



Building
Upon
Our
Strengths



Annual Report 2012

The Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto is a place of welcome, friendship and hope as newcomers begin their journey towards building a meaningful life in Canada. The Centre is a safe place where newcomers can explore their interests, learn from one another, find their voice and contribute to their communities. We are inspired by the strong skills and talents that each newcomer brings with them as they begin a new life here in Canada and we believe that together we can build a more just and compassionate society.

Our work in 2012 was centred on consolidating our programs and resources, which allowed us to build upon our strengths and focus on delivering relevant, useful programs that support the integration goals of immigrants and refugees living in Toronto. Guided by the Centre's mission and vision, our 2009–2013 Strategic Plan, outlines for all our commitment to Strong Programs and Partnerships for Full Integration, our advocacy of Community Engagement for Social Justice and Social Change, and finally, striving for continual improvement through the building of our own Organizational Capacity. Inspired by these three areas of our strategic plan, we celebrate the past year in this report, as we highlight our achievements, community building and leadership within newcomer communities.



“The Mennonite New Life Centre was the... key to our settlement process. They supported our difficult case throughout several years and their help ensured a happy ending to our story. We are now a family that calls Canada home.”

Eloy, Settlement Services Client

Vision

We envision a society in which all people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds participate fully in all aspects of Canadian life. We will model an approach that brings together community engagement and community services, working together with newcomers to reduce insecurity and reach integration, strengthen voices and increase social equality.

Mission

The Mennonite New Life Centre's mission is to facilitate newcomer settlement and integration through holistic services and community engagement, carried out within a gender justice and anti-oppression framework.



Strong Programs and Partnerships for Full Integration

As programs grow and diversify, we want to stay focused on the long-term goal of full integration for newcomers

Sharing the Integration Experience of Newcomer Seniors

In 2012, funding was granted by Human Resources Development Canada, Government of Canada, to support a new project entitled Newcomer Seniors Engaged: Reflection of Canadian Life. By organizing a series of educational experiences, seniors learned about Canadian life and were given the opportunity to reflect on themes of heritage, migration, social inclusion and civic engagement.

Through a series of workshops and field trips to places such as the Art Gallery of Ontario, Casa Loma and an Aboriginal Pow Wow, among others, newcomer seniors learned about Canadian history, culture and civic traditions. The use of digital storytelling technology to document and communicate the experiences of newcomer seniors enabled participants to create a digital story of their individual learning and reflection.

Consolidating Strengths in Settlement and Language Instruction

English-language instruction helps newcomers gain English-language proficiency so that they can access information about Canadian culture and society. Our teachers aim to teach language skills that are useful in real-life situations and provide significant Canadian content to highlight important aspects of Canadian culture, history, society and current events.

We support the integration needs of newcomers through one-to-one counselling and information sessions. At these sessions, counsellors provide newcomers with vital information that supports them in

making informed decisions about their settlement and integration into Canadian life. We nurtured industry networking by supporting Professional Immigrant Networks such as those for internationally trained journalists and mental health professionals.

Mental Health Programs Positively Supports Newcomer Inclusion

The Bridge Training Program for Internationally Trained Psychologists and Allied Mental Health Professionals continues to attract professionals from around the world, now living in Canada, who participate in course work, occupation-specific language training and supervised clinical internships. We have built relationships with sector employers to offer quality internships, and in return graduates of the program are being hired into sector jobs such as case managers and facilitators as well as entering into private practice.

Through the Community Mental Health Program, internationally trained mental health professionals, through supervised internships, give back to their communities. Newcomers experiencing stress, depression and trauma can access one-on-one counselling and psycho-educational workshops as part of their settlement and integration process.



Organizational Capacity

Building organizational capacity and infrastructure is important to organizational effectiveness

Organization Development and Wellbeing

Each year employees participate in a series of staff planning and organization development activities organized to support Centre growth and promote the professional development of staff. In an effort to provide staff with tools and resources to better manage their performance objectives, all Centre staff and interns participated in a day long training session that explored topics such as stress management, conflict resolution and prioritization.

In addition to organization-wide training, program staff attended program-specific training such as the TESL Ontario Conference for LINC teachers, the LINC Childminding Conference for childminding staff and the OCASI Professional Development conference for settlement counsellors.

Leadership Change

The Centre wished former Executive Director Tanya Chute Molina well when she resigned from her long-standing position in May 2012. Tanya is credited with molding programs and services of the Centre to reflect its mission and vision toward a more compassionate and just society while embracing an anti-oppression framework.

In November 2012, the Centre announced the hiring of the new Executive Director, Shelly Lalbeharry D'Mello, who had joined the organization in 2009 as the Human Resources and Finance Manager.

Shelly holds an MBA and possesses a solid background in finance, information technology and human resources. She is a skilled negotiator, relationship and team builder, a strong communicator and creative thinker who brings with her over 15 years of leadership experience in the private and non-profit sectors.

Volunteer Programs Taking Shape

The Centre's operation relies on the contributions of volunteers who generously donate their time, skills and expertise to the programs and services offered weekly at the Centre. The majority of our volunteers are newcomers or of immigrant background eager to be active community members.

During 2012, we have strengthened our Volunteer Program through process improvement such as the streamlining of our volunteer recruitment processes as well as other volunteer management practices. We also have a vested interest in creating a learning environment for volunteers and plan approximately five trainings per year on topics such as job search and public speaking.



Community Engagement for Social Justice and Social Change

Full integration happens when newcomers participate in shaping their environment rather than being simply shaped by it.

Building Newcomer Capacity for Active Citizenship

The Unlocking Newcomer Civic Power project promotes greater involvement of newcomers in civic life. During 2012, the Centre created a timely curriculum to foster civic awareness among diverse immigrant groups. Phase 1 of the learning process included the delivery of workshops to Latin American community leaders from the GTA. As a result, newcomers become familiar with the political decision-making process at the federal, provincial and local levels.

Phase 2 promoted twelve interested participants of the original group to create a project that would encourage change in their communities. Follow-up work by program participants in 2013 will see this group develop, define and implement the action-based project.

Engaging Employers and Trained Workers in Dialogue

The Fall 2012 New Voices issue, a bi-annual advocacy magazine, encouraged dialogue and dissemination of “Canadian Experience” as a barrier to inclusion in the Canadian workforce. This edition explored the concept of Canadian Experience from four different perspectives: the corporate view, the academic view, the services provider’s view and the view of newcomers themselves.

We were invited by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), as a member of the Beyond Canadian Experience (BCE) coalition, to support the design of a survey on immigrant labour experiences. The survey asked job seekers and employers to describe how “Canadian

Experience” requirements in the Ontario job market affected them. The findings of the survey and subsequent recommendations were published in 2013.

Enhancing Our Organizational Learning for Social Transformation

We began 2012 with new bylaws that better reflect our identity as an inclusive organization. In order to implement the new bylaws, the Centre worked toward the development of a membership engagement strategy closely reflecting a community-based membership structure. The Church and Community Relations Committee (CCRC) at the Centre worked to develop a strategy that would meet the legal requirements as outlined in the bylaws, and likewise support the Centre’s mission and vision.

As a result, the CCRC developed a strategy that will result in 1) improving the quality and relevancy of all programs and services at MNLCT; 2) the creation of a platform for meaningful dialogue with individuals and community organizations that have a vested interest in the success of newcomers in Toronto; and 3) individuals and groups feeling they belong to a community that comes together for collective sharing and action.



Finances

Funding for our budget of \$2.38 million comes from a wide variety of contributors including Citizenship and Immigration Canada as our primary contributor, followed by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, which funds our Bridge Training Program for Internationally Trained Psychologists and Allied Mental Health Professionals, together with the Newcomer Settlement Program services for refugee claimants and immigrants. This year we also received funding from Human Resources Development Canada to support a new project exploring the integration experience of newcomer seniors in Toronto. Our community mental health program was supported by the Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund of the City of Toronto.

Our Newcomer Skills in Action project was supported mainly through the contributions of the Catherine Donnelly Foundation, with additional support from Carranza LLP and the Wallenstein Feed Charitable Foundation. The Mennonite New Life Centre also received financial support from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the local supporting Mennonite churches, other church groups and like minded individual donors. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our funders and donors for their financial contributions throughout this financial year. With their support, we are able to continue to walk together with newcomers on their journey to full and meaningful integration.

Summary of Audited Financials

	2011	2012	2013 (estimate)
Revenue			
Government	2,377,991	2,202,847	2,294,764
Churches + Individuals	75,866	50,807	37,000
Foundations + Other	158,933	127,319	63,162
	2,612,790	2,380,973	2,394,926
Expenses			
Staff	1,572,171	1,457,652	1,495,751
Building	327,606	349,421	366,956
Program	475,976	408,400	404,712
Office + Other	182,250	170,345	134,986
	2,558,003	2,385,818	2,402,405
Excess of revenues over expenses	54,787	-4,845	-7,479
Summary By Program			
Settlement & Language Instruction	1,671,565	1,576,797	1,559,752
Community Engagement	115,536	99,611	97,780
BTP and Mental Health	721,933	627,989	664,525
Core Support	48,969	81,421	80,348
Total	2,558,003	2,385,818	2,402,405



Toronto
1774 Queen St E,
Toronto ON M4L 1G7
Tel: 416-699-4527
mnlct@mnlct.org

Scarborough
2600 Birchmount Rd
Scarborough, ON M1T 2M5
Tel: 416-291-3248
scarborough@mnlct.org

North York
2737 Keele St, Unit 9
North York, ON M3M 2E9
Tel: 647-776-2057
northyork@mnlct.org

www.mnlct.org

The 2012 Board of Directors, with their affiliation

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- Sam Sivarajan, Treasurer
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- Miriam Wiebe, Secretary
Toronto New Life Mennonite Church

We would like to thank our program participants, volunteers, donors and supporters for walking with us during this past year. As we engage with newcomers and communities in programs, partnerships and social change we will continue to work towards our strategic goals in 2013.

Service Statistics

3,695
newcomers served in our
settlement program

7,314
total visits

top 3 languages spoken

75%	13%	8%
Spanish	Mandarin	English

236
Students in LINC program

top 5 languages of students

69%	8%	6%
Mandarin	Tamil	Cantonese

6%	3%
Farsi/Dari	Arabic