

**Canadian Council for Refugees**  
**Fall 2007 Consultation**  
**“Breaking the barriers to refugee and immigrant rights”**  
**29 November – 1 December 2007, Ottawa**  
**Consultation report**

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Canadian Council for Refugees held a successful 2007 Fall Consultation in Ottawa, attended by over 400 participants from all over Canada and beyond. The Consultation took place from November 29 to December 1st at the Travelodge Hotel and Conference Centre. The theme was “Breaking the barriers to refugee and immigrant rights”. Highlights include a call for an increased Canadian response to the crisis faced by Iraqi refugees in the Middle East and the launch of the ‘Proud to Aid and Abet Refugees’ campaign, calling for legislative change to prevent future prosecutions of refugee workers. The Consultation also included meetings with Members of Parliament drawing attention to the need to make speedy family reunification a priority, the rights of temporary workers and the rights of trafficked persons in Canada.

Participants at the Consultation came from diverse backgrounds. They 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. The CCR actively promoted participation at the consultation of refugees, youth and members of the Ottawa region (the local organizing committee and the CCR Youth Network played an important role in this promotion work). As a result of efforts, refugee, youth and local participation were all strong, which increased the richness of diversity and perspectives in the Consultation sessions.

The objectives of the 2007 Fall Consultation were to enhance information-exchange and networking, offer training and strategize about the promotion of refugees and immigrants rights across Canada among people involved in services to refugees and immigrants. With respect to settlement and integration (i.e. the portions of the consultation supported by ISAP), the goals were to:

- Provide a forum for information-exchange among settlement practitioners from across Canada.
- Provide a forum for dialogue between government and settlement service providers.
- Identify gaps and emerging issues in the area of the settlement and integration of refugees and immigrants and develop responses.
- Focus attention on the diversity of newcomers and promote strategies for more effective responses to those newcomers whose needs are not adequately met.
- Strengthen the ability of the settlement sector to work collectively across Canada to improve Canada’s capacity to settle and integrate newcomers.

More than 30 sessions were offered during the three days of the consultation, including three plenary sessions, three Working Group meetings, 22 workshops and informal caucus sessions. The program structure offered 3 or 4 workshops simultaneously on different issues related to

settlement and protection. Workshops offered a participatory process, a feature that is much valued by participants as noted in their oral and written evaluations. It is CCR policy to encourage participation, particularly of those new to Canada and new to the CCR. Workshop moderators are asked to create an atmosphere in which newcomers feel they are invited to contribute actively. Moderators were briefed and had access to training on how to provide a space that is safe and free of bias and prejudice. Moderators mentioned at the beginning of every workshop that the CCR is committed to providing an environment which is free of racism, sexism, discrimination and bias, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

Following CCR's well-established and effective practice, topics of workshops and plenary sessions were selected during Working Group meetings. Emerging issues and strategic opportunities were identified and a wide range of volunteers were recruited to plan the workshops, ensuring broad input and ownership. The resource persons selected represented different perspectives: service providers, refugee advocates, UNHCR, government, lawyers, union, etc. They 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.

The Working Group meetings gave participants the opportunity to discuss in depth pressing issues affecting refugees and immigrants in Canada and to share information and strategies with others from across Canada. They also offered an opportunity to identify and respond to emerging issues, prepare resolutions to be presented for debate and approval by the membership at the General Meeting, and follow up on action items. Regional and provincial updates gave an overview of the situation across Canada and offered participants a chance to learn about best practices and innovative initiatives. Gender-based and anti-racist perspectives were systematically included in discussions about the direction of future work.

According to participants' oral and written evaluations, which were largely positive, the consultation succeeded in achieving its goals of information-exchange, networking, training and strategizing to enhance protection of refugees and settlement of refugees and immigrants into Canadian society. It also led to fruitful exchanges between people who approach refugee and immigrant settlement work from different perspectives. For example, the Consultation offered an opportunity for private sponsors and providers of settlement services to meet at the national level. The CCR deliberately fostered communications between the sectors, including through organizing a workshop jointly between CCR working groups (at this consultation the workshop: "Health care needs and issues of refugees").

The Consultation benefited from the active involvement of the local organizing committee, made up of staff and volunteers from CCR member organizations in Ottawa. We were also fortunate to be supported by an excellent team of 30 volunteers, who welcomed participants with warmth and consideration.

## **II. SUMMARY OF THE PLENARY DISCUSSIONS**

### **Opening plenary**

This session served as an introduction to the consultation and provided an opportunity to hear from a range of speakers on recent developments. Participants heard reflections from the recently appointed Chairperson of the Immigration and Refugee Board, as well as from the outgoing representative in Canada of the UNHCR.

Resource persons:

Elizabeth McWeeny, CCR President

Brian Goodman, Chairperson, Immigration and Refugee Board

Jahanshah Assadi, UNHCR Representative in Canada

Janet Hinshaw-Thomas, Director, Ecumenical Commitment to Refugees

Francisco Rico-Martinez, FCJ Refugee Centre

Moderators: Carl Nicholson, Catholic Immigration Centre, and Sylvie Moreau,

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada

### **Plenary session - Current and future issues for the CCR**

This session provided an opportunity for participants to discuss issues of anti-oppression, how an organization can benefit from the adoption of an anti-oppression policy and good practices in developing such a policy. Concrete steps were taken towards the development of a policy for the CCR, a process that will be pursued over the coming year. The session also touched on plans for activities to mark the CCR's upcoming 30th anniversary.

Moderators: Liz McWeeny and Jehad Aliweiwi

### **Theatrical presentation - 'Excluding Manuel' by the Asylum Players**

The Asylum Players performed a dramatization of 'Excluding Manuel', a short story from *Refugee Sandwich*, a collection of stories by Peter Showler. The play is about an IRB hearing taking place in a small town in Ontario. The performance was followed by a discussion about IRB hearings with the Players and author.

The Asylum Players: Chantal Tie, Michael Bossin, Laurie Joe, Francisco Rico-Martinez, Ann Scholberg

Author: Peter Showler

Moderators: Wanda Yamamoto and Roberto Jovel

### **General Meeting**

The Consultation concluded with the CCR's Annual General Meeting. Elections for the Executive Committee were held. A total of 10 resolutions were adopted.

### **III. SYNTHESIS OF WORKSHOPS**

#### **Transcending service silos: Improving outcomes for refugees and immigrants with HIV/AIDS**

Service silos are often among the biggest barriers in access to services. The silo approach to service delivery means that different services are in different compartments, and there is little or no connection or collaboration between them. Immigrants and refugees living with HIV/AIDS are particularly disadvantaged when confronted with this problem, in addition to dealing with other barriers.

This workshop presented the outcomes of two academic/community research projects, from Montreal and Winnipeg, about HIV and AIDS-related barriers and issues for refugees and immigrants. Panelists identified service gaps and policy problems relevant to the affected populations and shared their achievements in working collaboratively with community groups and organizations to improve service access for HIV positive immigrants and refugees.

The Montreal study concentrated on HIV positive refugees and immigrants and the pressures they experience in their lives: financial instability and impact on food security, stigma, issues related to family separation, and lack of a sense of security to disclose status to service providers, among others. The Winnipeg study looked at the lack of access to resources and the risks of infection among the refugee and immigrant population from endemic countries and the higher vulnerability experienced by women particularly.

Outcomes of the workshop include a recommendation that priority be given to processing family reunification for HIV positive refugees and immigrants and for those with AIDS; an action item asking that information for newcomers regarding the presence of HIV/AIDS in Canada and the prohibition to discriminate on grounds of HIV-status be posted visibly at shelters, immigration offices where claims are filed, and airports; and that the CCR address the federal government decision to cut 30% funding for Ontario community agencies fighting AIDS.

Resource persons:

Dr Joanne A. Cyr, McGill University Health Centre

David Thompson, Coordinator of research project on Optimizing Health Outcomes for HIV+ refugees from sub-Saharan Africa

MaryStella Anidi, Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC), Winnipeg

Moderator: Roberto Jovel, OCASI

#### **Iraqi refugees**

The catastrophe in Iraq has created the largest displaced population (internally and externally) in the world today. This workshop aimed at examining the situation of Iraqi refugees living in neighbouring countries of asylum and developing strategies for responding effectively to the enormous human suffering and limited international response.

The UNHCR representative gave an update on current situation of Iraqi refugees. UNHCR re-confirmed that Iraq is still not safe for refugees to return. There has been limited return of refugees for economic reasons. The negative impact of the displacement on the socio-economic

conditions of the Iraqi population was presented in detail. The high rate of cancer among Iraqi refugees was said to be related to weapons used in the Gulf war and other conflicts. There was also a presentation on the Iraqi community in Canada, and the challenges faced by the community with respect to political activism, such as lobbying, due to a history of living under a dictatorial regime. Bilateral aid to host countries such as Syria and other geopolitical interests of Canada were also raised as an issue.

In discussion, questions were raised about Iraqis of Armenian origin, who may be rejected on the basis that a solution is allegedly available in Armenia. This matter deserves follow up to see if there is a trend or it is an isolated case.

Outcomes of the workshop included a resolution calling for an increased Canadian response to the crisis faced by Iraqi refugees. The resolution urges the Canadian government to increase bilateral and multilateral support to neighbouring countries in the region; increase overall resettlement targets; and educate the Canadian public about the needs of Iraqi refugees, among other things.

Resource persons:

Hy Shelow, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR Ottawa

Louis Munther Azzaria, Iraqi born, Secretary/Treasurer of an NGO working inside Iraq

Glynis Williams, Director, Action Réfugiés Montréal, worked with UNHCR in Syria from March-July 2007

Moderator: Yosief Araya

### **Fraudulent advisors**

Refugees and potential immigrants, in Canada, the USA or overseas, are too often the victims of fraudulent advisers. There is now a regulatory body in Canada, CSIC, and the UNHCR is working world-wide to counter this trend, but much remains to be done. This workshop took stock of the scope of the problems, and examined the roles of all the actors (various levels of government, CSIC, the police, UNHCR and NGOs) in working for the better protection of the refugees and immigrants.

Participants heard about UNHCR's experience of fraud in its Office in Nairobi, which led UNHCR to take a number of measures on various different fronts to ensure program integrity. Types of fraud include: identity fraud, family composition, document fraud, material misrepresentation fraud, bribery, malfeasance and resettlement exploitation schemes. In response UNHCR has been conducting program integrity measures, promoting staff awareness and purchasing UNHCR domain names among other things. Participants also heard about a case of fraud from Montreal.

After the Supreme Court decision in 2002 (*Mangat*), the federal government drafted regulations to monitor immigration consultants, which came into effect in April 2004. Starting April 2008, clients can no longer be represented before the IRB, CIC or CBSA by consultants that are not members of CSIC.

It was noted that currently live-in caregivers, agents for students and temporary workers are exempted from the regulations, even though they perform immigration acts. Some provinces are taking the lead. In Alberta, employment regulations have been issued and there is a proposal to regulate temporary workers agents in Manitoba. It was also noted that government officials should be more proactive, and ensure that the regulations also apply to consultants that provide advice and/or offer consultations.

The following needs were identified: the need for better communication between stakeholders in Canada and overseas; the need for a general complaint procedure; political will and more resources. The response to the fraud at the Jerusalem Haitian Community Centre in Florida was cited as a best practice. Individuals that work in the Justice system should receive awareness sessions and training on this issue. There is currently a public campaign in Toronto. Wallet size flyers are being distributed. The Ontario municipal federation is also providing information regarding this issue to its members.

Panelists:

Michael Casasola, UNHCR, Ottawa

Deborah Isaacs, Mosaic, Vancouver

Rivka Augenfeld, Canadian Society of Immigration Consultants (CSIC), Montreal

Moderator: Catherine Gauvreau, Bureau International des Droits des Enfants

### **Refugee and Immigrant Women as Leaders**

This informal session was intended for refugee and immigrant women, to allow them to get to know each other and strategize about their involvement in the consultation, in the CCR and in their local communities. The resource person was the Executive Director of an Ottawa organization. She gave a presentation that focussed on questions such as: what is leadership; what does it take to be a non-traditional leader; how to get involved in the leadership within the CCR. Participants from Ottawa who wished to become more involved in immigrant and refugee issues connected with the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO).

Resource person: Hamdi Mohammed, Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization

Moderator: Jamila Aman, Northwood Neighbourhood Services

### **Health care needs and issues of refugees – resettled refugees and claimants**

This workshop examined the differences and similarities in the needs and health care experiences of resettled refugees and refugee claimants. Three perspectives were presented: the refugee claimant experience in Manitoba, the resettled refugees' experience in Toronto (with a case study of the recent Karen refugees), and CIC policy on medical protocols and sharing information with private sponsors and refugee reception centres prior to arrival.

CIC representatives gave an overview of different elements: immigration medical examination/assessment; Designated Medical Practitioners; Karen Refugee Health Management Protocol; Interim Federal Health Program; and sharing of information. A family doctor from Access Alliance talked about experiences in providing medical support to Karen refugees that

arrived in Toronto. A refugee claimant advocate from Winnipeg presented the particular challenges faced by refugee claimants regarding the Interim Federal Health Program.

Discussions highlighted the fact that many positive changes have been made in the last few months and many are on the way. There was also some discussion on support from the community to encourage medical practitioners to offer services under IFH.

Resource persons:

Meb Rashid, Access Alliance, Toronto

Janis Nickel, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, Winnipeg

Ümit Kiziltan, Director, Program Management and Control, Health Management, CIC

Josée Lévesque, Manager, Post-Arrival Health Management, CIC

Monique-Louise Leblanc, Medical Officer, program Management and Control, CIC

Moderator: Barbara Treviranus

### **Engaging youth locally**

This workshop looked at the engagement of youth on refugee and immigrant issues locally and nationally through programs, structures and initiatives. Participants heard about what CCR member organizations are doing to support youth in making lasting connections and developing involvement with their organizations and the CCR.

Participants first heard about YouCan's mission and history and about some of the tools they developed in regards to conflict resolution for youth in a multicultural setting. The second presentation outlined the Youth programs of Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO) in Hamilton and their positive impact on newcomer youth. A representative of Catholic Social Services in Edmonton spoke about the qualities a project or group must have to successfully engage youth on a local level. Participants viewed a short video clip produced for the previous CCR consultation in Edmonton. An important issue was raised during question and discussion period: how and why should we be addressing gender issues within youth specific programs and projects?

Resource persons:

Dave Farthing, YOUCAN, Ottawa

Taro Hashimoto, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton

Arsim Aliu, Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO), Hamilton

Moderators: Malgorzata (Maggie) Szczurowska, CCR Youth Network

### **Dialogue with the Canada Border Services Agency**

This workshop provided participants with an opportunity to hear from, and exchange with senior CBSA officials on a range of issues. CBSA officials and CCR representatives discussed different concerns relating to CBSA's approach to human rights, access to asylum, detention and removals.

As an outcome of the workshop, Ms. Johnston committed to following up on a number of points:

- 1) Why is the second (new) security check for access to the detention centre necessary and how can we work around it?
- 2) Access to detention at Vancouver Airport
- 3) Possibility of providing better public access to information on CBSA, possibly like CIC call centre
- 4) Presence of NGOs at airports
- 5) Presence of (or replacement of) social worker at Laval C.P.I

CBSA official also took note of the following issue: possibility of issuing TRPs for tardy spouse-in-Canada applications. Francisco Rico-Martinez indicated he would provide examples of non-respect of policy in place (i.e. if sponsorship is filled before PRRA, it must be studied prior to any potential removal).

Resource persons:

Kimber Johnston, Vice-President, Enforcement, CBSA

Robert MacDougall, CBSA

Francisco Rico-Martinez, FCJ Refugee Centre, Toronto

Glynis Williams, Action réfugiés Montréal

Moderator: Rick Goldman

### **Strategies for intervening in family reunification cases**

Refugees and others too often face barriers to family reunification with immediate family members. Participants in this workshop learned about some of the barriers of particular concern to the CCR, including excluded family members and separated children overseas, and explored strategies for intervening in individual cases and for reinforcing the CCR efforts to find systemic solutions to the barriers.

Resource persons:

Geri Sadoway, Parkdale Community Legal Services, Toronto

Deborah Isaacs, MOSAIC, Vancouver

Moderator: Mitch Goldberg

### **Temporary foreign workers or Canada's disposable workers?**

The number of temporary foreign workers recruited to work in Canada has increased dramatically over the last year. Applications are reportedly expedited, and workers are recruited for jobs that do not require specific skills, such as work in the hospitality industry. What does this mean for workers? The temporary foreign worker program was introduced as a federal government initiative designed to deal with a shortage of skilled labour in specific labour market sectors. Has Canada embarked on creating a population of 'disposable workers'?

Panellists representing different perspectives - government, labour and NGO - shared their analysis of these questions. Presentations focused on the different categories of Temporary Foreign Workers, their specific challenges and possible solutions. Participants agreed on a

resolution calling for the right of temporary foreign workers to apply for permanent residence at the initial application. Other outcomes include working on reviewing the policies and revising CCR's position on migrant workers.

Resource persons:

Francisco Rico-Martinez, FCJ Refugee Centre

Linda MacDougall, Policy Analyst, Temporary Foreign Workers and Visitors, CIC

Lincoln Ellis, UFCW Canada

Moderator: Loly Rico, FCJ Refugee Centre

### **Future of the private sponsorship of refugees**

This session aimed at discussing strategies for moving the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program forward and identifying potential key campaigns for the Overseas Protection and Sponsorship Working Group. A brief overview was provided regarding events in the past year, progress and issues remaining. Participants were divided into smaller groups to identify next steps in promoting the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program. Following their reports, participants were asked to identify the two top items. These are listed below in descending order of importance:

- Promote the good news of the PSRP to MPs and in the community;
- Tell CIC that the Group of Five sponsorship option should remain;
- Ask CIC to accept UNHCR referrals without interview, and to follow-up with UNHCR if Canada has any questions with HCR interview procedure;
- Advocate with CIC and politicians to treat the backlog as a temporary situation and provide resources to solve this temporary situation (targeting missions with highest numbers);
- Advocate with CIC and politicians to increase the target (both ends of the target) and ensure that resources are allocated to process higher numbers;
- Advocate for increased resources for RSTP to reach G5s (training/support)
- Develop service standards which are comparable to good practices of other resettlement countries.

Other suggestions include: improving visa officer training; recognizing the Nairobi pilot project; SAHs organizing amongst themselves to avoid recreating the backlog.

Resource persons: Paulette Johnson and Carolyn Vanderlip

### **Vulnerable persons guidelines**

The aim of the workshop was to explore the implications of the IRB Vulnerable Persons Guideline for refugee claimants, lawyers, NGO representatives and clinicians. The presentation examined the Guideline's definition of vulnerability, the types of procedural accommodation that may be requested, standards of proof, requirements concerning the content of expert reports, and so on. There was also discussion on how best to monitor implementation of the Guideline, and what additional measures need to be put in place to better protect vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees.

Resource person:

Janet Cleveland, Researcher, Chair on International Migration Law, Université de Montréal

Moderator: John Docherty

### **Breaking the Gender Barriers for Refugees and Immigrant Rights**

This workshop explored gender issues and focused on the toolkit “Pathways to Gender Justice”. Participants heard about challenges and sources of resistance, as well as positive aspects of applying the toolkit, as illustrated by two organizations that have used it in their work. The session included questions such as why and how a gender analysis can be applied to an entire organization, including policy, staff and structure.

The session began with an introduction to the toolkit and the distribution of a survey. A discussion followed on the definition of gender. Speakers gave concrete examples of resistance in communities and how to engage and open up discussions about gender. The discussion period was particularly productive. Participants engaged in a genuine conversation. They went beyond the concept and theories and expressed their personal experiences, such as trans identity, masculine gender identity in women, sexual orientation, men’s resistance in specific cultural communities and links between the toolkit and religion. Another issue that was addressed is the confusion about gender when coming to Canada.

Resource persons:

Jeannethe Lara

Wanda Yamamoto, Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, Winnipeg

Tigist Dafla, Catholic Social services, Edmonton

Moderator: Julie Lasonde

### **The CCR Report Card on Racism**

The Anti-Racism Core Group held a successful workshop, focussing on developing a periodic CCR Report on racism as it impacts on refugees and immigrants. The workshop featured a presentation on examples of CCR’s anti-racism work by Chantal Tie. This was followed by a facilitated discussion exploring participants’ understanding and expectation of a periodic report on the state of racism, and CCR’s anti-racism activities.

Participants made several suggestions that would help to inform follow-up work by the Anti-Racism Core Group and by CCR. These include a need to develop an explanation of racism as it could affect refugees and immigrants, that the report could be a core CCR document that would feature highlights on specific anti-racism activities, that it could provide a mechanism to gauge CCR’s progress in specific issue areas, and that it could help to build a vision of the kind of society that CCR and its members are striving for.

Workshop participants also recommended that there is a need to develop ongoing anti-racism and anti-oppression lens that would be applied to all CCR work. This could be expressed or developed through an anti-racism toolkit that would include guidelines or answers to commonly asked questions. The group also recommended that all Working Group co-chairs should be

trained in developing and applying an anti-racism analysis in their role as co-chair, and that the CCR should integrate race, gender and LGBT issues in all CCR activities.

Resource person:

Chantal Tie, South Ottawa Community Legal Services

Moderator: Kemi Jacobs

### **Housing issues**

The high level of poverty experienced by recent newcomers to Canada has an impact on their housing situation. According to the 2001 census data, 36% of recent immigrant households were living in unacceptable housing conditions. Affordability, quality and security of housing are among the major difficulties immigrants face. This workshop explored some of the challenges relating to housing faced by newcomers across Canada, with perspectives from Alberta and the Atlantic. A researcher presented an overview of a report recently published on housing challenges in Canada faced by immigrant and refugees. The workshop also provided an overview of the experience of the housing situation in Atlantic Canada and in Alberta.

Participants recommended creating an ad hoc task force on housing to develop a CCR housing policy position. This task force would have the mandate to conduct a community mapping process on housing (i.e. to better understand the national and local networks involved in housing solutions in Canada).

Resource persons:

Ernest Khalema, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton

Kevin Arsenault, P.E.I. Association for Newcomers to Canada

Sarah Wayland, author of the report "The Housing Needs of Immigrants and Refugees in Canada"

Moderator: Jehad Aliweiwi, Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office

### **The Strategic Misuse of Resettlement**

The session focused on situations where resettlement is used for the benefit of some refugees but with a negative impact on other refugees and/or on access to asylum and the overall protection regime. Agreements between countries use resettlement as a means to deny access to asylum (e.g. Safe Third Country Agreement, the Pacific Solution). In other situations, refugees who are not resettled may be negatively impacted by the resettlement of others. The workshop provided a forum for exploring how the integrity of resettlement must be safeguarded within the protection regime and as a durable solution for those refugees in protracted situations.

Participants heard about situations where resettlement has negatively impacted refugees. Government positions on strategic use of resettlement were presented. A very interactive discussion in small groups followed around the question: What is strategic resettlement for us and what should we advocate for? A resolution was drafted, asking the CCR to urge the Canadian government to commit to maintain global access to resettlement and increase the resources to make that access effective.

Resource persons:

Liz McWeeny, DOORS to New Life Refugee Services, Thunder Bay  
Debra Pressé, A/Director, Resettlement, Refugees Branch, Citizenship and Immigration  
Canada

Moderators: Gilbert Iyamuremye and Glynis Williams

### **Trafficked persons in Canada**

In 2007, CIC introduced guidelines for issuing Temporary Resident Permits (TRP) to trafficked persons. The workshop aimed at looking at how the TRPs have been working in practice and what more needs to be done to ensure that trafficked persons in Canada receive protection. The workshop also looked at what can be learned from best practices in other countries and presented the CCR's proposal for legislative amendment to protect trafficked persons.

CIC representatives presented the new measures updated in 2007 and gave an overview of policies and procedures. Issues highlighted: the length of the Temporary Resident Permit for victims of human trafficking was extended to 180 days; victims are not required to testify; fee exemption for initial resident and work permits; Interim Federal Health care includes counselling. CIC has not yet reviewed the policy as they have seen too few victims. CIC's Operations Director presented on the translation of policy to practice and training to support the victims.

CBSA offered an overview of roles and coordination with RCMP, CIC and Justice, as well as raising awareness throughout regarding identification of victims and the Anti-Fraud and Human Trafficking Section.

The panellists from NGOs presented different issues: the need for permanent residence status after the TRP; NGO presence with enforcement in order to support the victim; family reunification; the issue of detention as "protection"; the need for clear permanent policy to identify and support victims; safe space and supports for victims to disclose, access to supports; need to change attitudes and ways of looking at the issue (not criminalization/enforcement)

Resource persons:

Brenna MacNeil, A/Director, Social Policy and Programs, Citizenship and Immigration  
Canada

Melissa Gomes, Operational Management and Coordination, Citizenship and  
Immigration Canada

Clark Goodman, Director of Operations, CIC

Richelle Léonard, Border Intelligence, CBSA

Greg Modler, Senior Program Advisor, Operations, CBSA

Deborah Isaacs, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd

Loly Rico, FCJ Refugee Centre

Moderator: Debbie Hill-Corrigan

### **Family Class sponsorship breakdown**

Sponsorship breakdown happens when the sponsored family member withdraws from the sponsorship relationship before the end of the period specified in the sponsorship undertaking. This workshop provided an overview of the implications of sponsorship breakdown. The presentation first offered definitions of themes: sponsor, sponsored family member and sponsorship undertaking, and gave an overview of the length and basic requirements of the sponsorship agreement. The workshop then offered an overview of current social services regulation and a general picture of the consequences of a sponsorship breakdown.

Resource person:

Francisco Rico-Martinez, FCJ Refugee Centre

Moderators: Tigist Dafla, Catholic Social Services and Sylvie Laurion, RIVO

### **The International Protection Agenda – Current state and future trends**

We often focus almost exclusively on the Canadian domestic agenda without much consideration for the broader international context that guides Canadian policy. This session looked at the current status of the international protection scene as well as trends for the future that will require us to review CCR/NGO priorities for advocacy on refugee rights and protection both in Canada and abroad.

Resource persons:

Hy Shelow, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Branch Office Ottawa

Liz McWeeny, DOORS to New Life Refugee Services, Thunder Bay

Moderator: Gilbert Iyamuremye

### **Gender issues planning**

This workshop offered a review of activities undertaken by the CCR in the area of gender and contributed to developing the Gender Core Group's plan for the upcoming year. An update on past activities was first presented: the CCR's gender tool kit, the development of the second phase of the toolkit, the anti-trafficking campaign and the refugee women leadership. The following activities were suggested for the upcoming year:

- Election of Co-Chairs
- Gender Tool Kit second phase
- Anti-Trafficking Campaign
- Holding Regional Gender Workshops
- Updates on gender sent to the CCR list
- Holding a plenary on gender at a CCR Consultation
- Mandatory gender training for members of the Executive and Working Group Co-Chairs

Resource persons: Loly Rico and Roberto Jovel

Moderator: Jamila Aman

### **On the margins: Impacts of IRPA and IRB on LGBTQ refugees and immigrants**

This workshop looked at the barriers faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer refugees and immigrants as a result of current IRPA and IRB rules (the Act, regulations, guidelines and policies). The issues highlighted included: impossibility of filing a second claim; impact of Safe Third Country agreement; reduction from two IRB members to one presiding over a hearing; lack of implementation of RAD; certain IRB members' misunderstanding of issues of queer 'visibility' or 'openness'; lack of IRB Guidelines for claims based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression; lack of a list of countries for which overseas protection for LGBTQ claimants should be envisioned; issues affecting immigration for married same-gender couples. The workshop also looked at HIV-status issues. The examples used to illustrate the barriers or issues at stake were diverse and included issues of gender, race, faith, class.

Participants proposed a resolution on an Anti-Oppression Framework for CIC and the IRB, expanding their current gender-based analysis tool into a fully comprehensive, integrated anti-oppression tool including race, class, age, religion, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression.

The organizing process for this workshop included the re-launch of the CCR LGBTQ Caucus, which met twice at the Consultation. The speaker's presentation and following discussion allowed the identification of issues that would benefit from follow up, and that the newly created LGBTQ caucus could look at. These include: the development of IRB Guidelines for sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression claims; the development of lists of specialized counsel; the development of training for interpreters.

Resource person: El-Farouk Khaki, Immigration and Refugee Lawyer and Human Rights Advocate

Moderators: Roberto Jovel (OCASI) and Rachna Contractor (Among Friends)

### **Opportunities for engagement at the international level**

Panellists provided an overview of international meetings in which the CCR has participated, by presenting their personal experience when attending international meetings on behalf of CCR. They reviewed the challenges and opportunities these meetings present, and spoke to how the CCR benefits from participation. Panellists were asked to respond to the following questions: What meeting(s) did you attend? How do you prepare for attendance at an international meeting? What are the challenges in preparing and attending an international meeting? How much time does it take to prepare? How are attendance and participation at an international meeting different from attendance and participation in national meetings? How do you report back?

Gilbert Iyamuremye spoke about his recent participation in Ex-com and his observations about how others around the world hold in high regard the work done in Canada; he was able to go a little more in depth regarding diplomacy and the need to be mentored before attending the meeting.

Ana Maria Fantino answered the questions and discussed the work that is done after the meetings. She provided some insight on how to extend CCR international networks and how

important it is to be sensitive and aware that many sister agencies in the Global South have an inferiority complex wrongly believing that everything that we do here is better.

Carolina Gajardo summarized the many activities that CCR is involved in and briefly shared her own experience. She provided concrete suggestions on how to prepare and who could be an ideal candidate to be considered.

As an outcome of the workshop, it was suggested that the CCR add on its web site the following information: activities of the International Affairs committee; a description of past activities and what has been requested from participants; how to be engaged in this committee and how to apply to represent CCR.

Resource persons:

Carolina Gajardo, COSTI Immigrant Services, Toronto

Gilbert Iyamuremye, Diocese of London - Office of Refugees, Windsor

Ana Maria Fantino, Catholic Social Services, Edmonton

Moderator: Carolina Gajardo

### **Best interests of the child determinations**

The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires that best interests of the child be a primary consideration in all actions taken concerning children. What does this mean for children affected by displacement? This workshop looked at efforts to develop formal processes to determine best interests, for implementation by UNHCR and States, and reviewed briefly the law and practice with respect to best interests of the child in the US and Canada.

Panellists outlined the important factors in preparing for a BIC determination. They also gave an overview of the UNHCR guidelines on assessments and determinations and presented a report on field work in refugee camps in Thailand and Rwanda (re: BIC determination). Finally, an overview of procedure in the US for BIC determinations and of BIC in Canadian law was presented.

Participants drafted a resolution asking that the CCR call upon the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to conduct a departmental review of the understanding and application, by CIC officials, of the notion of “Best Interests of the Child”; that the CCR, the UNHCR and other members of civil society be consulted as part of this review, and that the results of this review be made public.

Resource persons:

Sara J. Feldman, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington DC

Amy Anderson, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, Baltimore, US

Rick Goldman, Committee to Aid Refugees, Montreal

Moderator: Hilary Cameron