



LE CENTRE DE RÉFUGIÉS | THE REFUGEE CENTRE  
INTEGRATION, SUSTAINABILITY, AND AID

THE REFUGEE CENTRE

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024





# THANK YOU!

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who support us and are part of our community. Your contribution plays a vital role in our ability to offer all of our services and achieve our mission.

Sincerely,

*The Refugee Centre Team*

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## SECTION 1

# WHO WE ARE



# OUR STORY

We are a group of professionals who have worked together to build an organization imploring young people to work with the community to help strengthen the refugee and immigrant population through unity and integration.

Founded in December 2015, we embarked on a journey to reestablish the way nonprofits work, and strengthen the communities they are involved with. We believe that modern-day obstacles require modern day solutions, thus the creation of The Refugee Centre and its sister nonprofit DevBloc.



## CREATIVITY

We are made up of engineers, political scientists, human relations experts, sociologists, statisticians and entrepreneurs. We believe this makes us one of the most unique and creative groups in this field.

## HARD WORK

In addition to our creativity, we work hard to ensure that the support we provide to our clients is holistic and sustainable.

## INNOVATION

Aside from the typical language integration services offered by the majority of NGOs, we created a one-of-a-kind economic integration and development incubator.

## TRANSPARENCY

Our budgets and events are made public for all to see in order to keep up with our transparency policy.

We are a group of young individuals from different cultural backgrounds, who, when working together, effectively and seamlessly achieve our organization's mandate.

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**ABDULLA DAOUD**  
Executive  
Director

#### PROJECT MANAGERS

**ANISSA JEEROBURKHAN**  
Community Health  
Coordinator

**ALINA MURAD**  
Advocacy and Media  
Relations Coordinator

**KINAN SWAID**  
Director of Operations &  
Resettlement and  
Integration

**CAMILLE FOURNEL**  
Outreach Coordinator

**NATASHA GUERRIERO**  
Communications Director  
& Housing Coordinator

**ME PIERRE-LUC BOUCHARD**  
Head of the Legal Aid Clinic

**JUDE IBRAHIM**  
Wellness and Art Therapy  
Coordinator



## LEGAL TEAM

**BRETT HOWIE**  
Lawyer

**ALEXANDER  
MCPHAIL**  
Legal Intern

**JAVIER GARCIA**  
Legal Intern

**AUDREY  
MATHESON**  
Legal Intern

**CASSANDRA  
MORRIS**  
Legal Intern

**CLAUDIA  
MOUANGÉ**  
Paralegal and legal  
researcher

**RAPHAEL  
SCHMEIDER-ROPEN**  
Legal Intern

**FAWAZ HALLOUM**  
Legal Intern

**RAINA YOUNG**  
Legal Intern

**MICHELLE  
MURRAY-SCHLITT**  
Legal Intern

**ALICE HARDY**  
Legal Intern

**GAJANAN  
VELUPILLAI**  
Legal Intern

**SORAIA AFSHAR**  
Legal Intern

**POONAM SANDU**  
Legal Intern

**CHARLOTTE  
MASSUE** Legal  
intern

**MARIANA MENDEZ**  
Legal Intern

**BRYCE LANDSDELL**  
Legal Intern

## RESETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION TEAM

**DIEGO FRASER DEL CARPIO**  
Resettlement and Integration  
Counselor

**TAMARA HOUSSAMI**  
Resettlement and Integration  
Counselor

**NATALIA IBAÑEZ**  
Resettlement and Integration  
Counselor

**ABDOULAYE BANGOURA**  
Resettlement and Integration  
Counselor

**ABDUL MAJEED**  
Program Developer and  
Facilitator in Resettlement and  
Integration

## OTHER PROJECTS

**JEANNE MARENGÈRE**  
Youth Initiatives Coordinator

**SEAN LEVIS**  
Housing Research and  
Development Coordinator

**DIMITRI TOPALOGLOU**  
Director of Software  
Development

## COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

**JANE CHAU**  
Communications and Marketing  
Coordinator

**LENA WANG**  
Graphic Design Intern

**JEREMY SEPULVEDA**  
Communications and Marketing  
Coordinator

## HEALTH & WELLNESS TEAM

**HANA SHERAFATI**  
Caseworker

**FRANSHESCA CARMIGLIA ARRIAGADA**  
Caseworker

**LAURA RENDON**  
Caseworker

**HEYDAR ENSHA**  
Caseworker

**MELISSA LOPEZ**  
Caseworker

**MAJD AUDI**  
Caseworker

**GENEVAAVE BARBO**  
Research intern

## ADMINISTRATION TEAM

**CATHERINE HARDER**  
Office Manager

**DIANE MAHKO**  
Office Manager

**NAJLA CHENIOUNI**  
Office Manager

## GOALS

- To provide a sustainable structure of integration for refugees and newcomers to Canada
- To offer support for students and their families as well as the Montreal community as a whole.
- To support the community, particularly students, through various mediums, not limited to any one particular sector of aid.

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To create long-lasting, self-sustainable, and creative solutions to refugee integration.

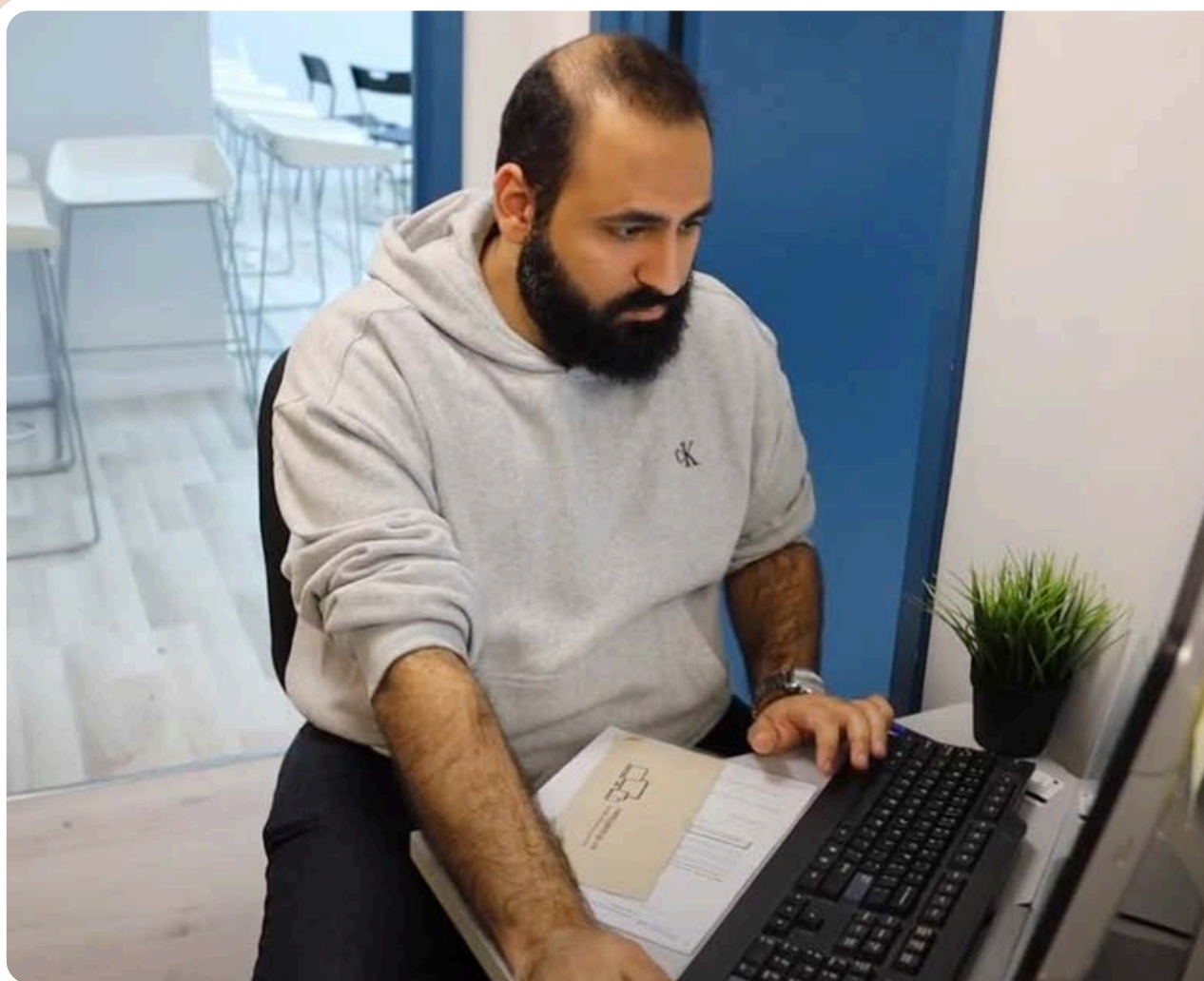


# OBJECTIVES

- Provide refugees with resources that help them find housing, access education and learn their rights in relation to Canadian immigration law.
- Work hand-in-hand with local and international organizations to promote and enhance the lives of incoming refugees in Canada.
- Create and enhance the economic situation of refugees in Canada by promoting economic integration through grants and refugee-run initiatives.
- Build business development programs to help strengthen the student population as well as the community including, and not limited to, business accelerators and incubators.
- Create housing alternatives and initiatives to aid in housing the refugee/newcomer population.
- Recognize the unique mental health challenges of the refugee population and prioritize mental health in all of the centre's services and activities.
- Raise funds and receive contributions where appropriate to finance the work of the centre.
- Publicize and promote the work of the centre.
- Assist refugees with banking, taxes and insurance procedures.
- Improve accessibility to healthcare systems through the creation of safe spaces for health promotion and illness prevention, specifically regarding mental health and general wellness.

## SECTION 2

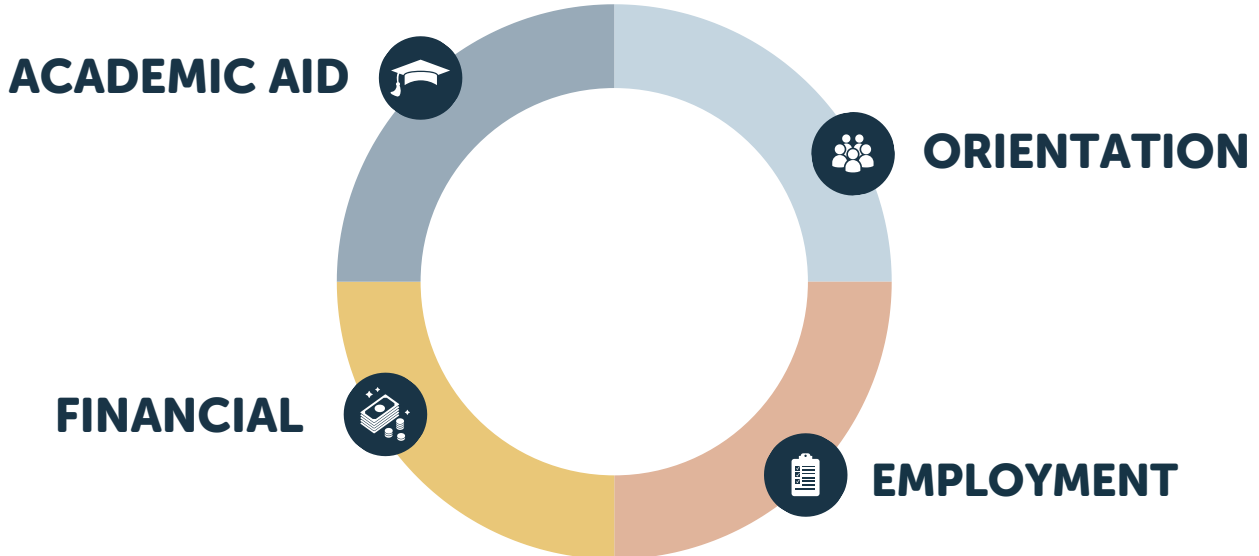
# OUR SERVICES & DEPARTMENTS



# RESETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION



The Resettlement and Integration Department is committed to assisting newcomers and refugees in successfully integrating into their new communities. Our department provides a wide range of essential services:



Our department plays a crucial role in helping newcomers and refugees build successful and independent lives in their new communities.

## RESETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION



### ORIENTATION

Delivering workshops and one-on-one appointments to help clients adapt to their new environment, navigate public services, including accessing language classes, obtaining social insurance numbers, applying for social assistance, obtaining a driver's license and much more.

#### Partnerships

- We have developed a list of referral partners to assist us in filling the needs for Francisation
  - SAC Anjou
  - La Maison de l'amitié
  - Amitié Soleil
  - Alliance Française de Montréal
- Concordia University Human Relations Department



### ACADEMIC AID

Offering workshops and one-on-one appointments to support refugees and newcomers in their educational pursuits. We also offer guidance, including enrollment assistance for training programs, school registrations, university & adult Schools admissions. Assistance in scholarship & bursary applications.

#### Partnerships:

- Equivalencies through partnership with WES
- Access to refurbished computers for refugees and newcomers through partnership with OPEQ
- Access to Online and free licenses with Coursera
- Access to Certificates in the technology field through Npower



## RESETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION



### EMPLOYMENT

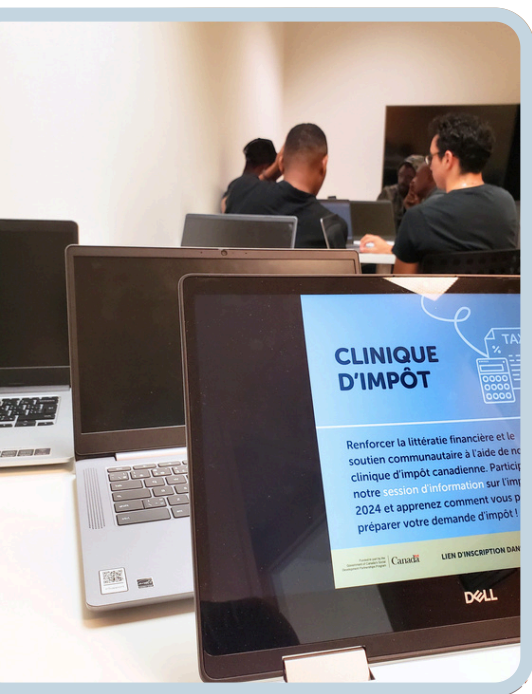
Offering workshops and one-on-one appointments to assist clients with job search strategies and referrals to employers, resume and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and understanding workplace culture and legal rights.

#### Special programs

- Beyond the Big City

#### Partnerships

- Job Search Workshop in partnership with Atwater Library
- With employers and Placement agencies



### FINANCIAL

Providing financial literacy workshops, budgeting assistance, and one-on-one counseling to promote financial stability and access to government platforms (CRA/Clicsecur) and a yearly Tax Clinic.

#### Partnerships with Banks

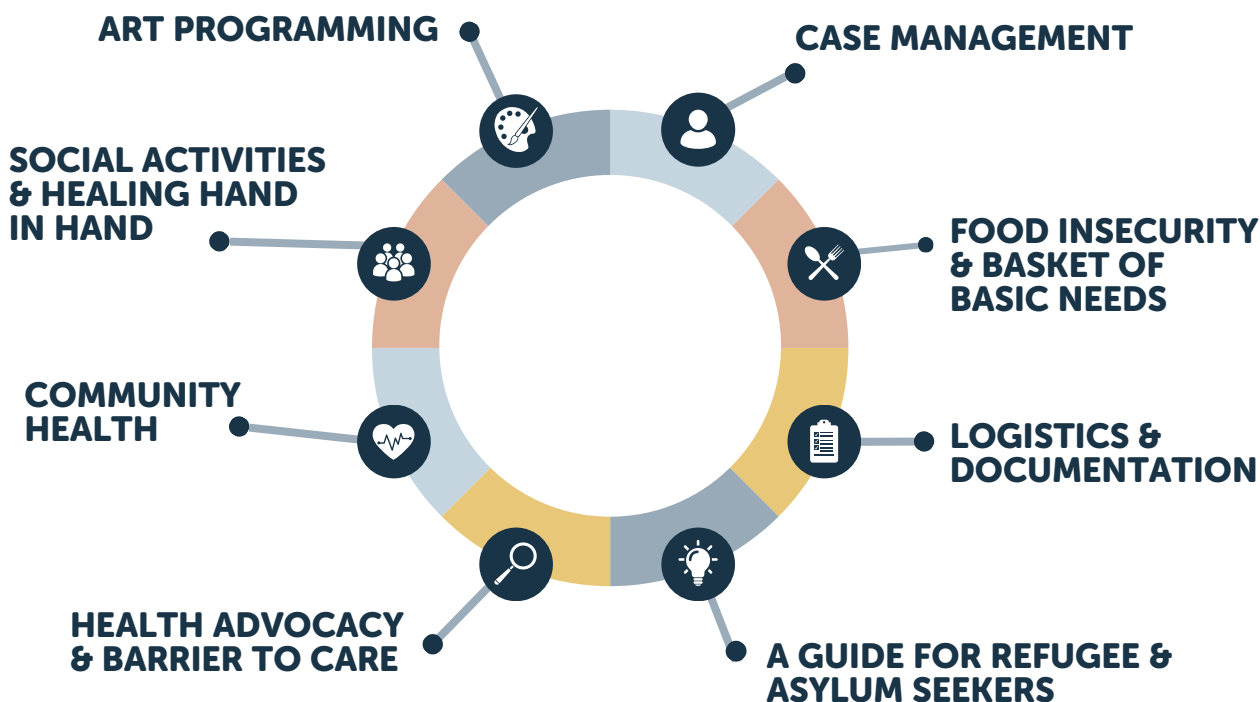
- Scotia Bank
- CIBC
- Desjardins



# HEALTH & WELLNESS



The Health and Wellness Department oversees the general health-related and social activities & workshops. The department also oversees all client case management clients followed at the centre. Composed of five permanent members, the H&W team also welcomes: Art therapy interns from Concordia University, Nursing Students from McGill University, and social work students from Dawson College.



The H&W Department has been strengthening its ties within the Peter McGill Community, Canadian Red Cross, Moisson Montreal, Monthly Dignity, McGill University, Dawson College, Public Health Agency of Canada, Doctors of the World, as well as, other health professionals, including family physicians, physiotherapists, nurses and others.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS



### CASE MANAGEMENT

The case management system ensures quality client care by pairing clients with caseworkers based on language and urgency. This approach offers psychosocial support while addressing legal, social, and health priorities of each client.

### BASKET OF BASIC NEEDS



In partnership with Moisson Montreal, this program provides access to essential food items for families and individuals and presents a critical intervention that addresses food insecurity and supports the well-being of our community members.



### ACCESSING HEALTHCARE WORKSHOPS

#### Logistics & Documentation

This workshop is aimed at easing the transition for newcomers into the Canadian healthcare system. Through this workshop, we empower individuals to navigate the complexities of healthcare registration, including securing family doctors, scheduling medical appointments, extending IFHP coverage, and applying for RAMQ/CSQ, and additionally providing invaluable insights into their specific challenges and healthcare requirements.

#### A Guide for Refugee Claimants & Asylum Seekers

This workshop aims at empowering asylum seekers and refugee claimants with essential knowledge regarding their IFHP medical coverage and newcomers' understanding of the intricacies surrounding healthcare access in Quebec. With recurring updates, this workshop is always informed with changes in the healthcare system.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS



### HEALTH ADVOCACY & BARRIER TO CARE

From Barrier to Care is a pivotal initiative aimed at bridging the gap in healthcare accessibility for refugees, asylum seekers, newcomers, and immigrants in Quebec. This presentation focuses on educating service providers and healthcare professionals about the complexities of healthcare access for the newcomer populations, the Interim Federal Health Program, the importance of cultural sensitivity, and challenges service providers to gain new perspectives regarding the clientele they are serving.

### SOCIAL ACTIVITIES & HEALING HAND IN HAND



The Social Activities Program at The Refugee Centre is a transformative initiative dedicated to enhancing the integration experience of refugees, asylum seekers, newcomers, and immigrants in Quebec. From cooking workshops to movie night events, the initiative offers a vibrant array of opportunities for individuals to connect, share experiences, and build meaningful relationships.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### ART PROGRAMMING



These initiatives are rooted in combining the realms of creativity and well-being, aiming to introduce how art-making can facilitate connections, self-expression, and healing. We have facilitated a variety of different bi-weekly, monthly and annual workshops including:

Deeply Rooted Art Workshop series, which is a collaborative initiative that started in 2021, between The Refugee Centre and the Black Healing Centre, and is dedicated to inviting & empowering BIPOC guest artists & community members through creative exploration.

The Art Hive Workshops is an initiative that aims at facilitating an open community art studio for all community members to try out new art materials, networks and have a good time. We have hosted the art hive both at The Refugee Centre, and at partnering organizations such as PRAIDA.

Art in the Park is a summer program that invites our community members to try out a variety of creative mediums, from painting on tote bags to kite-making.

We Are More is an annual art festival that is centered on spotlighting and uplifting refugee & newcomer artists and vendors in our community!

# TRANSITIONAL HOUSING



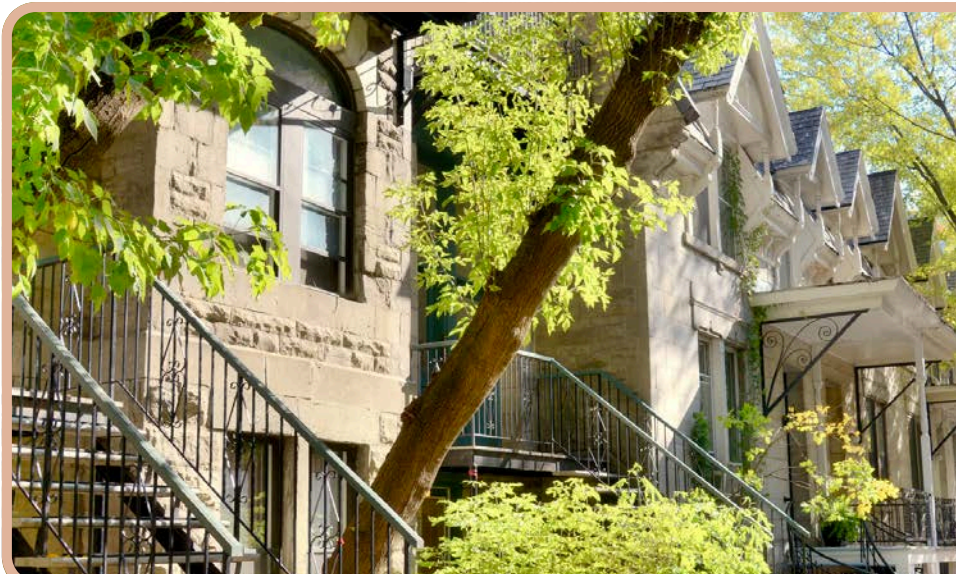
Innovative, affordable & supportive are the cornerstones of The Refugee Centre's Transitional Housing program. The goal of this program is to remove barriers to the housing market that people, particularly newcomers, often face. We strive to provide stability and affordability, allowing individuals to focus on building a life in Canada, rather than struggling with housing uncertainties.

In the past year, we have been able to secure partnerships with other community organizations which own and operate social housing in the greater Montreal area. This has allowed us to secure access to:

**8 apartments**  
AND COUNTING

to operate as transitional housing for our clients. During the clients stay, we pair them with caseworkers who work diligently to holistically support them throughout their time in the program.

We are grateful for the partnerships that we've secured with multiple community organizations, universities and private landlords.





## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Our goal is not only to prevent homelessness, but also to pave the way for success and integration into Canadian society. Our program ensures that newcomers not only have a roof over their heads, but also gain valuable resources such as credit history and landlord references. This is an important step in establishing a solid foundation in their new homeland.

By providing a stable living environment and necessary support services, The Refugee Centre's Transitional Housing Program serves as a springboard for newcomers, offering them a safe starting point and a promising path to a successful life in Canada, transforming the daunting journey of relocation into one of hope and growth.



[therefugeecentre.org](http://therefugeecentre.org)

## HOUSING RIGHTS & ROOMMATE WORKSHOP

Hosted at the YMCA Residence in partnership with PRAIDA, The Refugee Centre designed a housing rights workshop geared towards refugee claimants seeking roommates. The event provides attendees with vital information on housing resources and tenant rights, empowering them to navigate housing challenges more effectively. Open to participants in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic, the workshop attracts a diverse group of attendees. The interactive session helps raise awareness about housing rights, and networking among the refugees.

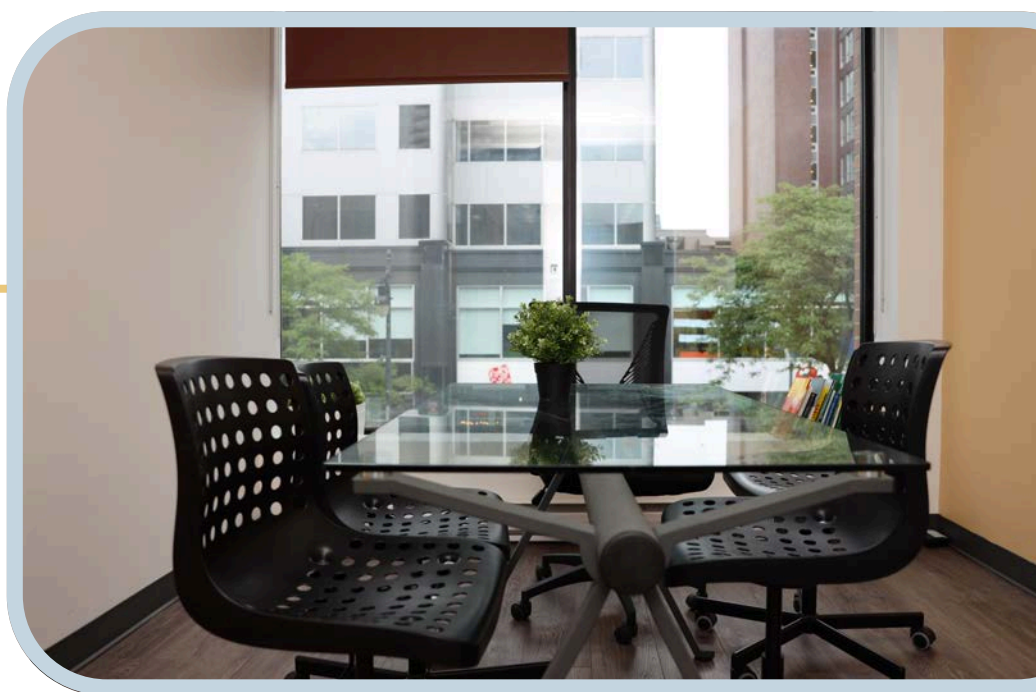
# LEGAL AID CLINIC



At the heart of The Refugee Centre, our legal clinic works tirelessly to embody a philosophy centered on education and preparation.

We strongly believe that empowerment lies in knowledge, which is why we are dedicated to educating new and future residents on the essential legal issues that pertain to their unique situation.

With a dedicated team of two attorneys, one paralegal and five rotating legal interns, we leverage our expertise and passion to provide a range of services tailored to our clients' needs. Our goal is to ensure that our clients are not only informed, but also equipped to navigate the complexities of the legal landscape.



## LEGAL AID CLINIC SERVICES

### WORK PERMIT APPLICATIONS

We provide comprehensive advice to those seeking to obtain a work permit, ensuring they understand the process and prerequisites.

### STUDY PERMIT APPLICATIONS

We assist individuals who intend to pursue their studies in the country by guiding them through the study permit application process.

### HUMANITARIAN AND COMPASSIONATE APPLICATIONS

We extend our services to those who need to apply for humanitarian exemptions, helping them effectively demonstrate their unique situation.

### REFUGEE CLAIMS

Our experts help people understand and navigate the refugee claim process, while ensuring that their rights and interests are adequately represented.

### PRE-REMOVAL RISK ASSESSMENT APPLICATIONS

We help people who are at risk of removal from the country complete Pre-Removal Risk Assessment applications, a process that assesses the potential risks of returning to their home country.



## LEGAL AID CLINIC SERVICES

### IRCC PORTAL WORKSHOP

This workshop aims to help refugee claimants navigate the IRCC Portal confidently and submit quality applications. By providing a free and reliable service, we remove the financial and digital literacy barriers that claimants often face. These workshops are offered twice a week at the Refugee Centre and once a week at PRAIDA where the attendees are provided with computers and get to complete their refugee claims in the IRCC portal from start to finish. This is made possible by our dedicated team of legal professionals, staff and volunteers.

### PERMANENT RESIDENCE APPLICATIONS

We guide potential residents through the intricacies of applying for permanent residence, ensuring they are well prepared and well informed.

### BASIC OF CLAIM (BOC) VALIDATION SESSIONS

This session is designed to ensure that each client's Basis of Claim form complies with the necessary requirements for submission. It is NOT to evaluate the merit of their case. This session is provided weekly by our legal team.

### REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP APPLICATIONS

We support groups who wish to sponsor refugees, providing clear guidance at every stage of the application process.

# THE LEARNING CENTRE



## IELTS AND DUOLINGO PREPARATION COURSES

Our IELTS (English Proficiency Test) preparation courses help students prepare for the tests they need to take to get into college or find a job. In addition, our teacher will cover topics that will prepare you for the now widely accepted Duolingo exam.

## FRENCH COURSES

French is one of the most important skills newcomers need to learn when they arrive in Quebec and we offer our French classes and conversation circles to help them do just that.

## ENGLISH COURSES

We offer beginner and intermediate English courses for people of different levels. Many students then take the IELTS course.

## ENGLISH AND FRENCH CONVERSATION CIRCLES

Conversation Circles are meant to help individuals practice English or French in a small, informal setting. These circles help individuals make connections in the community while simultaneously practicing their English or French conversation skills.

## WEB & PYTHON DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the year, we offer a variety of training workshops to help newcomers gain skills that will help them with employment and entrepreneurship. Some of the workshops we have offered in the past include web development and python.



# BEYOND THE BIG CITY

## Newcomer Relocation Program

FROM MONTREAL ACROSS CANADA

The Beyond the Big City project is a transformative resettlement and integration initiative designed to help individuals and families seeking a fresh start by relocating from Montreal to smaller cities across Canada. This innovative program promises to enrich the lives of participants and the communities they join by providing tailored support and carefully matching them with local employers. By promoting cultural integration and offering comprehensive assistance throughout the recruitment and settling process, the project aims to ensure a successful transition, creating new opportunities for participants to rebuild their lives and careers in welcoming, thriving environments.

The program includes :

- Assisting candidates in securing housing and employment;
- Providing language and skills training for effective integration;
- Offering cultural integration opportunities;
- Preparing candidates for a confident transition; and
- Establishing local partnerships for long-term support.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:



### **Facilitating Relocation:**

The primary objective of the Beyond the Big City project is to assist individuals and families in their transition from Montreal across Canada, by facilitating the logistical challenges of relocation and providing the resources necessary to ensure a smooth transition.

### **Improve Employment Opportunities:**

Participants will be matched with potential employers in other Canadian cities, leveraging their skills and experience to secure stable employment that matches their qualifications and interests.

### **Promote Community Integration:**

To foster a sense of belonging, the project will actively engage participants in the diversity of their new community, encouraging social interactions and fostering an inclusive atmosphere that supports cultural integration.

The Beyond the Big City project offers the promise of creating a better life for individuals and families seeking a new beginning in a new city in Canada. By providing tailored support, matching participants with employers and fostering cultural integration, the project aims to make this transformative journey a resounding success, enriching both the lives of participants and the community they join.

## SECTION 3

# OUR COMMUNITY



# WHAT IS DEVBLOC?



DEVBLOC

DevBloc is the first social enterprise community incubator meant to both educate and aid refugees and immigrants to be relevant in today's workforce. With training and certification in technologies related to today's emerging technology sector, DevBloc will ensure the integration of the immigrant and refugee population into the tech economy. Lastly, it will also aid individuals as well as groups to build/develop new technology to solve the existing refugee and migrant crisis, domestically and internationally.

This is essential for refugees and immigrants, as more and more skilled workers are needed in a very fast-paced market. Incubators accelerate the successful development of entrepreneurial ideas through an array of business support resources and services. Our main goal is to produce successful refugees/immigrants that leave the program financially viable and freestanding. Incubator graduates commercialize technologies, create jobs, and strengthen local economies.



The proposed mission of our Social Innovation Catalyst is to stimulate the establishment and growth of technology-based start-up companies and other compatible businesses in relation to social enterprise and community building. By fulfilling this mission, the incubator would contribute to job creation, enhance quality of life, and attempt to merge the tech world with the non-profit sector.

DevBloc will provide the Montreal refugee and immigrant community with the ability to engage in and learn about new and emerging technologies and businesses. We hope to foster an environment that will aid students and community members in developing businesses or technologies that will not only better the local community we reside in but also the world. Focusing mainly on the idea of social and community enterprise, DevBloc will be one of the few incubators in the world where the main focus of its business and technologies is geared towards life/social enhancement, rather than pure monetary gain. The proposed incubator includes facility space, flexible leases, shared use of common office equipment, direct business assistance and guidance, mentoring, networking to capital, and other technical resources. A network of existing resources in the community would be developed to support incubator/client needs.



The Refugee Centre's

# PAY IT FORWARD Fund

The Pay It Forward Basic Needs Fund helps provide new arrivals with financial support for urgent basic needs. These urgent basic needs can be defined as anything needed to access basic human rights services, and are divided into two categories: funds that go directly to beneficiaries and funds that are used to purchase basic necessities.

Of these funds, 66% go directly to beneficiaries and 34% are used for items that beneficiaries can get at our center, such as basic groceries, transportation passes, baby and hygiene products. Items covered by the funds that go directly to beneficiaries include: emergency housing, medical coverage, mental health services, pharmacy coverage, winter clothing, and school supplies.





## LUNA AI

LUNA AI is an artificial intelligence application that, through its interactive platform, will allow asylum seekers to exploit its conversational capabilities. Asylum seekers will talk to LUNA and, in turn, LUNA will control the conversation in order to extract all the information necessary for the asylum application. LUNA then automatically fills out all the forms and documents necessary to obtain refugee status in Canada, ensuring that applicants do everything according to the rules of the Canadian immigration system. This saves the government days of processing time and a large amount of management resources.



## POINT OF ENTRY

"Point of Entry," presented by The Refugee Centre, serves as a platform to amplify the voices of community members, newcomers, BIPOC individuals, and organizations. We delve into the experiences and challenges of resettlement and explore a wide range of intersectional topics, inviting a diversity of guests to share their unique perspectives on various "Points of Entry."

## ALLOCANADA.ORG

AlloCanada is a web application that has mapped the services available to newcomers in every major city in the country. Unlike any other resource tool, AlloCanada can filter all the organizations that can help its users based on their migration status and the types of services offered.



# ADVOCACY



The Refugee Centre's Advocacy department aims to work with political and community partners to create well-informed policies and social programs that positively impact the refugee community in Quebec and nationally. This department acknowledges the arduous processes that refugees face and honours this resilience by advocating with the community for better, more equitable social and political realities.

## PROJECTS WE'VE DONE

### **Community Ambassador Program Year 1 (September 2023 - May 2024)**

Internship program in which participants conducted primary research to identify bureaucratic barriers and address them through material creation.

### **Social campaigns (launched in April 2024)**

Highlighting issues facing refugees through social media posts accompanied with actionable campaigns (petitions, letter campaigns, etc) for community members to participate in.

### **Advisory Member of National Newcomer Collective for Truth and Reconciliation (Since February 2024)**

Participation and facilitation of a national member group dedicated to increasing allyship between Indigenous communities, newcomer communities, and the resettlement sector.

## ADVOCACY

### **Intersectional Youth Movement (Since February 2024)**

Involvement and participation in intersectional political and social issues that impact various communities. This movement works to put youth at the forefront of efforts to shape a better future.

### **Community Ambassador Program Year 2 (September 2024 - May 2025)**

Internship program to facilitate and influence positive policy change. Participants work to address prominent policy issues facing refugees in Canada through policy and grassroots solutions.

### **IRCC Special Measures Consultation (June 2024)**

Participating in information sessions on new special measures introduced by IRCC and providing feedback on what to improve.

## ADVOCACY

### **IRCC Immigration Level Targets Consultation (June 2024)**

Participating in information sessions on immigration levels targets and providing feedback on what can change.

### **Brief Submissions to Senate and House of Commons (Ongoing)**

Providing written briefs relating to the topic of investigation for Senate and/or House of Commons committees.

### **Advocacy Working Group (Since January 2024)**

Creation of an internal working group focusing on specific and pressing policy issues facing the refugee community. This working group aims to investigate issues and put forward solutions to the relevant political bodies.

### **Consultation sur la planification de l'immigration au Québec pour la période 2024-2027 (Mémoire et Assemblée Nationale) - September 26, 2023**

The Refugee Centre addressed the National Assembly of Quebec at the general consultation and public hearing on the consultation entitled: Planning immigration to Québec for the period 2024-2027.

### **Forced Global Displacement on the Standing Committee of Human Rights at the Senate of Canada - December 11, 2023**

Our Executive Director shared insights on Forced Global Displacement on the Standing Committee of Human Rights.

## ADVOCACY

### TRC'S ADVOCACY DEPARTMENT FLOURISHES WITH THE HELP OF DIFFERENT GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS.

The grants we've received in the past year include:

Concordia  
University's  
BIPOC fund

Concordia  
University's  
Community  
Action Fund

Concordia  
University's  
Sustainability  
Action Fund

Donation from  
Concordia  
University's  
School of  
Community and  
Public Affairs

#### Our partners over the past year have been:

- Concordia University's School of Community and Public Affairs
- Le RÈZO
- Black Community Resource Centre
- Himmat Shinhat
- Marlene Jennings
- Jennfier Maccrone
- Canadian Council for Refugees

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Community engagement is central to The Refugee Centre's mission, as it allows us to build meaningful relationships, understand the needs and aspirations of those we serve, and collaborate effectively with stakeholders. By actively involving community members and partners in our work, we enhance our ability to provide relevant support, advocate for positive change, and ensure that our services are responsive and impactful.

## MEMBERSHIP

Our organization is actively engaged with several prominent umbrella organizations, including:

- Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR)
- Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI)
- Regroupement des organismes en hébergement pour les personnes migrantes (ROHMI).

Through these memberships, we collaborate with a diverse network of professionals and advocates to advance the rights and well-being of refugees and newcomers overall. Also, our representation on the Boards of CCR and ROHMI allows us to engage directly in strategic decision-making and policy development, strengthening our collaborative efforts in the field.

## CONSULTATIONS & COMMITTEES

Our involvement in various committees allows us to contribute our expertise, stay informed about key issues, and work collectively towards shared goals. Here are the committees where we have been actively engaged this year :

- CCR Fall and Spring Working Groups
- CCR Fall Consultation 2023
- TCRI's Comité Accueil des personnes réfugiées
- TCRI's Comité ADAQ - Feb 27, 2024
- TCRI's Comité provisoire du Volet protection
- Peter-McGill Food Security Committee
- Peter-McGill Immigration Committee
- Comité de consultation du projet « Ensemble, améliorons l'inclusion au centre-ville »
- Sous-comité pour le soutien juridique de demandeurs d'asile
- IRCC Special Measures Consultation - June 2024
- IRCC Immigration Level Targets Consultation - June 2024



## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Throughout the year, we hosted and participated in various community events that provided valuable opportunities to connect with the public, celebrate cultural diversity, and raise awareness about important issues.

### **La Nuit des sans-abris - October 20, 2023**

In partnership with Foyer du Monde and Le Pont, we set up a kiosk at the event to raise awareness about the challenges faced by asylum seekers, particularly those without status or with precarious status. We emphasized the intersectionality between asylum seeking and homelessness, highlighting that these barriers stem from systemic issues within public institutions and policies, rather than from the presence of asylum seekers themselves.

### **CCR Fall Consultation Workshop Planning - November 17, 2023**

We were part of the planning committee for a workshop at the CCR Fall Consultation 2023 titled Solidarity Across Communities: Coming Together to Build Advocacy. This workshop delved into the complex reasons behind migration, often rooted in imperial and colonial forces that lead to forced displacement and habitat destruction. By recognizing the shared experiences of Indigenous migrants to Canada and Indigenous communities on Turtle Island, the workshop explored common issues and developed systemic advocacy strategies grounded in solidarity and mutual respect.



## **Salon de l'emploi et de l'intégration sociale des personnes demandant l'asile - December 4, 2023**

At the Salon de l'emploi et de l'intégration sociale des personnes demandant l'asile, organized by INICI, we participated by hosting a dedicated table to present our services to refugee claimants. This allowed us to connect with attendees, provide essential information, and support their integration needs.



## **First ROHMI's AGM - April 30, 2024**

We were pleased to host the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) of ROHMI at The Refugee Centre location. This event highlighted our commitment to ROHMI's mission and emphasized our role in fostering collaboration among organizations working to improve migrants' access to housing.

## **Official Launch New Office Space - June 7, 2024**

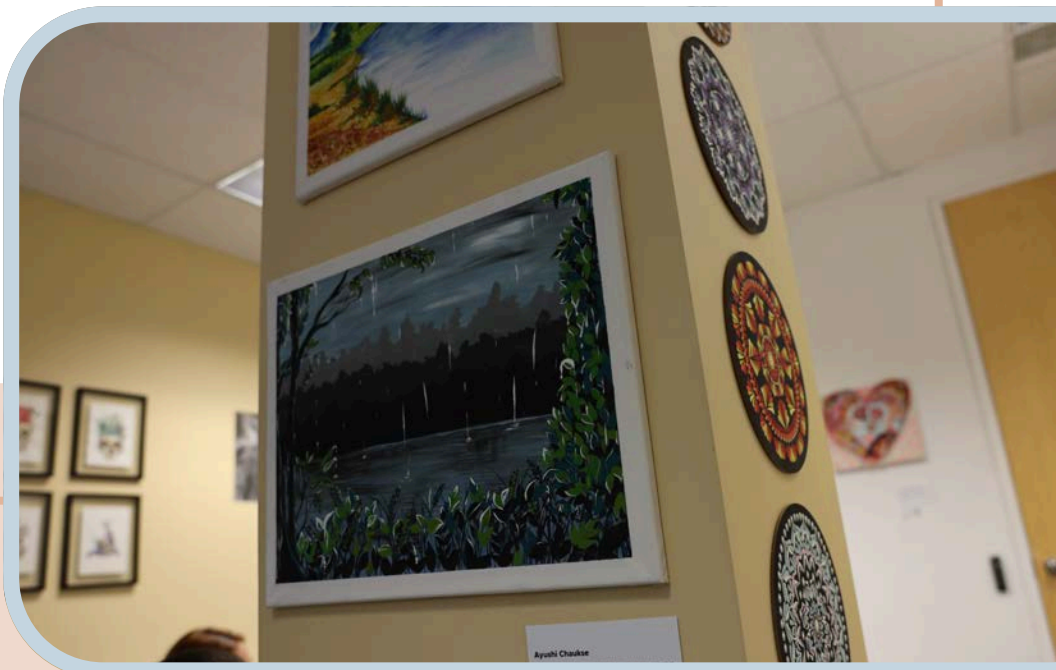
In January 2024, we relocated to a new office space, and to mark this milestone, we organized an event to officially launch our new location. The event provided an opportunity to celebrate our move with community members, partners, and stakeholders.

### **Annual Collective Art Festival 'We Are More' - June 8, 2024**

'We Are More' is TRC's annual collective art festival, designed to celebrate the incredible creativity within our community. The festival invites newcomer and refugee artists and businesses to showcase their artworks and products, highlighting the rich diversity and talent they bring.

### **World Refugee Day - June 20, 2024**

We participated in the World Refugee Day event organized by TCRI and ARM. At this important gathering, we hosted a table to showcase our podcast, Point of Entry, providing an opportunity to highlight the voices and stories of refugees within our community.



## PUBLIC SPEAKING & MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

Our public speaking and media engagement activities have allowed us to amplify our message and share our expertise with broader audiences. Over the past year, we made appearances on various podcasts and media outlets, including :

### Podcast Apéro-Cigare

Episode #34 Sans Frontières

### La Discussion de L'Organe

Les demandeurs d'asile confrontés à la crise du logement

### The Current

Quebec premier pushes to cut temporary immigration

## PANELS & CONFERENCES

- Panel discussion on the welcoming and inclusion of refugees organized by The Peace Network for Social Harmony as part of the Festival Nouveau Monde - October 12, 2023
- CCR Fall Consultation 2023 Panel Participation - More than a Roof over Their head: Effective supports for newly arrived refugee claimants
- Conference on Refugee Pathways organized by Comité des Affaires internationales de l'Université de Montréal (CAIUM) - December 8, 2023
- Opening Ceremony McGill MUN - January 25, 2024
- 2024 Global Leadership Forum - January 28, 2024
- Community Care as Power: Mutual Aid in Action, organized by Vent Over Tea - March 23, 2024
- 26th Metropolis Canada Conference- Invisible Refugees : Lessons Learnt From Serving Asylum Seekers in Canada and Ideas to Spark Systems Change (roundtable participant)
- 26th Metropolis Canada Conference - Housing and the Settlement Journey : Newcomer Obstacles and Options in Accessing Housing (panel participant)

## WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS

We believe it is essential to share our expertise by providing skill-building and informational workshops for our community partners. In 2023-2024, we offered two trainings aimed at enhancing knowledge and capacity within the community.

From Barrier to Care is a tailored presentation for service providers on how to work with newcomers through a culture and trauma-informed lens. We are aware that the healthcare system can be difficult to navigate, especially when newcomers face various barriers to accessibility. This training aim to explain everything you need to know about the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) and how to access medical care for refugees and refugee claimants. The training was delivered to 10 community organizations.

Refugee Pathways and Resources is a training designed for service providers to deepen their understanding of the complexities of refugee pathways and the various legal, social, and health eligibility. This comprehensive workshop equips participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to navigate the challenges faced by refugee claimants and to provide more effective support. In 2023-2024, we offered this training to 3 organizations.

## JOINT INITIATIVES & PROGRAMS

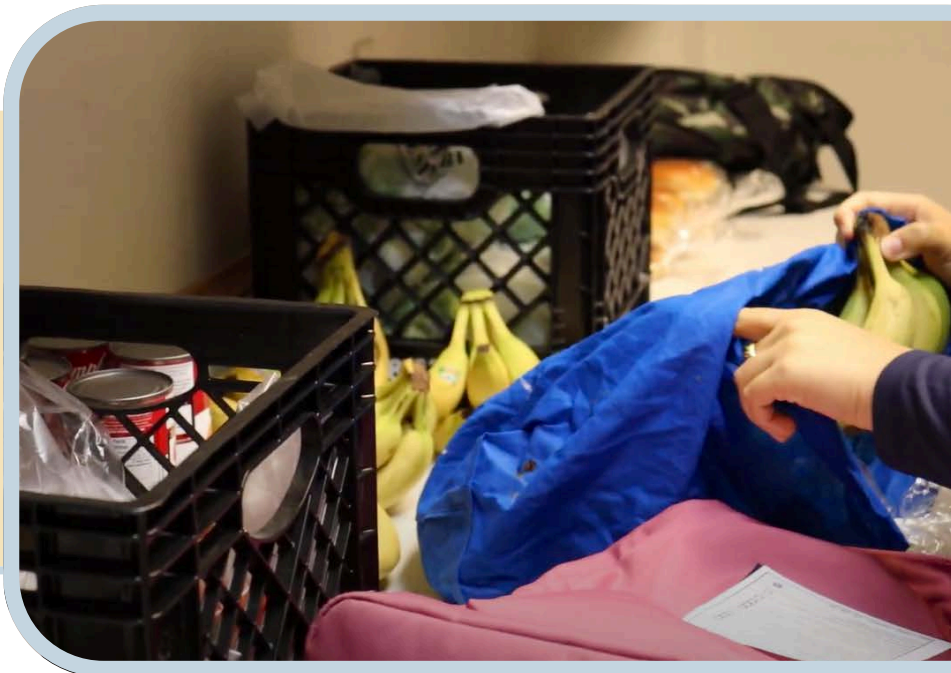
Through joint initiatives, we partner with other organizations to implement programs and services that leverage our combined expertise and resources.

### **Projet TRACES**

Conducted in partnership with TCRI, this 6-week program focuses on providing psychosocial support in a non-clinical setting, specifically designed for and with women. With a consistent group of 6-8 women, it fosters the sharing of experiences and the building of connections among participants while offering access to valuable information. The approach is mindful of the potential trauma linked to pre-, peri-, and post-migration experiences, incorporating elements of intersectionality and interculturality within a decolonial framework.

### **Ready Tours with Kinbrace**

In collaboration with IRB presenters, Kinbrace offers virtual Ready Tours workshops to help refugee claimants prepare for their hearings and understand the refugee appeal process. This year, The Refugee Centre has partnered with Kinbrace to deliver the Ready Tours in French



### **Empowering Youth Program**

In partnership with Résilience Montréal, the goal of this project is to provide community service experience for over 30 youth groups (ages 15-30) in Tiohtià:ke/Montreal, with priority given to Indigenous and refugee youth, providing them with valuable life experience and leadership skills, enhancing their project management capacity, and growing their networks of community partners and like-minded youth.

### **Capstone project with Concordia's Human Relations Department**

The Refugee Centre partners with Concordia University Human relations department for capstone projects aimed at enhancing services for refugee claimants and addressing the community's needs. The students, supervised by the Resettlement and Integration department, develop practical solutions focused on improving housing accessibility, language training, and community integration. Their work culminates in content creation or workshops to address different needs of refugee claimants. This collaboration fosters innovative approaches and strengthens the Refugee Centre's capacity to meet the evolving needs of the refugee community.



## COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS

### PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF CANADA (PHAC)

Ongoing health project, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada focuses on community-led research to understand the impact of lifestyle habits among newcomers and refugees. Emphasizing health promotion and chronic illness prevention, it aims to implement informed and tailored programs and activities for our community.

### COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRE (CJC) PROJECT

In collaboration with the Ministère de la Justice du Québec (MJQ), The Refugee Centre organized community mobilization sessions to evaluate the interest, feasibility, and priorities for a Community Justice Center (CJC) model tailored to the specific needs of Montreal's newcomer population.



# OUR PARTNERS

"Cooperation is the deep conviction that no one can succeed if everyone does not succeed"

## GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Ministère de la Justice du Québec (MJQ)
- Programme régional d'accueil et d'intégration des demandeurs d'asile (PRAIDA)
- Centre d'expertise sur le bien-être et l'état de santé physique des réfugiés et des demandeurs d'asile (CERDA)
- Employment and Social Development of Canada (ESDC)
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
- Justice Canada
- Bureau d'intégration des nouveaux arrivants de la Ville de Montréal (BINAM)
- Services Québec
- Immigration Refugee Board (IRB)
- Ministère de l'immigration, de la francisation et de l'intégration (MIFI)

## CORPORATE PARTNERS

- Desjardins
- ScotiaBank
- CIBC

## ACADEMIC PARTNERS

- Concordia University
- McGill's Institute for the Study of International Development
- Université de Québec à Montréal (UQAM)
- Dawson College
- Collège Bois-De-Boulogne
- Collège Ahunatic
- Comité des Affaires internationales de l'Université de Montréal (CAIUM)

## NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- Canadian Red Cross
- Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR)
- Doctors of the World / Médecins du Monde
- Kinbrace
- Matthew House Ottawa
- Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC)

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Medecins sans frontieres
- Peter McGill Community Table
- Moisson Montreal
- Monthly Dignity
- Actions Refugiés Montréal
- World University Service of Canada (WES)
- CALACS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île
- Foyer du Monde
- Le Pont
- La Traverse
- Bread & Beyond
- ROMEL
- Regroupement des organismes en hébergement pour personnes migrantes (ROHMI)
- Accueil Bonneau
- SAC Anjou
- La Maison de l'amitié
- Amitié Soleil
- Ordinateurs pour les écoles du Québec (OPEQ)
- Coursera
- Npower
- CITIM
- Atwater Library
- Le RÉZO
- Black Community Resource Centre
- YES Montreal
- SACOMSS
- Jamaican Association of Montreal
- Haitian Students' Association of Concordia
- Collectif des femmes immigrantes
- CIME McGill
- La Maison Bleue
- Action Sport Physio (Cabrini)
- Jeunes et racines
- Mind your Mind
- Housing and Jobs Concordia (HOJO)
- Abrar
- Keep.MeSafe
- Argyle
- McGill Legal Information Clinic
- Revive NCC
- Salvation Army
- International Students McGill
- Global Food Security McGill
- Darna Montreal
- Alternatives
- AGIR Montreal
- Tarjimly
- Jumpstart Refugee Talent
- Cinema Politica Concordia
- House of PeaceVision 770
- Cinema Shena
- CEED Concordia
- Spanish and Latin American Students Association (SLASA) McGill
- Table de concertation des organismes au services des personnes immigrantes et réfugiées (TCRI)
- Carrefour des ressources en interculturel de Centre-Suc (CRIC)
- Carrefour d'aide aux nouveaux arrivants (CANa)
- Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal
- Mama Khan
- Park Ex Curry Collective
- Community Engagement Project (CEP)
- Centre Kapwa
- Centre de crise TRACOM
- Centre de ressources en employabilité Montréal Centre-Ville (CREMCV)

# TESTIMONY OF OUR WORK OVER THE YEARS

"The Refugee Centre provides services and support for vulnerable immigrant groups by developing strategic partnerships and collaborations to provide supports for immigrant settlement and integration of immigrants"  
- Pathways to Prosperity

The Refugee Centre has been awarded for its settlement and integration practices. Read more about it [here](#)

Read the whole article [here!](#)

"Filippo Grandi was in awe as he visited the offices of The Refugee Centre in Montreal on Friday morning. 'It's a testament to what humanity can do positively,' he enthused a few hours later in an interview with Le Devoir, about what he saw there."  
- Filippo Grandi (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) in Le Devoir



Filippo Grandi  
@RefugeesChief

Over 150 years of welcoming refugees: [@canada150th](#).



Filippo Grandi  
@RefugeesChief

Young refugees in Montreal turned entrepreneurs: they start businesses; are tech savvy; & use their skills to help other refugees. Amazing!



## TESTIMONY OF OUR WORK OVER THE YEARS

In a letter of support for The Refugee Centre. "On many occasions, we have witnessed the professionalism and commitment of the Refugee Centre/Devbloc [...] and we are happy to collaborate with them on various projects."

- Jean-Nicolas Beuze (Canadian High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR))

"The Refugee Centre has very good services for learning French. The teacher teaches intelligently."

- Saeideh K. (Student at The Refugee Centre)

"Great organization. They help refugees and newcomers in a humane and professional way."

- Jiana (Client at The Refugee Centre)

"The french classes had to be held online due to COVID. Despite the online challenges, the french teacher was able to conduct the class well. We cover a lot of grammar and we are given many opportunities to improve our french speaking as well."

- Nilu K. (Student at The Refugee Centre)

## TESTIMONY OF OUR WORK OVER THE YEARS

”

“Through The Refugee Centre I was able to attend University in Montreal, and gain my status as a Protected Person.”

- Ali D. (Student at The Refugee Centre)

“Organized, very well maintained process and guidance.”

- Thea Palmer (Client at The Refugee Centre)

“The help extended to me by The Refugee Centre has had an incredibly positive effect on my ability to continue my degree and the mental well-being of my family.”

- F. H. (Client at The Refugee Centre)

“

“The Refugee Centre is place where I learned new skills and interacted with new people.”

- Anonymous (Participant in the Wellness and Mental Health Program at The Refugee Centre)

## SECTION 4

# OUR STATISTICS





# RESETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION

Since Sept 2023

**990** clients

served in the Orientation Workshop

**200** clients

served in the Orientation appointments

**180** clients

served in the Academic Aid appointments

**140** refurbished laptops

provided to clients, through our partnership with OPEQ

## RESETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION (CONT'D)

**154** clients

served in the Academic Services Workshop, in partnership with Atwater Library

**160** clients

in our Job Search Workshop, in partnership with Atwater Library

**86** clients

in our Quebec Employment Programs Workshop

assisted

**200** clients

for our Beyond the Big City Project

**180** clients

served in our Tax Clinic

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

## Casework

Launched in March 2023, the case management process has provided quality client care to over

**800** new & returning clients

## Food Bank

Since September 2023, the Basket of Basic Needs initiative has distributed

**1356**

**tailored baskets**

containing essential food items for asylum seekers and refugees, in partnership with Moisson Montreal.



## Accessing Healthcare Workshops

Since September 2023,

**543**

**people have attended our Accessing Healthcare Workshops**

## HEALTH & WELLNESS (CONT'D)

### ART PROGRAMMING & SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

#### Social activities program

Since January, we have facilitated

**5** social activities  
on a monthly  
basis

and reached over

**100**  
monthly  
participants in  
our activities

#### Art Hive

From painting on tote  
bags to kite-making,  
we have been able to  
reach over

**30**  
community  
members

#### Deeply Rooted

To date we have facilitated

**12**

Deeply Rooted  
art workshops

and reached over

**150**  
community  
members

#### We Are More

Throughout the past three years, we have been able to

showcase and  
support over

**150**  
artists

collaborate with

**20**  
vendors

and warmly  
welcome over

**350**  
community  
members

# LEGAL AID

**642** cases represented

with 100 current active cases

**2** per week

Our average number of refugee board hearings

**95%** success rate

in helping asylum seekers get their refugee claims approved

**552** appointments



# ASYLUM SEEKER SUPPORT

## ASYLUM APPLICATION IN CANADA

Asylum seekers are individuals who have not yet been granted protected person status in Canada because they are still proving their case before the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. The Refugee Centre's Legal Aid Clinic provides them with legal representation and resources.

### IRCC Portal Workshop:

**3819** clients served  
at The Refugee Centre

**924** clients served at the hotels  
contracted by the IRCC

**1650** clients served  
at PRAIDA



### Legal Aid Support Services

**921** clients served in our  
Legal Aid Workshop

**704** Legal aid walk-ins

# TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Since the inception of our transitional housing program in May 2023, we have

Acquired Additional

**8 units**

Graduated program

**23**

at risk newcomers

Provided over

**20**

Welcome Home Kits

Fully furnished

**6** complete  
apartments

Served more than

**100** Clients in the program

As well as secured multiple partners, including both community organizations & small landlords.





# ADVOCACY

Provided

3

paid  
internships

Connected with

7

political and  
community partners

Attended

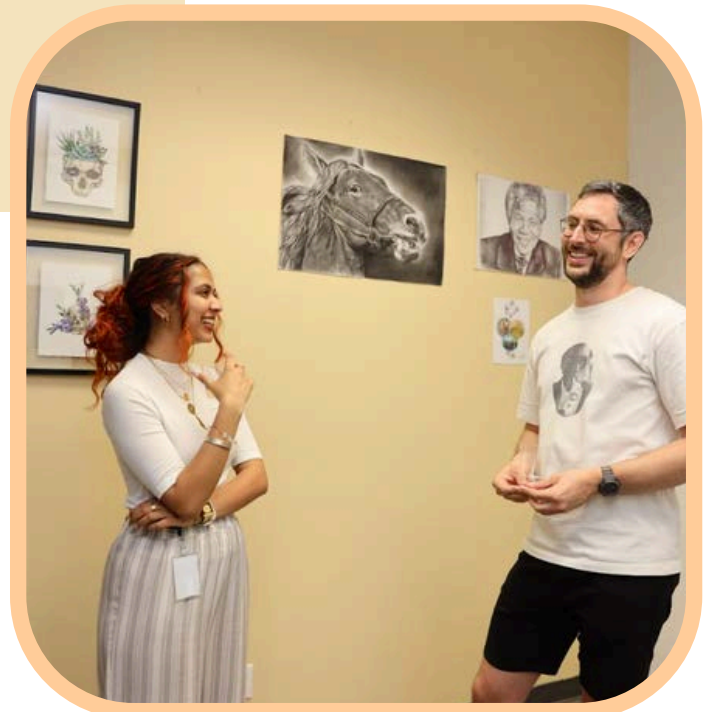
5

community  
consultations

secured

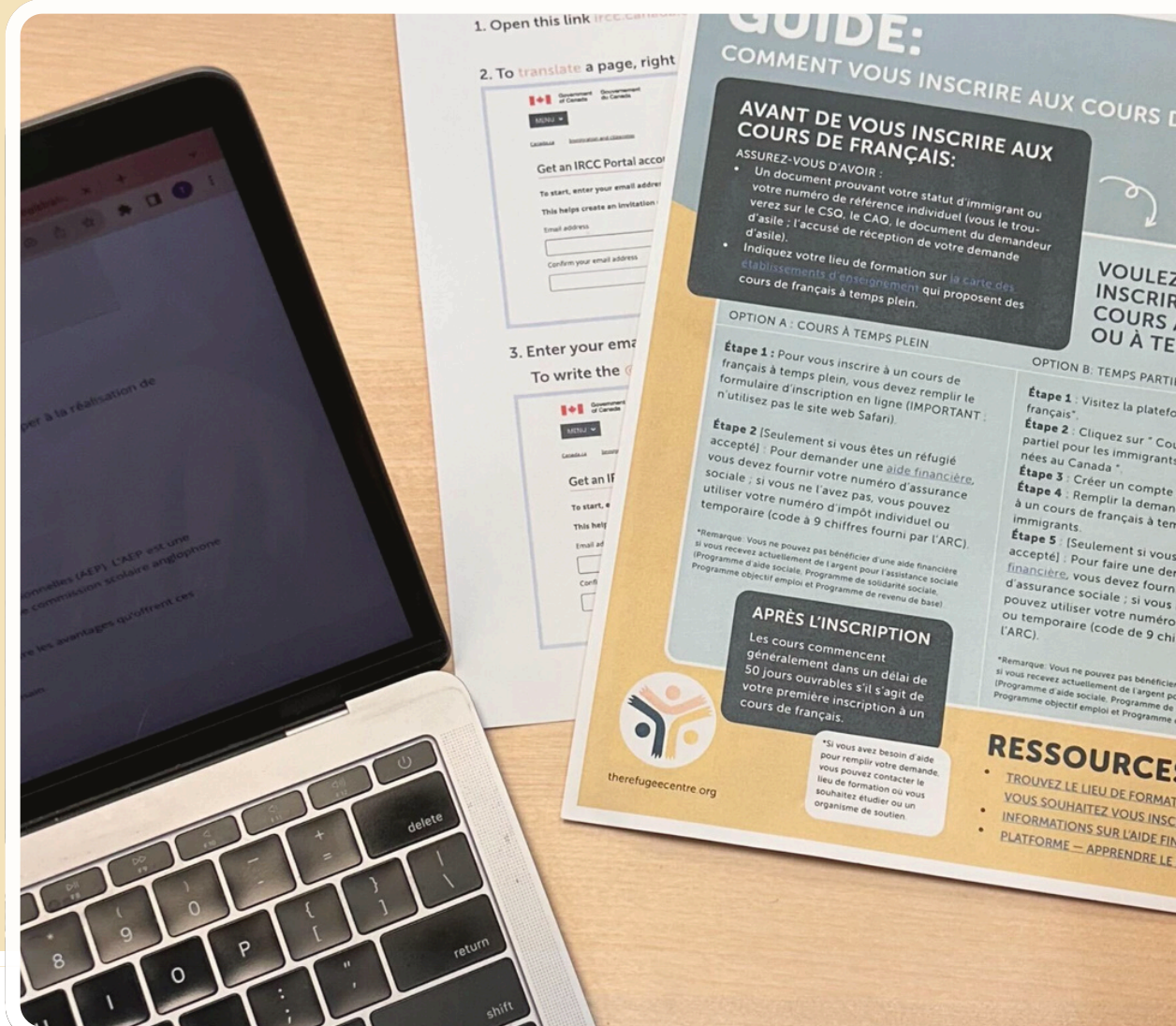
\$38,680

in grant funds



## SECTION 5

# OUR FINANCIALS



## OUR EXPENSES AND SAVINGS

Below is a representation of our financial position as of the end of August 31, 2024. Our financial statements and expenses are independently reviewed annually by a third-party Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) who provides a favorable financial opinion (provided on page 68) called a financial review engagement.

### What does a Full Audit by a CPA verify?

The individual performing a full audit must be a licensed practitioner. The practitioner is required to obtain evidence directly rather than rely on evidence provided by third parties. They perform procedures to reach a conclusion on whether anything came to their attention that causes them to believe that the financial statements are not prepared in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The review procedures that the practitioner is required to carry out include:

Inquiries on the accounting practices used by the company

Representations from management on the accuracy of the financial statements

Management responsibility for internal control systems

Management responsibility to detect and prevent fraud

Information on subsequent events

Knowledge of fraud

Ratios and relationships of recorded amounts

Analytical procedures on comparisons

Receipts of appropriate financial information

Procedures for recording financial information

## EVENTS/SERVICES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

# 70%

Part of The Refugee Centre's mission is to provide quality education and opportunities to refugees and newcomers so they can succeed here in Montreal.

Here is an overview of the list of services and events we organized in 2024.

- IELTS Courses
- English courses (Beginner, intermediate)
- French courses (Beginner, intermediate, advanced)
- Employment programs workshops
- Job search workshops
- Employment consultations
- Academic aid workshops & consultations
- Academic scholarship program (IRSB)
- Concordia admissions help
- Service-based salaries (teachers, social workers, counselors, tutors)
- Orientation workshops & consultations
- Tax clinic
- Web development workshops (2 months)
- Python workshops (2 months)
- Transitional housing program consultations
- Health & wellness support consultations
- Healthcare system navigation workshops
- Social support activities (cooking, yoga, dance)
- Health and wellness art programming (art & music workshops, art therapy)

## GENERAL AND OFFICE

# 4.6%

In order to maintain The Refugee Centre's innovative approach to delivering its services, we strive to ensure that all our IT tools are user-friendly and accessible to all. In addition, we adhere to more traditional methods of providing information or filing legal documents by paper and printing in large quantities, as we regularly handle sensitive information in our legal clinic that cannot be stored digitally.

Here are some examples of costs:

- Printers and paper
- Computers and other tech
- Website design and maintenance
- Web domains and hosting
- Development and administrative salaries

## PROFESSIONAL FEES

# 2.7%

Professional fees are necessary to keep The Refugee Centre up to date with all its reporting obligations to Revenu Québec and the Canada Revenue Agency.

Some examples include:

- Remittances to Revenu Québec
- Remittances to the Canadian Revenue Agency
- Cost of independent financial review
- Tax review

## TAXES / INSURANCE / ADVERTISING / BANK CHARGES

# 1.5%

Just like all registered NGOs, The Refugee Centre must pay taxes, rent and bank fees, among other things. We also set aside a small amount of funds to advertise our services online and in person where it can be the most effective.

## LEGAL AID CLINIC

# 10.2%

Immigrants, refugees, and undocumented refugees are in constant need of counsel to overcome their legal hurdles. This type of help is not readily available and requires a high level of discretion. Our Legal Clinic is available by appointment to all newcomers and students regardless of status.

Some services include:

- Work permits
- Study permits
- Asylum applications
- Permanent Residence Applications
- Refugee Sponsorship Appeals

## RENT & SPACE

# 4%

The Refugee Centre hosts thousands of newcomers each year for multiple events, classes, workshops, and counseling appointments. Thus having our own space is an integral part of our ability to operate both privately and efficiently. We are located in downtown Montreal, near the Concordia University campus, in a 5553 sq. ft. space to hold classes, meetings, private legal consultations, workshops and much more.

## COMMUNITY FUND

# 7%

At the end of each fiscal year, The Refugee Centre contributes at least 5% of its annual budget to its Community Fund. This is done in order to meet the legal obligations set by the provincial and federal governments, allowing us to be able to sponsor refugees each year.

For example: The Refugee Centre must have \$16,000 in savings to sponsor one refugee per year. Each year, depending on government quotas, The Refugee Centre sponsors 5 to 10 refugees.

BUDGET LINE	Projected (\$1,800,000)	Actual (\$2,093,485)
Events/Services	45%	70%
General and Office	7%	4.6%
Taxes/insurance/bank charges	2%	1.5%
Professional Fees	4%	2.7%
Legal Aid Clinic	8%	10.2%
Rent & Space	12%	4%
Community Fund	22%	7%



## INDEPENDENT RESULT OF AUDIT

*MMH Accounting and Consulting Services Inc.  
388 Rue Des Alismas, Laval, QC, H7X 0A5  
Telephone: (514) 294-3185 Email: mazri.m.hafiz@outlook.com*

### INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Canadian Refugee Initiative,

#### Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of Canadian Refugee Initiative (the "CRI"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at August 31, 2024, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the CRI as at August 31, 2024, and the results of its operations and cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

#### Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards ("Canadian GAAS"). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements* section of my report. I am independent of the CRI in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in Canada, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

#### Other Matter

I was appointed for the audit of the year ended August 31, 2024. As such, I do not provide an opinion on the comparative financial information for the year ended August 31, 2023, which was previously reviewed. A review is substantially less in scope than an audit and does not provide a basis for the expression of an opinion on financial statements as a whole.

As part of my procedures, I obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence that the opening balances do not contain misstatements that may materially affect the current period's financial statements. However, readers should be mindful that the comparative information, in and of itself, is unaudited.





FROM THE WHOLE TRC TEAM,

# THANK YOU

We would like to express our gratitude to everyone for taking the time and effort to review and support our work. We hope to continue to serve our community with your support, and from all of us at The Refugee Centre, we thank you for making it all possible!

