

LONDON CROSS CULTURAL LEARNER CENTER

2019-2020 ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT



Our Values

Inclusion

Actively demonstrating respect for the uniqueness of each individual and the richness of diversity while encouraging full participation in daily activities as part of a welcoming community.

Compassion

Expressing caring thoughts and feelings in our interactions with clients, co-workers and all members of our community to foster a welcoming atmosphere that motivates, empowers and impels one to action.

Empowerment

Creating a safe space that supports individuals in making informed choices, building their confidence and self-sufficiency, fostering a sense of belonging in our community.

Advocacy

Actively supporting or intervening on behalf of others with the goal of ensuring rights, opportunities and services are available to all members of our community.

Accountability

2 Conducting ourselves in an ethical, unbiased manner with integrity and respect for others, being answerable to our clients, co-workers, donors, funders, and community.

VISION

A more welcoming community where newcomers can succeed

MISSION

To provide integration services and support to newcomers and promote intercultural awareness and understanding

From the Executive Director



Valerian Marochko

This fiscal year, the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre's ability to adapt to change was unprecedented. We began with in-person services and live events, and shifted in March 2020 to virtual programs and a majority of our staff and volunteers working remotely from home.

In 2019-2020, our in-person annual events included Life As A Refugee and Celebration of Nations. Both welcomed hundreds of newcomers and Londoners. These shared experiences showcased diversity through dance, sport, stories, and educational seminars. In collaboration with several community partners, the CCLC launched the Yazidi Refugee Peer Support Program, thanks to a London Community Foundation grant. Over the next two years, the peer support project will train Yazidi peer leaders to facilitate group counselling sessions and help them navigate the mental health system. This is an important project as London is home to one of the largest Yazidi communities in Canada; most are under the age of 17.

As I reflect on the year that passed, I'm proud of the entire CCLC team and how everyone adapted to meet the challenges we faced. The staff's compassion, patience, and resourcefulness helped ensure the needs of our clients could be met. I am also thankful to our funders, donors, Board members, volunteers, community partners, and corporate sponsors who worked alongside us to ensure newcomers could continue to access our services. Although the fiscal year ended with many unknowns, we are exploring some exciting strategic opportunities and I look forward to reporting back on our progress.

Warmly,

Valerian Marochko, PhD, MBA, CMC
Executive Director

From our Board Chair



Thank you for taking the time to review this 2019-2020 Annual Report. I appreciate your continued commitment to our organization as we work to promote diversity, empathy, and community both in London and abroad.

In my message from last year's annual report, I noted the Board's decision to exceed the government-mandated minimum wage increase in order to ensure that our staff members were earning a living wage. For this year's message, I am inclined to reflect on the additional steps we have taken to support our employees. We enhanced our retirement benefit by moving to a defined benefit pension plan as a way of helping our employees prepare for a secure retirement. In addition, we invested in Trauma and Violence Informed Care (TVIC) initiatives that benefit the health and well-being of both our staff and clients.

Our commitment to supporting and recognizing our volunteers is no less resolute. Given the nature of the programs and services needed by our clients, having those who freely donate their time and energy to ensure successful transitions to living in Canada is invaluable. I would like to share my sincere thanks to CCLC volunteers at every level of the organization, including the Board of Directors. As Board Chair (and, therefore, a volunteer myself), I share your level of dedication to this cause and celebrate your contributions.

As an organization, we have made strides to continue expanding our international presence and amplify our local impact. For instance, Vally made contributions to the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement, bringing together the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the governments, and the NGOs of resettlement countries. Additionally, we began more closely examining opportunities to expand our footprint in the city as a means of better serving existing clients and more comprehensively serving our community. Finally, we solicited staff member feedback through a pitch competition designed to solicit exciting new ideas on how the CCLC can continue to prosper.

Thank you, again, for your support and contributions – whatever form this may have taken.

Sincerely,

Tarek Moharram, BA, JD, PMP
Board Chair

Table of Contents

- 10** Supporting Newcomers
- 12** The “Unachievable” Dream
- 15** Welcoming Newcomers
- 17** Physical and Mental Health
- 19** Resettling in Canada
- 22** Finding Employment
- 23** Learning English
- 24** Making New Connections
- 26** Supporting Families in Schools

- 27** Fostering Diversity
- 28** Language Services
- 29** Portal
- 30** Financial Statement Excerpt
- 31** Board of Directors
- 32** Community Partners
- 34** Donors' Circle



Supporting Newcomers



Moving away from home and resettling in a new country is extremely challenging. Far away from loved ones, memories, and cultural traditions, many newcomers find themselves in a very vulnerable position. The problems are often exacerbated when they are forced to flee from their home and take refuge in places where they don't speak their language or understand and appreciate their culture. These are all unfathomable for most of us, yet every day, somewhere in the world, families are torn apart to get themselves or their loved ones to safety. It is resilience that gets these brave newcomers through unimaginable and wearying journeys to Canada.

At the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre, we encounter many of these resilient people who have sacrificed everything for a chance to live a safe life. We've met single mothers who have taken dangerous journeys to provide safety for their children; parents who have left their livelihood behind to give their small ones a better life; and young adults with traumatic survival stories, impatient to be a part of their new country. Their resilience and strength inspire us.

To support newcomers in adapting to their new surroundings, the CCLC offers a number of services and programs including:

- School-based programs to help families and students connect to the Canadian education system
- Community outreach programs for youth, families, seniors, and adults
- Essential resettlement services, such as referrals to medical resources, life skills training, accommodations, and employment orientation
- Language assessment and referral services
- Translation and interpretation services

The “Unachievable” Dream



Fanny's Story

Photo by Wissam Nassar

For Fanny, everything changed on a scorching hot summer day at school. She was cleaning mud and sweat off her hands after a game of volleyball, when she heard a classmate calling out her name with excitement. “Fanny, Fanny. You are going to Canada!” Stunned by the news at first, Fanny looked at her classmate with disbelief. “This must be a prank,” she thought. “I just couldn’t believe my luck. I never thought I would ever get to hear those words. I thought it would remain an unachievable dream.”

In June 2016, Fanny looked forward to a brighter future, leaving her heartbreaking past behind, and giving her son, Ezra, a peaceful childhood that she never experienced. Her own childhood was cut short during a home raid in Fizi, her hometown in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where her family was killed. She was forced to find her own way at only 7 years old. To survive, and faced with homelessness, Fanny supported herself by selling vegetables, but she also managed to enroll herself in school. “My father was always very strict with us about school and homework. So, I knew education was my only way out.” Fanny also learned that posing as a boy would protect her from unwanted attention and harm.

Despite all the hardships and difficulties, Fanny found a home with a woman who let her lodge in her house. One evening, at 13 years old, three soldiers approached her. She recalls “I remember having a brief conversation with them; they asked my name and wanted to know where I lived. After that I just know that I was hit on the head, and when I woke up, there was blood everywhere. I wanted to run away, but every part of me hurt.”

Following the terrifying episode, Fanny escaped to Kampala, Uganda in the back of a transport truck. She thought she could start over but despite knowing four languages, she could not speak the native dialect.



After three days with no food or water, she heard two women speaking in Swahili, a language she spoke fluently. She asked if they had or knew of any available jobs so she could buy her own food and water. Although they could not help her, one of the women came back with a bottle of water, and offered to let Fanny stay at her small apartment. Her name was Michelina; Fanny calls her “Mama Michelina.” Not only did Michelina give Fanny a home, but she cared for her. She was amazed with Fanny’s willingness to work hard. Over the next few weeks, Michelina noticed an alarming change in Fanny. She took her to the hospital to confirm her suspicion. Fanny was pregnant. “I didn’t even know what pregnancy was, or how you would become it.” Michelina’s love and support for Fanny did not waver.

Not only did she help Fanny enroll in a prestigious boarding school, but she also registered her as a refugee with the UNHCR, hoping that one day Fanny could be resettled in a better country. When Fanny heard she was coming to Canada, the only thing she wanted to do was run and tell Michelina about it. Sadly, Fanny lost “Mama Michelina” to cancer three years earlier.

Today, Fanny’s son Ezra is 10 years old. He is going to school and dreams of becoming a policeman or a firefighter. Fanny is also in school. She is attending Western University, studying biochemistry, while working part-time. She is happy to call London her home. She has very fond memories of her first days in Canada when she came to the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre. “Those worries that you get when you just landed somewhere, disappeared when (the) CCLC staff started talking to me, directing me, teaching me,” she says. “They give you this smile at the CCLC and with that you just know that you are welcome.”

Welcoming Newcomers



When Government Assisted Refugees arrive at the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre, they are greeted by our Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) team.

In 2019-2020, our RAP team welcomed 449 government-assisted refugees.

2,362

Essential Services
provided

634

Medical Services
Provided

Due to the high number of arrivals in the summer, 161 clients were accommodated at a nearby hotel.

132

Families Greeted
by RAP

236

Syrian Clients
Served



Following their initial orientation, the newcomers were moved to permanent accommodations in London while others chose to relocate to other cities.

29 Clients Relocated

The RAP team has been very successful in bringing London community members together to help newcomers feel more at home, make friends, and improve their English language skills. In 2019-2020, some of our former clients joined the RAP team as Life-Skill workers, and helped newcomers become familiar with their new neighborhood.

728
Hours volunteered

70
Life-Skill Workers

“ I was worried about how I am going to handle the weather, but the immigration and airport personnel were completely ready to receive us at the airport by providing us with winter clothes. I am so happy for all the warm welcome and help that I receive everyday here at the [London Cross Cultural Learner] Centre.”

Physical and Mental Health



21%

Clients With A With
Pre-existing Condition

Fostering well-being is critical to increasing newcomer resilience. After welcoming Government Assisted Refugees, needs assessments are conducted to offer clients individualized support.

“ We used to spend a lot of money and enter severe debt to be able to treat my mother. It was exhausting for all of us; things are much better considering we do not need to spend money for her treatment, medication, etc. Here, everything is available to us and we are not as anxious about our finances. It is also easier for her now that she does not need to do any physical lifting and labour to take care of my brother.”

Point of Pride

We launched the Yazidi Refugee Mental Health Support Program. It was designed to provide mental and emotional health support for the Yazidi community, helping them improve their resiliency and increase their chances of success in Canada. This program was made possible thanks to the CCLC's partnership with The Canadian Mental Health Association, The Mary J. Wright Research Centre at Western University, and Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre. The 2-year program is generously funded by The London Community Foundation.

Raising Awareness

Beyond counselling and connecting our clients with health professionals, the CCLC has made tremendous strides to help build a stronger community in London. Through capacity building activities, the team has been involved in raising awareness about the refugee issues, and how the community can support them.

On June 20th, 2019, the 11th Annual of Life As A Refugee event brought 200 community members together to celebrate World Refugee Day. This event was organized with the help and support of 12 community partners, with the theme Unpacking Myths and Misconceptions About Refugees. Sharon Bala, our key-note speaker, delivered a poignant address.



Resettling in Canada



Government Assisted Refugees have a unique resettlement journey. Some have conflicting emotions about the hard journey they undertook; some are filled with fear about their future, making a living, or learning English; and many others are anxious about reuniting with their loved ones.

Orientation Services for Newcomers (OSN), help clients navigate the resettlement journey. In 2019-2020, 1,383 clients from around the globe were assisted with their resettlement. Housing, health care and employment, job search workshops, taxation, citizenship, financial planning, landlord/tenant rights, budgeting and enhancing social skills were all part of the orientation they received. It's worth noting that 1,303 new clients were welcomed and came through OSN.

“I arrived in Canada more than ten years ago from my native Sri Lanka fleeing persecution and violence for being a minority. I got married last year and again I asked for CCLC for help to bring my wife. I am happy to say that my wife arrived at the beginning of this year and we are going through COVID-19 together, keeping safe and maintaining social distance. I am currently working in the nursing home in dietary department.”

Settlement services provides support to LGBTQ+ clients of diverse ethnic origins. Our team advocates on behalf of clients who have been victims of homophobia. Our team delivers diversity and inclusion training to clients, CCLC staff, and services providers - working collaboratively with London Police Services, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, and the Positive Spaces Initiatives. Throughout the year, special events and quarterly social gatherings are also organized. We strive to make our community safer and accepting for newly arrived immigrants.

10,197
New and Returning
Clients Served by OSN

9,464
Client Visits

Orientation to Ontario (O20), includes standardized information to help ease the transition of newcomers in settling in Ontario. Workshops and workbooks, in both English and Arabic, are also provided. The project is co-funded by the Province of Ontario and Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and coordinated by COSTI Immigration Services.

International Student Connect (ISC) is a bilingual project. It is designed to identify and develop an appropriate service response to the settlement needs of international students pursuing post-secondary education in Ontario. The program provides settlement support to international students, who decide to stay in Ontario after graduating, and their families. The goal is to help them settle successfully in their new community. ISC is a partnership between colleges, universities and community settlement agencies, focused on international students' unique needs.



Helping Refugee Claimants

Although many of our clients are supported by the Government of Canada, we also serve refugee claimants. These clients are not eligible for Immigration Refugee Citizenship Canada's funded services. The CCLC's Josephs' House, a 9-room home, offers temporary shelter to refugee claimants. It also provides support with settlement services focused on the refugee claimant process, as well as work and study permit applications.

534

Unique Clients Supported
by Josephs' House

1,305

Services Provided by
Josephs' House
Settlement Worker

Finding Employment



Many of our clients would like to join the Canadian workforce as soon as they arrive. However, they often find the job-search process in Canada challenging. As a result, our Job Search Workshop is an important service offered to support clients in joining the Canadian workforce.

336
Clients Served

The Job Search Workshop provides clients with a one-on-one assessment of their goals and job aspirations. An action workplan is created to help each client work toward an employment goal. Last year, Job Search Workshop offered 24 sessions targeting how to look for jobs, resume writing, and interview skills.

“The Job Search Workshop was an eye-opener. My family and I learned crucial details about the expectations of the Canadian job market and the ethics of Canadian work life. This was very important and has assisted me up to this day. The program helped me to reshape my resume to be more suitable for potential employers. I am proud to say that after this program it took only a couple of weeks before I landed my first job in Canada.”

Learning English



Communication is an important tool in the resettlement process. Learning one of Canada's official languages will help newcomers find employment, continue their education, and make more meaningful connections in the community.

Our Language Assessment and Referral Services (LARS) help clients to assess their language skills level and provide them with referrals to ESL providers and other programs, both at the CCLC and with other community organizations.

In 2019-2020, LARS welcomed 114 clients who spoke 83 languages. The top five most spoken languages were: Arabic, Spanish, Mandarin, Kurdish and Urdu.

Most clients assessed during this fiscal year had a Canadian Language Benchmark between 3-5. All assessments in the London region are conducted by the LARS department of the CCLC.

2,415
Assessments
Completed

3,481
Referral &
Services

“The assessor did a great job. [She helped me] to know my level of English and advise me what type of courses I need to improve my English; [She] helped me to make my decisions easier.”

The Small group program also supports the social engagement of newcomers through groups like Newcomer Women Resiliency, Men's Mentorship, Family Mentorship, and Mutual Assistance Parenting Program.

160
Mentorship Program
Participants

700
Small Group
Attendees

In addition to supporting adults, the Community Connections team also supports youth by bringing them together for activities, such as music, soccer, and cooking.

The youth are also encouraged to participate in social programs such as youth leadership, volunteering, and mentorship.



450
Youth Participants

65
Leadership Program
Attendees

“*When I first arrived in Canada, I was a refugee claimant, and was thus lost and felt very alone. [...], it is due to the community connection programs and its kind staff that I was able to integrate into the London Community and call it my home.*”

Supporting Families in Schools



While ensuring that newcomer families are comfortable and well-connected in their new community, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program helps parents and their children transition from home to school. The SWIS team facilitates the integration of newcomer families and students into the education system and the community, by providing information, resources, and referrals.

In 2019-2020, the SWIS team included 11 staff, 107 volunteers, and 164 guest speakers. The team served 4,169 clients in 54 schools. Of those clients served, 1,776 were new clients and 2,393 were returning clients. The clients served throughout the year spoke 42 different languages.

“ I can say my SWIS Worker’s aid and guidance really helped me to adjust myself and my family much easier to live here, and really I appreciate it.”

Fostering Diversity

Intercultural Competency Advantage Program



Demonstrating respect for the uniqueness of each individual and promoting inclusion are two important values at the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre. To empower our community and cultivate a welcoming and accepting work culture, our Intercultural Education program, helps businesses and not-for-profit organizations develop intercultural competency.

One of two social enterprises, the Intercultural Competency Advantage Program (ICAP) focuses on research-based solutions to acknowledge differences as a strength, and recognizes cultural diversity as an asset to productivity in any sector.

24
Training Sessions

500
ICAP Attendees

The training modules are based on empirical research conducted by researchers at the Centre for Research on Migration and Ethnic Relations at Western University.

Language Services



Our Language Services help newcomer and professional clients with their translation and interpretation needs. Newcomers may require document translation to help them pursue their academic and professional careers in Canada. They may also require translations to support their medical, insurance and legal needs. Professional clients and agencies use our services for medical, immigration, education, legal and insurance needs as well. Hospitals, for example, may ask for the translation of medical reports to better assess patients needs.

56

Languages
Translated

90

More Translations Completed
Compared To Last Year

The top three languages for translation services were Arabic, Spanish, and Chinese. The top three languages for the interpretation services were Kurdish, Arabic, and Spanish.

2,198

Total Translation
Assignments

Portal



This on-line resource (immigration.london.ca) is owned and has been overseen by the City of London since February 2006. The London Cross Cultural Learner Centre provided operational support by maintaining the website, doing outreach, answering “Ask a Question” feature, and editing the quarterly e-newsletter.

18,239
Total Website Visits

The Portal’s on-line planning toolbox was popular with visitors. They could obtain a customized list to plan their move to London, including deadlines for submitting their immigration application, obtaining housing and job search information and much more. There were 718 unique visitors who used the online planning tool.

The Portal was updated in 2019. The navigation and content were streamlined; photos were refreshed, and a new section added for Francophone visitors. These changes resulted in visitors staying longer on the site compared to the previous reporting year.

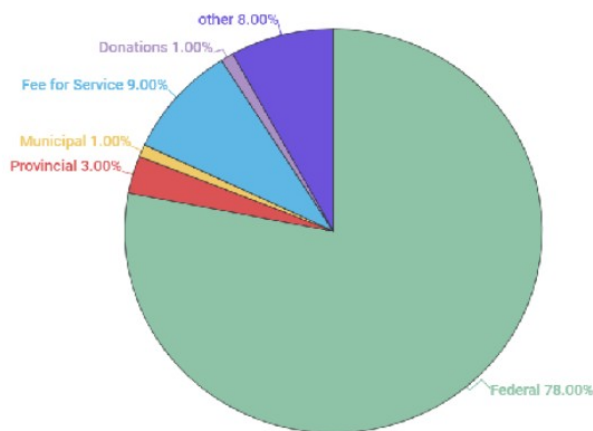
2019-2020 Financial Statement Excerpt



In Numbers

Total assets	\$3,862,269
Total liabilities	\$1,421,520
Net assets	\$2,440,749
Total revenue	\$7,297,847
Total expenses	\$7,143,888
Excess of Revenue over expenses	\$ 153,959
Total funds raised	\$ 68,000

Funding Sources



Board of Directors

OFFICERS (Executive Committee)

Chair: Tarek Moharram, President

Vice-Chair: Marek Kubow, Communications Consultant

Treasurer: Aamir Ibrahim, Public Accountant

Secretary: Quintin Lang, Professor, Project Management

MEMBERS

Lianne Armstrong	Lawyer
Henri Boyi	University Professor
Taghrid Hussain	Executive Director
Salma Khilaili	Accountant
Samantha Matty	Social Worker
Elena Ashford	Lawyer
Marisol Roa	Operations Specialist
Surinder Suri	Economist
Harold Usher	Professional Engineer

Community Partners



Our sincere thanks to the many organizations in our community who collaborate with the CCLC to support the programs and services offered to clients.

Anova
Big Brothers Big Sisters of London and Area
Boys & Girls Club of London
Canada Revenue Agency
Childreach
Children's Aid Society London and Middlesex
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada
Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre
Econo Lodge London
Investing in Children
London Children's Connections
London Catholic District Board
London Fire Department
London Police Service
London Public Library
Maple View Terrace Retirement Residence
Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre
Middlesex-London Health Unit
Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration

Northwest London Resource Centre
Oneworld
Pillar Nonprofit Network
ReForest London
Service Canada - Citizen Services Branch
South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre
Start2Finish London Region
TD Canada Trust
Thames Valley District School Board
YMCA of Southwestern Ontario
Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Builders (\$500 to \$999)

Association of Canadian Clinical Legal Education
L. Balkwill
Collège Boréal
Cuddy Farms
Ford Keast LLP
L. Geukers
S. Mehta
OCASI
PayPal Giving Fund Canada
Pride London Festival Endowment Fund at London Community Foundation
Public Service Alliance of Canada - Agriculture Union - Local 67
Public Service Alliance of Canada - Agriculture Union - Local 70075
Public Service Alliance of Canada - Agriculture Union - Local 33
Public Service Alliance of Canada - Agriculture Union - Local 14
S. Sheikh
L. Zarbatany

Friends (\$100 to \$499)

Anonymous
L. Ayala Ayala
M. Beyene
J. Brown
R. Brummell
T. Ceneviva
Carrefour communautaire francophone de London
B. Coleman
M. Cook
S. Dai
T. Dam
J. De Verteuil
C. Dorais-Plesko
P. El Shamy
M. Elms
M. Irene Faveri
A. Ibrahim

D. Jorgensen
W. Kacprzak
E. Ketan
King's University College
Q. Lang
Law Office of Edward C. Corrigan
O. & J. Liem
M. Loebach Barrister and Solicitor
A. Mahmoud
J. McCain
D. O'Grady
G. Pierce
Public Service Alliance of Canada -Agriculture Union - Local 19
Acorn Fund For Youth at London Community Foundation
Public Service Alliance of Canada - Agriculture Union - Hamilton & District
Public Service Alliance of Canada - Agriculture Union - Locale 70
Public Service Alliance of Canada - Agriculture Union - Local 70155
M. Sharifi
St. Thomas Aquinas High School
The Optimist Club of Oakridge Acres
S. Tsiligiris
Unifor - Local 27
L. Walsh
Westervelt College

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et Citoyenneté Canada



