations for a CBSA policy, based on examples of cases. The CBSA representative stated that CBSA appreciated this input and welcomes potential solutions. He pointed out that all CBSA officers are governed by a code of conduct, so complaints can be filed for unacceptable treatment.

Some of the suggestions for CBSA that came up during the session included:

- CBSA agents must be trained on VAW to increase sensitivity
- There should be an intake interview after a woman is detained to better identify vulnerability and experiences of violence
- Other forms of violence against women and perpetrators other than the spouse/partner should be considered.
- Detention of a woman should not be considered when abuse results in man withdrawing sponsorship, while the woman has done nothing wrong.
- Services should be coordinated between CIC, CBSA, police and NGOs
- When sponsorship is withdrawn, the sponsored spouse should be interviewed to determine whether abuse was a factor.
- When a woman without status is identified by police, a shelter should be contacted before arrest by CBSA, as an alternative to detention.

Resource persons:

John Helsdon, CBSA

Nasrin Tabibzadeh, Refugee Law Office, Toronto

Rita Acosta, Mouvement contre le viol et l'inceste, Montreal

Moderators: Tanya Aberman

Express Entry

The Express Entry immigrant selection system, introduced January 1st of this year, is set to change the way Canada selects economic immigrants. It uses the “points system” to further narrow selection criteria and gives employers a prominent role in immigrant selection. This workshop brought together presenters from the immigrant and refugee serving sector, francophone newcomer interests, and government to share perspectives about the implications and impacts of the new system.

Ms. Tudadovic of CIC gave a detailed overview of the technical aspects of the Express Entry system. Ms. Brown spoke to the challenges experienced by the francophone community as a result of Express Entry.

Karl Flecker gave a unique perspective on the negative long-term implications of the system, emphasizing that this system mustn't be used as an easy way to recruit cheap labour for low-paying jobs. Some of the concerns he identified regarding the new system are:

- No predictability for applicants
- Your success depends on who is in the pool with you
- Harder to qualify but maybe better short-term results
- Language standards will change source countries, while ignoring 2nd generation successes
- 3rd party assessment of language and education credentials = more objectivity (do we know the capacity of the assessors?)
- Regulated occupations still a problem
- CEC is not automatic; meeting the criteria gets you in the pool. Problematic for international students and high-skilled TFWs
- Harder for international students to qualify for PR. No extra points for study in Canada.
- Job offers must be in O, A, B NOC codes
- Bias built in for short-term labour market needs (defined by employers rather than government FSWP)
- Nation building is not in the formulae – but economic needs of employers are
- Early draws suggest in applicants are favoured = Creating a two-step immigration process. Alongside this likely to see problems for those with temporary entry status being ineligible for social protections, uncertainty, separation from family and time served while in TFW status does not count for citizenship eligibility.
- Two step bias hands over initial selection of potential immigrants to employers and educational institutions. No concomitant expectation of their role to provide assistance/service for transition to PR status. They get the worker – not the potential citizen.
- No incentive for employers to hire from abroad, if EE will be the fast and furious service road to transition TFWs to long-term employees

A major focus of the discussion following the presentation was on the impact on the francophone community, and on prospective francophone immigrants.

Resource persons:

Marjie Brown, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne, Ottawa

Emina Tudakovic, Director Strategic Planning and Delivery - International Region, CIC
Karl Flecker, KEYS, Kingston
Moderators: Georges Bahaya and Rita Chahal

Innovative Initiatives in Securing Acceptable Housing

Newcomers should have the right to an affordable and dignified home as it is a crucial element for individual and family well-being, and for successful settlement. This workshop presented initiatives in creating affordable and dignified housing from different provinces and focused on how research can help to make it happen.

Speakers from Winnipeg, Vancouver and Calgary presented research related to housing and housing initiatives in their cities. The general theme of all the presentations was that not only government (federal and provincial) but also the local community has responsibility to support refugees, and that they should focus on what refugees bring to cities rather than on what they take. Initiatives were shared by the presenters, including the rent supplement program in Winnipeg, Home Suite Home workshops in Calgary, and the New Welcome House that will be opening in Vancouver in spring 2016.

Resource persons:

Ray Silvius, Professor, University of Winnipeg
Hani Al-Ubeady, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, Winnipeg
Caroline Dailly, Immigrant Services Society of BC, Vancouver
Kirstin Blair, Immigrant Sector Council of Calgary

Moderators: Florim Tafilaj and Claudette Legault

Here and There: Putting Canada's immigration policy in a global gender perspective

This workshop facilitated a gender-based analysis of recent immigration legislation. Through an examination of the annual Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act report on the gender impacts of the immigration legislation, a diverse panel of speakers provided a platform to develop a counter-analysis to some of the changes that have taken place.

Presenters offered an overview of gender-based analysis (or Gender Mainstreaming) and how this analysis can be applied to the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act. The various shortcomings of CIC's gender-based analysis were examined, including how gender considerations aren't reflected in emerging policy changes and new legislation. Community perspectives that highlighted what is actually happening on the group were presented.

Resource persons:

Joan Grace, Associate Professor, Department of Politics, University of Winnipeg
Shauna Labman, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba
Chinue Bute, FCJ Refugee Centre
Adeena Niazi, Afghan Women's Organization

Moderators: Tanya Aberman and Philip Ackerman

Youth Views on Radicalization and Gangs

This workshop provided an opportunity for youth to talk about dealing with society's preoccupation with radicalization and youth gangs, and to discuss what recommendations could be made to government, funders and others who want to respond to youth being recruited to criminal activities.

Topics covered included:

- Media portrayal of newcomer youth in regards to radicalization and domestic terrorism
- The propagation of Islamophobia by the media
- Real life perspectives on radicalization of newcomer youth and active recruitment of newcomer youth by radical groups
- Youth engagement as a preventative measure
- Best practices for youth engagement

Facilitators: Alex Garcia, Najla Kanaan and Marko Gjuric

V. PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

Winnipeg Consultation participants who filled out evaluation forms reported particular appreciation for the opportunity to network, and to learn and exchange information with others involved in refugee protection, the immigrant and refugee serving sector, and refugee resettlement across Canada. Overall, participants reported that the opportunity to network and the workshop variety and content were particularly valuable to them.

Many of the positive comments about the Consultation were about the broad scope of workshop themes and the mix of presenters from different sectors, the interactive format and opportunity to ask questions and discuss, and the significant presence of new participants, especially from the Winnipeg area. Respondents underlined that having government representatives present as both speakers and participants is important, and they appreciated the opportunity to hear from the UNHCR.

Participants requested longer workshops to allow for more discussion, but they found it difficult to choose between several interesting workshops in one time slot. There were several comments about caucus sessions: some respondents felt confused as to the difference between caucus sessions (more strategy and discussion-oriented) and workshops (often with panel presentation format), while others felt that the caucus sessions were more successful than the workshops. There was a suggestion that the opening plenary should precede the first part of the Working Group meetings, to help prepare participants and put things in context. There were requests to improve translation between English and French, and to ensure more promotion of the event.

Respondents appreciated the efforts to foster participation and inclusion at the Consultation. Many respondents cited appreciation for the welcoming environment and encouragement to participate, while one person appreciated being given the space to listen without pressure to contribute. At CCR Consultations, moderators acknowledge and briefly explain the CCR's anti-oppression policy and acknowledge the indigenous territory the meeting is taking place on at the beginning of each session. At this Consultation a handout was introduced for the first time to the conference kit that all participants receive, offering tips for an inclusive Consultation, and including an exercise (the "power wheel") to help understand privilege. Many positive comments were received on these two elements that demonstrate and help reinforce the CCR's commitment to anti-oppression and inclusion.

Participants were appreciative of the efforts of the Local Organizing Committee, and many reported enjoying the social events that were organized for CCR participants to unwind and connect with others.

Overall, respondents felt that the conference was a success. Many people cited feeling motivated by being among so many others from across the country who work for refugee and migrant justice. Several people noted difficulty attending CCR Consultations regularly due to financial constraints, especially since professional development budgets are shrinking, but that proximity to their home location enables them to attend.