



Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture

1999-2000
Annual Report

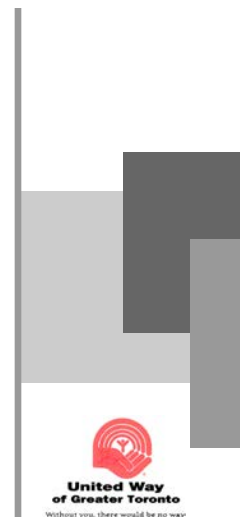


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Mandate

"Hope after the Horror"

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) aids survivors to overcome the lasting effects of torture and war. Working with the community, the Centre support survivors in the process of successful integration into Canadian society, advocates for their protection and integrity, and raises awareness of the continuing effects of torture and war on survivors and their families. The CCVT gives hope after the horror.



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It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the seventeenth Annual General Meeting of the Canadian centre for Victims of Torture.

1999 was a busy year for CCVT. During the year, 523 male, 395 female and 292 children were assisted. In partnership with the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture, we continued to pressure the Canadian government to fulfill its obligations through increasing funding to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Torture Victims. As a result of the advocacy work, the Minister of Foreign affairs, Mr. Lloyd **Axworthy, increased Canada's contribution to CAD \$60,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Torture Victims** in addition to CAD \$50,000 to fund a torture rehabilitation project oversees through a Canadian rehabilitation Centre.

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture produced a video "*Window of Hope: Coming to Terms with Torture and Organized Violence*", and accompanying training material was produced and used in the training of community groups, frontline workers, language instructors, faith groups and health professionals throughout Canada. Subsequent training material on the Befriending Program was developed for use in the training of volunteers and training was provided in Ontario.

As part of the National Forum 2000, the CCVT in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development organized day-long workshops in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax, where more than 200 young people discussed their own experiences of war in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Kenya, Kosovo, Liberia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and other countries.

The CCVT also participated in the Executive Committee meeting of the UNHCR, the UN Commission on Human Rights Working Group on drafting the Optional Protocol to the *Convention Against Torture*, the World Council of Churches Conference on Global Protection for Up-rooted People, the North American NGO Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, the External Affairs Annual Consultation in preparation for **Canada's participation in the UN Commission in Human Rights Conference**, an Anti- Impunity workshop organized by Amnesty International, the UNHCR Conference on the Protection of Stateless People in Ottawa and the International Conference on War Affected Children in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

This would have not been possible without the generous support from our donors, funders, Volunteers, network members, and direction from the Board of Directors and the commitment of staff.

Mulugeta Abai
Executive Director

A Message From the Executive Director



A Message from the Chair

1999/2000 was my first year as Chair of the Board of Directors. As I had a great model in Jim Lane, the previous Chair, it proved to be a task more manageable and less daunting than it might otherwise have been. I was ably assisted by an energetic and committed group of directors. An effective board of directors keeps the organization under its charge working smoothly, anticipates problems and fixes them, has a mutually supportive relationship with the ED and staff, and monitors and promotes the financial stability of the organization. In other words, the Board makes it safe for the ED and staff to do their work with a minimum of distractions. When looking back at the past year I am pleased to conclude that our Board of Directors were diligent and successful. I thank all the Directors for their commitment and hard work. Our special thanks goes to Rosemary Meier, Co-Chair of the Health and Program Committee who will be stepping down this year.

We are indebted to our large brigade of volunteers whose duties range from being befrienders to clients to stuffing envelopes. Under the able guidance of Michele Millard, our Volunteer Coordinator, CCVT sponsored many activities this year for volunteers on topical issues which explore the complexities of our work. I will mention just a few to give you some idea of their high interest: *International Humanitarian Law*; *Can Human Rights Violators Be Forgiven?*; *The Agony of Living in Immigration Limbo*; *Oppression and Genocide in East Timor*; *Human Rights and Islamic Law*; and the video *Facing the Truth with Bill Moyers*, a two-hour documentary depicting the events surrounding the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa.

It is my sad duty to report that one of our directors, and a founding member of CCVT, Trevor Bartram, passed away in Mexico on May 8, 2000. The passing of Trevor is a great loss to CCVT and we are deeply saddened. Trevor will be remembered for his passionate commitment to human rights, for the courage of his convictions, for his creative ideas, his generosity, his long-standing devotion to CCVT, and his advocacy for survivors and their families.

Continuing the good work done last year in stabilizing our finances, we have managed to strengthen that stability by adding to our operating reserves, thus giving the organization a buffer of 3 months operating resources. CCVT has plans to streamline the heating and air conditioning systems in the floor it occupies. It is anticipated that work will proceed as soon as permission is obtained from the Condo Corporation. In addition, we were able to provide a one-time contribution for the staff to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan worth 5% of the their gross salary.



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CCVT has completed the first stage of overhauling and streamlining its Personnel Policies to harmonize them with United Way requirements. An AntiRacism/AntiDiscrimination Policy and Complaints Procedure for Responding to Harassment **has now been added to CCVT's Personnel Manual. These policies and complaints** procedures apply to all CCVT personnel, including its Board of Directors, staff, clients, volunteers, and all those with whom CCVT does business. On July 7, as part of the implementation process, an all-day workshop for staff was successfully completed. To continue this process, more workshops are scheduled for the Fall period.

As Chair of the Board, I have had many more opportunities to be at the Centre this year. I am struck by the continued dedication of the staff, led by our dynamic Executive Director, Mulugeta Abai. I find them to be cheerful and positive even though their work is very stressful. They manage to counsel their clients, lead workshops in many parts of the country, produce newsletters and quarterlies such as *First Light*, organize training sessions and education sessions for volunteers, do advocacy work on behalf of CCVT, attend committee meetings as staff representatives, and engage in many other tasks as they arise. I am in awe of them and the amazing responsibility they have taken. I believe CCVT is in good hands.

Hari Lalla
Chair



Report of the Health and Program Committee

A working group advisory to the Board, this committee supports the CCVT mission in attempts to aid survivors to overcome the lasting effects of torture on survivors and their families. By the terms of reference, the committee undertakes work to develop and monitor implementation of guidelines for assessment and provision of services, to collaborate with the Personnel Committee in staff development and to work with the Public Education and Volunteer Advisory committees to promote public education. Members of the Health committee will sit on the Ethics Research committee, a sub-committee of the Public Education committee, to screen research projects for consistency in research ethics, assist researchers in developing projects and in following the specific ethical guidelines that will monitor them, and monitor that the specified research ethics are being followed.

Meetings of the Health and Program committee have been held in November 1999 and January, February, March, April and July 2000, with additional planning meetings for the visit to CCVT of Dr. Roland Fuca, Director of the Interim Federal Health Plan (IFHP) on March 31 and the joint meeting of the Health and Legal Networks on May 3.

The Resource Binder for medico-legal documentation was launched at the joint Networks meeting. We thank Michele Millard, CCVT staff and members of the Health and Legal committees for their involvement in the production of this large and unique collection of papers and other information, with their generous contributions of time, effort and experience. Plans are underway for the wider dissemination of this resource among health and legal professions. Members of the Health Network are involved in the preparation of medico-legal reports, and have also contributed by in-service presentations to the Immigration and Refugee Board. We thank all who contributed to the discussion on May 3, on Documenting Survivors of Torture – different stages and perspectives – and in particular the panel members Dr. Donald Payne, Dr. Wendell Block, Maureen Silcoff, Geraldine Sadoway and Teresa Dremetsikas.

The meeting on March 31 clarified for CCVT staff and physicians several aspects of the IFHP which will improve service provision for CCVT clients and other refugee claimants. Implementation of recommendations from the meeting is needed in order to improve other areas identified, such as the referral network and advocacy for health/mental health care.



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A research program is developing in accordance with CCVT priorities, with a further internal project to continue evaluation of an existing program, the Art Therapy program, by the trial of an Art Therapy/Psychotherapy Group. Up to twelve participants, men and women from different countries who were recommended by CCVT Intake staff in consultation with the co-therapists, have met for ten weekly two-hour sessions. Through the use of spontaneous art, these survivors of torture have been able to communicate their painful experiences and express the emotions that surround these experiences in a group setting with others who have been tortured. The co-therapists, a registered Art Therapist and a physician completing psychiatric training at Mount Sinai Hospital, have conducted low-key and non-intrusive sessions with a relaxed and open atmosphere which has been conducive to establishing trusting and open relationships. We thank Mary Sanderson, CCVT Art Therapist, and Dr. Abbas Azadian, member of the Health and Program committee for this pilot project.

Physicians in the Network have been invited to participate in a study of Pain and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as part of the work of the Pain Clinic of the University Health Network (formerly the Toronto Hospital) and an invitation remains outstanding for CCVT to consider studies of invulnerability to PTSD. A small blood sample would be examined by colleagues in the Anxiety Disorders program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH, formerly the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry) to identify biological markers in those who have suffered torture but have not developed symptoms of PTSD, which is valuable in focusing appropriate therapy and support.

Continuing professional education and development is required not only in interactive discussions and resource development but also in a program for implementation of the needs of CCVT staff, updated in a meeting facilitated by Dr. Ron Ruskin, member of the Health Network. Education continues to be an important activity, and we thank CCVT staff for their supervision of students and other trainees in the health professions for whom their CCVT project continues to be a formative experience.

The Health and Program committee warmly acknowledges the support of CCVT staff, of whom a growing proportion are themselves physicians, and Volunteers throughout the organisation. We again thank our Staff member Mohamed Ahmed for his thoughtful and effective work beyond the arrangement of meetings and facilitation of activities.

Submitted on behalf of Drs Abbas Azadian, Raul Berdichevsky, Jill Blakeney, Wendell Block, Donald Payne.

Rosemary Meier
Rolando Vasquez, R.N.
Co-Chairs, Health and Program Committee



The Legal Committee deals with legal matters arising from the CCVT mandate with the view of making CCVT work more effectively in serving its clients. The Legal Committee is specifically active in the field of policy analysis, legal advocacy and research. The Committee recruits its members from the CCVT Board, Legal Network, staff and volunteers. It provides recommendations to the CCVT Board and includes at least one person from the Board and one from the CCVT staff members.

During the past year, the Legal Committee received new blood in its veins by increasing its membership. It is presently composed of seven lawyers (in different fields of refugee/immigrants and human rights), including three CCVT Board members, two staff members and two Legal Network members.

CCVT's Legal Committee has been involved in the following areas:

Policy advocacy

The Legal Committee has collaborated with CCVT staff members to make the following interventions with the government on policy changes:

- Addressing the question of impunity with special reference to the prosecution of the former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet. Following the return of Pinochet to Chile, the CCVT Legal Committee advocates that Pinochet be prosecuted in Chile.
- Meeting with the UNHCR Legal Office in Toronto discussing different aspects of the protection of refugees and survivors of torture;
- Helping CCVT staff and counsellors by reviewing complicated cases of clients and providing appropriate directions;
- Attending UNHCR consultations in preparation for the protection of stateless persons and providing the Centre with feedback;
- Providing CCVT staff with its comments in preparing a **comprehensive report on Canada's compliance with the Convention Against Torture**;
- Holding extensive discussions and made positive recommendations on the issue of extending the medical network of CCVT;
- Assisting CCVT with the preparation of a Brief to the parliamentary Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration on Citizenship Act (Bill C-16);
- Participating in Ottawa discussions on the establishment of a Canadian Centre for the Prosecution of War Criminals



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Suresh Case

This case deals with the refoulement (returning to torture) of Manickavasagam Suresh, a Convention refugee whom the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has deemed a security risk to Canada. Mr. Suresh is a Sri Lankan Tamil who fears torture should he be returned to his home country, the only country which will take him. The Minister is of the opinion that Suresh is a member of a "Tamil terrorist organization" and came to Canada for purposes of fund-raising. The Federal Court of Canada, in both the Trial Division and the Court of Appeal upheld the Minister's decision to deport.

The Legal Committee discussed the above decision at length and reached the conclusion that the Canadian courts' decision clearly went against the principle of non-refoulement embodied in Article 3 of the *Convention Against Torture*, Article 5 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and Article 7 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. All these provisions are absolute and cannot be balanced with national security risks and other considerations. The Committee also discussed other international legal instruments, which prohibits deportation in situations where there is a risk of torture (Article 33 of the *Refugee Convention*).

The Legal Committee recommended that this matter required our urgent attention. The case has been taken to the Supreme Court of Canada, and the Supreme Court has very recently granted leave (permission) to appeal the decision of the Federal Court. A big challenge lies ahead. Many organizations including the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and Inter-Church Committee for Refugees (ICCR) have applied to intervene. The Committee strongly proposed that CCVT should intervene with the perspective of defending the absolute nature of the Article 3 of the *Convention Against Torture*. It was further proposed that CCVT invite IRCT to make a joint intervention with the Supreme Court of Canada. The Legal Committee decided to accept the offer of Michael Code, an internationally known international law expert to intervene on CCVT's behalf at the Canadian Supreme Court.

Other Issues

The Legal Committee has discussed and has provided feedback on the following issues:

- Feedback on preparing for meetings between CCVT and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration;
- Follow up on the cases of some clients who have been suffering in Immigration limbo for years;
- Assisting in the celebration of June 26th as the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture;
- Discussion on structural problems within the IRB and exploring the possibility of new IRB guidelines for refugee claimants with mental health issues including where they have been tortured;
- Feedback on articles written by CCVT staff.

Ezat Mossallanejad
CCVT Policy Analyst



The mandate of the Public Education Committee includes maintaining a high level of awareness about torture and human rights within the organization and the provision of information on these issues to the larger community. CCVT strives to be a learning centre. Activities include the production and distribution of education materials, onsite training of staff, volunteers and students and participation in training, presentations and conferences, locally and globally.

Creating Knowledge

A variety of strategies are used to create knowledge about torture and its effects, the work of the Centre, and human rights. During the past year CCVT staff and volunteers have participated in collaborative research projects, produced training manuals and a video, maintained the agency newsletter and re-launched a quarterly journal.

CCVT continues its research partnership with the schools of social work at the University of Toronto and York University initiated in 1997. With the support of a Citizenship and Immigration Canada grant, a training workshop and manual was developed based on the findings of the study of the befriending program.

“Windows of Hope”, an ISAP funded video on the work of CCVT and the settlement needs of survivors of torture was produced this year and is being used as training tool locally and internationally. The video is available in English and French.

CCVT re-launched its quarterly journal. Titled **“First Light”**, the journal is intended to contribute to the public understanding of torture, its effects and what we can do to aid survivors to overcome their experience of torture and war. This journal is in addition to the monthly newsletter on CCVT activities.

Onsite Training

CCVT maintains an active training schedule. The monthly volunteer meetings offer a variety of learning opportunities for new and experienced volunteers. CCVT welcomes students and visitors. Students in law, medicine and social work receive training from the staff. Visitors from around the world meet with CCVT staff to share ideas and experiences.

Going Out to the Community

CCVT staff and volunteers have been active in public education activities locally and globally. These include training, presentations and participation at conferences.



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Training sessions using CCVT's manual "*Coming to Terms*" have been held across the country with the support of CIC. Participants included LINC instructors, private sponsors, health professionals and religious groups. HOST program workers and volunteers in agencies across Ontario participated in training sessions on befriending using the newly developed manual.

Three papers were presented by board members at the VIII International Symposium on Torture held in New Delhi, India in September 1999. A presentation based on the befriending research project was made at the Metropolis conference held in Toronto in March 2000.

In addition staff and volunteers have made numerous presentations to agencies, associations and schools on the issues of torture and the work of the Centre. Staff have also been consulted regularly by the media on matters related to torture and human rights.

The Committee

The leadership for the public education activities of the Centre is provided by the Executive Director Mulugeta Abai. The wide range and high quality of the materials and activities are the result of the skills and talents of Volunteer Coordinator Michele Millard. Other contributors to the committee are staff member Ezat Mossallanejad and board members Magda Hatteb and Susan McGrath.

Susan McGrath
Chair, Public Education Committee



Mandate

- Definitions of torture generally accepted and found in relevant international agreements including "Article 1" of the *United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* adopted by the General Assembly, December 10, 1984, and ratified by Canada, June 24, 1987 will be interpreted broadly rather than restrictively and is to serve as a guide in CCVT's relations with individuals and organizations beyond Canadian borders.
- International projects may encompass any activity providing social and/or medical assistance to survivors of torture and their families.

These may include:

- administration of funds to on behalf of third party funding sources for the activities,
- advice and assistance as required,
- periodic visits of CCVT representatives to International Projects and vice versa to further the work of both parties,
- fundraising activity by CCVT to provide funds for specific International Projects.

The 1999-2000 year of the International Committee began with the journey of its Chair, Tina Lopes, to India where she and Susan McGrath, another Board Member, both presented papers at an international forum on torture. The initiatives concerning collaboration with the Nigerian organisation, Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA) were developed through applications for funding from CIDA so that our Nigerian colleagues could better serve their clients. We continue to work on these applications and keep in frequent contact with our Nigerian colleagues. During the spring of this year the Executive Director of PRAWA visited us at CCVT.

The International Committee continued to be attentive to the evolution of sister organisations in Chile and to discuss possibilities of assisting them.

In the summer of this year, Mulugeta Abai, the Executive Director of CCVT, traveled to Ethiopia where he took part in activities concerning training and advocacy.

The Committee has established contact with two senators in Ottawa who are sympathetic to our international initiatives and we intend to meet with them and also with CIDA officials in the near future. Throughout the year, contact was maintained with the International Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (IRCT), in Copenhagen, which remains the international umbrella organisation for centres treating victims of torture. CCVT and IRCT have joined together to make representation before the Supreme Court of Canada in the *Suresh* case concerning the return of a refugee to the country of origin where he is likely to face torture and possibly death.

The CCVT also participated in the Executive Committee meeting of the UNHCR, the UN Commission on Human Rights Working Group on drafting the Optional Protocol to the *Convention Against Torture*, the World Council of Churches Conference on Global Protection for Uprooted People, the North American NGO Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, the External Affairs Annual Consultation in preparation for Canada's participation in the UN Commission in Human Rights Conference, an Anti- Impunity workshop organized by Amnesty International, the UNHCR Conference on the Protection of Stateless People in Ottawa and the International Conference on War Affected Children in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Fred Case
Co-Chair, International Committee



This year has been very successful for the Volunteer Program at CCVT. The dedication and commitment shown on the part of CCVT volunteers continues to be the backbone of the organization. In recognition of the important work done by our volunteers, CCVT has committed to providing relevant, timely and on-going support and training for all volunteers, whether they are in the Befriending Program, Tutoring Program, involved in public outreach, or involved in any other aspect of the organization. The following points illustrate the accomplishments of the Volunteer Program over the past fiscal year:

1. Regular, on-going training sessions for all volunteers, new and old.
 - CCVT has developed a workshop, **"Befriending Survivors of Torture – Building a Web of Community Support"**, which is based on the findings of a participatory research study of the Befriending Program at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture. This study was conducted in partnership with York University and the University of Toronto, as well as benefiting from extensive feedback provided by CCVT Volunteer Befrienders. A one-and-a-half day intensive, and interactive workshop, participants share experiences and explore the dynamics of what makes a friendship successful. It also deals with issues of self-care (avoiding burn-out), and overcoming different challenges that exist in building relationships. After piloting the workshop at agencies throughout Ontario, CCVT has now made it available to Volunteer Befrienders on a regular, on-going basis. Delivery of the workshop will take place at least two times per year. A diverse team of experienced and trained volunteers will co-facilitate with CCVT staff members.
 - The Volunteer Advisory Committee sub-committee for training continues to develop workshops for the ESL tutoring program, and the computer tutor program. They expect to deliver workshops on anti-discrimination, anti-racism, and ESL tutoring (or, **"How to survive your first meeting"**) in the fall of the year 2000. The computer tutoring manual and notes for the instructor is in the process of being updated and revised. This will be completed in fall 2000 as well.
2. The Volunteer Program has been able to recruit and train 61 new volunteers, and assist in matching approximately 30 befrienders, 20 computer tutors and 30 ESL tutoring matches.
3. The Volunteer Program organized the CCVT Summer Picnic in August and the CCVT Holiday party in December. Both events were extremely successful and very well-attended. June 26, 1999 marked the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture and CCVT held a concert in honour of the day. **"Prometheus the Woman"** was the theme for the event, describing the endless struggle women face in terms of securing their human rights. Many groups from the community and professional musicians from the CCVT client base performed to great appreciation.



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4. The Volunteer Program organized monthly educational meetings for its volunteers. This year there were numerous interesting sessions on such topics as tips on befriending, compassion fatigue, the agony of living in limbo, oppression and genocide in East Timor, among others. These meetings were reported on in the monthly CCVT Newsletter sent out to volunteers, Board members and the Health and Legal Network members. Volunteers were also involved in weekly drop-in **"kaffee klatsches" with clients, helping them to practice their conversation skills and offering a relaxed, undemanding opportunity for socializing.**
5. The Volunteer Program is responsible for the recruitment of much needed **interpreters to accompany clients to doctors' offices, and to translate at intake sessions.** CCVT has an active interpreter list of 80 volunteers representing more than 38 languages.
6. The Volunteer Program does public outreach by hosting information tables, attending fundraisers and other community events, as well as through advertising and volunteer recruitment.

Future plans for the Volunteer Program include:

The creation of a Public Outreach subcommittee of the Voluntary Advisory Committee. In partnership with other CCVT standing committees, this subcommittee would be responsible for developing and implementing outreach programs to increase public **and community awareness of the CCVT's goals. It will also foster and encourage client participation in the work of CCVT through their involvement in the activities of the subcommittee.** Members will participate in the planning and organization of all Committee activities. Planned activities include:

- A CCVT Community Day with active participation in community events such as the United Way Walkathon
- Café events: art, poetry, music, storytelling
- Partnerships with cultural groups in the community, allowing CCVT clients the opportunity to be active on the local scene
- Film Night at CCVT
- Develop a partnership with youth ambassadors from the Roundtable discussions and support them in implementing in-school programs and events that highlight **issues relevant to CCVT's work**

Michele Millard
Volunteer Coordinator



From April 1999 to March 2000, 292 new children received services at CCVT. Although most of them came from Kosovo, CCVT served children from Iran, Albania, Hungary, Somalia, Angola and other countries as well. Some of the children had experienced war, while others directly experienced torture or even both. Many of them had also witnessed appalling events such as murders, rapes and beatings.



The Children's Program at CCVT was created to meet the specific needs of refugee children and their families in Canada through assessment, individual counselling, crisis intervention, and referral to a medical network of experienced physicians and psychiatrists. Typically, not only the child, but the entire family has been subjected to the trauma of flight and resettlement as refugees, the shock of encountering new languages, cultures or the loss of extended family and friends. That is the reason why working with the refugee family as a unit, and assisting the parents in dealing with their own traumatic experiences and thus restoring family functioning is essential in the philo-

sophy of the Children's program .

Throughout the previous year, CCVT organized group sessions for children with the following goals:

- to address the needs of refugee children with empathy, support and establishment of trust
- to encourage the children to express their feelings and emotions through art therapy, play therapy and other activities
- to provide the opportunity for comfort and healing in a safe environment
- to provide healthy integration into Canadian society

The group sessions were held at CCVT in informal atmosphere, where everybody was listened to and respected. Younger children had play therapy, music, puppetry, video or other activities, while presentations were given about the school system, discrimination and anti-racism, children's and youth's rights, stress management, etc., for the youth.

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Each session included art therapy for separate groups of youth and children. **At the beginning of the therapy, the children's work often depicted the atrocities they had witnessed: blood, guns and the dead were seen in almost every drawing. Amazingly, by the final therapy session, each child would paint details from Canada such as the CN tower, Canadian flag or a heart with "I love you Canada" written on it. Also, instead of burned out houses, the children would paint peaceful homes, trees and flowers, all of which clearly marked their progress towards recovery.**

Zuhra Hodzic
Intake/Settlement Worker



Youth Roundtables on War-Affected Children

In partnership with the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, CCVT organized roundtables among youth throughout Canada. **The Canadian government is interested in hearing youth's opinions on how Canada can best serve the interests of war-affected children and these roundtables were initiated towards this objective.** Roundtable discussions were held in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Halifax and Winnipeg, from May to July 2000.

Over 200 youth, 12-20 years of age and representing 38 countries, attended the five roundtables. Most of the youth came from war-affected countries and had first-hand experience of war. The roundtables were a valuable opportunity for them to share their thoughts and feelings about the plight of war-affected children. For the non-war-affected youth, the roundtables opened up their eyes to the situation of war in the world and the impact of



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war on children.

During the discussions, war-affected youth shared their personal experiences of war. Many described in detail the various ways in which war has affected their lives: grief, landmines, sanctions, child soldiers, abuse, disruption of schools and the loss of their childhood innocence. Youth participants also engaged in discussions of why wars occur and what can be done to stop war and to prevent war from happening. They traced the roots of war to several factors, including poverty, intolerance of differences, political/financial gain and the sale of weapons. In light of this, some of the solutions they suggested to **stop war are the following: redistribution of the world's wealth, stop selling weapons, more effective penalties for human rights violations, open-mindedness and tolerance for differences.**

CCVT is now in the process of preparing a report on the roundtables to give to the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. Moreover, several youth from each roundtable will be selected to act as delegates in the upcoming National Forum 2000 on War-affected Children, which will be held in Winnipeg this September. This youth conference is in conjunction with an international conference of Foreign Ministers, thus, giving youth delegates the opportunity to speak with world leaders on the issue of war-affected children

CCVT is honored to have been part of this groundbreaking initiative, in which the voices of youth, especially those whose lives have been affected by war, were provided a forum in which to be heard. These roundtables are only the beginning. Youth have now been awakened and empowered to act and further the cause of their war-affected peers. There is much work that needs to be done to put their ideas into organized action. CCVT plans to continue its leadership role in this endeavor, by initiating other youth-focused programs, such as a CCVT Youth Ambassador program, in which youth can promote greater awareness within their schools and communities about the plight of war-affected children.

Joan Borja
Project Coordinator



English Language Program

For the past eleven years, the CCVT has provided our adult clients with specially adapted language training courses. These classes, offered on-site, fill a vital need for the refugee community we serve. The wide range of debilitating side effects of torture and organized violence create great difficulty for our clients as they attempt to learn the English language. Some of the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder which interfere with learning are:

- Depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory problems
- Low self-esteem
- Difficulty trusting others
- Exhaustion
- Elevated anxiety levels
- Intrusive memories

Our teachers are specially trained and our curriculum modified to assist the students in the acquisition of various language skills related to their immediate life goals. The classroom atmosphere and the supportive environment we foster in the program provide the clients with the encouragement, hope and help they need to progress with their language and social skills.

Each year we provide training to approximately 300 clients, from 60 countries. They spend between three and eighteen months in the program, which ranges from beginner to high-intermediate levels. The clients have access to their counselors on site, and the teaching staff regularly consults with the counseling staff about individual clients who are having emotional or other difficulties.

The English (ESL) program is funded partly through the **federal government's LINC project and partly through the Toronto District School Board** and through CCVT fundraising efforts.

Many seminars and workshops are provided annually to other English language and education professionals, to assist them in the delivery of services to traumatized refugee learners. In this fiscal year, CCVT held two full-day workshops for LINC educators in Regina and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. TESOL, the US-based ESL organization, and TESL Ontario have invited CCVT to participate in symposia. We have also presented at the international Literacy 2000 conference in Ottawa, hosted by the Canadian federal government. Increasingly, the CCVT is receiving requests for special training for educators working with survivors of torture and violence. Even in medium and smaller-sized cities there appears to be a growing need for support for many educa-



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tors who are encountering refugee newcomers in their classrooms. The CCVT is taking an active and leading role in providing that support.

The CCVT's ESL program has welcomed several new instructors this past year, replacing outgoing staff members, and we are investing time to orient and train these new teachers. We are encouraged to see that the CCVT is attracting talented, committed professionals with a long-term interest in the overall objectives of the centre.

The ESL program is facing several major challenges, as we look toward the next year. Our funding, supporting four of our five classes, comes from the federal **government's LINC program and is restricted to Convention Refugees and Landed Immigrants.** Refugee claimants, who are the most psychologically fragile clients, are denied access to the LINC program because of their status. Due to this lack of funding, the CCVT has been forced to keep a growing waiting list of clients for the ESL program this year.

Currently, we provide full subsidies for transportation to refugee claimants from our own fundraising efforts. However, given the limited resources CCVT has, it will be difficult to continue providing this full transportation subsidy. We are exploring possibilities for new and increased sources of revenues to sustain the subsidy. Securing funding to provide a transportation subsidy is required to provide language instruction to refugee claimants. Any donations to provide transportation for the refugee claimants would be greatly appreciated.

The English Program is one component of the overall, integrated recovery program we provide at the CCVT. Graduates of the program find they are able to exercise greater control over their lives and regain independence. They are able to find employment more easily, and recover much of the dignity, self-confidence and sense of community that was lost as a result of their traumatic experiences.

Lawrence Hrubes
LINC Coordinator



CCVT ESL Class



Canada has often been declared to be the best place in the world to live. It is internationally reputed as the best country for refugees and immigrants.

It is an unfortunate reality that the Canadian immigration system has developed a tendency towards keeping refugees in limbo over the last 10 years. At present, refugees continue to live in limbo as they await the approval of their "landed" papers. Without landed immigrant status, they have no proper access to employment, post secondary education, bank loans, business opportunities, and social programs such as full health coverage. They face the anguish of separation from their spouses and children. Without being "landed", they cannot travel outside Canada to visit their loved ones. Refugees in limbo, the majority of them women and children, are left greatly vulnerable to exploitation, human rights violations and emotional torment.

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture has monitored the physical and psychological health of its clients who are in limbo. Limbo is one of the major causes of retraumatization in survivors of torture. The agony of endless waiting and uncertainty has made **many of CCVT's clients feel alienated and isolated. This sense of alienation and detachment has caused and will continue to cause incalculable long-term damage in Canadian society.**

Types of Limbo

The following are the main types of limbo:

1. Lack of Identification Documents
2. Unwarranted Security Concerns
3. Processing Fees
4. Lack of attention to the problem of prolonged Family Separation
5. Unjustified Criminalization of the refugee (Bill C-44)

Why Limbo?

The roots of keeping refugees in limbo in Canada can be traced back to the following:

- ***Structural problems resulting from various amendments to the Immigration Act.*** Two trends are visible in this process: (a) restriction and control, and (b) privatization.
- ***Unjustified discretionary power for immigration and visa officers and a total lack of accountability in this area.***
- ***Absence of face-to-face contact between Convention refugees and Immigration officials.***



CCVT Annual Report 1999-2000

- *Lack of relevant information, expertise or total ignorance on the part of immigration or visa officials.*

CCVT Limbo Project

The agony of CCVT clients suffering in immigration limbo has prompted us to look for an immediate solution to alleviate this suffering accelerating the process of their landing. Fortunately, CCVT secured a project grant from the Maytree Foundation to address this urgent and agonizing problem. The Limbo Project has helped CCVT to provide services to refugees in limbo at different levels.

- Individual counselling and providing each person with adequate training to produce the necessary documents to local CIC Visa Officers. CCVT staff has helped them fill other gaps in their files. Out of the CCVT clients in the first nine months of 1999, the Limbo Project helped 95 people with individual counselling and training.
- Education, information and counselling to CCVT clients on a group basis has been undertaken 5 times since the inception of the Limbo Project.
- **The Limbo Project has contributed towards CCVT's public education** to promote an understanding of refugee and immigrant rights, human rights, and anti-racism with an attempt to sensitize Canadian public about the plight of people in limbo and mobilize them for advocacy on individual cases and on the policy level. For example, CCVT delivered workshops to the Immigration and Refugee Board, Mennonite Central Committee, New Life Centre, Parkdale Legal Community Services, CCVT Volunteer Groups, Catholic Cross-cultural Centre, and Refugee Rights workers in the Niagara region. The CCVT Legal Committee has actively worked on some cases of refugees in limbo.
- CCVT promoted its national and international networking on the plight of people in limbo and the best way to advocate for them. In an attempt to give voice to voiceless refugees in limbo, CCVT has strengthened its networking with sister organisations such as the national and international network of torture survivors, the Inter-Church Committee for Refugees (ICCR), the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), FCJ Hamilton House Refugee Project, Vigil Toronto, community groups, ethnic communities, coalitions, unions and other professional groups as well as refugee and immigrant lawyers and advocates.
- CCVT staff gave radio and TV interviews on the subject. CCVT staff also published articles in *Refugee Update*, the community journal of refugee protection and advocacy. CCVT staff contributed articles on limbo to community journals. Such efforts were



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done in order to give the government and the groups interested in the plight of refugees in limbo current, accurate and accessible information as well as serious analysis of this information to understand the impact of limbo on the lives of refugees and their families.

CCVT staff actively participate as board members, and volunteers of ICCR, CCR and Vigil Toronto and collaborate in doing advocacy for refugees in limbo.

CCVT staff has successfully helped lawyers with details on different cases as well as the latest policy developments. In CCVT's overall strategy of individual advocacy, reference to the media has been used as a last resort.

CCVT is in regular contact with the Case Processing Centre in Vegreville, local CICs, government authorities, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and Visa Officers.

The CCVT has participated in international meetings with the intention of persuading governments to end limbo.

Successes

During the past 18 months, we have successfully utilised Maytree support in affecting changes both on the policy level and in the lives of refugees in limbo. We have successfully ended limbo for at least 60 cases involving 200 people in limbo.

With changes to the Immigration Act, CCVT has found it timely to demand the government to end limbo in Canada.

Ezat Mossallanejad
CCVT Policy Analyst



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Member, International Committee*

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*B.Sc., Psychiatric Nursing
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Committee*





Financial Report

Consolidated Schedule of Operations Year Ended March 31, 2000

Revenues	2000	1999
Citizenship and Immigration Canada – ISAP A	205,804	191,370
Citizenship and Immigration Canada – ISAP B	195,057	64,050
Citizenship and Immigration Canada – LINC	152,648	108,860
Donations	128,121	154,250
United Way	128,183	67,498
United Nations	22,200	31,046
Canadian Heritage	-	29,730
City of Toronto	21,150	27,700
Ministry of Citizenship		
- NSP	19,000	22,000
- Pay Equity	15,609	13,915
Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development	15,000	-
Interest and sundry income	7,279	17,910
Foundations	57,000	7,985
C.A.W.	1,154	-
Honorarium	2,317	350
	970,522	736,664
 Expenses	 904,816	 664,649
 Excess of Revenues Over Expenses	 65,706	 72,015

Note: To view the complete audited financial report, please contact CCVT at 416-363-1066



**Consolidated Statement of Expenses
Year Ended March 31, 2000**

Expenses	2000	1999
Wages and benefits	529,805	375,581
Fundraising expenses	45,685	74,738
Program supplies and expenses	86,237	32,327
Contract fees	21,900	29,000
Stationery supplies	20,656	17,215
Common expenses	14,963	14,513
Traveling expenses	23,313	14,240
Conference and meetings	4,377	12,780
Telephone	9,384	12,015
Maintenance and cleaning	15,933	10,780
Bookkeeping	11,578	10,762
Resource Production	2,715	8,591
Mortgage interest	8,184	6,624
Utilities	11,264	6,617
Postage and courier	8,595	6,016
Insurance	4,245	3,998
Printing and photocopying	56,340	9,212
Interest and bank charges	1,692	3,124
Professional fees	4,245	2,700
Equipment rental	2,900	1,179
Development and travel	3,201	1,853
Dues and fees	610	755
Publicity	3,338	351
Amortization	13,656	9,678
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	904,816	664,649
	<hr/>	<hr/>



CCVT Programs

- Coordinated professional services including legal, medical and social care, as well as crisis intervention, counseling, the Children's Program, Art Therapy and the Limbo Project.
- English as a Second Language courses which are specifically designed to meet the needs of survivors and include a strong life skills component. Classes include all levels of literacy: beginners, intermediate and advanced. Trained volunteers provide one-on-one tutoring including ESL computer tutoring.
- A volunteer program which provides community support through a network of volunteer befrienders. More than 230 volunteers assist in all programs of the CCVT and hold monthly meetings, usually with a guest speaker. A structured orientation program prepares volunteer befrienders to work with torture survivors within a context of community understanding of global issues. **The "CCVT Newsletter" is sent to all volunteers each month, which provides information on CCVT events, volunteer opportunities and job postings. A volunteer guide has also been prepared.**
- A public information program which responds to the numerous request for information, assistance and consultation on torture and its after-math. **CCVT's quarterly publication "First Light", is produced which discusses issues related to the CCVT's mandate and ongoing work.**
- International projects: The Centre has provided partnership with the Imbali Rehabilitation Centre in South Africa and the Ethiopian Centre for Survivors of Torture.
- Mutual support groups and Art Therapy for men and women which address the general and specific problems survivors face in adapting to Canadian society. A specific model has been developed based on the success of previous models. CCVT's support and group programs also include a drop-in program and a program for children and youths. The Art Therapy program works in conjunction with the basic services of counseling, crisis intervention and referral to our extensive network of lawyers, doctors, psychiatrists and social service workers. Art is a universal language that allows survivors of torture to express themselves graphically in a manner that allows survivors to overcome the various traumas associated with torture. The use of art assists survivors in learning to cope with the torture experience and transforms it into one that is understood and objectified. The art of pain as well as of solidarity.



CCVT Health Network

**Psychiatrists,
Psychologists
and Other
Specialists**

Dr. F. Allodi
Dr. A. Azadian
Dr. A. Bagheri
Dr. R. Baruch
Dr. R. Berdichevsky
Dr. G. da Costa
Dr. Degani
Dr. D. Etlin
Dr. Fornazzari
Dr. M. Freire
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Kenneth Hahn	Carey A. McKay	Ian Wong
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Coordinator

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Childrens Program Worker

Zuhra Hodzic
Intake/Settlement Worker/
Childrens Program Worker

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Volunteer Coordinator

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Afsaneh Palmer
Art Therapist, Children's Program

Jorge Pombo
Maintenance Worker

Mary Sanderson
Art Therapist

Munni Subhani
LINC Instructor

Meskerem Tebeje *
Administrative Assistant

Delfina Vega de Paiz
Administrative Assistant

* Resigned

Interns and Students

Sacha Agrawal
Faculty of Medicine
University of Toronto

Benjamin Affroh
Community Worker
Program
George Brown College

Joan Borja
Faculty of Social Work
University of Toronto





CCVT Volunteers

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Phil Alcabao	Diosdado Corrales	Cemal Gungoren
Julie Alexander	Allison Crawford	Jean Hackney
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Maureen Anglin	Calvin and	Ann Harrington
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Lilian Banjevic	Soheila Dehmassi	Ruth Hislop
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Stephen Bartlett	Barbara Dresner	Patrick Hughes
Vanessa Bastos	Isabel Drever	Concetta Ianello
Susan Beattie	Jorge Duarte	Mirjana Ignjatovic
Belia Berrocalitito	Peter Duerr	Franklin Irwin
Wayne Berry	Samuel Dunn	Lamis Islam Goras
Chris Beyers	Mohamed El Faki	Fadumo AhmedJ ama
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Allison Bottomley	Peter Englehutt	Maren Kaitell
Joe Dordo Brnobic	Doris Epstein	Kevin Kakonge
Daniela Bruzzese	Sarah Erlichman	Kufuku Kalungedi
Maria Calleja	Don Franco	Ashraf Karimi
Fred Case	Fred Franklin	Leslie Katona
Clarice Marinho Martins De Castro	Karen Fung	Bryan Keefe
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Source of Funders: Government/Foundations

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

- Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program – ISAP – A
- Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program – ISAP – B
- Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program - One time Project Grant
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada - LINC

Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development

Foundations

- Maytree Foundation

City of Toronto

- Community Services Grant
- Breaking the Cycle of Violence Grant

Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation

- Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP)

Toronto Board of Education

United Way of Greater Toronto

- Membership allocation
- One time grant

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The Honourable Hilary Weston, Lieutenant Governor

Professor J.C. Polanyi, Nobel Laureate

Gordon Cressy, Former CEO of the Greater Toronto Area United Way



CCVT Survivors

New Intake

April 1999 to March 2000

COUNTRY	Adults		Children	Total	COUNTRY	Adults		Children	Total
	M	F				M	F		
Afghanistan	16	2	6	24	Iraq	18	12	2	32
Albania	53	28	21	102	Israel		1		1
Algeria	3	1		4	Ivory Coast		1		1
Angola	5	5	10	20	Kazakhstan	3	6	4	13
Azerbaijan	3	4		7	Kenya	3	3		6
Bangladesh	3		1	4	Kosovo	57	52	116	225
Bolivia	1	1		2	Latvia	1	1	1	3
Bosnia	30	39	9	78	Lebanon	1			1
Bulgaria	3			3	Liberia	1	1		2
Cameron	3	1		4	Macedonia	1	1		2
Chad	3		1	4	Madagascar	2		2	4
Chile	2	1		3	Mexico	24	13	12	49
China			1	1	Nicaragua		2		2
Columbia	4	6	1	11	Nigeria	7	12	1	20
Congo Dem.	26	21	4	51	Pakistan	19	3	1	23
Congo Brazzaville	1		1	2	Peru	2	1		3
Costa Rica	1			1	Romania	2		2	4
Croatia		1		1	Russia	9	4	1	14
Cuba	1	1		2	Rwanda			2	2
Djibouti	1	1		1	Saudi Arabia			1	1
Ecuador		1		1	Somalia	6	38	17	61
Egypt	1	1		2	Sri Lanka	32	11	4	47
El Salvador	3	2	2	7	Sudan	4	6	1	11
Eritrea	3	4	1	8	Syria	2	1		3
Ethiopia	3	10	2	15	Tanzania	1	1	1	3
Gaza	2			2	Togo	1			1
Georgia	1			1	Turkey	11	1		12
Guatemala	2	5	1	8	Uganda	4	1		5
Guinea	2	1		3	Ukraine	5	4		9
Honduras	1		2	3	Uruguay	1			1
Hungary	13	9	21	43	Venezuela	1		1	2
India	2	1		3	Vietnam	2			2
Iran	104	68	38	206	Yugoslavia	6	3	3	12
Total:						523	395	292	1210



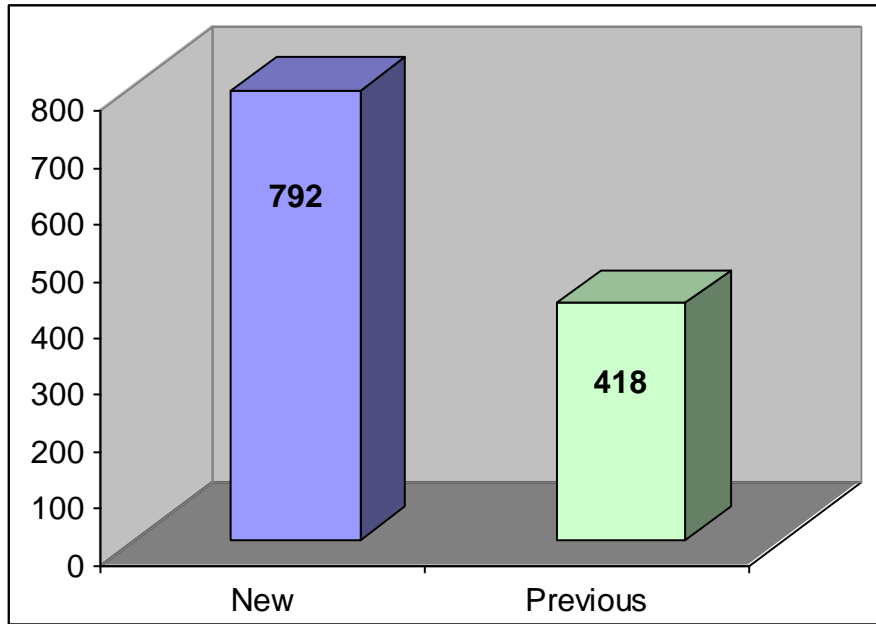


Figure 1: Client Category

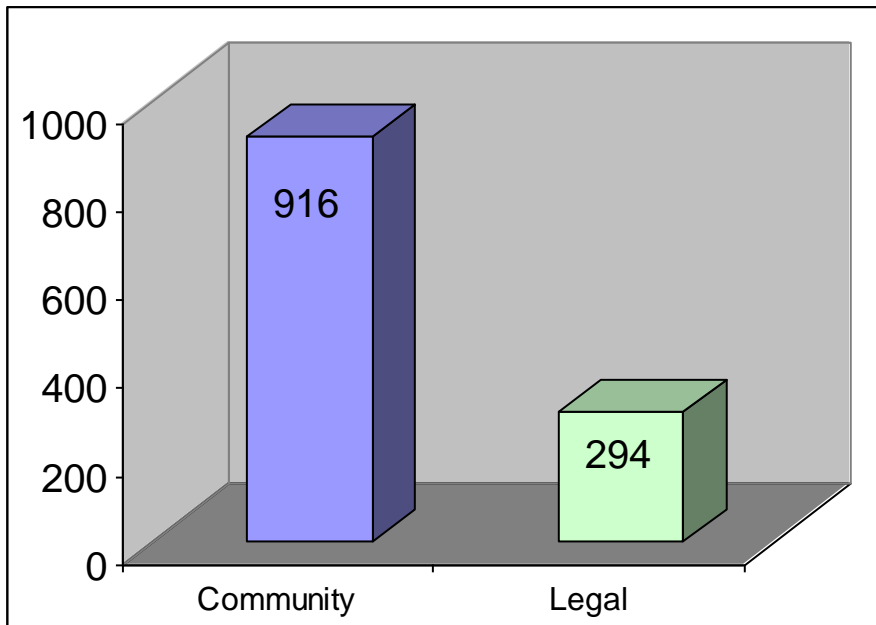


Figure 2: Source of Referrals



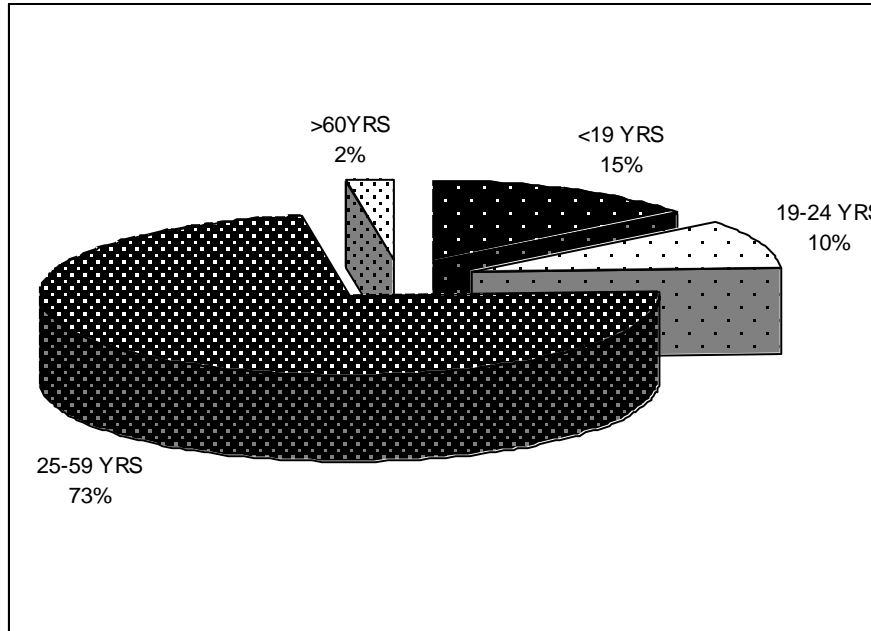


Figure 3: Age

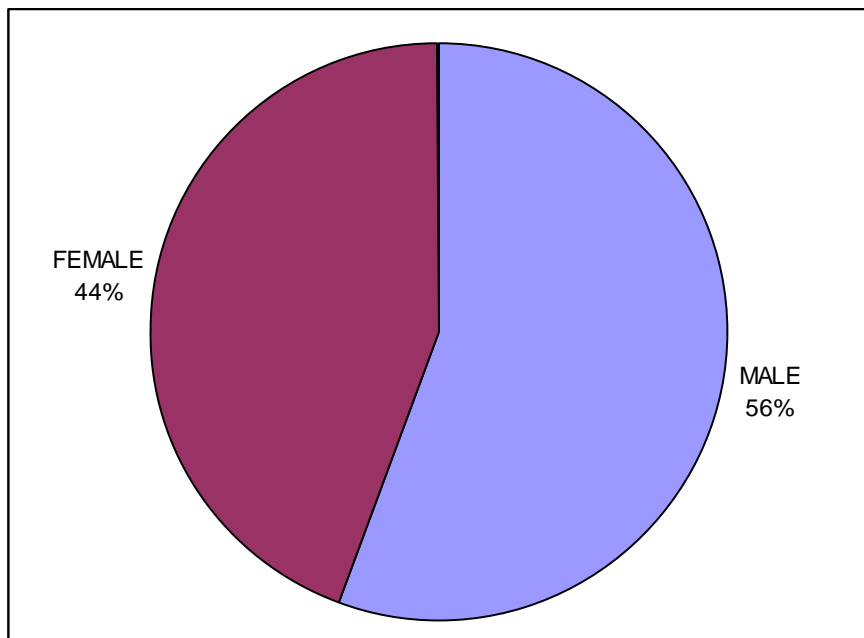


Figure 4: Gender

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Figure 5: First Language

COUNTRY	LANGUAGE	COUNTRY	LANGUAGE
Afghanistan	Dari, Pashtu	Israel	Hebrew
Albania	Albanian	Ivory Coast	French
Algeria	Arabic	Kazakhstan	Azari
Angola	Angolan, Kimbund, Portuguese	Kenya	Swahili
Azerbaijan	Azari	Kosovo	Albanian
Bangladesh	Bengali	Latvia	Latvian
Bolivia	Spanish	Lebanon	Arabic
Bosnia	Bosnian	Liberia	
Bulgaria	Bulgarian	Macedonia	Macedonian
Cameroon	Bagante, French	Madagascar	Malagasi
Chad	Chadian, Arabic, French	Mexico	Spanish
Chile	Spanish	Nicaragua	Spanish
China	Cantonese, Mandarin	Nigeria	Yoruba, Ibo, English
Colombia	Spanish	Pakistan	Urdu
Dem. Congo	Lingala, French	Palestine	Arabic
Congo Brazza-	Luba, French	Peru	Spanish
Costa Rica	Spanish	Romania	Romanian
Croatia	Croatian	Russia	Russian
Cuba	Spanish	Rwanda	Lingala, French
Djibouti	Somali, French	Saudi Arabia	Arabic
Ecuador	Spanish	Somalia	Somali
Egypt	Arabic	Sri Lanka	Tamil
El Salvador	Spanish	Sudan	Arabic
Eritrea	Tigrinia	Syria	Arabic
Ethiopia	Amharic	Tanzania	Swahili
Guatemala	Spanish	Togo	Mina, Ewe, French
Georgia	Georgian	Turkey	Turkish
Guinea	Malinka, French	Uganda	Swahili
Honduras	Spanish	Ukraine	Ukrainian
Hungary	Hungarian	Uruguay	Spanish
India	Hindi, Punjabi	Venezuela	Spanish
Iran	Farsi	Vietnam	Vietnamese
Iraq	Arabic	Yugoslavia	Serbian, Croatian



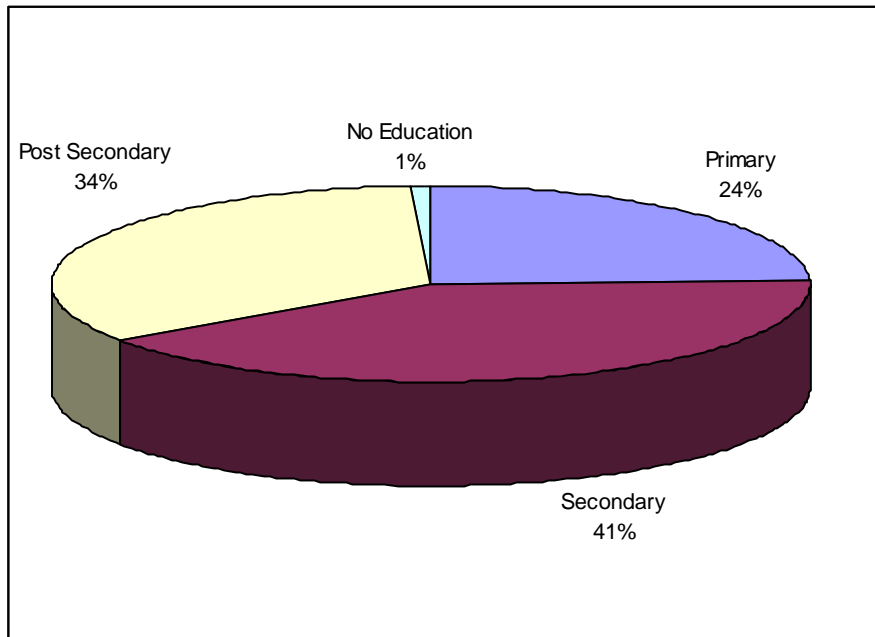


Figure 6: Education

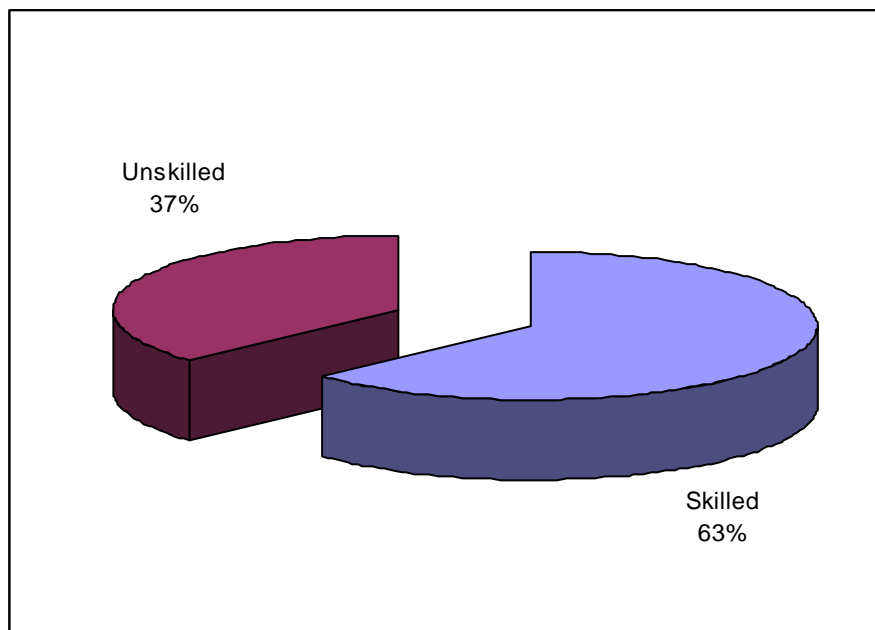


Figure 7: Employment Skills

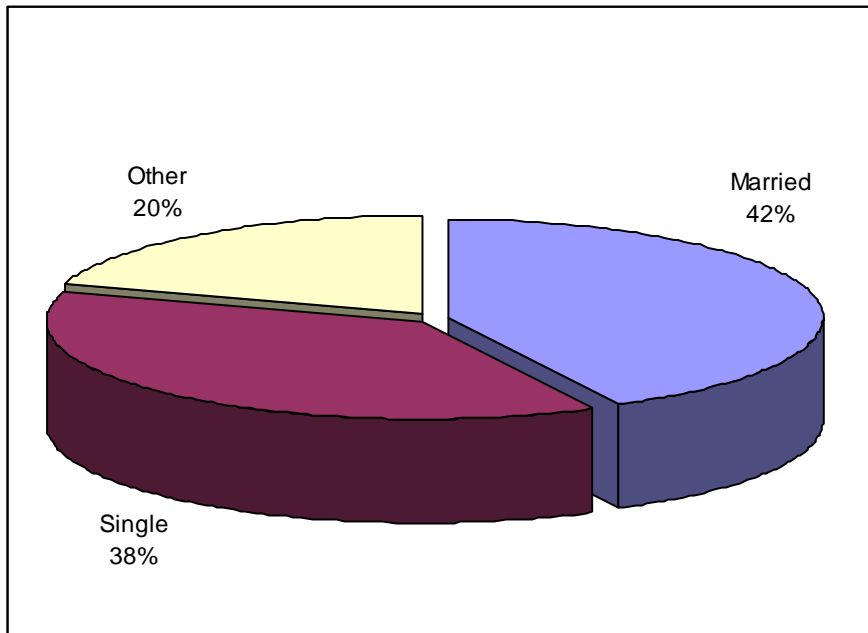


Figure 8: Marital Status

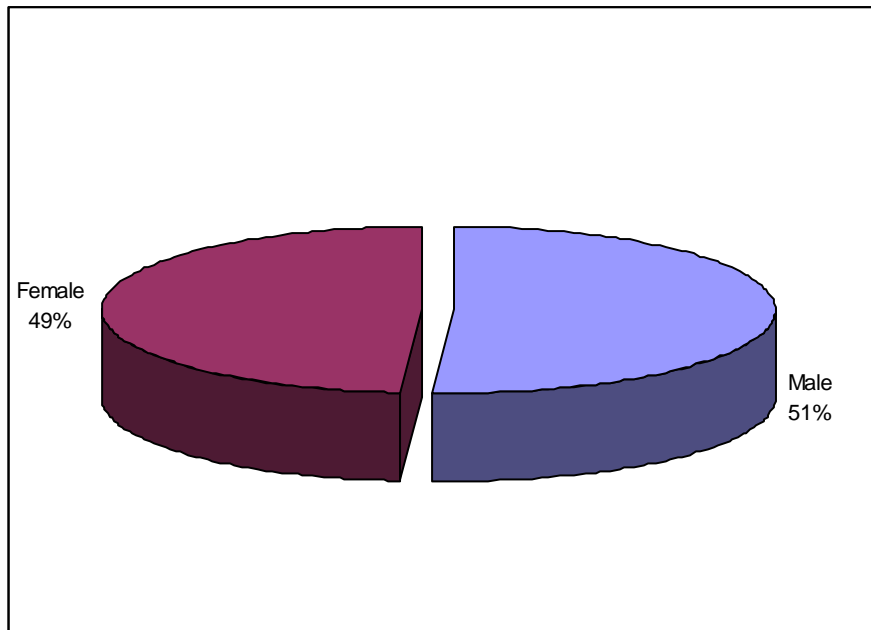


Figure 9: Gender of Children



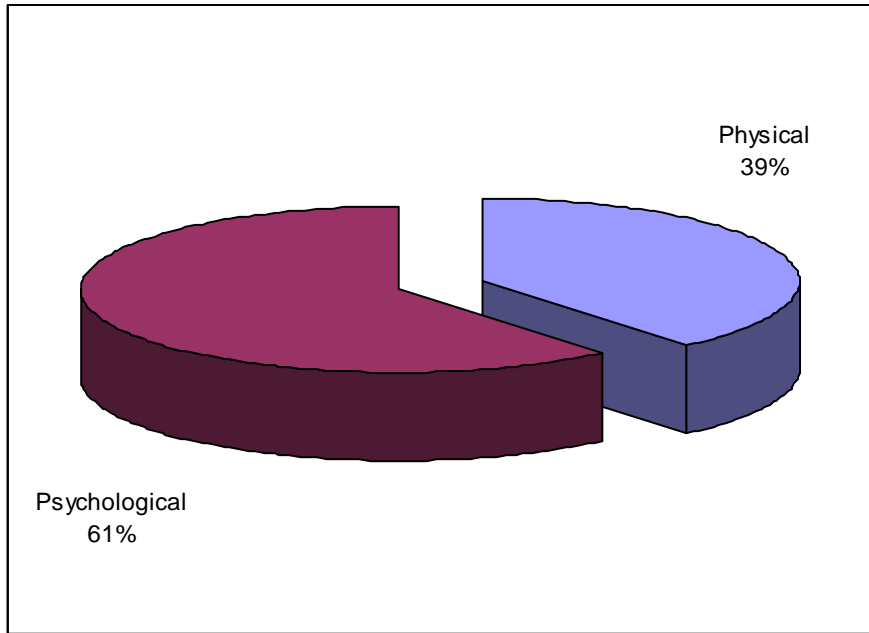


Figure 10: Types of Torture

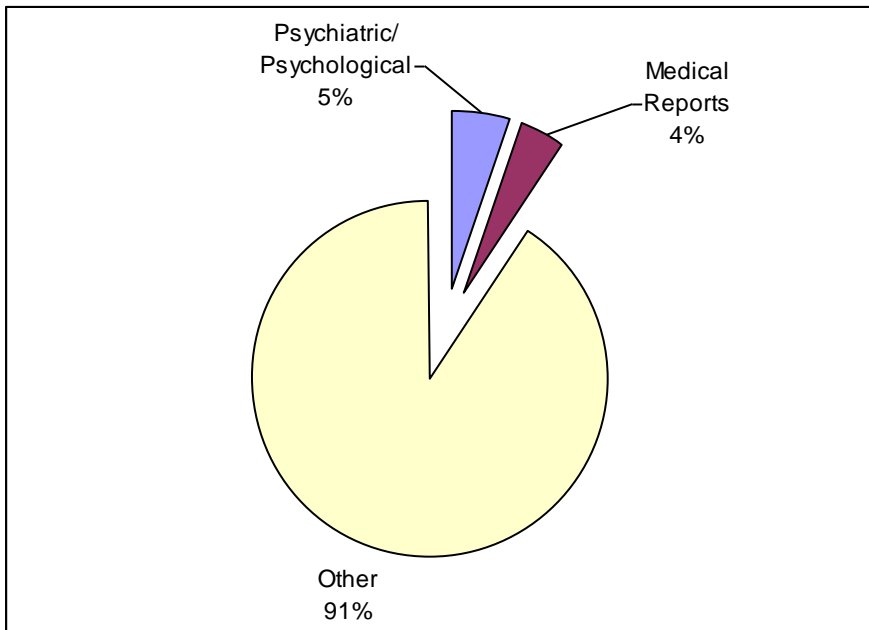


Figure 11: Client Referrals

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture

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Toronto, Ontario
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**Tel: 416-363-1066
Fax: 416-363-2122**

**Email: ccvt@icomm.ca
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