

CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES



CCR Spring Consultation 'Successful integration of refugees and immigrants' 24-26 May 2007, Edmonton, Alberta Consultation Report

July 2007

The Canadian Council for Refugees 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 over 180 organizations involved in refugee sponsorship and protection and in newcomer settlement. The CCR serves the networking, information-exchange and advocacy needs of its membership.

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
II. SYNTHESIS OF WORKSHOPS	4
Opening plenary	4
Settlement services for persons with HIV or AIDS	4
The CCR analyzed through gender lenses	4
Racial profiling and Canada's Security Agenda	5
Increase in temporary migrant work in Canada: How do we respond?	5
Child soldiers	6
Principal Applicants and Dependants: Stories Left Unheard.....	6
Trends and Initiatives in the Resettlement of Refugees: A meeting with Vincent	7
Cochetel, Head of UNHCR Resettlement Services, Geneva	7
Torture and Trauma: Working with Children and Youth	7
Anti-Racism core group annual planning session.....	7
Refugee women as leaders	8
Plenary session.....	8
The Settlement of Refugees from Protracted Situations	9
Settlement starts as soon as the claimant arrives	10
Communicating our Message: Using new media to promote the welcoming and sense of belonging of refugees and immigrants.....	10
Blue Ribbon Report and the Settlement Service Sector.....	10
Durable Solution for African Refugees: Issues of Long Processing Time and Acceptance Rates..	11
Security certificates: the future	11
Racialization of Poverty and Barriers to Labour Market Integration	11
Using the "Pathways to gender justice" toolkit.....	12
Research: a tool to promote understanding and effect change.....	12
General Meeting.....	13

Canadian Council for Refugees
Spring 2007 Consultation
“Successful integration of refugees and immigrants”
24-26 May 2007, Edmonton
Consultation Report

I. INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Council for Refugees held a successful Spring Consultation in Edmonton, attended by over 300 participants from all over Canada and beyond. The Consultation took place from 24 to 26 May 2007 at the Ramada Hotel and Conference Centre. The theme was “Successful integration of refugees and immigrants” with a special focus on gender. Highlights included a powerful theatrical performance on the problem of trafficking and a visit from Geneva of Vincent Cochetel, UNHCR Head of Resettlement Service.

Participants at the Consultation came from a wide range of communities and included refugees and immigrants, staff and volunteers at organizations serving newcomers and ethnocultural organizations, as well as lawyers, private sponsors, representatives of various levels of government and of UNHCR, academics and others involved in refugee and immigrant issues. Refugee participation was strong, as it is an objective of the CCR to promote refugee participation in discussions and decision-making. Youth were also well represented at the Consultation. There was a one day strategy session designed by and for youth participants prior to the Consultation. Youth were also included in the planning teams for many of the workshops during the consultation.

More than 25 sessions were offered during the three days of the consultation, including two plenary sessions, three Working Group meetings, informal caucus sessions and 19 workshops. The objective of CCR Consultations is to facilitate information-exchange, offer training, promote networking among people involved in services to refugees and immigrants and strategize about the promotion of refugees and immigrants rights across Canada.

The Spring Consultation had a special focus on gender, meaning that a gender lens was brought to the preparation and choice of topics of the workshops. The consultation also featured a training workshop aimed at helping participants to deepen their ability to bring a gender analysis to their work, and a workshop focused on the CCR toolkit, Pathways to Gender Justice, with the objective of familiarizing more people with the toolkit and promoting its use.

A variety of perspectives was presented by resource persons who came from different backgrounds and were selected by taking into consideration different factors: participation of refugees; gender balance; regional diversity; representation of local resource people; a youth perspective, and experience and knowledge of the issues. Workshops offered a participatory process. Moderators put emphasis on offering a space that is safe, and free of bias and prejudice. The consultation format allowed participants to learn about developments in particular areas of concern, and actively contribute to discussions.

Based on participants’ oral and written evaluations, the consultation was successful in contributing to CCR’s goals of protection of refugees and settlement of refugees and immigrants into Canadian society. It provided a unique opportunity for refugee and immigrant advocates to share skills, expertise and best practices.

The significant participation of people from Edmonton was also noted as a positive aspect of the consultation. Participants enjoyed the warm welcome of the local organizing committee and volunteers.

Many thanks go to the members of the local committee and the numerous CCR members who contributed to the success of the consultation.

II. SYNTHESIS OF WORKSHOPS

Opening plenary

The opening plenary served as an introduction to the consultation and gave an update on recent developments related to CCR's work. Participants were welcomed by representatives of different levels of government and organizations:

- Randy Gurlock, Area Director, Edmonton, Northern Alberta and Northwest Territories, Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
 - Greetings from Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton.
 - Ken Sandhu, Deputy Chairperson, Immigration and Refugee Board
 - Victor Moke-Ngala, teacher and integration activist
 - Fariborz Birjandian, Chairperson, Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
- Elizabeth McWeeny, CCR President, gave an update on CCR's work.

Moderators: Brigitte Ngezahayo, Centre d'accueil et d'établissement d'Edmonton and Alice Colak, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton

Settlement services for persons with HIV or AIDS

This session presented models of settlement services for persons with HIV or AIDS (PHAs). At present, there are few agencies that have developed strategies to better serve newcomers who are PHAs. Stigma around HIV infection and denial of its presence among newcomers have hindered the development of sensitive, adapted and effective settlement services. Panellists are involved in the provision of such services and engaged participants around how to craft best practices that are inclusive, gender-competent and anti-oppressive.

Participants agreed that sexual health and health education should be a priority in services to immigrants and refugees. An important question is how to address these issues in new communities. ESL teachers represent potential allies and learning resources should be developed. Participants also discussed the need to ensure HIV positive newcomers are connected to counselling services for the whole extended family from day one. The privacy concerns were raised and non-community-related interpreters could be useful, but this would require funding. Information is also a major issue since it is not widely available. Many newcomers are not aware that treatment is effective and worthwhile. Participants recommended a follow up on the issue of actively connecting HIV positive immigrants and refugees with counselling services from day one, and not simply with a handout.

Resource persons:

Rawle Teekah, Planned Parenthood Edmonton

Susana Runge, Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op, Edmonton

Moderators: Nicholas Dubé and Janis Nickel

The CCR analyzed through gender lenses

This workshop offered basic training on gender issues. Participants were provided with information and examples that can be used as tools to address gender issues in their work, whether it is in the area of newcomer integration, refugee resettlement or refugee claims. A summary of CCR work on gender based analysis was presented. A case study was then used as an example. The case was based on the concept of the principal applicant and how this notion affects the life of refugees. A gender analysis of the case was presented from the perspective of the three working groups.

Outcomes were identified in relation to the three working groups' field of interest. For overseas protection, the need for training on gender issues for officers and workers overseas was underlined. In the

area of settlement, there is a need for more services related to mental health, taking into consideration the impact of migration on refugees, more services in small cities and services offered in different languages. Participants suggested having training on cultural sensitivity and gender issues for men by men, and training of frontline workers with the CCR gender toolkit.

In the area of inland protection, one issue identified as important is that the accompaniment process should start at entry. Also, there is a need for training on cultural sensitivity and gender issues for immigration officers, frontline workers and lawyers. These workers need to listen to stories from all members of the family and include all aspects in the case. It was also recommended to have training for CCR membership on gender issues at each consultation.

Resource persons:

Jeannethe Lara, PWRDF, Toronto

Marie-Josée Duplessis, TCRI, Montreal

Asni Mekonnen, WUSC, Ottawa

Moderator: Loly Rico, FCJ Refugee Centre, Toronto

Racial profiling and Canada's Security Agenda

This workshop aimed at learning more about the objective conditions facing racialized refugee and immigrant communities. A growing number of racialized refugee and immigrant communities in Canada are experiencing the negative effects of increased security scrutiny. The Government of Canada has in some cases begun to challenge positive refugee claim decisions on the basis of suspected terrorist links. Other refugees and immigrants have lost their jobs for suspicion, have experienced restrictions on travel overseas, difficulty in sending money home to families and inordinate delays in family reunification. To what extent is racial profiling playing a role in Canada's security agenda? What is the impact on racialized refugee and immigrant communities?

Speakers talked about the impact of a broad range of racial profiling measures on racialized communities in Canada, including Arabs, Muslims and Eritreans. Participants discussed about racist legislation and policies, public discourse in white, Eurocentric media, and racist and xenophobic behaviour from individuals, groups and institutions. The session also included a discussion on the gendered experience of racism and the specific role constructed for Muslim women. Participants shared ideas about what individuals and organizations can do to counter racism and xenophobia, and specific suggestions for CCR.

Resource persons:

Tim Weis, CAIR-CAN Advisory Board member, Edmonton

Itrath Syed, Centre for Women's and Gender Studies, University of British Columbia

Norah Abu Absi, Executive Director, Canadian Arab Friendship Association, Edmonton

Yosief Araya, Catholic Cross Cultural Services, Toronto

Moderator: Wanda Yamamoto, CCR Anti-Racism Core Group and Manitoba

Interfaith Immigration Council

Increase in temporary migrant work in Canada: How do we respond?

This workshop explored the increase of temporary employment programs in Alberta and the rest of Canada. Issues such as cheap labour, governments and employers obligations, violations of workers rights and what support networks and initiatives exist to help workers were presented. Building on a "Statement of Unity" developed by participants at the 2006 first National Migrant Justice Gathering, the main goal of this workshop was to generate a set of principles for an informed advocacy response to the impact of Temporary Migrant Work programs on migrant workers and their families.

The panellists' presentations covered a wide range of issues: rights violations, exploitation of migrant

labour, forced migration, human trafficking, isolation of migrant workers, employment brokers charging migrant workers large amounts of money, lack of services and support. They also highlighted the fact that settlement agencies are restricted in providing services, the lack of government enforcement of legislation to ensure the compliance of contracts from employers and that workers are invisible in Canadian society.

Participants discussed the need for CCR to implement a campaign to pressure the government of Canada to adopt the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. They also recommended that CCR form a subcommittee on temporary workers, advocate for government to fund services to temporary migrant workers and implement a public education campaign to increase public awareness.

Resource persons:

Yessy Byl, Alberta Civil Liberties Research Center and Temporary Foreign Worker, Advocate - Alberta Federation of Labour, Edmonton

Alfredo Barahona, Refugee and Migration Program Coordinator, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, Toronto

Moderator: Loly Rico

Child soldiers

This workshop examined the particular situation of child soldiers based on experiences in Africa and in Canada. The speakers first talked about the reasons children, boys and girls, get involved in armed conflicts. They also explored the emotional, psychological and social consequences of having lived this experience and its impact on resettlement. The effect of images in the media and the need for policy change were also discussed. One of the questions raised was “Whose story gets told?” Speakers also discussed academia and research versus frontline workers’ perspective, suitability of rehabilitation programs and services, stigma and shame associated with disclosure and barriers for youth to get help.

Participants underlined the need to promote awareness at the national level, and the need for education in school system, including teachers. It was also noted that the government must act to stop the practice of businesses that operate in support of wars, such as in Sudan. Work must be done to provide a safe place for youth to begin to heal from trauma. For this, working in a group is more successful. When youth have trust and establish a relationship, they may feel safe to disclose their experience. The need for funds for frontline services was also stressed.

Resource persons:

Megan Mackenzie, Doctoral student, University of Alberta

Sophie Parkin, Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton

Moderators: Mary Banda and Tigist Dafla

Principal Applicants and Dependants: Stories Left Unheard

Because the established structure for presentation and determination of refugee claims often identifies claimants by the terms “principal claimant” and “other claimants”, the entire family’s safety and status may depend on the strength and success of the principal claimant’s story. The potential for a claim by a “dependant” may be overlooked. Some never have the opportunity to talk about their experiences, some do not think their experiences are important, some are ashamed, some have never told anyone of their experiences, so their stories remain untold. This workshop looked at this structure’s implications.

Krista Daley explained the process of how principal claimants are designated at the IRB and emphasized the importance of the Personal Information Form (PIF). Mary Lou Docherty spoke about how women and children need a “safe place” before they will feel ready to divulge their stories. Carole Dahan spoke of the perils of the existing nomenclature, who decides who will be the principal claimant and why is it necessary. She emphasized that claimants must be interviewed separately and more than once. Time is

required. Designated representative other than the parents should be named for minor children.

Resource persons:

Krista Daley, General Counsel, Immigration and Refugee Board

Carole Dahan, Refugee Law Office

Mary-Lou Docherty, Juan Moreno Refugee Centre

Moderator: Nancy Doray

Trends and Initiatives in the Resettlement of Refugees: A meeting with Vincent Cochetel, Head of UNHCR Resettlement Services, Geneva

This session provided an opportunity for participants to learn about new developments within the UNHCR with respect to refugee resettlement and to discuss with Vincent Cochetel some of the priorities of Canadian NGOs. Participants had many questions for Mr. Cochetel, including the following: what is UNHCR doing to work more closely with NGOs? What is UNHCR doing to improve access to registration? Mr. Cochetel provided an update on measures to prevent corruption and talked about how Canadian NGOs can work with UNHCR to address the issue of Canada's reputation for slow processing resulting in urgent protection cases being sent to other countries.

Mr. Cochetel commented on Canada's Private sponsorship of refugees program, gave UNHCR's position on providing resettlement to internally displaced persons and the role UNHCR could have in facilitating resettlement from Canada's source countries. He also gave his opinion on the strategic (mis)use of resettlement and talked about the current status of Bhutanese in Nepal and the recent resettlement of Karen from Thailand.

Moderator: Ed Wiebe

Torture and Trauma: Working with Children and Youth

This workshop explored the effects of parents' trauma on children's ability to integrate into Canadian society. Participants learned about the Youth In Two Cultures program that helps them adjust. The panel included perspectives on parents' challenges and youth's personal experiences.

The workshop first presented a general overview of the effects of torture and trauma on families, followed by an overview of the "Youth from 2 Cultures" program of Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN). Four youth from the EMCN program gave their input. Participants then discussed related dynamics around bridging / merging cultural identities, family dynamics and other potentially useful program initiatives.

Resource persons:

Joanna Bukczynska, Psychologist, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Mana Ali, Family and Youth Counsellor, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Four representatives from the Youth In Two Cultures program

Wendy Martin, Program Manager, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Moderator: John Docherty

Anti-Racism core group annual planning session

The goal of this session was to learn about the role and mandate of the Anti-Racism Core Group and to work together to identify priorities for CCR attention with respect to anti-racism, in all of the CCR's working group areas: inland protection, overseas protection and sponsorship and immigration and settlement.

Participants at the workshop made many recommendations, including the following: make Core Group materials and survey about racism available at the CCR table at consultations; send out once a month an

update on Core Group activities on the CCR list; collect and distribute on the CCR list samples of anti-oppression documents such as an anti-racism and anti-oppression policy for an organization and examples of how it would apply internally (with staff) and externally (with clients); approach the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to take on some of this work.

Anti Racism Core group proposals for action include the following: invite CCR members to share experiences of racism; send a call to CCR members asking for pro-bono legal representation for people who have experienced racism in the context of immigration; ask CCR members to share examples of successful anti-racism initiatives; the ARCG should coordinate anti-racism initiatives with aboriginal peoples' groups; issue on March 21 an annual report on anti-racism or racism in Canada as it impacts on refugees and immigrants. It was also recommended that the CCR ask members to adopt an anti-racism policy and make this a criteria for membership.

Moderator: Jihad Aliweiwi

Refugee women as leaders

This informal session was intended for refugee women, to allow them to get to know each other and strategize about their involvement in the consultation and in the CCR. Participants talked about involvement on the community and individual levels. The community role was discussed by looking at how to ensure that refugee women have a leadership role within the CCR. On an individual level, ways in which refugee women can increase their choices and leadership were discussed. The role of the CCR is also important is allowing refugee women leadership. The role of groups and persons with disability was also discussed.

Participants suggested having a session on refugee/immigrant women leadership within CCR in every consultation and to change the workshop title to Refugee/immigrant women leaders. All attendees expressed interest to have their organization become members of CCR. Funding is seen as the only barrier to participation. Participants also suggested to have a session on physically accessible space and make it bilingual, to have formal leadership training for refugee/immigrant women and to have gender training at every CCR consultation.

Moderators: Jamila Aman & Loly Rico

Plenary session

Participants watched a challenging theatrical performance about trafficking in persons, which conveyed forcefully the human impact on women of being trafficked and the various ways in which people are complicit in trafficking. The performance was by Ajoka Theatre of Changing Together ... A Centre for Immigrant Women. Ajoka Theatre is a form of theatre that presents solutions to social issues in an entertaining manner, helping people become aware of their rights, and providing direction to face and overcome such issues. Through Ajoka Theatre awareness is created to work toward collective social change, and thus contribute to the struggle for a humane, secular, egalitarian and just society.

Participants then heard from Vincent Cochetel, Head of UNHCR Resettlement Services. His presentation covered basic facts about UNHCR and resettlement activities, Canada's contribution to resettlement activities and global trends and challenges for UNHCR. The UNHCR has identified the need for resettlement in 2007 of 77,100 refugees, representing 0.9% of the refugees worldwide. UNHCR has been increasing its capacity to refer refugees for resettlement, with an estimated capacity of 50,000 referrals in 2007.

Mr Cochetel noted that Canada is one of the "big three" resettlement countries in the world (US and Australia are the other two). Canada has a resettlement program that is sensitive to protection concerns/priorities (e.g. Palestinian refugees in Jordan). He also noted that Canada's refugee resettlement

program is usefully complemented by the Private Sponsorship Program (PSR), He welcomed Canada's readiness to use resettlement for protracted refugee situations (e.g. Bhutanese refugees in Nepal or Eritrean refugees in Sudan) and Canada's commitment to use resettlement in a strategic manner. Refugee resettlement enjoys consistent public support in Canada and there is strong involvement of NGOs, volunteers and local/central authorities. There was an improvement in the predictability in referrals in 2005-2006.

In terms of global trends, Mr Cochetel highlighted the impact of new anti-terrorist legislation, the excessive use of the criteria of "local integration potential" by certain countries of resettlement, the increase in the emergency resettlement requests because of the deterioration of the situation in certain countries of first asylum, difficulties for resettlement countries of considering various groups in many countries of first asylum and the temptation to turn to a mode of selection by group, with the risk of limiting geographical diversity in in-take, and effective access employment market in several countries of resettlement.

Mr Cochetel highlighted the following challenges for Canada's resettlement program: ensuring better synergies between the Government-Assisted Refugee Resettlement program and a strategic use of the Private Sponsorship Program, piloting the use of dossier places and/or remote interviews, improving and shortening the length of security screening, building upon group resettlement experiences and improving the functioning/responsiveness of the Urgent Protection Program.

Finally Mr Cochetel recommended enhancing the role of NGOs in various ways and identified a long list of challenges for the UNHCR.

A copy of Mr Cochetel's powerpoint presentation is available from ccr@web.ca.

Resource persons:

Ajoka Theatre, Changing Together ... A Centre for Immigrant Women

Vincent Cochetel, Head of UNHCR Resettlement Services, Geneva

Moderators: Elizabeth McWeeny and Gilbert Iyamuremye

The Settlement of Refugees from Protracted Situations

Protracted refugee situations have a direct impact on refugees' mental, social and cultural well-being. Understanding whether the resettlement of refugees from such situations requires a more comprehensive approach to settlement and integration could help inform practice for the private sponsorship community and settlement agencies.

James Milner presented an overview of protracted refugee situations, and changes in resettlement patterns. Personal perspectives and perspectives from the Karen community were presented by Nyaw Nyaw and Thaw Thaw Simon, privately sponsored refugees from Mae La camp. Karin Linschoten talked about mental health challenges facing refugees from protracted situations, and the team approach followed in Edmonton. Jan Drews presented the perspective of private sponsors. Discussion followed on different issues: particular challenges, personal experiences, background from UNHCR on Bhutanese, settlement information shared and need for Canadian involvement overseas.

Resource persons:

Dr. James Milner, University of Toronto

Karin Linschoten, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Thaw Thaw Simon

Nyaw Nyaw Simon

Jan Drews, Refugee Coordinator, Canadian Lutheran World Relief - Toronto Office

Moderator: Barbara Treviranus

Settlement starts as soon as the claimant arrives

Participants at this workshop discussed the importance of supporting claimants' settlement as soon as they arrive, barriers to settlement for claimants and approaches to supporting settlement of claimants.

Resource persons

Sylvie Laurion, CSAI and RIVO, Montreal

Claudia Obreque, Sojourn House, Toronto

Paul St Clair, Roma Community Centre

Deborah Isaacs, MOSAIC, Vancouver

Moderator: Debbie Hill-Corrigan, Sojourn House, Toronto

Communicating our Message: Using new media to promote the welcoming and sense of belonging of refugees and immigrants

The goal of this hands-on workshop was to develop a better understanding of how and which media resources can be used to promote positive messages about refugees and immigrants and to promote successful integration. Session participants created a multimedia resource that can be used or adapted for local outreach work.

Different questions were asked during the workshop: What are the current methods NGOs and groups are using to communicate their messages? Are they effective and are they reaching the right audience? How can we use local resources and/or tap into or use current programs and even our client base to come up with and produce our messages? Are we using new and alternative methods of communicating?

Participants made several suggestions during the workshop: share the Youth Network video via Youtube web link; have media presentations at future CCR consultations; make video / radio interviews with Amina Malko Fund delegates and new delegates; develop more visuals into CCR web site; have a skills development workshop with more time; use youth in programs to support and participate in creative projects.

Resource persons:

Ian Keteku, Edmonton Immigrant Services Association, Edmonton

Erin Fitzgerald, Youth A.R.M.I., Edmonton

Alfredo Lombisi, Ici Radio Refuge, Montréal

Nabeal Monsoor, Edmonton

Moderator: Taro Hashimoto, Catholic Social Services Edmonton

Blue Ribbon Report and the Settlement Service Sector

In June 2006, the independent Blue Ribbon Panel was commissioned by the Government of Canada to recommend measures to make the delivery of grant and contribution programs more efficient while ensuring greater accountability. The panel concluded that there is a need for fundamental change in the way the federal government understands, designs, manages and accounts for its grant and contribution programs. It also concludes that it is absolutely necessary to simplify administration in order to strengthen accountability. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the Blue Ribbon Report's implications for the settlement service sector.

The first speaker presented the Blue Ribbon Report's conclusions and recommendations as well as steps already taken by the government to follow these recommendations. This was followed by a presentation of the current situation of non profit organizations receiving grants and contributions from the federal government. Particular challenges faced by these organizations in terms of funding requirements, core funding and relationships with funders were presented by the panellists from the sector. Participants then discussed implications and strategic planning for settlement organizations.

Resource persons:

Bhagwant Sandhu, Executive Director, Treasury Board Secretariat of Canada

Marty Dolin, Executive Director, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council

Bob Wyatt, Executive Director, Muttart Foundation, Edmonton

Moderator: Sherman Chan, MOSAIC

Durable Solution for African Refugees: Issues of Long Processing Time and Acceptance Rates

This workshop served as a brainstorming session in finding durable solutions to the large backlog of cases and longer processing times for privately sponsored refugees in Africa. Available statistical data was used to try to understand the causes, effects and consequences of the delays in processing. The workshop's aim was to come up with an effective solution to address this issue.

Specific issues addressed by the panellists included long processing time and high rejection rates in African visa posts, the number of refugees and immigrants that come from Africa and the number of visa posts in sub-Saharan Africa. They also emphasized the challenges and problems in settlement of refugees and immigrants from Africa and the systematic racism exercised in African visa posts. The Canadian government response to African refugees' problems was also raised.

Participants recommended the following: challenging systematic racism against African refugee claimants and immigrants; African caucus to prepare one workshop at each CCR Consultation; for families there should be an assessment of the principal applicant as well as dependants.

Resource persons:

Gilbert Iyamuremye, Roman Catholic Diocese of London, Windsor

Martin Mark, Catholic Cross Cultural Services, Toronto

Moderator: Said Nixon Bangura

Security certificates: the future

In February the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that aspects of the security certificate procedure violate the Charter. The Court suspended the declaration of unconstitutionality for one year to give Parliament a chance to amend the law. Participants at this workshop learned more about the Court's decision, which found that the use of "secret evidence" violated Charter rights to life, liberty and security of the person, in a manner that cannot be justified in a free and democratic society. The workshop then reviewed what is known about next steps, including the likelihood that the government will introduce legislation to amend the security certificate process. A draft of a position paper for the CCR was presented for comment. [The paper has since been finalized and is available at <http://www.ccrweb.ca/documents/Certificates07.pdf>]

Resource person:

Janet Dench, CCR Executive Director

Moderator: Rick Goldman

Racialization of Poverty and Barriers to Labour Market Integration

Recent research and reports show that race and immigration status are playing an increasing role in pushing newcomers down to the lowest levels of participation in Canada's labour market and into poverty. Racialized newcomer women are particularly affected by this trend. How is Canada doing when it comes to its internal and international commitments to counter racism and gender based discrimination? What should Canada be doing in this area given the rapid demographic changes it is undergoing?

This workshop offered regionally grounded (Quebec, Ontario, Alberta) as well as general, pan-Canadian perspectives on the issues of racialization of poverty and barriers to labour market integration. Particular attention was paid to the combined effect of gender and race on newcomers' situation, with a detailed

analysis of racialized newcomer women outcomes in areas such as employment commensurate with skills, salary, ability to retain employment, etc. Speakers offered a wide range of levels of analysis, from municipal, to provincial and federal policy responsibilities to concrete, day-to-day frontline work issues. Workshop participants contributed to the content of the activity by offering further analysis around issues of refugee claimants and people without status, as well as concerns around underemployment, precarious employment and lack of benefits and labour protections.

Resource persons:

Valerie Preston, York University, Toronto

Jean-Claude Icart, CRIEC-UQAM, Montreal

Pauline Mukashema, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Moderator: Debbie Douglas

Using the "Pathways to gender justice" toolkit

This workshop aimed at showing the membership how to use the CCR toolkit in their everyday tasks, depending on their working group of interest. The workshop started with an introduction to the tool kit. Each panellist then explained briefly how the toolkit is useful to their organization. Next, participants took part in small group exercises (3 groups facilitated by each of the panellists) taken from the tool kit and adapted to the needs of each group. After the exercises, participants returned to a discussion with the whole group. One group decided to present the result of their discussions with a role play, after which the moderator invited participants to recreate another version of the role play to explore different interpretations of the dynamics between a social worker and a refugee mother and son. Themes discussed included notions of gender, sex, sexual orientation, culture, religion and intersections between all these notions in the work with refugees. There were also discussions on the need for and reluctance towards education on the notion of gender.

Participants agreed that the CCR should continue to integrate gender issues in all its events, such as it has been done for some time. Noting the difficulty of identifying the level of interest and knowledge on gender at the beginning of the workshop, it was suggested to develop a self evaluation questionnaire on gender knowledge to go with the tool kit, that users can fill out before they use it – and after, to see if they have learned something. Participants seemed to have a great interest in gender issues. They found the tool kit useful, and appreciated the fact that panellists made very concrete references to the tool kit during their presentations.

Resource persons:

Sherilyn Trompetter, Changing Together, Edmonton

Heather MacDonald, The United Church of Canada, Toronto

Nancy Doray, AQAADI, Montreal

Moderator: Julie Lassonde

Research: a tool to promote understanding and effect change

This two-part workshop began with a discussion on current and emerging trends in refugee-related research. In this part of the workshop, existing research on refugees, including both academic and NGO research was explored. Then participants reviewed the kinds of research being done at the NGO/community level. They also discussed how research priorities are determined, and some of the challenges facing researchers and NGOs.

Participants identified needs of various communities for further research and explored ways of getting it done. Discussions also focussed on different ways of interacting with academics, policy makers and government. The informally structured discussion that followed focussed on research needs, on issues of access and appropriateness. Participants also discussed generating new research and initiating partnerships.

Resource persons:

Tracey Derwing, Prairie Metropolis Centre - University of Alberta

Noorfarah Merali, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta

Chris Pullenayegem, CPJ, Toronto

James Milner, Centre for Refugee Studies and Munk Centre

Moderator: Michele Millard, Centre for Refugee Studies

General Meeting

The Consultation concluded with the CCR's spring General Meeting. Fourteen resolutions were adopted, available at <http://www.ccrweb.ca/documents/resmay07.htm>.