

Annual Report

Canadian Council
for Refugees

2020
2021

Sept. 2020 - Aug. 2021

Introduction

This second year of the pandemic had profound effects on the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) and those we serve – yet once again we showed strength and an unwavering commitment to make Canada the welcoming country it needs to be.

Thanks to the resilience and dedication of our members coast to coast to coast, the CCR led in advocacy on many issues affecting fundamental rights, including the reopening of the Canadian border to refugee claimants, regularization for those with precarious status, restarting refugee resettlement, and expedited family reunification. We were persistent in our recommendations on these and many other issues at regular meetings with government departments. We were also present in the courts, continuing our challenge of the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA).

As a national information hub, the CCR was honoured to exchange and share material with our members and partners. Among other initiatives, we quickly developed clear resources about Canada's response when the Afghan crisis emerged, and we launched a housing network to connect across regions and develop joint strategies to face the current challenges.

On the international scene, the CCR participated on the official Canadian delegation to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and formed an international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) steering committee on resettlement.

With two major multi-year projects concluding, we were proud to see the Youth Network's accomplishments in promoting the engagement of newcomer youth, and the Anti-Trafficking Committee's work in developing peer connections, knowledge exchange, and policy and advocacy engagement.

In the struggle to respond to the wide range of concerns we hold near to our hearts, we also had to be kind to ourselves. With such challenges comes the opportunity to re-evaluate how the CCR can most effectively fulfill its mission. Through the year, we took advantage of the innovation and creativity of members and staff to build a Strategic Plan that will propel us forward over the course of the next five years.

The CCR warmly thanks Dorota Blumczynska, as she completes her term as President, for her inspiring leadership at a time when optimism and thoughtful guidance were more than ever needed to navigate the pandemic and plan for the future.

We are eager to continue to work with our members and communities to accomplish remarkable things!

Who we are



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

CCR members are settlement organizations, faith-based organizations, lawyers' associations, private sponsors, unions, and other organizations that work to protect human rights and welcome newcomers. We serve the networking, information-exchange and advocacy needs of our members.

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

43 years of existence
and 216 member
organizations.

Our team

Executive

President: Dorota Blumczynska

Vice-president: Aleks Dughman-Manzur

Treasurer: Ricki Justice, Jasjeet Ajimal

Secretary: Jill Hanley, Françoise Magunira

Counsellors:

Saleem Spindari	Bindu Narula
Akram Ben Salah	Mouloud Idir
Adam El-Koussa	Jacques Bertrand
Sabrina Dumitra	Saba Andu
Catherine Bruce	
Magaly Guzman de Diaz	
Armin Boroumand	
Françoise Magunira	

Office team

Direction

Janet Dench

Executive Director

Deborah Traoré*

Associate Executive Director

Administration and fundraising

Claudia Cojal

Office Manager

Van Thao Dam Thi

Fundraising Coordinator

Chitra Ramsurn*

Administrative and Logistics Officer

*means the employee left during the year

**means the employee arrived during the year

Working Group

Co-Chairs

Immigration and Settlement:

Amy Casipullai

Luis Mata

Darae Lee

Claudine Uwingabiye (interim)

Inland Protection:

Anne Woolger

Mariana Martinez Vieyra

Overseas Protection and Resettlement:

Fikre Tsehai

Michelle Ball

Roya Atmar

Hugo Ducharme

Policy

Sandra Gasana

Settlement Policy Director

Elvira Truglia*

Anti-Trafficking Coordinator

Tony Luong**

Anti-Trafficking Coordinator

Juliana Cortes Lugo

Youth Network National Coordinator

Communications and services

Alice Alvarez-Pereyre

Member Services Coordinator

Andréa Viens**

Communications Coordinator

How we work

Our members bring an issue forward

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

The CCR takes this issue on

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

Understand and discuss the issue

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

Plan and act on the issue

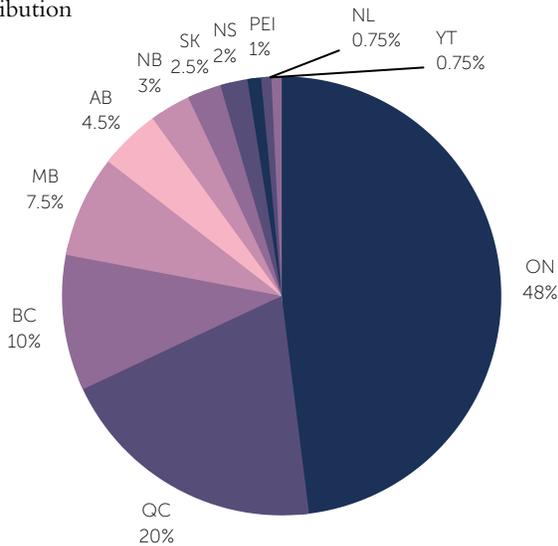
Collectively, members decide how the CCR should act regarding this issue: pass a resolution, create practical or policy resources, bring attention to the issue in the media, launch a public opinion campaign, take legal action, or engage in a dialogue with government.

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

Member organizations

Building on last year’s review of member services, the Member Services Coordinator and the Membership Committee have adopted a strategy that is based on four founding principles: nurturing, considering, engaging and partnering with our members.

Membership provincial distribution



The first steps have been implemented, keeping in mind key aspects: connection (to better understand), capacity (to develop sustainable processes) and consistency (to communicate coherently).

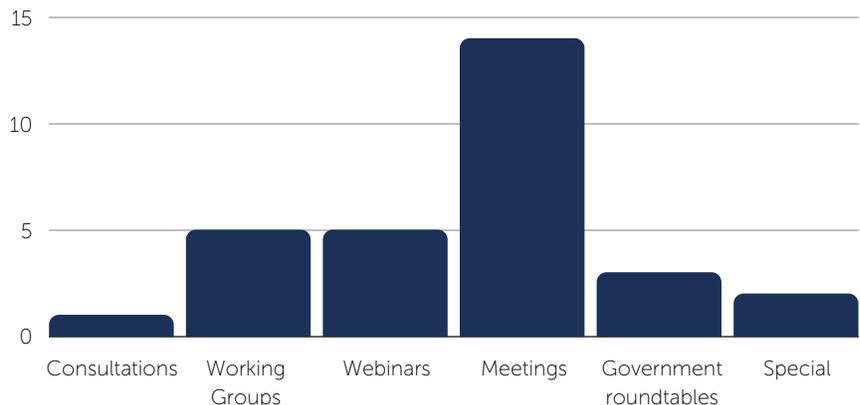
216 member organizations
 Making up 90% of our total membership in all categories

Overview of meetings

Meetings organized by the CCR represent key opportunities for networking with members and partners, allowing for discussion and organizing regarding matters of policy and advocacy.

The CCR’s Fall 2020 Consultation took place online, on the theme of “Challenges and beyond: thriving in the era of a pandemic”. This consultation aimed to highlight key issues affecting vulnerable communities as well as new opportunities emerging in the midst of a health crisis.

Number of meetings per type



Over 1,150 attendees
 in virtual events throughout the year!

Policy and Advocacy

Immigration and Settlement

- We held several meetings with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to address the problems with the Open-Work Permit for vulnerable workers.
- Our new Housing network had several meetings to discuss pressing issues and was able to connect with the National Right to Housing Network.
- International students faced multiple challenges in this pandemic context--the Working Group (WG) met with IRCC to look for solutions.
- Through the Migrant Workers subcommittee, we continued to call on the government to grant "Status for all".

Inland Protection

- CCR highlighted the horrifically long times for refugee family reunification, and called in particular for separated children to be reunited with their parents in no more than 6 months.
- We welcomed the pathway to permanent residency for claimants working in the health-care sector, while regretting its narrow scope – developed a practical tool to help people assess whether to apply.
- The group addressed the challenges of the Border ban, closing the door on people trying to make a refugee claim.
- We submitted detailed recommendations to Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) on gender-based violence.
- We also organized a project to interview people on their experiences at virtual refugee hearings.
- CCR continued to address the challenges of people in the refugee claim process or in detention, through meetings with members, with IRCC and with CBSA.

1 campaign

To call for expedited family reunification

1 practical tool

Explaining the pathway to permanent residency

10

recommendations

Were made to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) following the announcement of their resettlement program for Afghans.

Overseas Protection and Resettlement

- The Working Group continued to address the impacts of the pandemic Travel ban on resettlement and promoted advocacy for priority to be given to restarting resettlement.
- We responded to the Afghanistan crisis with information and advocacy.
- CCR continued to hold meetings for Group of 5 sponsors and to liaise with Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAH) Council.

Legal Affairs

The government appealed the Federal Court ruling that the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) is unconstitutional because it violates the rights of refugees. Disappointingly, the Federal Court of Appeal overturned the decision. We are appealing to the Supreme Court.

CCR and the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL) have been granted standing as public interest parties in a case (Ali) challenging the long limbo faced by people found inadmissible on security grounds.

International engagement

We have been actively participating in the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement (ATCR). CCR led a process to create a new ATCR non-governmental organization (NGO) Steering Committee to enhance international NGO leadership on resettlement and complementary pathways.

We were once again part of Canada's official delegation to the UNHCR Executive Committee.

CCR joined in a request for precautionary measures to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on behalf of people directed back from Canada and detained in the US.

Youth Network

The Youth Action Gathering (YAG) took place online from 19 to 21 March 2021 on the theme "Shaping our new realities: Collective Action by Youth and for Youth".

It brought together nearly one hundred immigrant and refugee youth from different communities in Canada.

The Talk to Action sessions were designed to foster dialogue among newcomer and refugee youth (ages 16-25). The specific topics discussed were mental health, racism, youth leadership, education and professional development.

The Daniel Schickedanz Scholarship Award was launched in August 2021, to support young people of refugee and migrant background in their efforts to pursue higher education.

Anti-Trafficking Committee

The committee hosted its National Anti-Trafficking Forum online on April 29, 2021, featuring an interactive legal case study hack and other discussions on key themes.

The event provided a space for networking, sharing information, tools and strategies to better meet the needs of trafficked persons and those in potential trafficking situations in Canada.

1 Youth Action Gathering (YAG)

Organized by youth, for youth.

15 organizations across Canada

Participated in the virtual Talk to Action initiative.

10 bursaries for 10 years

Awarded based on education and community engagement.



Anti-Racism

Reflecting our commitment to fighting anti-Black racism, we hosted several meetings addressing this issue.

- In October 2020, we organized a webinar in collaboration with QuakeLab, titled "Your anti-racism training is doing harm. Here's what you should be doing".
- At the Fall 2020 Consultation, we held an African Refugee Network caucus, and workshop titled "Anti-Black racism – inequities in systems", featuring Peter Flegel, Director of the Government of Canada's Anti-Racism Secretariat, and Farahdine Boisclair, Director of the Anti-Racism Task Force at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to help them better understand inequities in immigration policies and practices, and consequently to push for change with concerned parties.
- In June 2021, we hosted a webinar on COVID testing and vaccination for refugees in Africa.

Public education

Following the public education workshop held at the Fall 2020 Consultation, the CCR developed "[Centring newcomer voices](#)"; a collaborative guide meant to equip readers with tools, best practices and ethical considerations for encouraging newcomers to share in a variety of contexts (from group discussions to campaigns).



Francophone committee

During the Fall Consultation, new members were elected in the Steering Committee including a person in charge of recruitment of francophone members.

The Steering Committee met three times this year to discuss strategic actions that will help promote bilingualism within the CCR as well as empower francophone members.

Internal Activities

Fundraising

Although the pandemic has created many challenges in our ways to work and engage with our supporters and donors, we were humbled to find that our supporters' commitment did not diminish. One quarter of our revenue comes from donations! We are grateful for the support of our long-term and loyal donors who represent 62% of all donors who gave during this fiscal year. Our monthly donors represent 35% of these long-term donors, and support our activities and campaigns in the most sustainable way possible.

The coming year will bring new challenges as the pandemic continues to disturb our work and life. We will stay focused on building meaningful relationship with our existing donors and supporters while engaging with a younger generation of donors through different channels and networks.

In 2020-2021:

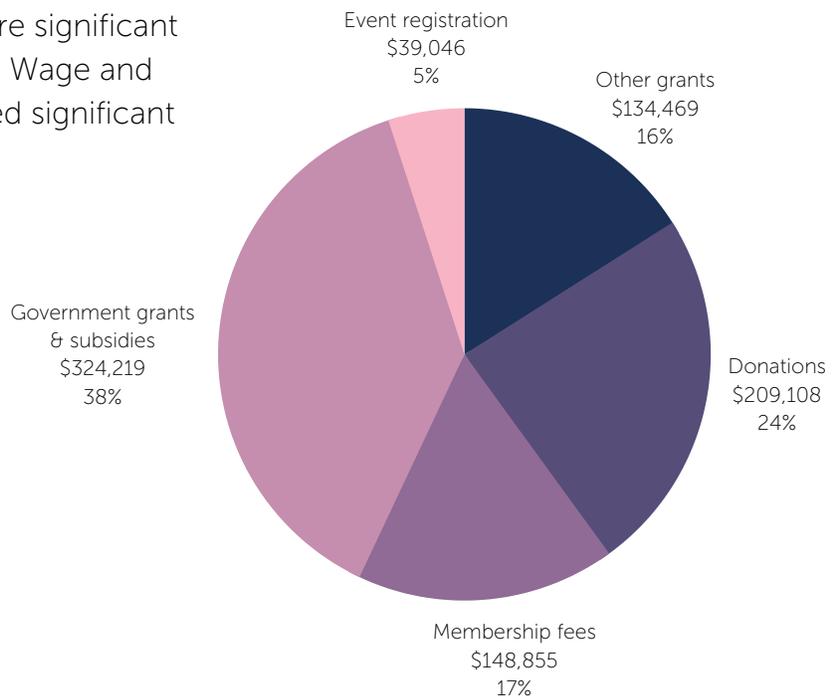


*Friends of the CCR represent a monthly donor community dedicated to sustaining the CCR's mission.

Financials

Government grants were more significant this year due to the Canadian Wage and Rent subsidies, which provided significant support.

Other grants were obtained from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the Canadian Women's Foundation, EQUITAS, and Montréal Services des finances.



Financials

Statement of operations for the year ending August 31, 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
Revenues		
Grants		
Government grants	324,219	228,138
Other grants	134,469	152,676
Donations	193,108	199,062
Membership fees	148,855	147,340
Conference registrations	38,846	73,042
Fundraising events	200	1,430
Interest	578	951
	<u>840,275</u>	<u>802,639</u>
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	499,795	463,143
Administrative expenses	107,682	100,261
Conference expenses	21,993	59,677
Public education and networking	49,208	60,805
Fundraising	36,862	29,607
Working groups	40,495	79,566
Executive committee	39,581	8,913
Syrian Refugee and Support Fund	-	4,700
	<u>795,616</u>	<u>806,672</u>
Balance sheet as of August 31, 2021		
Assets*	<u>2,544,648</u>	<u>2,098,756</u>
Liabilities	<u>88,493</u>	<u>139,686</u>
Net assets		
Externally restricted	785,153	785,153
Internally restricted	1,357,935	905,509
Unrestricted	<u>313,067</u>	<u>268,408</u>
	2,456,155	1,959,070
	<u><u>2,544,648</u></u>	<u><u>2,098,756</u></u>

*Assets include \$2,123,088 in the CCR's Endowment Fund – made up of amounts that are externally or internally restricted in order to provide a secure income to support and sustain the mission of the CCR.

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

In the next year

Policy and Advocacy:

- As the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) makes its way to the Supreme Court, our legal team, with the support of our members, is determined to advocate for the rights of refugee claimants at our borders.
- The Afghanistan crisis will no doubt continue to develop over the upcoming year, and the CCR will pay close attention to the government's response in order to provide input and further recommendations on behalf of our member organizations.
- We are actively looking for ways to increase our advocacy and actions regarding anti-racism and will engage with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) on these issues.
- The Migrant Workers' Committee will launch a national campaign, with a letter to the new minister of Immigration, a national press conference and more.

Internal activities:

- We are currently working on a new visual identity for the CCR which will be revealed in the next year.
- The website is also undergoing an update and will be redesigned to be more user-friendly, and to reflect the organization's new branding!
- We will begin implementation of a new Strategic Plan.
- Last but not least, we will implement a member management software to streamline operations which will help make the member experience more beneficial and enjoyable.

Thank you!