



CANADIAN CENTRE
FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2020—2021



Funded by:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Financé par :

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada





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LAND

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CCVT would like to acknowledge that we are currently on the Dish With One Spoon Territory.

The land we are on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississauga's of the Credit, the Anishnabek, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers, have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect.

The meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island and we are grateful for the opportunity to love, live and work on this territory.

We would like to acknowledge that we are all treaty peoples – including those of us who came here as settlers - as migrants either in this generation or in generations past; and those of us who came here involuntarily – particularly as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.



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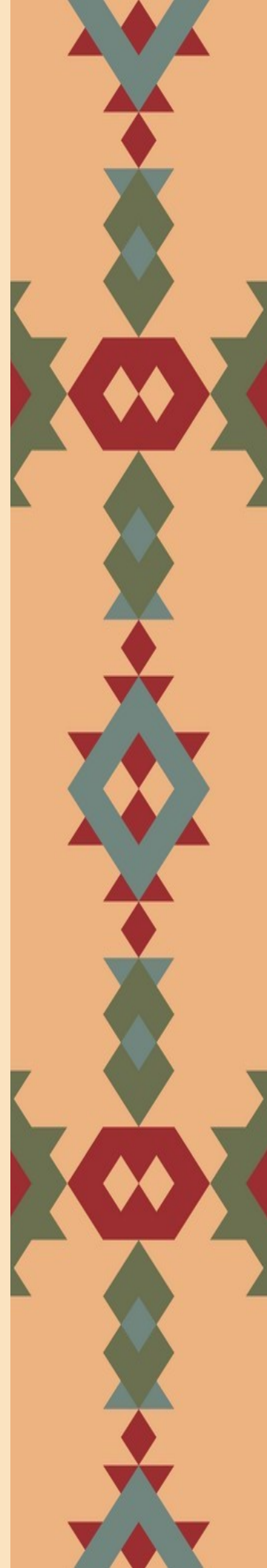
CCTV'S MANDATE

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) aids survivors of torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity to overcome the lasting effects of torture and war. Working with the community, the Centre supports survivors in the process of successful integration into Canadian society, works 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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CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MESSAGE



Richard Wazana,
Chair of the Board of Directors



Mulugeta Abai
Executive Director

COVID-19 has changed the world and the way we do business. It has been a challenge but we are getting our balance slowly. This pandemic has further showed us how the playing field is uneven. Affluent countries have galvanized all their resources to keep people safe and protect themselves from the pandemic. The global south is still struggling with no end in sight. The death toll from this pandemic is staggering and the future does not look promising unless the wealthy nations assist and share their vaccine supply.

Torture continues to be a global epidemic. We have witnessed ordinary men, women, youth, and children become victims of war, torture and cruel and degrading treatment. Brutal governments, death squads, and para-military groups, continue to fan the flame of conflict, torture, indiscriminate bombing around the world

The indifference, apathy and impunity that allow violence against innocent people to spread like fire is quite shocking. The fight against genocide and torture has been further complicated by the silence or slow decision making of the International organizations including the UN Security Council.

CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

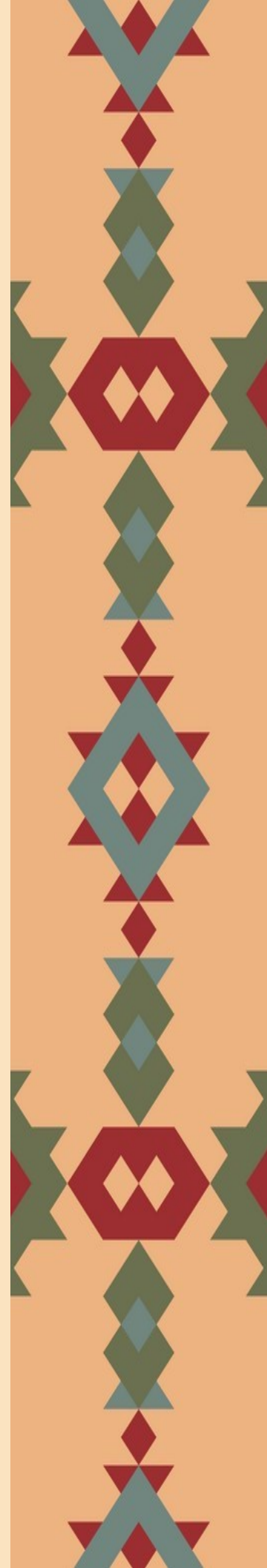
At a state level, the ability of states to protect human rights is in serious crisis and unless a concerted effort is made, further global crises will inevitably develop and might be impossible to stop.

In some places, armed groups, criminal groups, or clan chiefs hold sway over people's lives. We need to work harder for a sober reappraisal of what needs to be done to revive the human rights system and our faith in its abiding values. The UN Security Council, the US, European Union and the Canadian government have to play their role instead of relying on the phrase "we are concerned." Action speaks louder than words. They cannot hide under this phrase because there is a body of evidence that genocide is taking place.

Last year the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) has assisted a total of 2816 clients from 94 countries by providing a range of holistic therapeutic services. CCVT has also collaborated with several agencies both at home and abroad to strengthen the global human rights movement and to hold the government accountable to the international human right treaties they signed and agreed to implement on our behalf.

CCVT has strengthened the delivery of mental health services by partnering with Women's Health in Women's Hand, Parkdale Community Health Centre, and CAMH. In addition to providing treatment and documentation by psychiatrists and family physicians, our certificate program on trauma is running for a third year and currently there are 25 registered participants.

This report is a brief synopsis of the activities of CCVT for the year ending March 31/2021. This is a significant accomplishment and it would have not been possible without the guidance of the board, the unwavering commitment and hard work of all staff, volunteers, and community supporters to whom we are grateful!





MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

REPORT

CCVT Mental Health Program

The fiscal year April 2020-March 2021 saw the transition to virtual services due to the pandemic. For some clients, the transition was not easy but for others, they enjoyed the convenience of receiving virtual services in their own homes. The Mental Health program supported clients and their families using a holistic approach where settlement and mental health needs were covered to improve the determinants of health of our clients. We understood that in addressing issues of mental health, employment, housing, social support networks, and health among others, we were working to improve the wellbeing and mental health of survivors of torture, war, Genocide and crimes against humanity. Indeed, the program has empowered clients and provided them with tools, so they could cope with daily stressors and therefore improve their health and mental health.

The Mental Health program worked with a medical network that included psychiatrists, psychologists and doctors in order to provide a comprehensive service to clients in need. We believed that early intervention was a key factor for the healing process of survivors. We ensured that clients had access to needed internal and external services that promote health and mental wellbeing.

CCVT's mental health programming included:

- One-on-one on-going counselling support in various languages.
- Crisis intervention to individuals and families experiencing mental-health crisis
- Support groups and wellness groups for CCVT clients.
- Confidential assessment by in-house psychiatrists, psychologists and family doctors.
- Public education with a focus on mental health.
- Support letters to advocate for clients within the immigration and refugee claimant process.
- Referral to community partners for medical and mental health services.
- Case management to address clients' social determinants of health; i.e., housing, finances, employment, education, etc.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

REPORT

Crisis intervention

We provided crisis intervention using a client's centred approach, as well as trauma informed care approach. Meaningful crisis response required a thorough understanding of the issues at play. An appropriate understanding of the emergency situation not only included an appreciation for what was happening at the moment, but also why it was happening and how an individual felt when he or she was not in crisis. Crises- particularly recurrent crises-likely signaled a failure to address underlying issues appropriately.

In Numbers: 25

Some examples of crisis situations:

A Trans-Gender female in her early 40's was taken to emergency room after over-dosing on prescription medication. Client had been suffering from Depression and Anxiety. She was kept over-night for observation. Follow up counseling sessions were provided.

A male client in his late 20's passed out after consuming a lot of alcohol. He was taken to Emergency room and stayed at the hospital for 2 days. The client had been consuming large quantities of alcohol for a while but he did not share this information with the counselor. The client was referred to Centre for Addiction and Mental Health for Addiction treatment.

A female client in her 40's attended session in distress. She shared that she felt hopeless and helpless and was not sure if she wanted to stay alive. After the safety plan was conducted, the crisis centre was contacted and an ambulance was sent to take the client to the hospital. The client attended trauma counseling and she is stable.

A female client in her 30's with diagnosed complex PTSD, called and reported that there were people after her trying to harm her. After an assessment with the counselor, it appeared like the client was having hallucinations. The client's psychiatrist was contacted and her medication was reviewed. The client received supportive counseling.





MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

REPORT

Certificate Course

One of the mission of Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) is to provide public education. Every year, CCVT facilitates a trauma informed certificate course. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the Certificate Course 2020-2021 was conducted virtually.

This course comprised a series of tailored individual seminars addressing key aspects of refugee mental health. Each seminar was a realistic and up-to-date appraisal of the topic, which included resources for the attendee where possible. Each topic addressed across the life course (from childhood to later life) and incorporated understandings and information about best approaches with special need groups. Participants who successfully completed a minimum of six seminar sessions received a Certificate.

After completing this course the participants were able to:

- I. Outline the key determinants of refugee mental health.
- II. Discuss the impact of pre- and post-migration experiences on refugee mental health.
- III. Describe the effects of politically organized collective violence, war, intimidation and targeted individual violence on survivors and their families and communities.

Support Groups

There were different kinds of Support groups conducted. The way a group worked depended on its goals. The two main types were mental health groups and psychoeducational groups.

In **Mental Health/Wellness groups**, the interpersonal experience between the members of the group was a major focus. Opening up in front of others could be challenging, but it also led to major growth and change when participants experienced a sense of belonging and acceptance from their peers. Mental Health groups were based on working through these challenges and changes. Through Wellness group sessions, participants developed better understanding about mental health, and better ability to address their mental health concerns.

MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

REPORT

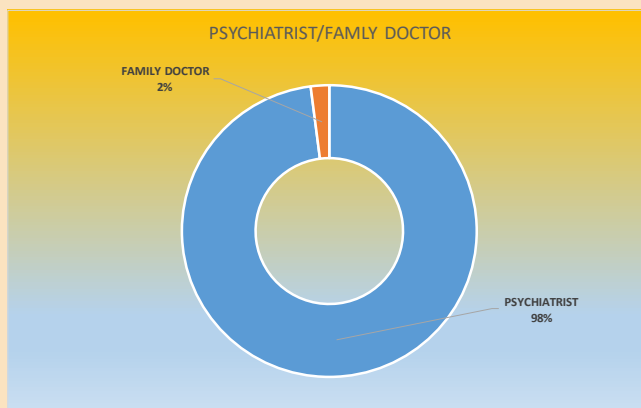
Psychoeducational groups were more focused on sharing information on a particular topic or teaching skills (e.g., Housing, Employment, Education, Finances, Health). The relationship between members was not so important in this kind of group, though participants still benefited from connecting with others who were struggling with similar issues. Through educational information sessions and settlement workshops, these groups aimed to empower the participants with settlement information to assist them to be more confident in navigating the Canadian systems and to have access to other community services.

Support groups at CCVT were generally psycho-educational in nature and run for 3 months. There were two mental health/wellness groups conducted, one for women and another for all-gender, and each run for 6 weeks.

The support group included presentations and workshops by guest speakers from different organization and CCVT staffs. Workshop topics were selected to meet the needs of the participants.

Throughout the year, groups ran virtually. The groups included:

- African Women Group (other than Eritrean background and Francophone community)
- Adapting to Life in Canada (Women)
- Farsi and Dari speaking Group (Men and Women)
- Ethiopian and Eritrean Women Group
- Stronger Together (Men and Women)
- Mental Health Support Group (Mind over Mood Wellness Group 2 cohorts – All gender, Women and Non-binary)
- Arabic Speaking Support Group
- Arabic Women Support Group
- Spanish Speaking Support Group



MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

REPORT

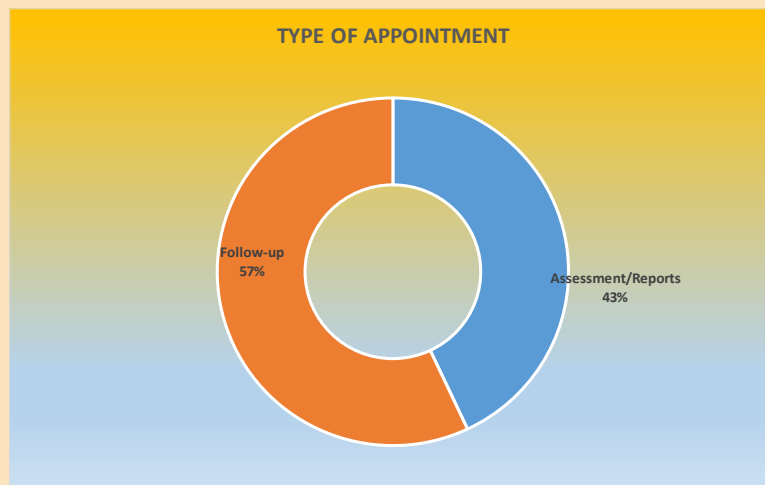
These groups aimed to provide clients with relevant information. Some examples of the themes presented were:

- Information about Employment Ontario Information & Resume Preparation
- Impact of COVID-19 pandemic
- Access to social assistance
- Mindfulness/Stress reducing Yoga exercises
- Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression
- Accessing health services
- Educational upgrading
- Housing rights
- Family Conflict/Domestic Abuse
- Effective Communication
- Interpersonal Conflicts
- General Overview of Toronto Public Health Services
- How to overcome trauma
- Mental health and wellness
- Employment rights
- Self-care
- Financial literacy

In numbers:

Total workshops/group sessions: **132**

Total number of participants: **1527**

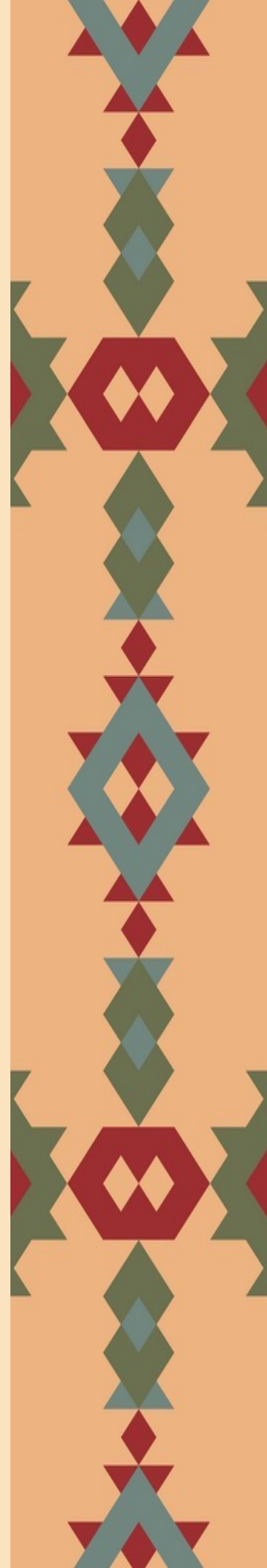


TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

SERVICES

2020-2021 was a “rollercoaster” and not an easy year for CCVT. As an essential service it was imperative that we remain open and continue to provide services to survivors and their families. With the immense effort of our staff, management, senior leadership and volunteers CCVT overcame many hurdles that proved to be opportunities for growth, innovation and resilience. For case management CCVT had already adopted OCASI OCMS database prior to the pandemic but immediately management had to assess and implement various virtual databases to provide services on such as Bell Connect, Zoom, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, emails to facilitate remote sessions with service users. The number of service users served this year reached 2816 clients coming from 94 countries virtually. Using a Trauma Informed Care and survivor centred approach our services continued virtually to adequately meet the unique needs of our service users. These services were provided by our diverse Mental Health, Trauma Informed, Settlement counselors, language and computer instructors. Also CCVT expanded its mandate by launching a new program focusing on survivors of human trafficking. Other, specialized services continued to be provided for the children and youth survivors including youth mentorship, leadership and civic engagement.

With on-going, “off and on” lock downs, service closures CCVT’s community intervention model proved to be effective in addressing the community trauma brought by the pandemic including navigating basic needs, our complex housing system, health, legal and mental health services. Whether it was a wellness check home visit to an isolated senior, a grocery gift card to a family in need of food, a survivor socializing and participating in an English conversation circle when no in person language assessment centres were open, providing counseling to a survivor experiencing depression on a weekend were all ways that staff, volunteers, management and community partners were there with survivors at this difficult time. Just to name some few, in unprecedented COVID-19 time we are immensely thankful to the following partners at the local, national and international level: Mount Sinai Hospital, ICHA Inner city health associates, Women Health in Women's Hands, Canadian, Addiction Mental Health, Sherburne Health Clinic, Revenue Canada, Barbara Schiffer Clinic, University of Toronto, Cross Roads Clinic, Fred Victor, IRCT refurbished computers, OCASI/WES, Canadian Women Foundation and Reed Smith.



TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE SERVICES

Despite COVID-19 we were able to conduct 20 virtual workshops with 224 participants in attendance. While the sessions topics included employment, Language assessment, mental health, family sponsorship, stress management, mindfulness, systemic racism, gender based violence, human rights and more. CCVT did many topics focused on COVID-19 related issue such as, awareness of COVID-19, PPE health and safety measures, Vaccines and ensuring clients were able to understand it in various languages.

In addition to direct services to survivors in was imperative that CCVT continues public education during the Covid-19. Survivors were a involved in various civic engagement and community initiatives CCVT youth ambassadors providing presentations to their peers, survivors participating in the City of Toronto alternative to policing focus group. Furthermore, counselors and managers in addition to their day to day work shared best practices on various topics to service providers such as how to support families during COVID-19, financial support, how to wok with children and youth, supporting women survivors, vicarious trauma and self care. Building capacity of Children’s Aid Society staff, faith groups such as Islington United Church, San Lorenzo Church & Latin American Community Centre Radio Voces Latinas 1610AM, language instructors with Achev and many more.



TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

SERVICES

In addition to direct service capacity building, CCVT expanded its *RENOWNED COURSE ON TORTURE, TRAUMA, PSYCHOSOCIAL IMPACT AND MENTAL HEALTH* certificate course nationally. Furthermore, one of our major highlights for 2020-2021 CCVT launched Phase 1 of its National Trauma Informed Care Train the Trainer Project with a national advisory committee representing all provinces and with over 200 service providers participating in a needs assessment and focus group on Trauma Informed Care. Phase 2 of the project will be pilot train the trainer in the province in Ontario which will be launched in 2021-2022. CCVT wrapped up 2020-2021 by partnering with IRCC to develop a National Trauma Informed Care Train the trainer manual and training for IRCC Open Work Permit Officers.

Last but not least CCVT launched a land-based research project with Dr. Chizuru Nobe-Ghelani at York University on *Re-imagining refugee integration: Learning from local Indigenous teachings*. This research is a critical step for CCVT on our journey and commitment to reconciliation with indigenous communities. The project involves Dr. Timothy Leduc at the Centre for Indigegogy, Wilfrid Laurier University, Elder Norma Jacobs of Six Nations; and, Mr. Isaac Crosby of Anderdon First Nations, who leads the urban agriculture program at Evergreen Brickworks as knowledge holders. Furthermore, this action-based research involves service users and CCVT counselors. Although, this is a 2year research project ending in 2021 CCVT hopes to apply for more funding to continue this work, use the learning in our service delivery to survivors and share the results within the sector for capacity building.



TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

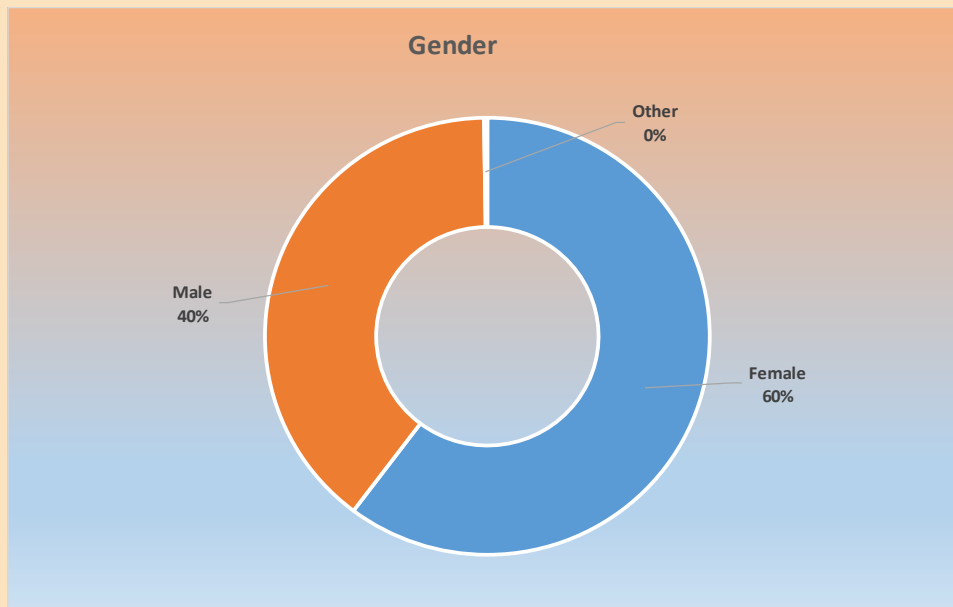
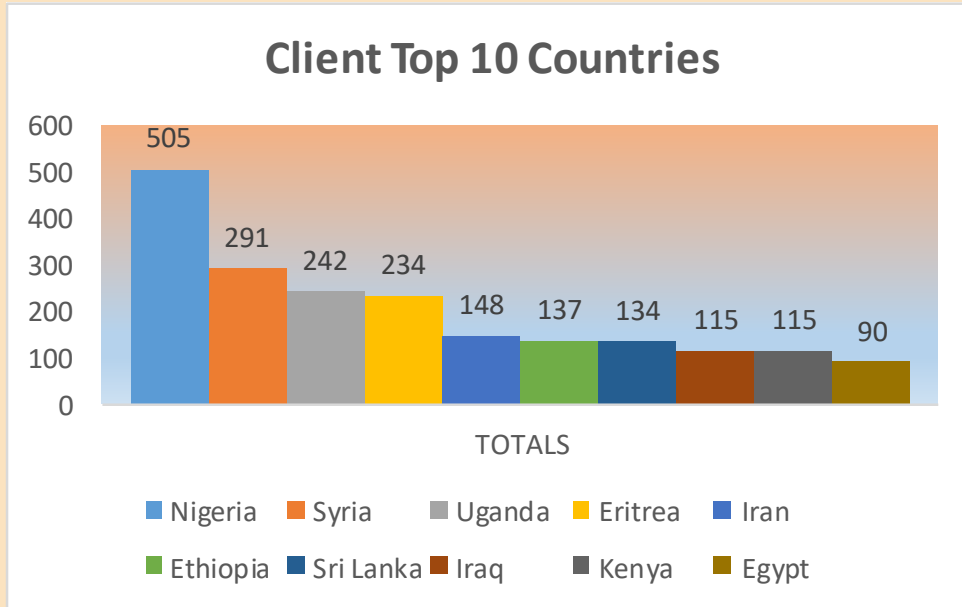
SERVICES

While providing effective services was critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, at the core of trauma informed practice service providers wellbeing is crucial to effective service delivery and community healing. Management worked tirelessly to ensure more communication for all through weekly debriefing, monthly meeting and one to one check ins. Staff were encouraged and assigned to participate in community webinars, CCVT certificate course plus courses with the OCASI's PET course Fund to increase their capacity and improve their skills. CCVT staff also participated in various difficult debriefing session such as the murder of George Floyd and anti-black racism. As a result, CCVT launched its first Anti-black racism committee including management and staff.

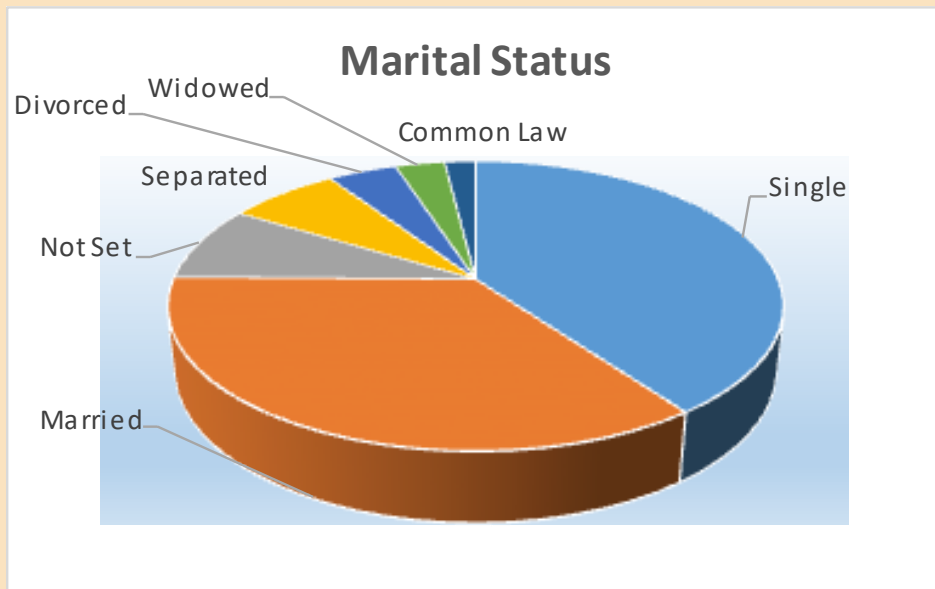
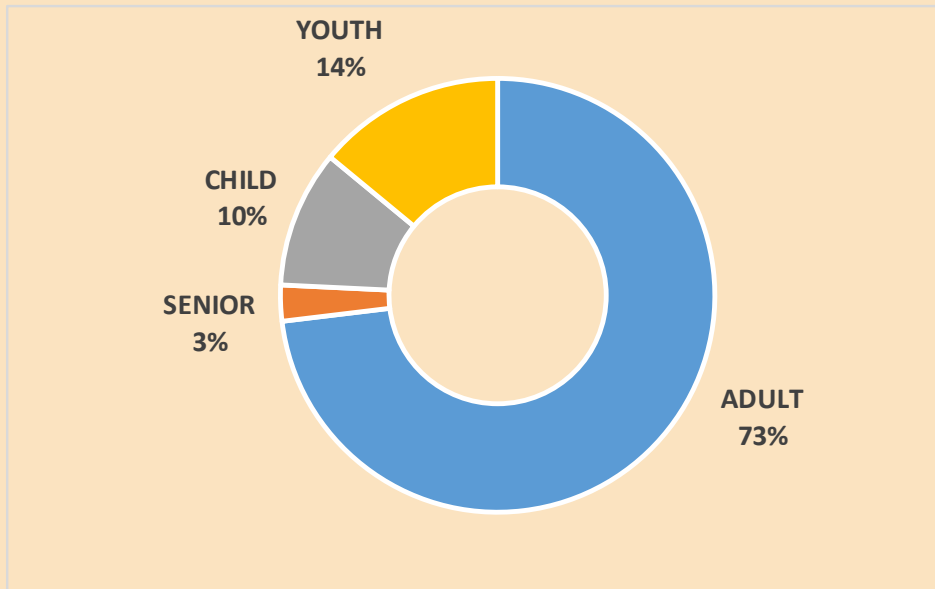


CCVT sent small tokens of appreciation to staff.

CCVT CLIENTS



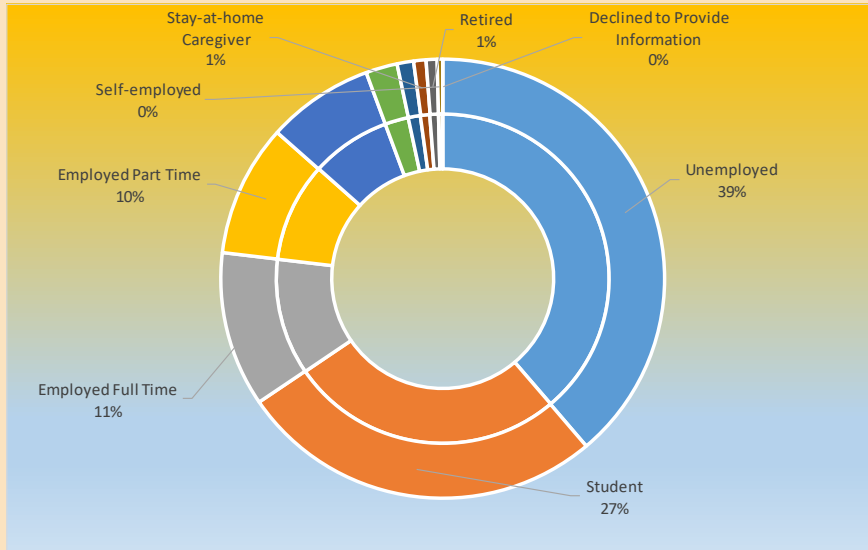
CCVT CLIENTS AT A GLANCE



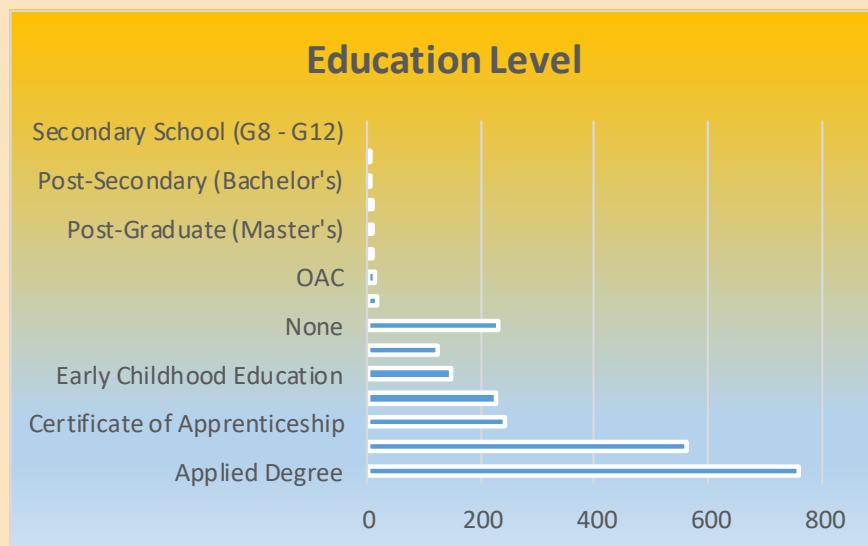
CCVT CLIENTS AT A GLANCE



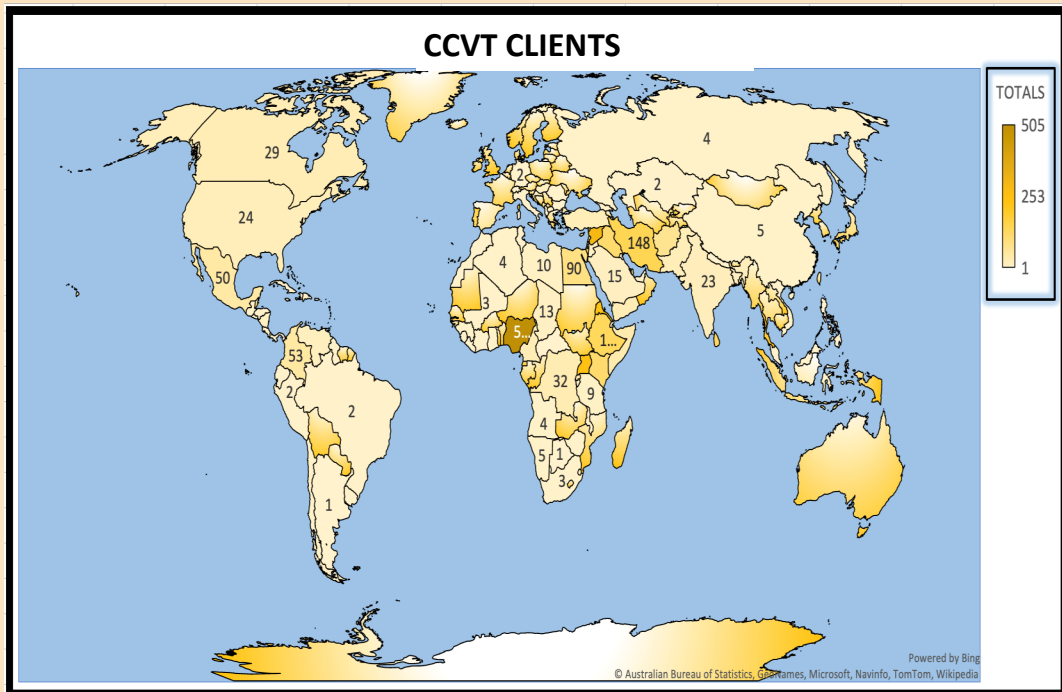
Employment Level



Education Level



CLIENT COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



LANGUAGE & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

According to CCVT’s mandate, the Center “...aids survivors of torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity to overcome the lasting effects of torture and war.” This statement defines the details of all the endeavors of the Centre, including the Language and Skills Development program.

For the past 30 years, CCVT’s specialized Language and Skills Development Program has been a key component in the recovery and successful rehabilitation of survivors of torture, war, and organized violence. It is an organic part of CCVT’s goal to offer survivors the will to live. In collaboration with the many other services at the centre and in partnership with the community, CCVT’s English as a Second Language and Skills Training Program enables and supports survivors in the process of successful integration into Canadian society and promotes hope after the horror.

The program aims to assist survivors of torture and war with learning language tools and developing the communication skills needed to achieve their recovery goals and start their journey of integration into Canadian society. To this end, our Language and Skills Training Program works in conjunction with TDSB ESL classes and other CCVT services to provide a supportive learning environment and accessible delivery approach to maximize the learning experience of our students.

To achieve the highest quality and best outcomes, we also partner with community groups like Second Harvest Food Bank to provide needed nutritional support and decrease client food insecurity.

Another key objective of the program is to reduce barriers faced by survivors of torture and war by aiding students in their acquisition of English language. Our English language courses as well as our Computer Skills Training Program are designed to be flexible and sensitive to the needs of adults who have experienced trauma and aware of the impact that such trauma can have on learning and memory. Our program offers alternative schedules and supportive learning environments while maintaining a high quality of teaching.

The Language and Skills Training courses at CCVT are specifically adapted to the learning abilities and needs of our students and designed for the language proficiency and skills development of survivors of torture and war. Our courses nurture the individual and cater to the needs of adult learners who suffer from debilitating imprints of violence that make the learning process harder and more strenuous than for other adult learners. Our teachers are highly qualified and specially trained, and our curriculum is adapted to help students acquire skills related to their immediate and long-term life goals. The classroom atmosphere and supportive environment provides clients with encouragement, hope, community, social context and the help they need to progress with their language and social skills.



LANGUAGE & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAM

The Language and Skills Training courses at CCVT are specifically adapted to the learning abilities and needs of our students and designed for the language proficiency and skills development of survivors of torture and war. Our courses nurture the individual and cater to the needs of adult learners who suffer from debilitating imprints of violence that make the learning process harder and more strenuous than for other adult learners. Our teachers are highly qualified and specially trained, and our curriculum is adapted to help students acquire skills related to their immediate and long-term life goals. The classroom atmosphere and supportive environment provides clients with encouragement, hope, community, social context and the help they need to progress with their language and social skills.

Experiencing torture, war and other forms of organized violence results in isolation, stress and despair of survivors. Through the years, CCVT has met the challenge of teaching English as a Second Language, providing Skills Training and addressing re-settlement issues by fostering and addressing the needs of our clients by creating a “safe haven” where clients feel welcome and by creating an environment where virtually all services are delivered in a central location and found in one organization.

A special feature of CCVT’s Language and Skills Training Program is fostering interpersonal ties and connectedness as an objective, and as a mediating link between survivors and the host community. Clients attend LINC, ESL and Skills Training programs not only to learn the language and skills, but to make friends, network, socialize and be among others who have come from and experienced similar traumatic situations. They come to their “family” where they know they are accepted. This is especially true for many of our ESL clients who are seniors and can develop social networks through interacting with the other students in the classrooms. This interaction aids in breaking their isolation and fosters a connection with our younger clients. In addition, our students also engage regularly with CCVT volunteers and teachers in the classes and together they all serve to become agents of change in the community.

Involvement in Language and Skills Training activities gives our clients the opportunity to access our trained settlement staff, who provide other settlement services which would otherwise be beyond their reach because of the language barrier or lack of information. You can see the effort put into language instruction at CCVT. It is not an ordinary class or learning environment but a unique and specialized classroom for people who are survivors and often suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. Class levels available to our clients range from low beginner to advanced. Every year CCVT provides language and skills training for approximately 300 clients from 80 countries. Clients stay with our English Language Programs for an average of 3 to 18 months, moving through language proficiency levels at their own pace.

LANGUAGE & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Normally classes are provided on CCVT premises downtown and in Scarborough so that clients and teaching staff will have access to counselors and other CCVT services when emotional or other needs arise for themselves or their families. During the last fiscal year we transitioned to remote learning due to the pandemic to provide an opportunity for our teachers and students to stay safely at home and continue their work on language skills and be a part of the community during this difficult time. The teachers had to learn how to conduct their lessons remotely. Initially, we had some difficulties connecting with all our students and teaching them how to attend their classes online over Zoom. We partnered with another organization to provide our students with good and very affordable computers as many of our clients did not have access to technology.

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our programs through collaborative work with instructors, counselors, computer and secretarial staff, CCVT volunteers and partner agencies in Europe. The CCVT language program has gained significant expertise in delivering services to traumatized immigrant and refugee learners, and in providing workshops and seminars for ESL and educational professionals. CCVT has already developed its reputation as an active and leading organization that can provide curriculum and delivery practice as well as professional insight into newcomer and refugee learner issues.

In cooperation with the volunteer program, we have enhanced our English tutoring program to include a significant number of our students. We continue running our volunteer-driven Citizenship Class to assist our students in preparing for citizenship tests. Conversation Circle is also facilitated by volunteers to expedite communication skills development in low beginner and intermediate level students. Before the pandemic we had an increased number and frequency of volunteer teaching assistants in the classes to provide more opportunities for our students to interact with other Canadians in English and a successful Computer Aided English Language Instruction classroom that benefited our students tremendously. Currently, because of the pandemic restrictions, English tutoring program, Citizenship Class and Conversation Circle are successfully running remotely over Zoom.



LANGUAGE & SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Clients may also be in need of upgrading language skills to master the language and acquire basic computer skills to pursue long term learning in continued education. It is our aim to help students achieve their goals in skills training or higher education so that they can find work and live higher quality, independent lives and also become self-sufficient and active participants in Canadian Society. The CCVT Language and Skills Training Program continues to be a critical component of a successful recovery program for our clients. It is also often the first point of contact with their new home in Canada. The Language and Skills Training program at CCVT has become a source of strength and support that helps our clients resume their lives with independence, confidence and dignity .

This program helps our clients to be informed and equipped with the new technology on their journey to successful employment.

It helps prepare participants for a range of jobs within an office and retail environment, or develops required computer skills for positions like Personal Support Worker, where reporting would be done on-line. Many entry-level office positions are available to individuals that have limited job market experience, or are new to the Toronto labour market, or people that are returning to work following an interruption in their career. These positions are frequently used as a first job experience and as a starting point for many other occupations in the same industry.

While acquiring these skills the students also have access to an expert advise on job search strategies, resume writing and interview skills.

The program currently includes:

- **Basic Computer Skills Course**
- **One-on-one employment counselling and resume writing help**
- **One-on-one help with any technical issues that students might have while trying to attend their classes remotely on Zoom**

Students in the on-line Basic Computer Course (over Zoom):

Enrolled: 27 Graduated: 14

Male: 2 Female: 25

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all of us at CCVT to adapt rapidly and efficiently to continue to meet the needs of our clients. CCVT's dedicated volunteers have stood with us every step of the way and proven that we are stronger together. Their kindness and collaborative spirit has ensured we stay focused on our goal of delivering uninterrupted service.

We are committed to continuing the necessary work to ensure that the clients who rely on CCVT for services will have an avenue to turn to.

As such, I would like to highlight a success story from Zac Schraeder, a CCVT Befriender:

"I was paired with someone named Ahmed Abduljaleel (he goes by Ahmed Moneka), a refugee from Iraq. He was on the older end of the mentee age range, but was paired with me because he was a seasoned actor, filmmaker, musician, and activist. I work with students at a film school, so it was a great pairing! Part of the reason why he is a refugee is because he advocated for the Iraqi LGBTQ+ community through his art. As a queer person myself, I was deeply touched by Ahmed's commitment to allyship and social justice. He is truly amazing.

Ahmed and I met frequently to build connections, develop a personal website, get his banking in order etc. We attended some of CCVT's events and hung out frequently. He swiftly became a member of Toronto's thriving arts community and has made quite a name for himself as a resident performer of Arabic Jazz at Toronto's Drom Taberna. He has also performed for some of Toronto's premier music and arts institutions. He has since become a permanent resident (nearly a citizen!), gotten married, and recently welcomed his daughter, Sina, into the world. This is all a testament to his work ethic, patience, and persistence.

Shortly after Ahmed came to Canada, his own family in Iraq was displaced and had to re-settle as refugees in Eastern Turkey. News of Ahmed's TIFF screening spread in Iraq and his own family began to receive threats similar to the ones that caused him to seek protected person status in Canada. So they had to flee. His biggest priority and dream has always been to have his family join him in Canada. Ahmed has tirelessly fundraised, saved money, raised awareness, and worked on the appropriate documentation to have them come here.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Ahmed notified me that his family has finally made it to Canada as refugees with a short pathway to permanent residence, are out of quarantine, and can start their lives together. This would not have been possible without initial support Ahmed received from CCVT. It is not limited to just mentorship, but also through the community and mental health support that CCVT provided. I know he is thankful for it, as am I.



In addition to sending this update, I want to thank CCVT for providing me with this profoundly rewarding, emotional, humbling journey with Ahmed. We would not have met without you! He has become such a source of inspiration and hope for me. We love each other and are true, lifelong friends. In light of this most recent news, I am overcome with a deep sense of joy I did not anticipate when I attended that first volunteer meeting at CCVT. Though Ahmed's journey has been full of stress, immense patience, and struggles, it has also been full of joy. Not once was he ever hopeless.

I know that organizations like CCVT depend on funding to function, which I'm sure involves keeping track of and communicating success stories. Please consider this one of them! If communicating this in any other way would benefit CCVT, please let me know. I want to shout this story from the rooftops in whatever form might be most beneficial for the agency."

It is toward these types of relationships that we are grateful for our dedicated volunteer selfless time and effort.

During the 2020-2021 year:

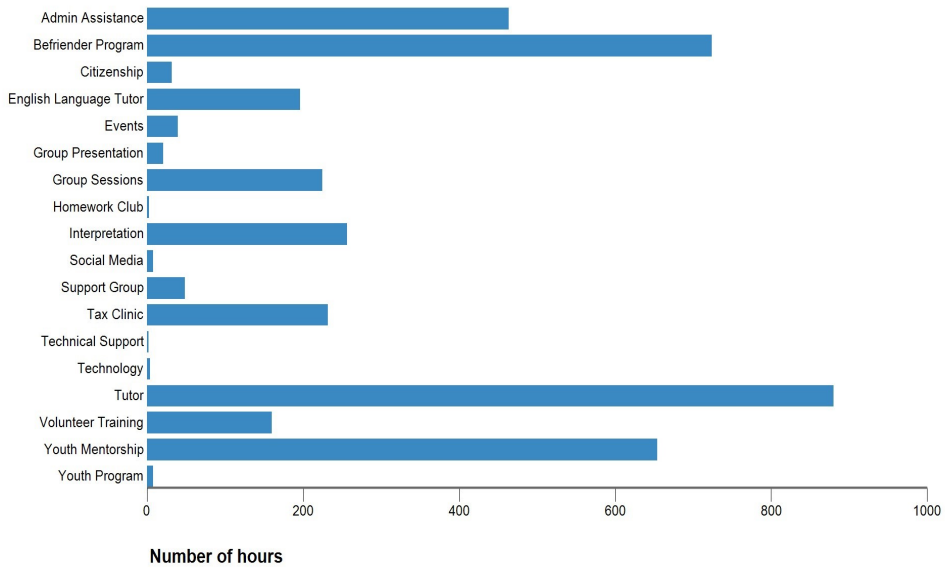
261 volunteers providing 3960 hours of service.



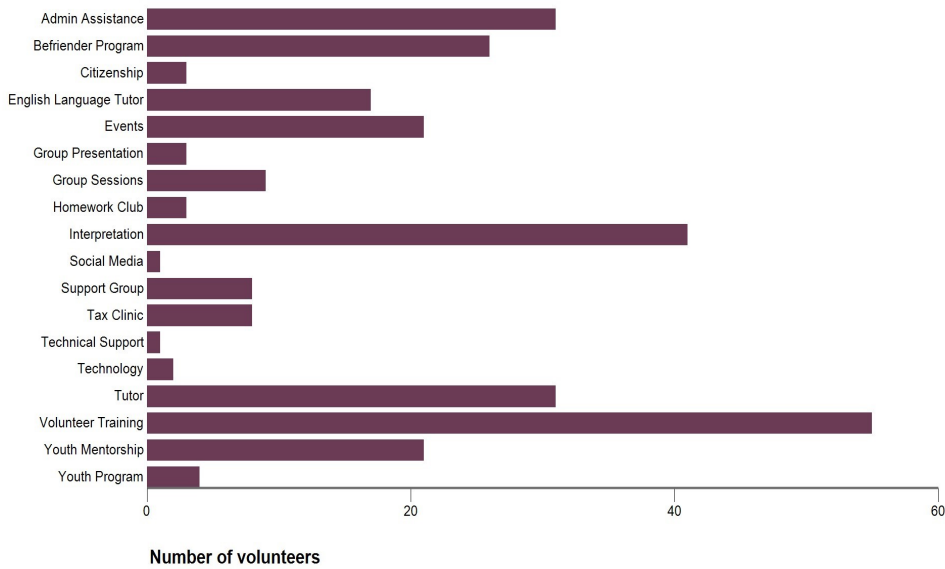
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Activity Category Totals: 01/04/2020 - 31/03/2021

Logged Hours By Activity Category



Number Of Volunteers By Activity Category



CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM

The Child and Youth programs in Scarborough and Downtown have had an extremely challenging year due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As with all other community groups, we have had to shift our services to an online platform to stay connected with our young service users. Some of our offerings were easily adapted to the Zoom application, while others required a total transformation from what we have all become familiar.

Traditionally, the child and youth department have been a blend of information sessions, trainings, recreational events and other activities for CCVT service users who are between the ages of 7 to 24. As the vast majority of our clients are new to Canada, our sessions aim to provide knowledge and education that best support their settlement needs. CCVT also strives to bridge cultural gaps with unique programming to give newcomers the tools they need to be successful in their daily interactions. Prior to the provincial closures, our trips into the community were educational, while also orienting newcomers to resources in their neighborhoods. Lastly, the recreational programming was a means to provide social experiences to the children and youth without a financial cost to their families to ensure they stayed active, made new friends and practiced their English language skills.

Virtual programs have been a method to keep the work of CCVT forging ahead in uncertain times, but it has not been without its difficulties. Our clients often have precarious housing situations. Being under housed in shelters or with large families make it difficult for participants to engage in quiet spaces. Also the availability of devices and adequate Wi-Fi have been a challenge for everyone. For folks living in apartment buildings, internet signal is effected by the high volume of users trying to connect simultaneously; the problem is exacerbated after school, which is when our programs are generally run. Most obviously, prolonged screen time is making it difficult to stay focused and is having physical impacts on our bodies and posture. Everyone has put their best foot forward and we have enjoyed a lot of successes despite the obstacles we have faced. This year, Scarborough and Downtown teams informally amalgamated for better support and to decrease service duplication. The following is a breakdown of the various programs between April 2020- March 2021.



CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM

Tutoring for Children and Youth

Previously, the Homework Club at CCVT had been a core program for children and youth. The program aimed to provide academic support and socialization and met three times a week in office. During revamping, it was not feasible to follow this same format on Zoom as individual attention was not possible. In its new incarnation, the department has rolled out the offering of virtual tutoring. Once an individual or family has indicated they need assistance with school work in some area or language development, a request is sent to our Community Engagement (CE) Team. They source a volunteer based on the necessary requirements. Together, the Child and Youth Counsellor, CE Coordinator and the family or youth meet together on Zoom to discuss the parameters of the program as children's interactions must have parental supervision. They exchange contact information and set their schedule to move forward. This adaptation has been hugely successful, with excellent feedback and tangible results. We hope to continue it as a permanent fixture in our repository of services.

Youth Mentorship

CCVT continues to facilitate a program that matches newcomer youth between the ages of 12 to 24 with a mentor who is more familiar with the local systems. It has been a successful measure that allows our clients to get to know people in the community that can offer guidance and advise on issues of education, recreation and the community. It has allowed our clients to improve socialization with direct benefits to their settlement journeys. It was easily converted to an online format with youth utilizing social media and other digital platforms. Similar to virtual tutoring, mentors are found through our team of volunteers and are initially introduced on Zoom to their mentee in the virtual presence of the Youth Mentorship Facilitator.



CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM



Information Sessions and Group Programs

Information and Activity Sessions for Children

Information sessions are held throughout the year to provide information to supplement the education our young clients receive in school. The purpose of these sessions are to help participants develop life skills and acquire healthy coping mechanisms. They have also fared well in the digital uptake of services. Below are the following information sessions held for children between the ages of 7 to 13 with the support of community partners and volunteers.

- *Computer Coding for Kids (3 Sessions)*
- *Healthy Dance and Body Movement with Sharing Dance c/o the National Ballet School of Canada*
- *Play Reading*
- *Drawing with Vibe Arts (4 Sessions)*
- *Children's Wellness Check-In*

Information Sessions and Training for Youth Scarborough and Downtown for 2019-2020

The sessions for youth aimed to build practical skills that would better equip our clients in the challenges they would face in this particular stage of adolescence. There were a blend of both of both training and information sessions provided to the youth who were in 14 to 24 age group.

- *Youth Employment Rights and Strategies with St. Stephen's Community House (2 sessions)*
- *Youth and the Police: Know Your Rights with Justice for Children and Youth*
- *Affordable Housing Options*
- *Mental Health and Anti-Black Racism*
- *Post-Secondary Education for Students with Precarious Immigration status*
- *Settlement Workers in Schools information session*



CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM

Other Events and Activities

Youth Roundtables

Two youth roundtables were held virtually in the fiscal year. The first session took place in June 2020 as a graduation event at the end of the school year. A Mental Health Counsellor from Stella's Place shared his challenges to success as a racialized male and provided motivation and encouragement to the attending students in these uncertain times. The second event was held in September and coincided with the return to school. An Engagement Coordinator from Planned Parenthood discussed the importance of maintaining healthy relationship with those in our circles and presented the concept of boundary setting to keep ourselves mentally well. Approximately 20 youth attended both session and provided positive feedback about their experiences.

Youth Network and Youth Ambassador Program

Youth Network

The Youth Network youth group was held once a month via online platform, ZOOM. This group is designed to provide a safe space to learn about important settlement resources which help to reduce isolation, discuss relevant issues, build community, and develop new skills. Additionally, many youth do not have access to affordable sources of entertainment or recreation among people their own age. The Youth Network was able to offer a variety of events, and skill building activities including games nights, arts events, and graphic design workshops to newcomer youth at CCVT.

Youth who have attended the network have given positive feedback about the program, indicating that they have reduced isolation and became friends with other participants, even meeting outside of CCVT programming. Many youth who attend programs at CCVT are unaccompanied thus building a sense of community is vital to their mental health. Youth were also able to access important information about everyday issues that they face such as finding stable housing and work and knowing their rights in housing and employment settings. Youth who attended these sessions reported having a greater sense of agency and felt more empowered. For many newly arrived youth, accessing youth network activities also helped to strengthen their relationship with CCVT, in turn, enhancing opportunities to access trauma-informed settlement support in navigating the experience of forced migration and associated challenges such as housing, health, immigration, social isolation, and employment.





CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM

The youth have been so excited to continue connecting throughout COVID-19, and share how they have been coping as well. One recent success was when one of the youth in session had started to talk about how they have been feeling isolated and lonely due to COVID-19. The other youth participants started comforting the youth and letting them know that they weren't alone in feeling this way. This was a great peer to peer moment within the Youth Network that really captured how providing a safe virtual space for the youth is extremely beneficial for them to stay and feel connected to one another at this time.

The Youth Network program was run on the 1st Thursday of every month via the online platform, ZOOM. In total, there were approximately 5-16 youth who participated in the program. The Youth Network program also includes Summer Quest activities and the Holiday Party. All in all, we were able to nurture the existing community partnerships, and build many new ones. According to our end of year evaluations, 75% of participants felt the online platform was easily accessible, safe and inviting. As well, 75% of youth felt they have learned new information regarding settlement and mental health and wellness. The relationships built during the program were also valuable to them as it grew into a source of social support and built the youth's knowledge around newcomer serving agencies in Toronto. Overall, the majority of youth felt like the Youth Network program helped combat social isolation during COVID-19.

Outcomes

1. Better understanding of complex and intersecting issues such as mental health and access to resources for newcomer youth, discrimination and racism, poverty and homelessness.
2. Increased knowledge in areas such as affordable housing, anti-black racism, healthy relationships and post-secondary education options for newcomer youth.
3. Greater social network as a resource for each Youth Network participants.
4. Increased awareness regarding different community services and supports.

Youth Ambassador

The main goals of the Youth Ambassador Program are to combat social isolation, provide leadership training and to provide a platform for newcomer youth to strengthen their advocacy skills so they can better champion for themselves and other youth who may be facing challenges. The program was run on the 3rd Thursday of every month via the online platform, ZOOM. In total, there were approximately 4-10 youth who participated in the program. According to our end of the year evaluations, over 75% of the participants believed that the program was easily accessible, and that the virtual program was safe and inviting.

CHILD & YOUTH PROGRAM

Overall, the majority of participants felt that their confidence and self-worth had increased however, 20% wished their social network grew larger. Given the switch to virtual programming, the Youth Ambassador program was extremely valuable in being a source of social support and a bridge into peer-leadership training for the youth.

Outcomes

1. Increased sense of self-worth and confidence to advocate for critical issues.
2. Better understanding of complex and intersecting issues such as mental health and access to resources for newcomer youth, discrimination and racism, poverty and homelessness.
3. Increased knowledge in areas such as Financial Literacy, Femicide and leadership skills.
4. Greater social network as a resource for each Youth Ambassador.

Summer Programming

Summer Quest Child and Youth – Scarborough and Downtown

The Summer Quest program has been the most affected by the COVID-19 related closures. We have not been able to visit the community as a group, which has negatively impacted us all. CCVT has long standing relationships with Toronto Parks and Recreation, film institutions, museums and theatres and private organizations that we have leveraged when planning for this highly anticipated event. For our virtual sessions we had organized games, sing-alongs, Netflix movie screenings, crafts, trainings, online escape rooms, trivia and quizzes on a weekly basis. Admittedly, they have proved entertaining, but are no substitute for the comradery and adventure we have experienced in previous years.

March Break Child and Youth

Scarborough and Downtown Offices- COVID-19

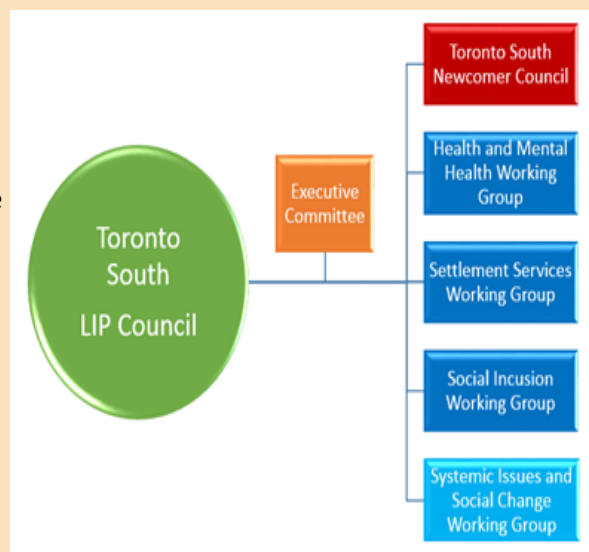
For March Break 2021, there were 3 virtual events scheduled, 2 for children and 1 for the youth, at both locations. This year as we continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the provincial government cancelled traditional March break and prolonged it beyond this current fiscal year. Service users and staff alike were disappointed and we hope that we will be able to come together once again next year.

TORONTO SOUTH LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) are federally funded planning bodies focused on developing and implementing settlement strategies that coordinate and enhance service delivery to newcomers while promoting innovation and efficient use of resources. We seek to engage various stakeholders in the partnership process, including employers, school boards, boards of trade, levels of government, local associations, ethno-cultural groups, faith-based organizations; in conjunction with community, legal, health and social services sectors. There are over 80 LIPs across Canada, with four quadrant community LIPs in Toronto. Additionally, one municipal LIP, the Toronto Newcomer Office based at City Hall engages the entire city. The 40 official City of Toronto neighbourhoods that comprise the Toronto South area occupy the central southern part of the city that generally runs from Lake Ontario, north to St. Clair Avenue, and from Victoria Park Avenue west to Parkside Drive/Keele Street.

Our vision is for LIPs to be perceived as a valuable resource for the local community, facilitating access to information and resources and fostering partnership building and collaboration. As structures that are uniquely connected to a wide range of stakeholders, LIPs have an important strategic role to play in advising on and implementing Canada's immigration and settlement policy.

In support of this vision, the Toronto South LIP's member organizations such as CCVT, are committed to exploring new ways of communicating, collaborating, coordinating and partnering for the benefit of newcomers in the Toronto South area. We are committed to working together to provide a collaborative network of information, programs, supports, and services for newcomers that reflect our service values that include being: welcoming, accountable to newcomer communities, responsive to changing needs, and inclusive. The work of the Toronto South LIP is executed through a sophisticated structure which is depicted here.



TORONTO SOUTH LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

Key Highlights of TSLIP`s Successes from April 2020—March 2021 during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The work is then divided for the working groups to accomplish with the input and oversight from the newcomer council.

- Launched an improved TSLIP website to improve user experience and facilitate better communication with stakeholders and the community in early 2021
- Co-recipient of Collaboration Award on September 22nd 2020
- Actively participated at tables including but not limited to the United Way/City of Toronto community cluster meetings, Uninsured Network, City of Toronto Newcomer Leadership Table, the Canadian Council for Refugees and OCASI.
- Conducted periodic newcomer needs assessments to capture pandemic trends in collaboration with other Toronto LIPs
- Organized a *Back to School* Town Hall on September 8th 2020 in collaboration with relevant decision makers such as Toronto Public Health, and Toronto based schoolboards
- Promoted grass roots peer-led efforts to support newcomers and are working towards the creation of a grassroots network to build capacity and share resources in the community.
- Provided ongoing anti-racism and anti-xenophobia professional development opportunities to the Newcomer Council and facilitated engagement in anti-racism work as a standing practice
- Developed a short video on the *Pandemic Experience* employing a newcomer lens in June 2020
- Participated in the consultation for a protocol for community involvement in safety checks in the Fall of 2020.
- Creation of Frontline Staff Support Network in Fall of 2020 with 3 meetings during the fiscal year
- Completed needs assessments and established foundation for the launch of Mental Health First Aid Training for Language Instructors with CIESPO

TORONTO SOUTH LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

TSLIP has been integral in the creation of professional development opportunities for staff of member agencies on topics addressing virtual workspaces. *Shifting to Engaged Virtual Volunteering* was an event held February 4th 2021 via Zoom with, *Digital Messaging Apps and Newcomer Outreach* held March 11th 2021 also via Zoom to meet the needs of frontline workers adapting to virtual methods of connection. Another online event *Employment, Workers' Rights and Self-care during COVID-19* was organized by the Systemic Issues and Social Change Working Group (SISC WG) on January 20th, 2021 to provide verbal and written resources and information on basic workers' rights, safety, self-care and self-compassion. This working group also organized *Financial Benefits during COVID-19* on March 30th 2021 in partnership with Warden Woods Community Services to demystify much of the pandemic programming and available resources.

During the fiscal year, repositories for learning, training, webinars and resources for staff of TSLIP member agencies have been created on a wide range of topics. *LinkedIn Learning Repository for TSLIP Partners* included information on anti-racism/anti-oppression, virtual platforms, privacy and security, remote work and service with access to 50 LinkedIn learning licenses provided by Woodgreen Community Services up to March 31st, 2021. Development of a document *Promising Practices for Reopening During Covid-19* addressed remote service delivery, virtual platforms & privacy, resources and toolkits for re-opening safely, and multi-lingual COVID-19 resources. TSLIP has also been an advocate for the translation of multiple mental health resources and information and worked close with the City of Toronto to identify widely spoken languages needed for better access. A collection of these resources have been made available on the new website for easy access.

Moreover, in addition to their other dynamic initiatives, the SISC WG conducted a review of service provider technology needs within Toronto early in the fiscal year and published a comprehensive report on November 27th 2020 that outlined the impacts of online service provision for newcomers, especially those in vulnerable situations, with the intent that findings will inform policy and influence social change. The report was based on results from two online surveys targeted at service providers and newcomers, and also supplemented by phone interviews.

Ordinarily, TSLIP implements a 5-year strategic plan that drives project direction. As the pandemic brought great uncertainty, a 1 -year transitional plan was instead implemented to address urgent and emerging needs for 2020-2021, with excellent completion results. We look forward to continued success as we cultivate our 4 -year strategic and work plans with the community.

COMING TO TERMS WITH TORTURE: DEVELOPING TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

Project Objective:

The Trauma-Informed Care Project is an initiative led by the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) and a National Advisory Committee from all provinces to develop best practices and produce manuals for the professional training for agencies working with survivors of trauma, torture, genocide, and other crimes against humanity. The implementation of the Trauma-Informed Care Project will follow several phases and will be carried out nationally.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

The Needs Assessment was led by CCVT. The purpose of the needs assessment was to identify what knowledge exists in the provision of Trauma-Informed Care services by analyzing the best practices in the country. The specific implications of the COVID-19 pandemic are identified during the process.

TIMELINE



National Advisory Committee

The purpose of the National Advisory Committee (NAC) was to provide guidance in the development of the project by sharing their own experiences and expertise. NAC members were recruited from provinces and territories based on their experience, expertise, and their roles in the sector.

Meetings were held once a month from September to March to review and discuss the development of the Needs Assessment work. Both the NAC and the NAC sub-committee provided support in finalizing the needs assessment survey, and national focus group .

COMING TO TERMS WITH TORTURE: DEVELOPING TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

METHODOLOGY

CCVT implemented several approaches towards the needs assessment research. This included incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The purpose of the needs assessment was to examine the existing knowledge and present gaps in the service-providing sector on Trauma-Informed service delivery when working with vulnerable newcomer populations who are victims of war, torture, genocide, and crimes against humanity.

The needs identified will be compiled and developed to serve as the guideline in the development of the training modules. The training modules will be used by service-providing organizations, sponsorship groups, educators, and mental health professionals throughout the country.



121 AGENCIES PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT



CANADIAN CENTRE
FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

COMING TO TERMS WITH TORTURE:

NATIONAL TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE PROJECT

This course will be provided virtually once a month from October 2021 to February 2022.

Check out the course syllabus at [CCVT.ORG](https://www.ccvvt.org)

| To register email Mahnoush Kay Kohpaei
at mkohpaei@ccvt.org




FINANCIAL REPORT

CONDENSED AUDITED REPORT APR.1,2019 — MAR.31,2021

| | 2020-2021 | 2019-2020 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| | ₹ | ₹ |
| Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada | | |
| - Settlement | 1,656,618 | 1,604,054 |
| - TSLIP | 92,648 | 83,885 |
| - NHQ | 26,803 | - |
| - TM | 184,077 | - |
| - Public Safety Canada | 19,970 | - |
| Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration | | |
| - Newcomer Settlement Program | 76,910 | 76,911 |
| - Pay Equity | 23,311 | 23,311 |
| City of Toronto | | |
| - CSP | 28,785 | 28,200 |
| - Toronto Public Health | - | 5,000 |
| Ministry of Children & Youth Services | 78,214 | 58,214 |
| Ministry of Health-LHIN | 46,092 | 46,092 |
| HRSDC - Canada Summer Jobs | 8,669 | 8,860 |
| United Way of Greater Toronto | 342,808 | 265,751 |
| Donation\Fundraising | 88,085 | 269,844 |
| Foundations and Other Charities | 29,917 | 11,187 |
| Government Assistance | 25,000 | 0 |
| Canadian Women's Foundation | 25,000 | 0 |
| Honoraria\Fees | 1,543 | 2,844 |
| Interest\Sundry Income | 2,331 | 2,813 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 2,756,781 | 2,486,966 |

FINANCIAL REPORT

| | 2020-2021 | 2019-2020 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | ₹ | ₹ |
| Wages and Benefits | 1,980,411 | 1,721,557 |
| Rent | 155,880 | 155,965 |
| Program Supplies & Expenses | 102,301 | 95,596 |
| Common Expenses | 52,318 | 53,786 |
| Maintenance & Cleaning | 16,774 | 40,416 |
| Funded Capital Purchases | 75,542 | 9,329 |
| Bookkeeping | 85,545 | 62,553 |
| Fundraising Expense | 32,121 | 47,988 |
| I.T. Support\Web Hosting | 51,299 | 49,271 |
| Telephone | 42,985 | 20,850 |
| Professional Fees | 34,144 | 43,548 |
| Printing and Photocopying | 21,283 | 24,508 |
| Utilities | 19,303 | 19,858 |
| Staff Development | 7,848 | 28,476 |
| Conference & Meetings | 2,420 | 22,517 |
| Amortization | 24,660 | 22,811 |
| Insurance | 16,302 | 14,252 |
| Stationary & Supplies | 4,051 | 7,553 |
| Volunteer Support | 1,982 | 9,963 |
| Consulting | 6,615 | 5,025 |
| Postage and Courier | 3,404 | 4,608 |
| Mortgage Interest | 2,406 | 4,534 |
| Sponsorship & Partnership | 9,425 | 6,174 |
| Membership Dues | 2,722 | 3,788 |
| Interest & Bank charges | 2,600 | 3,055 |
| Publicity | - | 6,183 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 2,754,341 | 2,484,164 |
| NET INCOME | 2,440 | 2,802 |



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The CCVT International Committee monitors the activities and services of a network of organizations that support survivors of torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity and makes any necessary recommendations to the CCVT Board of Directors. This committee is working towards monitoring and responding to global issues related to the prevention, exposure and eradication of torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity. During the fiscal year of 2020-2021, the International Committee was involved in the following activities:

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) is an accredited member of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). Mr. Mulugeta Abai, the Executive Director of the CCVT, has been appointed as the Canadian representative of the IRCT in North America.

The Ethiopian Prime Minister Mr. Abiy Ahmed began his military operations Tigray region in Northern Ethiopian on November 4, 2020. The capital of Tigray, Mekele, was occupied by the Ethiopian and Eritrean armies as well as the Amhara militia forces on November 28, 2020. The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) wrote a detailed letter to the Prime Minister of Canada amidst the war (November 14, 2020) and raised its grave concerns about the escalation of armed conflict.

We shared our concerns the deep humanitarian crisis in Tigray region and among refugees that continued to flee to Sudan. The army had blocked all roads, preventing food and humanitarian aid to reach Tigray. In our letter, we mentioned about situation Of Ethiopian refugees in Sudan. They entered Sudan with nothing but clothes in their back. 50% of them are children with inadequate means to survive.

We shared our strong belief that the armed conflict in Ethiopia could lead to the unfortunate potential of being escalated into a full-fledged war threatening the peace and security of the family of nations. We appealed to the Canadian government to rely on the moral authority of the Canadian society and utilize all unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral means to stop the hostilities in Ethiopia and terminate the multiple violations of the fundamental rights of humankind there. We requested Canada to continue to stand against genocide, ethnic cleansing, and aggression on the one hand and for peace, human rights, humanitarian support and peaceful engagement on the other. We specifically demanded the following measures by the Canadian government:

- Utilize your bilateral relationship with the government of Ethiopia and pressure it to stop its military operations against Tigrayans and choose a peaceful solution with the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF).

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

- The government of Ethiopia must stop hunting Tigrayans anywhere.
- Both sides must respect international law and take all necessary measures to protect civilians fleeing the war zones by allowing them to cross the border into Sudan and seek refugee protection.
- No obstacle should be made in the way of delivering humanitarian relief to the civilian population in the affected areas and in refugee camps in Sudan.
- Work towards a multilateral solution by mobilizing the United Nations Organization specifically the UN Security Council to stop war in Ethiopia.
- Use the Canada reputation as a global human right pioneer to mobilize European, Asian, African, Latin American, Australian and other Canadian allies to intervene for immediate stop of the conflict.
- Facilitating the process of peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia through a just and free election with the aim of establishment of a full representative government.
- Work towards repatriation of refugees to Ethiopia following the ceasefire between belligerent forces.

We continued with our peaceful efforts by writing to the Nobel Committee on November 17, 2020, requested the Committee to protect the brilliant principles of the Nobel Prize and play a leading role in putting an immediate halt to the armed conflict in Ethiopia. Our appeal was based on the Committee's decision in awarding the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. Abiy Ahmed Ali, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. With the continuation of the occupation of Tigray, the CCVT conducted a thorough research about war crimes and crimes against humanity in Tigray and Eritrea.





INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

At dawn on Thursday, December 31, 2020, the Iranian regime hanged a juvenile offender Mohammad Hassan Rezaei at the Lakan Prison in the city of Rasht in the north of Iran. He was detained at the age sixteen, twelve years before allegedly for involvement in a group fighting that led to the death of a citizen. According to the Amnesty International, he was forced to confess under torture and received death penalty on the basis of his confession. He lived in a death row for 12 years and was taken for execution twice before the implementation of his sentence. According to the Amnesty International, Iran had executed at least 73 young offenders between January 2005 to November 2015.

With the help of the International Committee, the CCVT wrote to the Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs on 1 January 2021 and shared its concern about the global practice of imposing death penalty against juvenile offenders. We raised the difficulties of getting the exact number of child executions across the globe, as some countries carry it out in total secrecy. The following countries are notorious for the imposition of death penalties against child offenders: Iran, Nigeria, Yemen, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Somalia (in Semi-autonomous Puntland region), Sudan and the USA.

The CCVT explained the reasons behind the exemption of child offenders from death penalty: their immaturity, children's lack of ability to fully understand the nature and outcome of their anti-social acts and their emotionality to be misused or be provoked by adults to commit horrible crimes. We shared the example of the child soldiers, brainwashed to even kill their family members. Due to their young age, they have the potential to reform themselves rapidly and compensate for their offences.


There is a consensus among jurists that the prohibition of death penalty against children should be considered *as jus cogens*, a principle of international law binding on all states regardless of their accession to a particular treaty. Strict prohibition of capital punishment against children is enshrined in at least five major international human rights treaties as well as regional instruments. It is interesting that almost all states have acceded to one or more of these treaties. It should also be noted that various inter-governmental bodies have frequently appealed for the strict prohibition of the death penalty against children.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

According to the Article 68 of the International Humanitarian Law of 12 August 1949 (4th Geneva Convention), "In any case, the death penalty may not be pronounced against a protected person who was under eighteen years of age at the time of the offence." This is repeated in article 77 (5) of its Additional Protocol I (adopted in 1977) and Article 6(4) its Additional Protocol II. Article 6(5) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, adopted in 1966) provides that "Sentence of death shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below eighteen years of age and shall not be carried out on pregnant women." According to Article 37 (a) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted in 1989), "Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age. . ."

Among regional treaties, Article 5(3) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (adopted in 1990) has excluded children below the age of 18 from the death sentence. According to the Article 4(5) of the American Convention on Human Rights (adopted in 1969), "Capital punishment shall not be imposed upon persons who, at the time the crime was committed, were under 18 years of age. . .". It is important to note that according to the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) death penalty is abolished for every human person across the world.

The CCVT made an urgent appeal to the Canadian government to utilize all its unilateral, bilateral, regional and multilateral means and work towards protection of children against death penalty.



INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Following a thorough research by the International Committee, the CCVT wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on February 9, 2021, raising concerns about the aftermath of the armed conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia. We brought the Minister's attention to the fact that the Turkish-back offensive of the Azerbaijani army against Armenian-supported forces in the Nagorno-Karabakh region erupted on September 27, 2020. The fighting ended on November 9, 2020, with a joint statement of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. It was followed by a trilateral ceasefire agreement signed between these countries (November 10., 2020) and the deployment of several thousand Russian peacekeeping forces to the border areas. The war resulted in thousands of casualties and a deep humanitarian crisis with over 100,000 displaced Armenians. They living an awkward life of displacement in the middle of a global pandemic.

According to the Amnesty International (AI), both Azerbaijani and Armenian military forces committed war crimes during this six-week armed conflict. Report about blatant violation of the International Humanitarian Law was based on the AI's verification of 22 videos depicting extrajudicial executions, the ill-treatment of prisoners of war, the decapitation of captives and the desecration of the corpses of hostile forces.

Based on the reports of the Human Rights Watch, Azerbaijan and Armenia hold scores of Prisoners of War (POWs), who live under awful conditions including lack of safety, forced confession, physical abuse and constant humiliation. The Human Rights Watch has reported about the Armenian POWs being subjected to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment by the Azerbaijani military forces. The videos received by this prestigious human rights agency show "Azerbaijani captors variously slapping, kicking, and prodding Armenian POWs, and compelling them, under obvious duress and with the apparent intent to humiliate, to kiss the Azerbaijani flag, praise Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, swear at Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, and declare that Nagorno-Karabakh is Azerbaijan."


INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The maltreatment of POWs and other captives is strictly prohibited under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and article 8 of the Rome Statute for International Criminal Court. According to Article 13 of the Geneva Convention III, relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War: “Prisoners of war must at all times be humanely treated. Any unlawful act or omission by the Detaining Power causing death or seriously endangering the health of a prisoner of war in its custody is prohibited, and will be regarded as a serious breach of the present Convention.”

The CCVT reiterated its utmost concern about the precarious ceasefire in Nagorno-Karabakh. We urged the Canadian government to utilize all bilateral, regional and multilateral means with regards to the aftermath of this conflict and work towards a durable peace, respect for international human rights instruments, humanitarian relief, immediate release of POWs and an end to impunity. We shared our strong conviction that the outbreak of a new war would produce more casualties, more displacements, more destruction, more poverty, more deprivation and all sorts of epidemic diseases. We specifically demanded the following measures by the Minister:

- Call upon all relevant actors to provide full access for humanitarian relief to reach the civilian population in the affected areas in collaboration with the United Nations.
- Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment against the POWs and other captive must immediately be stopped and they must be protected according to the international humanitarian and human rights instruments.
- POWs and other captives must immediately be released and be returned to their families according to the article 8 of the tripartite agreement that calls for the “exchange of prisoners of war, hostages and other detainees as well as the remains of the fatalities.”
- The governments of Azerbaijan and Armenia must be urged to allow external and independent investigations, preferably from the Office of the UN Human Rights Commissioner, about the violation of international law by their military forces. Authorities of the belligerent countries must identify and prosecute all those responsible for violation of International Humanitarian Law, including commanders who ordered or consented to these heinous crimes.
- The governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan must engage in an ongoing dialogue about durable peace, security of people, stability of the region and prosperity of people based on mutual cooperation.





INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

The CCVT wrote to the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on February 20, 2021, raising grave concerns about the safety and security of writers, artists, journalists, human rights supporters and relief workers around the globe. Journalists are at risk, because they oppose human rights violations, expose corruption, cover conflicts and report about injustice and violence. We appealed to the Prime Minister to rely on the moral authority of the Canadian society and utilize all unilateral, bilateral and multilateral means to protect them on the one hand and provide them with a safe refuge in Canada on the other.

We shared the report of the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression about the brutal murder of more than fifty journalists across the world in 2019. Scores of others have experienced imprisonment, severe torture and disappearance without a trace. There are quite a few journalists who have escaped their countries of origin looking for protection. Over the past 10 years, a journalist or media worker has been killed every four days. In Ethiopia, for instance, before and after the outbreak of War in Northern Tigray, journalists have faced systematic detention, widespread threats and intimidation – and even physical attacks, torture, risk of life and house being ransacked.

Journalists face physical, psychological, judicial and economic threats at the hands of state actors and politicians in the course of exercising their professional job. Despite all these difficulties, journalists continue doing their job with heroic resiliency and dedication in hostile environments. History will remember the coronavirus campaign through reports by journalists across the world, many of whom are putting their health and even their lives at risk in order to cover the pandemic from the frontlines.

We specifically made the following demands from the Prime Minister of Canada:

- Ensure the safety and security of journalists around the world in a way that they can continue with their professional missions in a peaceful atmosphere.
- Take effective measures to protect the safety of journalists at risk and call for the release those who languish in jails and detention centers.
- Urge the governments to address the impunity of perpetrators and prosecute those responsible for murder, disappearance and imprisonment of journalists.
- Create a favorable environment for free, independent and diverse media at the global level in line with provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Right and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

We strongly support the suggestion of the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression that the Canadian government adopts a fast-track program for the resettlement of “Journalists at Risk,” including those who are unable to leave their countries of origin seeking protection in a third country.

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Canada's Contribution to the UN Voluntary Fund

The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture believes that the UN Voluntary Fund for Victim of Torture (UNVFVT) is instrumental to the rehabilitation of survivors of torture. It provides opportunity and access to remedies for victims and their family members through direct assistance including psychological, medical, legal, humanitarian, social, and vocational among others in order to support their independent livelihood. The support of UNVFVT is an opportunity for survivors to redress and to experience empowerment in their healing process. We have reiterated that Canada is one of the initiators of the UN Voluntary Fund for Torture Victims, but its contribution is minimal (\$60,000) in comparison with other industrialized countries. We have frequently brought it to the attention of the Canadian government that given Canada's prominence in the human rights movement, this is inexcusable. Unfortunately, the government has not yet considered our frequent requests. We expect that the Canadian government increase its contribution to the UN Voluntary Fund and allocate more resources for the rehabilitation of torture services at home.



PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT

The function of the Public Education Committee is to contribute to the implementation of the organizational mandate to raise awareness of the continuing effects of torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity on survivors and their families, and to work for their protection and integrity. The Committee also strives to contribute to the development of human rights in theory and in practice on a domestic, national, regional and global scale. The CCVT is also a learning centre, focusing on torture, other international crimes, and protection and rehabilitation of survivors through activities that include research, production and distribution of learning materials, onsite training and education programs for staff, volunteers, and students and the community, as well as public forums and presentations - locally and globally. The CCVT is involved in a partnership with universities, colleges, hospitals as well as refugee and human rights agencies to promote its mandate.

In its public education endeavors, the CCVT maintained a close collaboration with the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), Ontario Council for Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), the Canadian Centre for International Justice (CCIJ), York University, University of Toronto, Ryerson University, University of Ottawa, Wilfred Laurier University, George Brown College, Humber College, Seneca College, FCJ Refugee Centre, Amnesty International and the branch office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The CCVT staff continued to play a major role in the Speakers' Bureau of the United Way. It has been a wonderful training opportunity to educate non-profit agencies as well as business communities about the scourge of torture, war, genocide, crimes against humanity and human trafficking while paying special attention to the need for rehabilitation of survivors. The CCVT staff attends consultation meetings of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB), Canada Border Service Agency and the Immigration (CBSA), Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and provide them with feedback about government policies and regulations.



PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT

Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in a training program on issues related to after-effects of torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity. We are also in collaboration with the Barbara Schleifer Clinic. We have addressed issues such as trauma, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, vicarious traumatization, etc.

The CCVT continued its partnership with a number of settlement agencies affiliated with the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP). The Scarborough branch of the CCVT collaborated with the Toronto East Quadrant as well as Eglinton East/Kennedy Park Network. The latter includes a network of many agencies such as the YMCA, Tropicana, Public Health, the City of Toronto, etc. The CCVT is collaborating with almost all member agencies with regards to public education on health and legal services.

Throughout the year, the CCVT conducted a certificate course on Torture, Trauma, their psychological Impacts and Mental Health: meeting the needs of survivors. CCVT-affiliated psychiatrists, physicians and other professionals provided participants with useful presentations. The course focused on the scourge of torture, refugees, women survivors, LGBTQ, children & youth, family, addiction, resilience and vicarious trauma.

For years, the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) has celebrated April 4th and June 20th as the Canadian and international day in support of refugees. This year, the CCVT collaborated with sister agencies and refugee rights communities to celebrate these important days through the use of public media.



PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT

Since 1998, the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) has celebrated June 26th as a commemoration of the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. Unlike the last 22 years, this year, the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT) could not celebrate June 26th by rallying clients and supporter together due to the pandemic of Covid-19. We celebrated the event by using Zoom meeting, in which scores of clients, volunteers, colleagues and supporters participated.

The program included stories by survivors, artistic presentations by clients and volunteers, including music, dances, poems, etc. The CCVT Policy Analyst and Researcher gave a PowerPoint presentation about the history of the CCVT celebration of June 26th since 1998. We shared our strong conviction that celebration of June 26 becomes more and more meaningful in the context of the continuing global pandemic trauma of Covid-19. Coronavirus has endangered the lives of millions of human beings, specifically helpless prisoners who face double torture and the specter of death is hanging over their heads. We must not forget against torture under any condition, at any time for any reason or by any person – the need for absolute prohibition of torture

As a part of its public education program, the CCVT sent the following message to its partners: We, at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT), join millions of Canadians and celebrate Canada Day (*Fête du Canada*) as our national day in commemoration of the anniversary of July 1, 1867, On this day Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick joined the rest of Canada and paved the way for full independence of the Canadian society that occurred much later with the passage of the 1982 Constitution Act. We are proud of the 1982 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom that guarantees fundamental human rights and the right to life and security of person. Canada is one of the unique multi-cultural and multi-faith countries of the world. We are pleased that there is no systemic torture in Canada and the Canadian free health is a great help to people in low-income brackets. As Canadians, we must protect these achievements like the pupil of our eyes.



PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT

Canada is not, however, free from racism and xenophobia. The rights of aboriginal people have been violated frequently. There is hardly any effective civil control over the activities of police and enforcement officers. Poverty and homelessness are reaching an alarming point. It is a fact that poverty brings violence and the vice versa. This dangerous vicious circle must be stopped and the government should come up with a national strategy to combat these social evils.

The CCVT congratulates this important historical day to the great people of Canada and reaffirms its solidarity with them. We expect our government to intervene actively towards implementation of the provisions of the Canadian Charter and ratify all international human rights instruments. A vital link must be maintained by the government between civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other. The rights of aboriginal people as well as the refugee and immigration rights, including the right to asylum, must be protected. We do hope that the government takes an active leadership role in international relations towards peace, global justice and general disarmament.

The CCVT Policy Analyst provided a series of Zoom presentation on different aspects of human rights:

- Human Rights: A Historical Background on November 1, 2020
- Human Rights in Philosophy on December 10, 2020
- Human Rights in Literature on January 14, 2021
- Women's Rights: A Historical Perspective on March 17, 2021



PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT

On November 25, 2020, the CCVT Policy Analyst and Researcher joined a Zoom international panel on the Scourge of Torture in Turkey organized by a human rights group named Turkey Tribunal Team. Following the event, the organizers wrote to the CCVT panelist: “We thank you for your time and commitment, also for your patience against the odd technical troubles we had in the beginning. We hope that such international solidarity activities will have a growing impact for restoring the fundamental rights in Turkey and rest of the world. Keep in touch and stay safe.” Following is a gist of the presentation:

During the fiscal year 2017-2018, the CCVT served 52 survivors of torture from Turkey, among them 29 men, 16 women, 2 children (girls) 5 youth (2 boys and 3 girls). We documented their physical and psychological torture and provided the with our ongoing holistic services. Based on the CCVT experience, people have tortured in Turkey due to their Kurdish ethnic background, Alevi faith, affiliation with Alevi Cultural Centre and the Dehip Kurdish Party. Despite lack of anti-LGBTQ legislation in Turkey, people have been tortured due to their sexual orientation and same-sex relationship. We have served both women and men who were severely punished and humiliated by homophobic police.

Torture in Turkey include both physical and psychological. The CCVT clients have shared with us their infamous physical torture as follows: beating, mutilation, burns, whipping, electrical shock, hanging, exposure to physical hazard by pouring pressure water on head and body, sexual abuse and in some cases rape as a technique of torture, mock execution plus food and water deprivation, etc.

Following are some common impacts of physical and psychological torture from our Turkish clients: pain, lack of concentration, memory loss, nervousness, fatigue, flashbacks, fear, nightmares, suicidal thoughts, feeling of detachment, losing passion for life, hyper-vigilance, hypersensitivity, restlessness, avoiding people especially police and those in uniform, headaches, anxiety, feeling of detachment, irritability, anger and insomnia. We have found our clients from Turkey highly resilient and highly responsive to our holistic method of treatment.

All these happened despite the fact that Turkey is basically a civil society with a brilliant history of secularism: separation of state from the religion. Through her brilliant writers such as Nazim Hikmet, Aziz Nisin, Orhan Kemal and the Nobel Prize laureate, Orhan Pamuk, Tukey has shared its rich cultural heritages to the entire world. I am optimistic about the future of human rights in Turkey.

PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT

It has been for years that the government of Turkey has put reservation on the application of the Geneva Convention of 1951 and its refugee protocol of 1967. They can only be applied to the European population. This provision has left thousands of asylum seekers in Turkey unprotected. The government of Turkey carries a bad record in sending people back to torture and even execution. This is against article 33 of the Geneva Refugee Convention and article 3 of the UN Convention against Torture. The government of Turkey has recently emerged as a regional superpower invading Kurdish population of Syria and encouraging the Government of Azerbaijan to choose a military operation rather than a peaceful dispute over its dispute with Armenia on Nagorno Karabakh. Hundreds of civilians have been perished during these operations. The Turkish government has hardly considered addressing the impunity of torturers and perpetrators of war crimes and those who have committed crimes against humanity.

CCVT's journal, the *First Light*, continues to provide valued and critical commentaries on current issues along with information on the Centre's programs and activities. The last issue was on No to the Evil of the War. It contained articles and research by the CCVT staff, volunteers, clients and supporters. *First Light* has and will continue to serve as a valuable means of education and public awareness. *First Light*, along with other research reports and public education materials are available on the CCVT web site: www.ccv.org

Participation at a Global Panel on Torture in Turkey

All these happened despite the fact that Turkey is basically a civil society with a brilliant history of secularism: separation of state from the religion. Through her brilliant writers such as Nazim Hikmet, Aziz Nisin, Orhan Kemal and the Nobel Prize laureate, Orhan Pamuk, Turkey has shared its rich cultural heritages to the entire world. I am optimistic about the future of human rights in Turkey.



LEGAL COMMITTEE

REPORT

The CCVT Legal Committee is presently composed of lawyers (in different fields of refugee/immigration law and human rights) and a staff member who acts as a liaison bringing any legal problem CCVT clients may have, to the attention of the Committee. The Legal Committee is also specifically active in the field of policy analysis, legal support and research as well as being involved in monitoring national and international human rights instruments dealing with torture, genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, impunity as well as activities of bodies involved in protection and rehabilitation of survivors, refugees and other uprooted people. The Committee recruits its members from the CCVT Board, Legal Network, staff and volunteers and it provides recommendations to the CCVT Board; it includes at least one person from the Board and one CCVT staff member.

The CCVT was approached by a group of refugee and human rights lawyers in November 2020 to intervene with the Federal Court of Appeal against the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement. Other NGO interveners included the Canadian Council for Refugees, Amnesty International and the Canadian Council of Churches. The CCVT made a joint intervention with the Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAIHR). On December 30, 2020, we made a joint move for intervention with the Registry Office of the Federal Court of Appeal. The move for intervention was accepted shortly afterwards.

With its unique expertise in serving survivors of torture, war, genocide, crimes against humanity and human trafficking, the CCVT supplemented the contributions of other interveners. While all three interventions based their discussions on the application of international law, the CCVT and the CLAIHR based their arguments on refugee protection and the protection of survivors of torture.



LEGAL COMMITTEE

REPORT

- Our intervention related to the interpretation of the Safe Third Country Agreement (STCA) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, both of which must conform with Canada's international legal obligations.
- The Proposed Interveners were not seeking to advance policy objectives that were not already directly before the Court.
- We referred to international law with special focus on the *non-refoulement* obligations as set out in the *Refugee Convention* and the *UN Convention Against Torture*.
- We based our intervention on the specific provisions of the binding international human rights instruments that were not fully explored by the parties.
- We shared our concerns on consequences of the application of international human rights law in Canada and Canada's compliance with those obligations.
- We reiterated the fact that the CCVT and the CLAIHR had experiences making submissions before Canadian Courts regarding Canada's international human rights law obligations and working on issues connected to immigration, refugee rights and protection of survivors.
- We incorporated the relevant practical facts and evidence in in our arguments to ground the international human rights implicated.
- We argued about Canada's obligation to ensure that individuals under its jurisdiction are not subject to rights violations when those violations are foreseeable; we found the foreseeability of rights violations in the United States relevant.
- We did not base our arguments on the extraterritorial reach of the *Charter*. Our submissions related to the actions of Canada, on Canadian soil, in its determinations relating to the *STCA*.
- We maintained that our proposed submissions would assist the Court in considering the important aspects of the issues at stake in the Appeal.

The Federal Court of Appeal rejected our move on in late January 2021. It was frustrating, because we did not find the Court's arguments convincing. However, we felt that our endeavor was not wasted. The court had acknowledged our expertise: "The proposed interveners are high quality organizations. Their causes are important and worthy of attention and consideration. In the right case with the right kind of intervention, they can contribute much." The court dismissed the move, because, according to the court, it was untimely.





LEGAL COMMITTEE

REPORT

During the past year, the CCVT staff members participated regularly at the Quality of Life Meetings organized by Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA). Along with refugee and human rights lawyers as well as community agencies we raised the legal and other problems of the Immigration detainees:

- Conditions of the Immigration Holding Centers (IHC) in terms of minimum international standard of behavior with detainees as well as their health, nutrition and recreational facilities. and life State of the IHC
- Update on Contracts within the IHC- Building/Construction and detainees' security issues.
- Update on the number of detainees, their outbreak in terms of age, gender, countries of origin and the duration of their detention. We have been particularly interested in getting information about detention of children and the number of removals.
- Phones at the IHC to maintain connections with the outside world, specifically with the Legal Aid and counsels.
- Availability of extracurricular activities offered to detainees at the IHC, during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Engagement legal counsel at all stages of detention review.
- Timely delivery of the detention review disclosure, in particular 48 hour reviews.
- Does CBSA have any information regarding a new phone system being set up in provincial correctional facilities and whether immigration detainees will have access to this system?

LEGAL COMMITTEE

REPORT

Following consultation with the Legal Committee, the CCVT provided information to senior clients about Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income. Quite a few clients have reached the age of 65 and are eligible for these benefits. We provided some with letters of support.

One of the greatest challenges of the CCVT during the fiscal year 2018-19 was helping a client who was at risk of her refugee status being vacated by the CBSA. This challenge continued in the fiscal years of 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. A senior client of the CCVT also received a letter from the CBSA about vacation of her status due to her emergency visit to her country of origin. With the help of the Legal Committee we have prepared reports on their exceptional cases. We have continued with providing them with our holistic services including settlement and trauma counselling.

With feedback from the Legal Committee, we have been continuing helping clients in immigration limbo. We have been collaborating with the Refugee Law Office supporting a client who has been accepted under Pre-Removal Risk Assessment, but is considered inadmissible to Canada and therefore lives in a tormenting limbo for the last 22 years. We, presently, help him with his submission for Ministerial Relief.

The Legal Committee has been involved with the PRRA application of a client since 2017-18. Through CCVT collaboration with the Refugee Law Office (RLO) and in consultation with the CCVT Legal Committee, she received a positive answer to her PRRA. We continued helping her with her landing application by referring her to appropriate agencies and providing her with settlement counselling and mental health protection. She received her permanent resident status last year. She suffered in limbo as a rejected refugee claimant and suffers from after-effects of trauma. We have been continuing with providing her with our trauma and settlement counselling.

The Barbara Schiffer's Clinic has accepted to provide legal consultations to two clients of the CCVT every month by its legal experts. Under this program the women clients of the CCVT, who are survivors of domestic violence, received legal information about their refugee and immigration problems as well as other legal issues.

LEGAL COMMITTEE

REPORT

Under the guidance of the Legal Committee, the CCVT has been monitoring the position of the Canadian government with regards to the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT). Based on feedback from the government, it seems that it would take some more years for our government to ratify this marvelous piece of international law. The CCVT has written frequently to the Prime Minister of Canada about the utmost need of ratification of the OPCAT (March 20, 2014, April 15, 2014 and December 10, 2014, March 29, 2016). We have attended tele-conferences to that effect including one with the participation of other stake-holders on January 12, 2017. We have also written to the Premiers of all the Canadian provinces and territories and urged that Canada should sign and seek ratification of the *Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (Optional Protocol or OPCAT). The CCVT collaborated with Amnesty International in this direction. On 10 December 2014, the CCVT endorsed Amnesty International’s petition to this effect.

The statement of the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Stephane Dion, in late 2016 that “optional protocol is no longer optional” created lots of hope for the rapid ratification of the OPCAT. We shared our frustrations with the Minister that “thus far, no action has been taken in this regard”. We brought it to the attention of the Minister that apathy as such “is in stark contrast to the leadership that Canada showed during the early stages of the Protocol’s development and adoption.

In December 2002, the United Nations adopted the OPCAT, an international instrument that stands to make an important contribution to preventing torture and ill-treatment worldwide. The OPCAT lays out a framework for regular national and international level inspections of detention centers, with a view to identifying and remedying the conditions that encourage and allow torture and ill-treatment to take place. The OPCAT entered the stage of enforcement in 2006. As of October 2019, 90 states have ratified the protocol.



LEGAL COMMITTEE

REPORT

Throughout the year, the Legal Committee provided CCVT with advice on the following issues: Immigration limbo, legal obstacles to family reunification, and different kinds of inadmissibility problems, citizenship, housing and eviction. With close assistance from the Legal Committee, the CCVT made its best efforts to hasten the landing process of vulnerable survivors of torture, war, genocide and crimes against humanity. We also wrote to the Immigration Section of the Canadian embassies asking for acceleration of the process of family unification of our clients' close relative.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Fatoumata (Fanta) Ongoiba is the Executive Director of Africans in Partnership Against Aids. She is a leader in the African community and a former member of the Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS and the current co-chair of African/ Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS. She holds a Masters in Cooperative Business Development and Management, a Masters in Business Administration, a PhD in Economics, and is a former Board Chair of CCVT. She was on many boards such as PASAN, CAS, Women's Health in Women's Hand, CANORA, ASDC and is currently a PhD candidate on Social Justice Education at the University of Toronto.

Richard Wazana has an LLB from Osgood Hall Law School, York University, and MSW and a Masters of Education from the University of Toronto. He is currently working as an immigration and refugee lawyer. Mr. Wazana brings extensive social policy and social services experience. He was actively involved in the following organizations: Parkdale Community Legal Services, Kids Help Phone, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Laidlaw Foundation and Family Services Association of Toronto. He is currently the **Chair of the CCVT Board**.

Dr. Branka Agic is Director of Knowledge Exchange with the Provincial System Support Program (PSSP) at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). She is an Assistant Professor and Associate Director of the Master of Science in Community Health (MSCHS) in Addiction and Mental Health Program at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto. Branka holds PHD in Health and Behavioral Sciences along with a Medical Degree from the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Branka has extensive experience in counselling, research and service development with immigrants and refugees. Her primary research interest is in the area of mental health and substance use among immigrants, refugees, ethno-cultural and racialized groups.

Monika Franklin has been involved in newcomer and settlement issues for many years. She is a lawyer and worked for more than 20 years in the Ontario legal clinic system, most recently as staff lawyer and social assistance team lead at Flemingdon Community Legal Services in the Thorncliffe Park area of Toronto. She provided services to low income, vulnerable and marginalized populations, particularly on social assistance/disability, human rights, housing and immigration issues. She is currently on the Board of MCIS Language Solutions, which provides interpreters to many courts, tribunals, hospitals and legal clinics and also trains newcomers to work as interpreters. She was on the Board of CCVT between 1998 and 2001 before rejoining again and currently she is **Vice Chair of the Board**.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wajeeha Rafat is a passionate finance professional, has a splendid career of over 15 years in Finance, Audit and Consulting across large global companies such as Ernst & Young, Siemens, Royal Bank of Canada. She is CPA (Canada), CMA (UK) and SAP CO Certified (Germany) and has a Bachelors in Commerce and Masters in Economics degree. She started her career with Ernst & Young, conducted external audit of clients in multiple industries including non-profit organizations. She was able to get her first job in the Canada with Scotia Bank as a Manager Reporting and Analysis and thereafter served Royal Bank of Canada for over 3 years as Manager Financial and Regulatory Reporting. She took active part in various volunteering activities hosted by or sponsored by RBC. Recently she raised funds for RBC Race for the Kids and was recognized as the top 10 fund raiser of the CFO Group. Wajeeha is very passionate about volunteering and has been associated with CCVT for almost five years.

Ruba Ali Al-Hassani is a PhD candidate at Osgoode Hall Law School, York University, studying post-conflict state sovereignty and state-building. She holds a Masters Degree in Criminology from the University of Toronto that focused on cases of torture at Guantanamo Bay & Abu Ghraib, and a Masters of Law from Osgoode Hall Law School that focused on the Saddam Hussein trial. She has taught Sociology at York University and at her alma mater, Trent University, where she had majored in Psychology and Sociology. Ruba is a co-founder and former Board Member of the Canadian Association of Muslim Women in Law. She is also a member of the Board of Directors at the Canadian Alopecia Areata Foundation. During her free time, she is an interpreter for the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project, and a regional representative of the Iraqi Cooperative Orphan Aid Foundation. Her research interests are many, but focus on Iraqi Studies, terrorism and counter-terrorism, digital sociology, the sociology of storytelling, as well as the sociology of law, crime, and social control.

Kemi Jacobs is Executive Director of the Delta Family Resource Centre and has also been Director of Property Management at one of the largest social housing companies in North America, with a focus on quality housing, the engagement of tenants and building a healthy organization. In her work in the west of Toronto, her team is focusing on capacity-building, good customer service, clean buildings and a strong operational performance. Previously Kemi lead the Children and Youth section at TCHC. Under her leadership, there was a total re-orientation of the department. As the focus changed to youth development approaches and on the integration of anti-oppression framework into work with children and youth. With over 20 years of community involvement, Kemi is a past President of the Canadian Council for Refugees, former Executive Director of CultureLink Settlement Services and past chairperson of the National Anti-Racism Council of Canada.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Carolyn Filteau recently completed a PHD at Osgoode Law School in Toronto, Canada. Her PHD thesis title is Rights and Responsibilities: What are the Prospects for R2P in the International/Transnational Arena? She also holds an LLM in Law specializing in Dispute Resolution from Osgoode Law School and BA, MA in Anthropology from the University of British Columbia. She taught Conflict Resolution at Seneca College in Toronto and is currently teaching Negotiation at the Life Institute Ryerson University. Her research interests include international law, humanitarian intervention legal theory, global conflict, the responsibility to protect, global governance, nongovernmental organizations and conflict resolution. She has presented papers at international conferences and published in conference proceedings and journals. She is currently a Member of the Board of the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture and is also working as a Senior Researcher for the Canadian Centre for Equality.

Jehan Teja was born in Toronto to first-generation East African Indian immigrant parents, and grew up very aware of the challenges around resettlement in a new country. Since her early teens, she has volunteered in many capacities with the Shia Ismaili Muslim institutions, including extensive work with youth from families that had recently fled Central Asia (Afghanistan in particular). She has an undergraduate degree in Economics and Political Science, and a Masters degree in Economics, both from McMaster University. For four years, she was a capital planner with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, but in early 2014 she left this position to pursue her current endeavours as the owner and artist behind Azki Jewelry, through which she designs and creates ethical jewelry and fashion accessories. Most recently her work has become a permanent feature at the Aga Khan Museum shop.

Dr. Jaswant Kaur Bajwa is a Professor and Research Coordinator in the Centre for Preparatory and Liberal Studies (CPLS) at George Brown College. In her work as academician, clinician, anti-violence advocate, and community researcher she uses an intersectional lens and is passionate about the use of education as a tool for social change and empowerment. Both her research and practice since the early 1990s have focused on the impact of violence and mental health issues on learning and the educational changes (both at micro and systemic levels) that need to be made in order to foster a safe and inclusive learning environment for students. She has worked with students with histories of violence, refugees, people marginalized as a result of mental health issues and other systemic barriers. In her role, she provides leadership to staff and students and is responsible for the development of the research capacity within the division. She leads a number of research projects at the college. She has a PhD in Clinical Psychology with the focus on psychological burnout in caring professionals.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Haleh Doulatyari Azar is a physician, currently practicing family medicine, psychotherapy and counselling. She also is president of Canadian-Iranian Medical Association. In regards to administrative experience, she acted as Provincial Chief of Family Health in Iran and as Vice-President of Medical Services and Chief Medical Officer in Northern Region of Manitoba.

Hope Masika is a Senior Funding Officer with the TD Auto Finance Bank. She holds a Masters degree in Public Affairs, Policy Analysis and Human Security (Refugee settlement) from Sciences Po Institute of Political studies (Institut d'études politiques de Paris), France. Hope has volunteered with CCVT since 2018.

Fiona C. Thomas, PhD in the Clinical Psychology program at Ryerson University and Vanier Scholar (2017-2020). Her academic interests are in cross-cultural mental health, including adaption, delivery, and evaluation of mental health interventions for individuals often overlooked by mainstreams mental health services. Fiona's PHD dissertation examines the impact of daily stressors and coping mechanisms on trauma symptoms severity in post-conflict Northern Sri Lanka. Her doctoral research builds on her academic and fieldwork with refugee populations in transit countries, including Nepal and Malaysia. Fiona also remains actively involved in supporting newcomer populations settle in Canada.



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| Mahnoush Kay Kohpaei | | Training Project Manager |
| Michelle | Collier | Director of Human Resources |
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| Ismail | Elnour | Community Engagement Assistant Worker |
| Juliette | Ntege | Administrative Assistant/Volunteer Coordinator |
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| Leah | Macdonad | Settlement Counselor - Youth |
| Lee Anne | Corlett | Language II Instructor |
| Madina | Kane | Administrative and Outreach Worker |
| Margaret | Forsyth | Language III Instructor |
| Mathura | Nagaratnam | Settlement Counselor - Tamil |
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| Gladys | | |
| Mildred | Fidele | Settlement Counselor - Somali |
| Mona | Kalil | Settlement Counselor - Arabic |



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| Nisreen | Al Khatib | Settlement Counselor - Arabic |
| Rahel | Gebrechristos | Settlement Counselor - Amharic\Tigrigna Temporary Settlement/Child and Youth Counselor (Maternity Leave - Nov. 30, 2020) |
| Rahel | Hailemichael | Settlement Counselor - Amharic\Tigrigna |
| Rigbe | Tsige | Administrative Assistant |
| Rosy | Bossoke | Youth Mentorship Facilitator / Youth Counselor |
| Samar | Ahmed | Settlement Counselor - Arabic |

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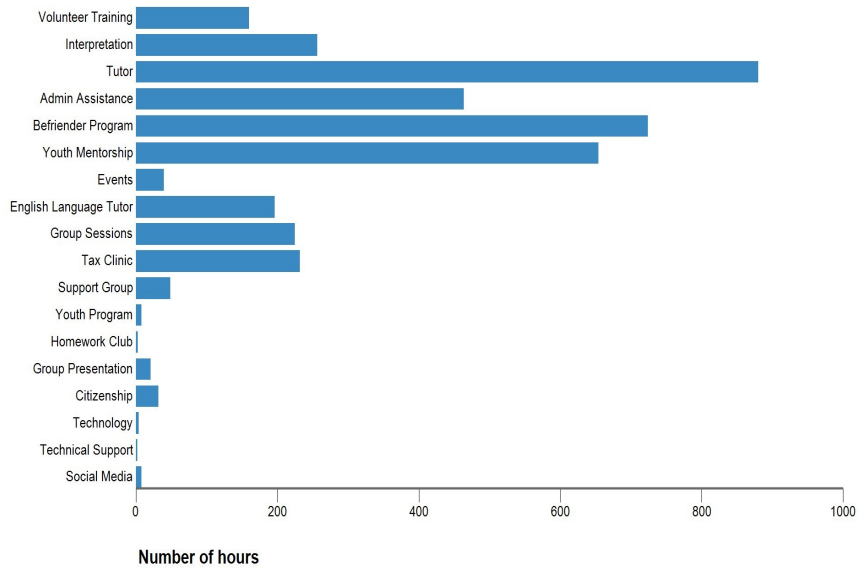
| | |
|-----------|---------|
| Emily | Machado |
| Leigh-Ann | Lee |
| Maryam | Mahjoob |



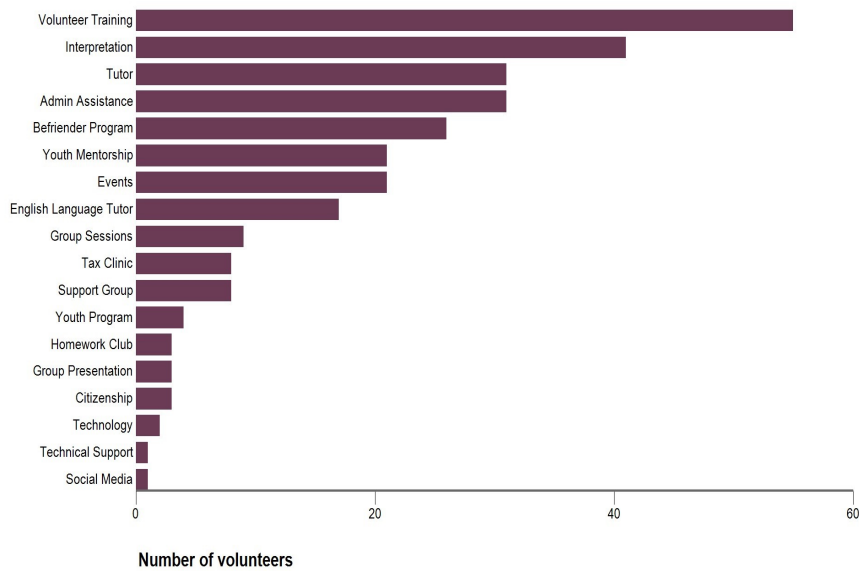
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Activity Category Totals

Logged Hours By Activity Category



Number Of Volunteers By Activity Category



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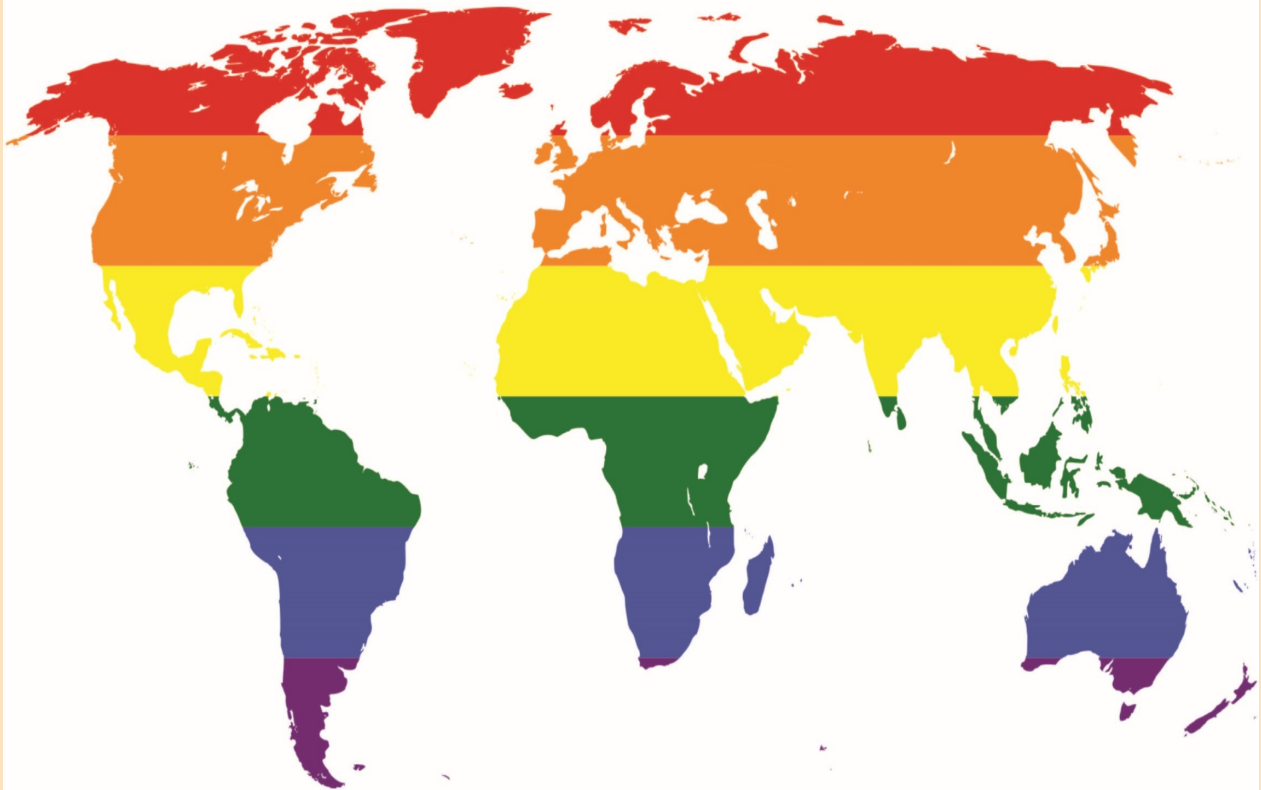




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