



Canadian Council for Refugees Fall 2014 Consultation
Connecting Communities, Saving Lives
27 – 29 November 2014, Gatineau
Conference Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Council for Refugees' Fall 2014 Consultation was held the 27 - 29 November at the Crowne Plaza hotel in Gatineau, on Anishinabeg territory. Over 340 participants from across Canada attended the Consultation; with a strong attendance from Ontario and Quebec, and delegates from almost every province (only missing representation from Newfoundland and Labrador).

The Fall 2014 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. A particular focus for the Consultation was the diminishing access to supports such as healthcare and social assistance for refugees, as well as access to justice, and opportunities and avenues for protecting and serving refugees and vulnerable newcomers. The Consultation was preceded by a full-day National Forum on Human Trafficking, carried out with the support of the Canadian Women's Foundation and PACT-Ottawa. These meetings generated considerable interest and participation. Find presentations from the meetings at: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/2014-forum-presentations>, and the highlights report at <http://ccrweb.ca/en/trafficking-forum-highlights-2014>.

This Consultation built on the 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. A new Closing Plenary format was also used, which started and ended earlier than usual as a result of having no Saturday morning workshops, and included a light lunch. Participants found that these changes increased their level of engagement and encouraged their participation in discussions.

Thirty-two sessions were offered during the three days of the Consultation, consisting of two plenary sessions, three orientations, one training session, three working group meetings, fifteen workshops, and eight caucus sessions. The program included three or four concurrent workshops 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.

CCR member organizations and volunteers from Gatineau 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 success of the Consultation was made possible thanks to the time, dedication, and hard work of the staff of Accueil-Parrainage Outaouais, as well as the City of Gatineau and interested community members, 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 marked the 35th anniversary of the host organization APO, and on Friday participants enjoyed a three-course meal, entertaining performances from local dance troupes, and dancing.

At this Consultation, the CCR benefited from the in-kind contributions of Accueil-Parrainage Outaouais, the City of Gatineau, and Carrefour jeunesse employ de l'Outaouais.

The CCR gratefully acknowledges financial support for the Consultation from Canadian Heritage, the Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion, the Catholic Centre for Immigrant – Ottawa, and the Carrefour jeunesse emploi de l'Outaouais.

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.

Access to social assistance

Bill C-43, the omnibus budget bill which received royal assent on December 16 2014, contains provisions that allow provinces to reduce access to social assistance for refugee claimants and other people without permanent status in Canada. The provisions were opposed by the CCR and other organizations from a wide range of sectors. Although Bill C-43 is now law, the measures will not take effect unless a province decides to impose a residency requirement for refugee claimants. Ontario and Quebec have already said they have no plans to do so, which is a good start, but more needs to be done to ensure the provinces are aware of the implications of cutting refugee claimants off from this critically important source of income.

LGBT Networking

The opportunity to use the CCR as a forum for networking among those interested in issues surrounding LGBT newcomers has been taken up with enthusiasm. The initiative cuts across CCR working groups, with participants involved in working with LGBT newcomers in settlement, refugee claims, and sponsorship processes, as well as researchers. To facilitate networking and information sharing this web page has been created: <http://ccrweb.ca/en/lgbt>

Trans issues

The workshop presented at this Consultation was in response to a sense that CCR members need more awareness and information about trans people, and the challenges faced by trans refugees and newcomers in particular. The workshop was a good starting point for the discussion, but this issue must continue to be highlighted in future.

Urgent protection for refugees in need of resettlement

Discussions at this Consultation followed up on a workshop at the Consultation by identifying avenues through UNHCR and Citizenship and Immigration Canada to use the Urgent Protection Program as an option to provide protection for refugees in need of resettlement.

Working with CBSA to ensure rights and dignity of people are respected

In recent months, many people have felt less secure in Canada as a result of reports of stop checks by CBSA. Participants at the Consultation were able to discuss the limits of CBSA authority to stop and question people within Canada, and to engage with CBSA on how to ensure that enforcement operations are carried out in full respect of the rights and dignity of all persons.

Secondary Migration

The Consultation provided a forum for Refugee Assistance Program service providers (and their equivalent in Quebec) to discuss challenges related to secondary migration. Service providers came together for a scheduled caucus, and continued the discussion during an additional lunchtime meeting. They resolved to create a network in order to improve communication around and preparation for receiving secondary migrants where possible, and to continue the discussion about gaps and recommendations on how to mitigate the reality of secondary migration challenges.

III. SUMMARY OF THE PLENARIES

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

Opening plenary

Chief Gilbert Whiteduck gave a powerful welcoming address, informing participants of some of the history of the region and calling attention to the current crisis of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. CCR President Loly Rico reviewed CCR activities since the last consultation. Nora Elmi and Chinué Bute drew attention to the work of the Youth Network.

François Crépeau gave the keynote address: “Border Control, Survival Migration and Global North States Responsibilities”. Highlighting the crises of migrant deaths at sea and the mass flight of Syrian refugees, he argued that borders should not be conceived as a barrier to be enforced at all costs, but rather as a corridor that should function as an enabler of mobility through registration and incentives.

Speakers:

Chief Gilbert Whiteduck, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg
Loly Rico, President, Canadian Council for Refugees
Nora Elmi and Chinué Bute, Youth Network representatives
François Crépeau, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants

Moderators: Bato Redzovic and Lisa Bamford

Closing plenary and Annual General Meeting

The first part of the closing plenary consisted of a panel discussion with two representatives of Refugees Branch, CIC. They provided an update on the current status of the resettlement and asylum programs. This was followed by two powerful presentations of Speak Up projects, introduced by some of the youth responsible for the projects. The session ended with the CCR Annual General Meeting, including the election of Executive Committee members and the adoption of resolutions.

Part 1

Resource persons:

André Baril, Director, Asylum
Jean-Marc Gionet, Director, Resettlement

Moderators: Rivka Augenfeld and Jim Mair

Part 2

Co-chairs: Loly Rico and Rick Goldman

Speak up projects presented by: Najla, Fattimah and Gina, Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration, London

Zainab, Nora, Jesse and Allan André, YOCISO (Youth Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization)

IV. SYNTHESIS OF WORKSHOPS

Note: a number of presentations from the workshops are available to CCR members online at <http://ccrweb.ca/en/spring2014-presentations>.

Urgent Protection and Refugee Resettlement

Building on a workshop of the same name that took place in Halifax in Spring 2014, this workshop was designed to further explore issues and strategies to provide protection to refugees under the Urgent Protection Program (UPP), by addressing questions that came out of the previous workshop. Mr. Casasola addressed questions about the UNHCR'S role in the UPP including how they refer cases and under what circumstances. Mr. Gionet discussed how CIC processes cases and some challenges faced by the government.

One action item came out of the workshop: a fact sheet describing the UPP so that NGOs and sponsoring groups better understand how the program functions. The fact sheet could include some information about the success of the program, so that advocates can be vocal in their support for the program.

Resource persons:

Michael Casasola, UNHCR, Ottawa

Jean-Marc Gionet, Director, Resettlement Division, CIC

Moderators: Mustafa Delsoz and Lauren Lallemand

Attraction and retention of newcomers to smaller centres: Nationwide approaches to regionalization

Many smaller communities have felt the force of demographic change in recent years, experiencing population decline, stagnation or minimal growth. At the same time, other places are experiencing remarkable growth rates and attracting the majority of Canada's immigrants. This workshop aimed to look at how Canada's smaller cities and less densely populated regions are developing and implementing strategies to attract and retain newcomers, and to thus spread the benefits of immigration more evenly across Canada.

The presenters spoke about the models being used by governments and NGOs to attract and retain newcomers in their regions. For the NGOs it was a matter of offering services and working with partners in various sectors for the successful integration – social and economic - of newcomers, in order to encourage them to stay. The government of Saskatchewan uses a strategy that combines funding settlement services offered by NGOs, pre-arrival planning (especially online), and mainstream public services. Settlement services are divided in two categories: the first is Saskatchewan Regional Newcomer Gateways, which act as a one-stop shop for initial settlement support in the form of information and referrals, and the second is the more specialized settlement services. The Gateways, as well as the other services are decentralized, and offered around the province, serving a large area in their vicinity.

Resource persons:

Jean McRae, Inter-cultural Association of Victoria

Robert Mayrand, Service Intégration Travail Outaouais (SITO), Gatineau

Tim Helfrich, Settlement and Language Programs, Government of Saskatchewan

Brigitte Duguay-Langlais, Conseil économique et social d'Ottawa-Carleton (CESOC), Ottawa

Moderators: Sherman Chan and Darryl Barnabo

Assisting trafficked persons to navigate through the immigration system

This workshop offered both contextual and practical information on providing assistance to trafficked non-citizens. It was primarily designed for service providers, including settlement workers, lawyers and others working with trafficked or potentially trafficked persons.

In the first part of this workshop, the moderators reviewed the main priorities resulting from the CCR National Forum on Trafficking held the day before, for contextual purposes. This included an overview of the common challenges shared by participants throughout the forum in the areas of awareness-raising, prevention, protection, and service provision. It also included policy priorities, which were focused on:

- Existing human trafficking definitions and their operational impacts;
- National policy directions on trafficking, including perceived impacts of Public Safety's [National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking](#) and possible directions to improve its effectiveness;
- Short-term and long-term protection measures available to trafficked non-citizens and possible avenues to improve trafficked persons' protection needs.

In the second part of the workshop, the panellists presented practical information on how to provide assistance to trafficked persons throughout the immigration process. Ai Li Lim, representing the West Coast Domestic Workers' Association (WCDWA), provided information on how to assist trafficked non-citizens throughout the application process for a Temporary Resident Permit, which exists as the main tool to seek statutory protection for trafficked persons in Canada. This information was provided from a point of view on the experience in British Columbia. Danielle Monroe provided insight on ACT Alberta's experience in working with and providing support to trafficked non-citizens.

The discussion following the presentations suggested following up on the priorities raised throughout the Trafficking Forum, the caucus session on the trafficking Aboriginal women and girls and the workshop, by:

- Proposing and adopting a resolution calling on the Canadian government to commit to and implement a National Action Plan that addresses the discrimination and inequalities facing Aboriginal women and girls, and to establish a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls;
- Proposing and adopting a resolution calling on the government of Canada to ratify the [Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930](#), and to implement all of its provisions;
- Pursuing research on the situation of forced labour and trafficking in Canada, including a focus on the changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program over the years and the increasing precarity for migrant workers.

Resource persons:

Ai Li Lim, West Coast Domestic Workers' Association (WCDWA)
Danielle Monroe, Action Coalition on Human Trafficking (ACT Alberta)

Moderators: Louise Dionne

Refugee Appeal Division: How is it working?

This workshop was an interactive discussion about the strategies that have been most effective in assisting clients with RAD appeals and about decision-making trends at the RAD. The workshop covered issues surrounding how the RAD is operating, now that it's been back up and running for almost two years. Issues addressed included:

- Nature of the appeal
- Refugee Appeals Division vs. Judicial Review
- Evidentiary issues
- Decision-making trends and stats
- What community workers can do to assist clients with a RAD

No specific follow-up or resources CCR were recommended to CCR, however lots of tips and advice were offered on issues such as assisting clients in gathering evidence, requesting extensions of time, dealing with problematic counsel, etc.

Resource persons:

Aviva Basman, Refugee Law Office
Heather Neufeld, South Ottawa Legal Clinic

Moderator: Rick Goldman

Access to Healthcare

The workshop began with a summary of the results of a survey conducted by the CCR on issues in access to healthcare through the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). Representatives of CIC responded to points raised by the survey and provided details of the changes to the IFHP introduced in November 2014. They then answered questions from participants, who raised a range of issues encountered in different parts of the country and with different people in different immigration categories. The CIC representatives undertook to get back to the CCR with further information on a number of points raised.

Resource persons:

Craig Shankar, Director, Program Management and Control, Health, CIC
Joanne Laskoski, Acting Assistant Director, IFHP, CIC

Moderators: Monica Abdelkader and Debbie Hill-Corrigan

Migrant Workers: What's changed and what are the impacts?

Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) has undergone numerous rule changes following endless cases of exploitation and abuse of workers by rogue labour brokers and employers. This workshop looked at what the latest legislative changes mean for Canada's immigration policy, and what the impacts will be on workers, workplaces/communities and families left behind. Panelists and participants will also discuss reforms and policies that would better protect migrant workers and build the national fabric of the country.

Professor Blackette spoke to the changes to the TFWP, with particular attention to recent changes to the Caregiver Program (previously the Live-in Caregiver Program), and held the TFWP up to international conventions and protocols such as the ILO conventions on Domestic Workers, Forced Labour and Migrant workers and their families. Participants heard about the experiences and perspectives of two former migrant workers – one who worked as a live-in caregiver, and another who participated in the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program. Both had negative experiences of abuse or wrongful dismissal. Finally, Mr. Hussan discussed current grassroots organizing that is taking place for migrant workers' rights.

The workshop was followed by a caucus session where three resolutions were developed to be presented at the Immigration and Settlement working group meeting. Calls to action were also encouraged for December 18th (International Migrants Day) and of April 1 2015, when the four-year limit placed on migrant workers would first be felt.

Resource persons:

Adelle Blackette, McGill University, Montreal

Syed Hussan, Migrant Workers Alliance for Change, Toronto

Noé Arteaga, Temporary Foreign Worker Association, Montreal

Fiel Salazar, PINAY, Montreal

Moderator: Jill Hanley and Karl Flecker

Proud to Protect Refugees: What should we do and say?

To change the conversation about refugees in Canada, what should we say and do? This workshop took a critical look at how we talk about what we want for refugees and where efforts like the Proud to Protect Refugees campaign should be going. Strategic communication students from Carleton University introduced tools to talk about what we want for refugees and together participants looked at ways to use them in our communities.

An overview of the Proud to Protect Refugees campaigns was given, and the Carleton University students did an evaluation of the campaign. Some of the strengths they found were the huge potential of the campaign, the reputable name of the CCR associated with it, and the knowledge and information behind it. Challenges included the lack of time and resources, as well as inconsistent branding. Participants discussed ideas, strategies and tactics moving forward.

Practical ideas were discussed for social and news media, document templates, planning Walks with refugees, and branding. Participants were invited to see the online toolkit prepared by the students at: <http://bit.ly/153NyWC> and to sign up to the Proud to Protect Refugees newsletter at:

ccrweb.ca/en/proud-to-protect-refugees to receive news, tools and other updates about the Proud to Protect Refugees campaign, including the *Walk with refugees* in June 2015

Resource persons:

Carleton University journalism students (Mackenzie Kearnan, Martha Darby, Emily Cook, Harrison Boyd, and Sarah McMichael)

Moderators: Eunice Valenzuela

Dealing with Problematic Lawyers or Consultants

This session looked at the realities and possible solutions when refugee claimants receive poor legal representation. The objective was to develop practical resources to help NGOs and individuals know how to recognize bad representation and work with someone to get out of it.

The workshop covered common problems in representation prior to, during and after an RPD hearing, and at the RAD, FC, and H&C. Speakers and participants proposed tips and strategies to address these problems and save the client's case.

The moderators agreed to produce a resource tool for service providers and claimants; to empower them to recognize the signs of a bad lawyer and take steps to fix the problem.

Resource persons:

Jamie Liew, University of Ottawa Faculty of Law
Heather Neufeld, Counsel, South Ottawa Community Legal Services

Moderators: Salvator Cusimano and Anna Purkey

Caucus: Detention

Participants at this session heard from the resource person about the UNHCR's global Beyond Detention Strategy and gave input into the national plan of action for Canada.

The 3 goals of the strategy are:

- Ending detention of children
- Ensuring that alternatives to detention available in law and implemented in practice
- Ensuring that conditions of detention, where necessary and unavoidable, meet international standards (including access for monitoring by NGOs, etc.)

It is a five year strategy wherein the first two years are pilots with 12 selected countries, including Canada. The entire strategy can be viewed here: www.unhcr.org/53aa929f6.html

The presentation of the strategy was followed by discussion, where several issues were raised:

- There is nothing in the plan acknowledging that detention is often in the hands of private agencies

- Detention of children has to be joined with the issue of family separation; separating children from their families can be worse than detaining them with their families, so these two issues should be put forward together.
- There should be a voice for people who have been or are currently detained – to get the whole picture can't only talk to people who carry out detention. Note that those currently detained might not be as able to speak freely as those who have been freed. Partnership is key, as some CCR members have refugee housing that includes former detainees.

Resource person:
Rana Khan, UNHCR

Caucus leaders: Jenney Jeanes and Jennie Stone

Caucus: Issues in services for Government-assisted refugees

This caucus was aimed at those providing services to Government-Assisted Refugees (Resettlement Assistance Program – RAP and the equivalent in Quebec). It looked at the challenges around secondary migration, and solutions were discussed.

Participants discussed the difference between secondary migrants and primary secondary migrants, and shared the challenges they experience as service providers to GARs when addressing the needs of secondary migrants. Primary secondary migrants are those who have moved from one city to another or from one province to another before having received the initial RAP services. This is called “self-transfer”. Secondary migrants are those who move after they have received the initial services. This movement happens without any notice to the RAP service providers at the receiving end and at times even RAP service providers in the city the GARs are coming from are unaware of this movement. This poses challenges to RAP service providing organizations (SPOs) because they don't know what kind of services the migrants have received and what should be provided at their end. Without any pre-arrival information, it takes weeks for CIC to schedule an intake and provide people their first RAP allowances, leaving people in limbo.

Challenges discussed were broadly of two sorts: challenges for SPOs due to lack of information sharing about the arriving migrants, and problems of GARs migrating without fully understanding the risks and challenges, then ending up desperate.

Experiences of challenges arising from secondary migration that were raised included:

- Many secondary migrants wind up overwhelmed by challenges, and without quick access to services because of confusion or lack of communication about migration. SPOs aren't in contact with each other about this.
- Clients believe rumours in their community and what their relatives say more than SPOs, so they will move to other locations despite challenges such as expensive housing, SPOs that are too busy to provide supports, etc.
- Sometimes the client will go and then return because the situation was more difficult than they expected; they return with no money left and in a desperate situation.
- GARs spending start-up allowance on flight to destination, arriving with no money.

- Secondary migrants often arrive so desperate that agencies feel ethically responsible to provide services although this is not part of what they are funded to do.
- CIC simply cuts off money when they find out GAR has moved
- Clients moving from Quebec are supposed to spend the money in Quebec because it's provincial funding, often they are asked to return the money if they move to another province after receiving their welfare cheque.
- While SPOs want to help, they are not permitted to arrange tickets for clients according to the RAP contribution agreement.

Attendees discussed ways they could mitigate the situation, including:

- Providing a change of status form as per RAP agreement, to help CIC track where clients end up
- Agencies must create a network in order to inform one another of arrivals
- Basic fact sheets and consent forms can be shared between agencies

The caucus was followed up with a second, lunch-time meeting the same day to further map out solutions. It was decided that a task group would be formed that would develop a contact list of all RAP providers across the country, to be circulated to all. The list will have contact info and basic information on services provided to GAR secondary migrants. The task group will also develop a form that RAP service providers will use to send to the receiving RAP SPOs when GARs are moving out of their cities to another city or another province. The form will include information about the client and services received at their initial location. The task group will continue working together via virtual meeting in 2015.

Caucus leaders: Yasmine Dossal and Caroline Dailly

LGBT Caucus

This session offered an opportunity to discuss how to network and exchange information on LGBT issues, including in relation to sponsorship of refugees, refugee claims and newcomer settlement. Participants broke out into three groups focused on the aforementioned themes, spent 25 minutes discussing, and then reported back on their discussion and any recommendations coming out of it.

The Sponsorship group discussed a number of issues focused on the challenges of finding, applying for and getting timely approval for LGBT refugees. Recommendations of this group included:

- Extension of the Rainbow Refugee Assistance Fund beyond the scheduled termination on March 31, 2015. A draft letter should be provided by the Ottawa group Capital Rainbow Refuge.
- Advocate for sponsorships to be readily available from any visa post
- Blended VOR program: the government should expand the countries of origin for the list to include countries where LGBT people face considerable danger and persecution. The request includes ensuring that Nairobi is a focus for LGBT VOR candidates.
- Continue call-out to LGBTQ communities to network nationally

- Support for Proud Lebanon: the sponsorship group noted the significant work being done by Beirut-based NGO Proud Lebanon. This group currently has 170 potential cases worthy of sponsorship. The Government of Canada should be asked to approve all those eligible with support from LGBT community sponsors, and the 100 LGBT refugees in Kakuma (Kenya) should be approved by the government for sponsorships, either government or private sector.
- Educational resources: when resources are developed for the web, they should privilege video, which is well received. This includes videos that show how to fill out forms and prepare relevant sponsorship materials.

The Inland Claims group included members of government, the Red Cross, and community organizations. This group was more of an information-exchange, with the government participants seeking to have a better idea of what the implications of being LGBT are in various countries and cultures. Many of the questions raised were around creating safe spaces for LGBT refugees by using the right vocabulary, doing the research, etc. The group felt it was important to ensure that lawyers, members of the IRB, and staff in refugee housing had access to the proper information on creating safe spaces, and on LGBT people in different countries/cultures, especially given the challenges posed by the new shortened timelines for making a claim.

The Inland Claims group's recommendations were:

- SPOs to give workshops on accompaniment of refugee claimants whose claim is based on gender-based violence and/or sexual orientation
- Government agencies (CIC, IRB and CBSA) make the development of trainings and knowledge on LGBT refugee claims a priority. Community organizations with expertise should be consulted.

The Settlement group discussed the challenges faced by LGBT refugees as they navigate their new society. The issue of creating supportive and safe spaces was central, since many LGBT refugees face marginalization both by their cultural community and by the mainstream LGBT community in Canada. Other issues raised included access to appropriate health and mental health services and how to provide information to LGBT refugees before they arrive in Canada. It was also raised that diversity was an issue within this session (all 5 of the group's co-facilitators appeared to be white), and the inclusion of people with lived experience in leadership roles should be prioritized.

Some strategies and ideas for future activities coming out of this group included:

- Connecting LGBT refugees to upon-arrival community resources before they come to Canada
- Creating programs/services that specifically serve LGBT newcomers in a safe space (so that both identities - LGBT and newcomer – can be understood in one place)
- Outreach into areas beyond the city centre, especially into areas with less expensive housing and high newcomer populations
- Supporting community health centres' anti-homophobia programs
- Display the Positive Spaces symbols, and have the staff training, policies and practices to back them up
- CCR webpage to host resources publicly

- Supporting the creation of anti-homophobia strategies in all provincially-controlled services, including health and education

Caucus leaders: Erin Ewing, David Pepper and Christina Olivieri

Judicial review (Overseas refugee cases)

This session provided an opportunity to learn about and share experiences of judicial reviews of overseas refugee decisions. The first part of the caucus session consisted of experience sharing among Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs). Some of the challenging experiences they had faced included:

- Some visa posts making wrong negative decisions, such as those where the refusal letters address minor logistical errors in the application rather than protection issues
- The ineffectiveness of the response process regarding negative decisions: sometimes SAH reps request CAIPS (Computer Assisted Immigration Processing System) notes and present all arguments possible to aid in granting the applicant a second interview, on for the CIC headquarters to simply confirm the visa post's negative decision without addressing the argument about protection needs

Participants had found that judicial review can be a solution: participants shared photos of five refugees that were refuse Canada's protection, but arrived in 2014 thanks to the JR process. However some barriers include the cost to file a judicial review in federal court which can vary between \$500 and \$4000.

Two action items came out of the session:

- a) Development of a request to get legal aid in different provinces for judicial reviews for overseas refugee cases. There are two lawyers willing to work on this.
- b) Creation of a survey of overseas refusals, allowing for an overview of the types of refusals occurring in which countries, with which refugee population, and also to document what action was taken and what the result was.

Resource persons:

Tim Wichert, lawyer

Gilbert Iyamuremye, Diocese of London – Ministry for Private Sponsorship of Refugees

Caucus leader: Jim Mair

Caucus: The role of newcomers and migrants in the environmental movement

This session engaged participants in a discussion about large scale energy projects taking place around the country, the localized environmental risks they pose to our communities, and the inclusion or exclusion of newcomers and migrants from environmental movements resisting these projects. The caucus aimed to start a conversation within organizations serving migrant communities in Canada about their role in environmental movements, and to answer the question of how organizations assisting newcomer communities can play a role in addressing these issues through effective partnerships locally.

The discussion explored the connection between migrant justice and environmental justice by looking at migration to Canada and localized environmental exploitation across Canada (i.e. Tar Sands development, pipeline proposals, mining) and its connection to international industrial and resource extraction projects. Environmentally destructive projects in “developing countries” supported by “Western” nations such as Canada, their resulting forced migration, and increased numbers of refugees due to armed conflict over resources were among the ideas brought up to connect environmental and migrant issues transnationally. The conversation produced a complex but important picture of how migrant and environmental issues are connected and what points need to be considered when thinking of next steps.

Caucus leader: Jesse Ranauta

CBSA Limits of Authority

This workshop examined the exercise of CBSA authority to request identification and to interrogate. It explored cover the limits of CBSA authority, how clients are experiencing CBSA authority across the country, what advice should be should be given to clients, and what to do when abuses of authority come to light. Panellists addressed current issues of accountability of the agency, and the need for a national oversight strategy.

The workshop concluded with a strategy session which concluded with the following next steps:

- Continue lobbying for an oversight mechanism
- Continue to request regional problem solving mechanisms to provide an avenue to resolve local problems
- Develop materials (possible in conjunction with CLEO or another popular legal education organization) on the right to refuse to identify oneself or answer CBSA questions at different stages and for people with different status. A webinar could be done with these materials.

Resource persons:

Roch Tassé, International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG)

Noa Mendelsohn Aviv, Canadian Civil Liberties Association

Moderators: Chantal Tie and Gloria Nafziger

Trans Refugees: Learning more about the T in LGBT

Trans refugees (those whose gender identity does not match the label they were assigned at birth) often experience a unique set of issues, barriers, needs and resiliencies in the refugee claims and settlement process. Examples include systemic barriers around identification and gender-segregated spaces, accessing appropriate health services, experiences of transphobic discrimination and harassment, and navigating cultural norms, stereotypes, and assumptions.

The workshop gave participants an introduction to some of the issues commonly faced by trans refugees, and developed a discussion on best practices for supporting them. The presenters were able to give diverse perspectives on the issue, as they came from distinct realms of legal work, research, and grassroots community organization.

Ms. Iglesias spoke from her lived experience as a trans refugee in Montreal. She covered many of the challenges faced by trans people, and looked at specific challenges faced by the racialized and newcomer trans community. She looked in particular at issues around trans health, and talked about the trans peoples health community organization that she works for. Finally she talked about things non-trans people can do to be supportive of and contribute towards safe spaces for trans people. Ms. Gamble discussed her research on the experience and specific needs of trans refugees in the Greater Toronto Area, and Ms. Smith spoke to the refugee claims process as it applies to trans refugees.

A couple of points that were highlighted during the discussion included the need for trans health services, increased mental health services that are free or affordable, and strategies for finding housing and shelters that are safe for trans refugees and immigrants. The issue was also raised that trans newcomers to Canada experience barriers in obtaining government documents which reflect their gender identity, and that CIC policies state that its documents cannot be changed to reflect persons' lived gender identity, which goes against the right to gender identity upheld by provincial and territorial human rights codes. A participant drafted a resolution on this issue, which was then passed at the General Meeting. See the resolution here: ccrweb.ca/en/res/cic-documents-trans-persons

Resource persons:

Kathleen Gamble, Envisioning Global LGBT Human Rights – Canada Research Team, Toronto

Adrienne Smith, lawyer, Toronto

Betty Iglesias, Quebec Trans Health Action, Montreal

Moderators: Roja Bagheri and Darae Lee

Youth Engagement

The youth engagement workshop was an interactive workshops designed to create a space for dialogue about the many questions surrounding the concept of youth engagement. What does youth engagement really mean? What is the difference between participation and engagement? What prevents youth from becoming more involved in the CCR? In plenary and in smaller break out sessions these questions were explored and participants shared their contrasting views on the topic. The tensions around some of the conversations show us that there is still much to be explored and discussed on this important topic.

Moderators: Juliana Cortes Lugo and Nathalie Lozano

The Syrian-Iraqi Refugee Crisis: The realities and Canada's response

This workshop was an opportunity to discuss Canada's response to the Iraq-Syria crisis, and hear about the challenges and successes in the Middle East, including the handling of sponsorship cases here in Canada, and the Syrian community's work.

The UNHCR representative detailed the refugee movement from Syria and Iraq, and noted some creative responses to finding asylum in third countries. The SAH (Sponsorship Agreement

Holder) representative discussed the Canadian response, in which the Quebec has done more than the rest of Canada put together. Mr. Héту of CNEWA focused his presentation on why the Middle East crisis is happening and projections of how the situation is likely to progress. Huda shared her personal and family experience throughout the Syrian crisis. She shared the positive view of the past in Syria when all religions and people lived in harmony. It was a moving insight from a member of the Syrian community in Canada.

Resource persons:

Aurvasi Patel, Senior Resettlement Coordinator, UNHCR, Geneva

Carl Héту, National Director, Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), Ottawa

Fikre Tsehai, SAH representative, Winnipeg

Huda Kandalaft, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Ottawa

Moderators: Sara Shahsiah and Paul Clarke

Case Management: Vulnerable populations

There is a strong need to better support vulnerable populations to settle and integrate into Canadian society. This workshop explored the strengths and limitations of various vulnerable population service models by examining the definition of vulnerability, the variety of programs across the country and the policy considerations surrounding vulnerability.

Resource persons:

Ashley Korn, YMCA, Toronto

Mille Braun, Family Dynamics, Winnipeg

Marc-Andre Cossette, Resettlement Policy Officer, CIC

Moderators: Mustafa Delsoz and Monica Abdelkader

Faith-based Support for Refugees

For this workshop, CCR invited participants from all faith backgrounds to learn from each other about how our faith motivates us to engage in work that supports refugees. Presenters from Muslim, Jewish and Christian groups shared how they have worked with refugees, both historically and currently.

Each of the resource people spoke to the faith-based motivation for their involvement with refugees. Although the invited Imam didn't make it, others present spoke about how their Muslim faith inspires their work and their lives. Discussion ensued, and participants added their perspectives on the same personal question, and then there was a brainstorming about what could be done together within the CCR to complement and strengthen what groups are doing.

There was clearly a shared motivation among many participants as they looked at their individual motivations, rooted in religious values of welcoming the stranger, respect of the other, and reaching out to those in need, as well as religious texts. Many felt a personal sense of calling, of obligation, and of comfort gained from their religion, although one participant also mentioned a fear of declaring her faith to her clients, and a sense of stigma. The tone of the workshop was

very positive, and there was interest in pursuing more similar discussions at future CCR meetings

Resource persons:

Mitch Goldberg, Jewish Refugee Action Network

Adeena Niazi, Afghan Women's Organization

Rose Dekker, World Renew

Moderators: Rob Shropshire and Rivka Augenfeld

Protection Challenges in Countries of First Asylum: Focus on women and children

This workshop looked at the pressures caused by internal emergencies and mass arrivals of refugees in countries of first asylum, and their impacts on refugees' security and socio-economic rights. Special emphasis will be given to the rights of refugee children and women.

Ms. Purkey provided a broad overview of key problems related to dependence and various restrictions. She presented a detailed chart of risks that women and children in particular face in this context, including risks related to sexual and gender-based violence, economic and social insecurity, generalized violence and marginalization and discrimination. She also touched on strategies for addressing the risks, emphasizing the roles of power dynamics, identity registration and gender roles within the refugee community. Some challenges around dealing with the risks included these issues:

- Even when rights exist, logistics and precarious legal status make accessing rights difficult.
- Host states lack both political will and capacity. Most cannot meet their own people's needs.
- Both host states and aid agencies/donors experience donor fatigue. Host states want additionality and donors want local integration. Host states, aid agencies, the international community and refugees themselves all have a role to play.

Mr. Mohamed gave information on protection challenges for unaccompanied minors and children in Egypt as a case study. Some key aspects of this situation related to a) the fact that refugee youth are urban and not in an encampment situation, and b) roles are differentiated for government and UNHCR. A key problem is that the Egyptian government has offloaded responsibilities to UNHCR, which is in turn offloading some responsibilities to implementing partner organizations. The presenter also touched on problems around human trafficking. Mr. Mohamed proposed asking UNHCR to expedite cases of youth and improve the capacity for Best Interest Assessments, and encouraging CIC to use the Urgent Protection Program to assist youth in these situations. Another recommendation was to find ways for SAHs to work more closely with refugee NGOs that have important information about cases so that they can facilitate the resettlement of at-risk youth more effectively.

Ms. Wittiven focused on the work of Oxfam in refugee situations, particularly where encampment is involved. Some important themes were:

- The need (of aid agencies like Oxfam) to work with local partners

- The focus on safety, dignity and rights; the important of having a voice, along with basic goods and services
- Strategies to reduce threat and vulnerability
- Most problems relate to basic needs: medical care, food distribution, water and sanitation; education

Some key themes across the three presentations:

1. It is not only basic needs that need to be met. Refugees are people with more complex psycho-social needs that must be addressed.
2. The refugee situation has some very negative but also some potentially positive effects on gender roles – there are some opportunities.
3. Additionality: aid agencies must help communities in host countries at the same time as they help refugees.
4. Important roles for community based organizations as well as for the international aid community to play in responsibility sharing and problem solving. Shared responsibility for addressing problems in host countries seemed to be an important theme.
5. Negative impact of restrictions on movement, closed borders, etc.

During the discussion it was pointed out that when men are identified as the principal applicant on an application for resettlement, the risk for the women in the family is exacerbated. It was proposed that CIC and UNHCR need to reconsider how to identify the family unit so that if/when the principal applicant disappears or is rejected for some reason, the other family members do not get rejected automatically.

Resource persons:

Sharmarke Mohamed, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society

Anna Purkey, McGill University

Ann Witteveen, Oxfam Canada

Moderators: Awet Haile and Mary Purkey

Youth network space (Caucus)

This was a two and half hour session in which Youth Network members gave presentations they had prepared on migrant workers, refugee identities, and the history and functioning of CBSA. The presentations were focused on giving a youth perspective and were designed to be a more accessible way to engage with some of the content that is presented at the Consultation.

Co-facilitators: Alex Garcia, Destin Bujang, Zainab Santur, Treisy Rivera, Maria Alejandra Bolaños Ramirez, Mutatayi Fuamba, Chinué Buté

V. PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

Participants who filled out evaluation forms appreciated the opportunity to connect 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 workshop content and variety and the opportunity to network were particularly valuable to them.

Among the qualities of the Consultation that were most appreciated were the expertise of resource people, the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, and the discussions and broad participation that took place at the event. Several people valued having had the opportunity to hear different perspectives on various issues, and noted that there seemed to be more participation from CIC and UNHCR than in other years. Many people cited the keynote speaker, François Crepeau – UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, as a highlight.

Respondents appreciated the efforts to foster participation and inclusion at the Consultation. Some of the factors identified as having contributed to an inclusive atmosphere were the relaxed and welcoming atmosphere, the opportunity to ask questions, and the availability of translation in many of the sessions.

While comments on participation and inclusion were overwhelmingly positive, a few suggestions were made to enhance this in future Consultations. Many people commented on the session moderators, saying that either they needed to be stricter about limiting speakers' time in order to give others a change to talk, or that they needed to be careful about inclusion and anti-oppression, to ensure that participants feel welcomed. If a session is closed to media or government, this must be made clear from the outset, and not part way through the session so that a person is singled out to leave. Another suggestion was to, where possible, set up the session less formally in order to allow for more interaction, and to include more small group discussions. One person suggested "ice-breaker" activities to facilitate people meeting each other.

Overall, respondents felt that the conference was a success. Among the sources of motivation prompting participants to attend future Consultations were: the continued relevance and diversity of topics, the importance of keeping up-to-date and informed on policy changes and how to respond, and the inclusion of more government participants. Several people noted that financial constraints are a reality, especially since professional development budgets are shrinking, but that proximity to their home location enables them to attend.