



# Canadian Council for Refugees Conseil canadien pour les réfugiés

## Annual Report 2007-2008

### Mission Statement

The Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) is a non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada. The membership is made up of organizations involved in the settlement, sponsorship and protection of refugees and immigrants. The Council serves the networking, information exchange and advocacy needs of its membership.

### Executive Committee

**President** - Elizabeth McWeeny, Thunder Bay

**Vice-President** - Roberto Jovel, Toronto

**Treasurer** - Jamila Aman, Toronto

**Secretary** - Simbo Conteh, Abbotsford

**Counsellors** - Jan Drews, Toronto; Anne-Marie Kabongo, Montréal; Mary Fiakpui, Edmonton; Deborah Isaacs, Vancouver; Diane Nancy Doray, Montréal; Nicholas Dubé, Sackville; Wanda Yamamoto, Winnipeg; Muuxi Adam, Winnipeg

### Working Group Chairs

**Immigration & Settlement** - Sherman Chan, Vancouver & Debbie Douglas, Toronto

**Inland Protection** - Rick Goldman, Montréal & Debbie Hill-Corrigan, Toronto

**Overseas Protection & Sponsorship** - Yosief Araya, Toronto & Heather Macdonald, Vancouver

### Staff

**Executive Director** - Janet Dench

**Office Manager** - Guadalupe Macias

**Settlement Policy Director** - Meissoon Azzaria

**Communication and Networking**

**Coordinator** - Colleen French

**Office Assistant** - Thabet al-Qadomi / Svitlana Palyukh

### Message from the CCR President, Elizabeth McWeeny

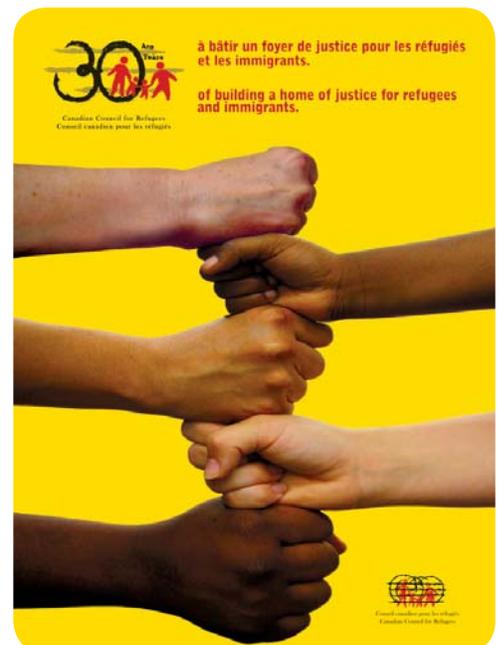
On the CCR's 30th anniversary it is important to reflect not only on the achievements of this past year but also what we have accomplished for refugees in the long term. Oftentimes the gains are incremental. Although it is hard for advocates to stay the course, it is immeasurably more difficult for the refugees affected.

Recently I was asked to name the three most important achievements of the CCR. First, we have grown from a group of 23 individuals to a national coalition that spans the country and engages 180 member organizations in seeking protection and rights for refugees and immigrants.

Secondly, the CCR is the national voice for refugees. We intervene with parliamentarians and public servants, take on legal battles, and support our members on national issues. We meet regularly with government and, while we do not always agree on the issues, through continued dialogue we do influence outcomes on government policies and practices.

Thirdly, the CCR has become a reflection of the refugee and immigrant communities in Canada. Our voice speaks from personal experience. Refugees and immigrants are our leadership, our membership, our driving force.

Our theme for this anniversary is "30 years of building a home of justice for refugees and immigrants." As we celebrate, there are still people in Canada as well as abroad who are neither safe nor protected. We renew our commitment to them as we look forward to another 30 years of building a home of justice for refugees and immigrants.



The Canadian Council for  
Refugees: More than 30 years of  
building a home of justice for refugees  
and immigrants.

## Highlights of Activities 2007 - 2008

### Defending refugees' access to asylum

The CCR remained vigilant as always in responding to barriers to refugees receiving the protection they need:

- > The CCR launched the Proud to aid and abet refugees campaign in response to the arrest in September 2007 of Janet Hinshaw-Thomas, a US refugee worker. She was charged by the Canadian government of people-smuggling because she was "aiding and abetting" a number of Haitians in making a refugee claim at the Canadian border. The government backed down and dropped the charges in November 2007, but the CCR continued to press for changes in the law so that aiding and abetting refugees is not a crime.



- > Participants gathered at the CCR Fall 2007 consultation were thrilled to learn that the Federal Court had upheld our challenge of the designation of the US as a safe third country for refugees. Unfortunately, the government appealed the ruling, and the matter was heard by the Federal Court of Appeal, which overturned the earlier decision. The CCR is now asking the Supreme Court to decide whether sending refugees back to the US is a violation of the Charter and our international human rights obligations.

- > The CCR continued to press the government to implement the Refugee Appeal Division (RAD), so that errors in refugee determination can be corrected. A private member's bill forcing implementation of the RAD was on the verge of becoming law when the elections were called in September 2008.



### Responding to new directions in immigration policy

Over the past year the government made clear its intention to reorient Canada's immigration policy in significant ways. The CCR was active in responding, opposing the shift towards increased reliance on temporary workers and the reduction in the rights of applicants in the immigration process. In coordination with other organizations with similar concerns, the CCR drew the attention of the public and decision-makers to the negative consequences for immigrants of the changes to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act made through Bill C-50.

### Trafficking

The CCR pursued its campaign to raise awareness about trafficking and to win legislative change to ensure trafficked persons in Canada receive the protection they need.



Photo: UNHCR

### Calling for an increased response to the Iraqi refugee crisis

The CCR continued through the past year to actively press the Canadian government to resettle more refugees, and in particular to respond more energetically to the millions of displaced Iraqis.

"I was deeply moved by the support of CCR and so many Canadians for me after my arrest. Without your continued support, there would be even greater tragedies. ... I continue to carry the red buttons in my purse - reminding me over and over again about the fact that Canadians (at least) understand that certain people should be given a safe haven because of the horrendous situation in their home countries."

- Janet Hinshaw-Thomas, arrested by Canadian authorities for 'aiding and abetting refugees'



## Highlights of Activities 2007 - 2008

### Promoting family reunification

The CCR continued to energetically press for quick and effective family reunification:



> In April 2008, the CCR released profiles of families separated as a result of Regulation 117(9)(d) – the inflexible Excluded Family Member rule. The public campaign was successful both in achieving reunification for the children profiled and in drawing a commitment from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to look for systemic solutions.

> The CCR also focused on the agonizingly slow family reunification process for children overseas of refugees in Canada, especially children who are at particular risk because they are separated from both their parents. In response, Citizenship and Immigration Canada struck a working group to analyse the causes of the delays and make recommendations. The CCR provided detailed input on the range of problems experienced by refugee families.

### Working internationally to promote resettlement

The CCR was very active at the international level over the past year. As the NGO Focal Point for the resettlement consultations, the CCR worked closely with the Canadian government and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in consultation with NGOs in other resettlement countries, to promote effective and responsive resettlement internationally. The efforts culminated in a very successful meeting of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, held in Geneva over the summer. As part of this process, the CCR led NGOs, governments and UNHCR in an initiative designed to improve the response to refugees with medical needs.

### Working together to promote settlement and integration



The CCR continued to offer a national forum for networking on settlement and integration issues, helping to identify barriers and work towards solutions. The two consultations, held last year in Ottawa and Winnipeg, are key to this networking. For example, a workshop on transportation loans at the spring consultation led to the CCR launching a campaign to call on the government to eliminate the devastating burden of transportation loans carried by resettled refugees. Over the past year, the CCR also launched the second phase of a project designed to support organizations in taking a gender-based approach to settlement.

### Getting the word out

As always, the CCR worked hard to get out accurate information about the experiences of refugees and immigrants. The CCR:

- > Developed a large number of accessible and attractive resources, available for order and/or for download. CCR resources continued to prove very popular with member organizations.
- > Launched a new Regional Promoters Program, designed to support people in doing public education work in their local communities.

“I am still grasping for the last six months the wonderful gift I got back, my son for whom I fought so hard to bring to Canada. I could have never ever done this if I did not have the support of people who know this is a real problem that separates mothers from their children. I thank CCR for the arm of support they gave me during my struggle.”

- Mira, whose son Akino was excluded by Regulation 117(9)(d)



“I’m just really, really happy to be here with my mother and my brothers, plus I

can see many doors opening to me in the future because of the help given by CCR. Thanks. (And this December will be my first sight of snow.)”

- Akino, recently reunited with his family in Vancouver.

**Report on Membership**  
**Wanda Yamamoto, CCR**  
**Executive**

*Be a part of One-to-One:  
 Welcoming new CCR members*

Over the past 30 years the CCR's strength have been our members: our united voice, our common vision, our collective work.

Help us to strengthen our foundations! In the coming year, the CCR is challenging each of its members to bring a new organization into the fold.

Are there organizations working with refugees and immigrants in your community that are not familiar with the CCR and our work? Invite them to join the CCR! For membership kits and information, see:

[www.ccrweb.ca/eng/about/joinccr.htm](http://www.ccrweb.ca/eng/about/joinccr.htm)

*Many Cheers at 30 Years -  
 Thanks to Donors and 'Friends'*  
 The CCR's work would not be possible without the contributions of our donors. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all our members and friends for their financial support this past year. A special tribute to the CCR's 30th anniversary donors is online at:

<http://www.ccrweb.ca/30anniv/wall.htm>

We look forward to your ongoing support and generosity next year.

Become a *Friend of the CCR*:

[www.ccrweb.ca/eng/donate/donate.htm](http://www.ccrweb.ca/eng/donate/donate.htm)

The Canadian Council for Refugees is a non-profit charitable organization. Business number: 11883 0470RR 0001. Donations are tax-deductible.

**Audited Financial Report for Year Ended August 31, 2008**

2008 2007

\$ \$

**Revenues**

Grants		
Government	90,514	91,404
Others	51,936	50,536
Donations	122,926	104,546
Events -fundraising	600	1,106
Conference registrations	51,945	65,003
Membership fees	57,130	55,975
Publications	2,049	1,320
Interest	4,331	1,805
	<u>381,431</u>	<u>371,695</u>

**Expenses - Note 9**

Salaries	178,108	Expenses
Conference expenses	52,897	were
Executive committee	11,788	grouped
Working Group expenses	14,016	differently
Networking and public education	47,430	in
Fundraising	15,805	2007
Administration expenses	43,589	
	<u>363,633</u>	<u>347,925</u>

**Excess of revenue over expenses**

17,798 23,770

**Balance Sheet as at August 31, 2008**

**Assets**

**Current Assets**

Cash	16,055	17,020
Investments maturing in the coming year - Note 3	98,715	61,791
Accounts receivable - Note 4	41,376	43,894
Prepaid expenses	1,687	348
	<u>157,833</u>	<u>123,053</u>
Investments - Note 3	40,000	10,000
	<u>197,833</u>	<u>133,053</u>

**Liabilities**

**Current Liabilities**

Accounts payable - Note 6	14,822	15,014
Deferred contributions - Note 7	56,774	9,600
	<u>71,596</u>	<u>24,614</u>

**Net Assets**

Restricted to income stabilization fund - Note 8	20,000	20,000
Unrestricted	106,237	88,439
	<u>126,237</u>	<u>108,439</u>
	197,833	133,053

The above is a summary. Copies of full audited statements, including notes, are available from the CCR office.



**CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES**

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