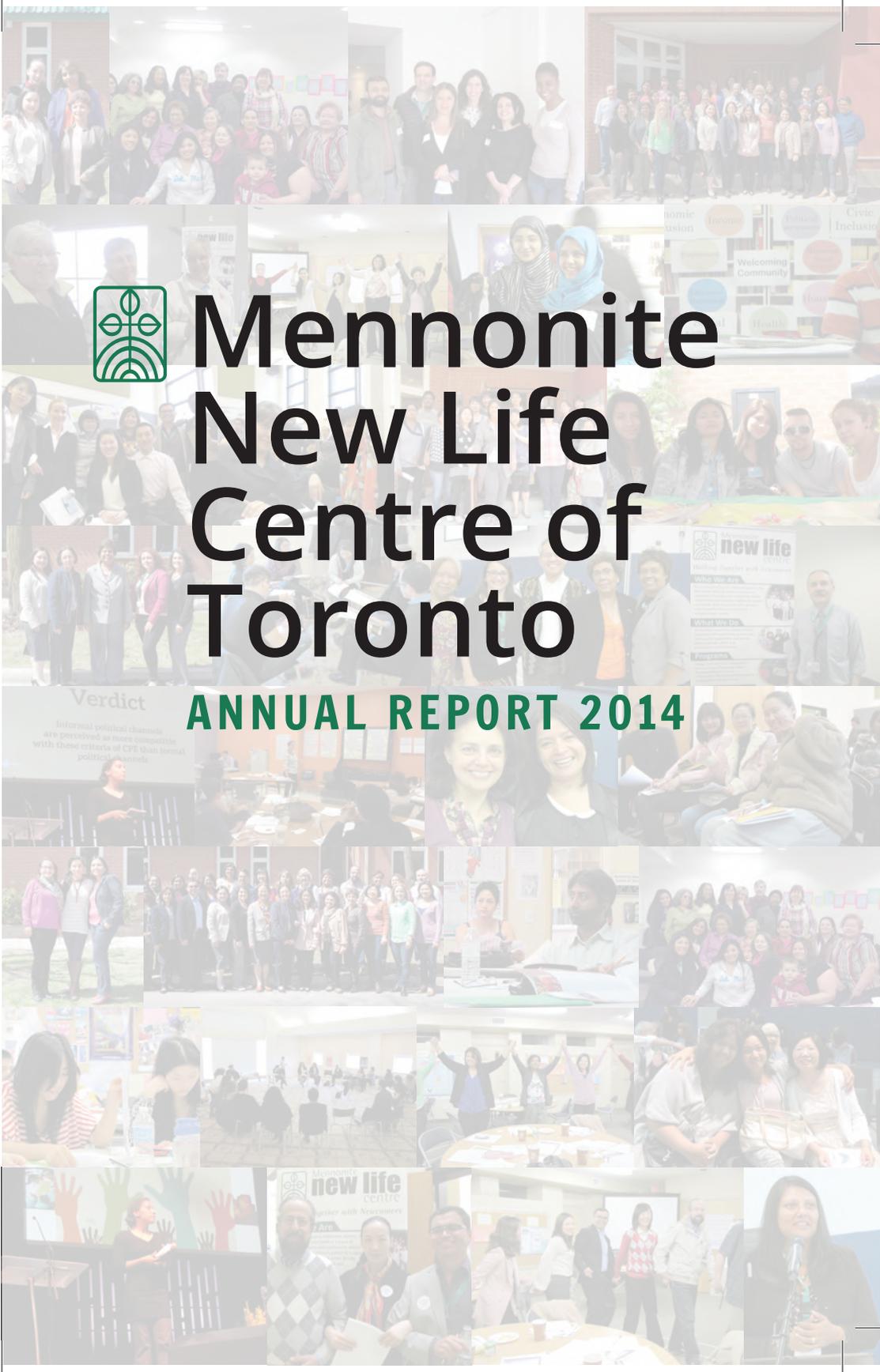




Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



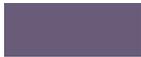
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Continuing the Journey of Walking Together with Newcomers



As a member-based, community settlement agency, the Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto (MNLCT) has been a place of welcome and friendship since 1983. The Centre's many programs and services help newcomer families from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds build a new life in Canada. Our holistic approach brings together practical assistance, emotional support, and community engagement practices within an anti-oppression and gender justice framework.

— 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.

— 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.



STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2014, the MNLCT embarked on the creation of a strategic direction that builds upon our more than 30 years of experience in walking together with newcomers. While the political, economic and social landscapes affecting our newcomer communities continue to shift, the Centre's commitment to supporting newcomers on their journey to full integration and participation in Canadian life remains steadfast. In consultation with staff, clients, volunteers, the community at large, and like-minded stakeholders including funders, donors and partners, the Board of Directors mapped out a strategic direction for the Centre that is built upon our foundational values of respect, community building, participation and voice, equity and integration, and peace with social justice. As a result, the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan named three Strategic Priorities and the resulting Strategic Objectives as follows:



BUILDING A RESILIENT ORGANIZATION

- » Development of strategic alliances and sector collaboration.
- » Succession planning supporting organizational sustainability.
- » Leadership and staff development through the building of strengths in cultural competency, evaluative capacity and cross-program collaboration.
- » Diversification of funding streams to include alternative funding models such as social impact bonds and social enterprise.



DESIGNING RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS

- » Conversion of the Community Mental Health Program to a core service.
- » Innovation in service delivery model through the development of self-directed, on-line integration content and reaching out to newcomers where they live, work and play.
- » Creation of program initiatives that support the economic integration of newcomers.



MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY IMPACT

- » Development of an adult education framework for community engagement.
- » Increased awareness in both newcomer communities and the public at large about civic participation, social change, and the value of newcomers to our economy and society.
- » Engagement of policy makers through participatory action research to enable systemic change.

Through the implementation of the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan, MNLCT will continue to be a responsive and agile organization that can meet the changing needs of newcomers and refugees. We are excited to be building upon the strategic alliances, partnerships, and collaborations the Centre has fostered with its clients, members, donors, and funders and look forward to taking the next steps in our journey as an immigrant-serving agency.

BUILDING A RESILIENT ORGANIZATION

Effective leadership guided by a sound governing body while working collaboratively with traditional and non-traditional stakeholders to develop new initiatives in response to an ever-changing environment.

Leadership Development

Investing in the professional development of staff and leadership is vital to sustaining our programs and services. In 2014, the leadership team – made up of managers and coordinators of MNLCT programs, along with shared services staff – participated in a number of key development activities and workshops. Of particular significance was the training received on evaluating programs, strategic planning, and leadership development in the areas of building trust and integrity in teams, providing feedback and having difficult conversations, and leveraging diversity for team success.

The leadership team cemented this learning by undertaking projects that evaluated program effectiveness, implementing suggestions that arose from the evaluations, having meaningful conversations with staff during the annual performance review process, and developing an implementation plan to support the priorities and objectives named in the 2014-2018 Strategic Plan.

New Client Management System

In addition to leadership training and development, the settlement team participated in intense training to prepare for the implementation of our new client database, OCASI Client Management System (OCMS). In keeping with our strategic objective of collaboration, training was provided by our IT Coordinator in partnership with the OCMS development team.

Staff began working with the OCMS in June 2014, with the key aim of securely recording relevant client data and reporting on program performance in a timely manner. As a result of the OCMS implementation, we have increased the security and efficiency of data collection by eliminating redundant data entry practices and creating new input tools to effectively capture client data.



Additionally, custom reports and data analysis tables have provided insight to ensure that programming and services are responsive to the changing needs of our clients.

Collaborations and Partnerships

We would like to recognize that the work undertaken by the Centre in 2014 is a direct reflection of the partnerships and alliances developed on our path to building vibrant newcomer communities. One example of these connections is our ongoing participation in the Toronto Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP), which has allowed us to impact newcomer communities across the north-west area of Toronto by sharing our expertise and experience in mental health, employment and civic literacy.

In 2014, we also partnered with The Peoples Church to become a provider of settlement services with their newly established Newcomer Network. This partnership allows us to expand the reach of our settlement services to a diverse client base in the north end while lending our leadership and settlement experience to growing services in the settlement sector.

The Bridge Training Program for Internationally Trained Psychologists and Allied Mental Health Professionals (BTMH) named Seneca College as an education partner in offering the program's certificate course to BTMH participants. As a result, participants have access to library facilities, career guidance and counselling, and professional development courses, including the 3084 online video courses available through Lynda.com.

The Centre has also been working closely with Aurora House, an organization that provides transitional housing for individuals who have been trafficked, to provide settlement and counselling services to residents of the House. The MNLCT is committed to furthering our organizational strengths in helping vulnerable immigrants. By becoming the settlement partner to Aurora House, the Centre will be able to provide transitional and mental health supports to those in need.



DESIGNING RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS

The design of responsive programs requires innovation, creative thinking and the incorporation of new technologies in service delivery as well as a heightened capacity for data analysis to stay abreast of emerging trends.

Catholic Children's Aid Society

The Community Mental Health Program, in partnership with Catholic Children's Aid Society (CCAS), has been contracted to offer a pilot project called "Supporting Family Connections". The project aims to employ strategies and interventions to appropriately and safely support children and at-risk youth in remaining with their families instead of entering into the care of CCAS. As part of the program, the MNLCT provides culturally specific intensive counselling and a range of mental health and settlement interventions to Hispanic families in their homes in order to mitigate the risks.

The pilot project began in the Fall of 2014 and has resulted in keeping six at-risk families together. The MNLCT will continue to partner with CCAS into 2015 to support five new at-risk families.

Citizenship Classes

Based upon the book "Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship", published by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the MNLCT offers clients in-person, hands-on preparation for Canada's Citizenship Test. The Centre has been offering the 4-week program multiple times a year for over five years and engages potential new Canadians in conversation and learning about the responsibilities of Canadians and the rights that come with citizenship. In 2014, we held a total of 31 citizenship workshop classes at both our North York and Scarborough locations. Of the 217 participants, 37% passed their Canadian Citizenship test and the remaining 68% are still in the process of writing the exam. Achieving citizenship is a significant milestone for newcomers who are on the path to holistic integration in Canadian life.



Immigrant Employment Week

Underutilization of immigrant skills has profound implications in terms of labor market adjustment and the socio-economic integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities. Unfortunately, research has shown that recent immigrants have higher levels of education but their earnings have remained lower in comparison to those who were born in Canada. In an effort to reverse this trend, Immigrant Employment Week, organized by Toronto East Quadrant LIP, is a week full of activities showcasing and celebrating the skills, talents, education and experience that newcomers possess.

As part of the MNLCT's contribution, a cross-collaboration of staff and clients from all programs created a short play entitled "Vignettes from a Journey in Search of Opportunities" which explores and reflects on the various challenges, from an immigrant perspective, of entering the labour market. The MNLCT invited members of the private sector to this event to share their initiatives in promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce. We believe the integrated effort of the different sectors in our society will help new Canadians and the community at large to succeed.



MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY IMPACT

By combining adult education and participatory action research, we can promote active civic participation in immigrant communities to help address barriers that result in social exclusion. The outcome is an inclusive and globally minded society.

2014 Toronto Mayoral Panel Discussion on Immigrant Issues

As a member of the Latin American Civic Participation Campaign, the MNLCT Community Engagement team provided leadership in organizing and facilitating a mayoral panel discussion on the topic of immigrant barriers and issues to integration in the City of Toronto. The event, entitled “Economic, Social and Political Inclusion of Immigrant Communities in Toronto” was held on October 14th, 2014 ahead of the Toronto Mayoral Elections, in collaboration with over 30 community organizations. The three front-running candidates – Olivia Chow, Doug Ford and John Tory – participated in the discussions and answered relevant questions about immigrant integration, including voting rights, access to political process, and policy issues. The Q&A-style event was live-streamed by media outlets such as CP24, and was recorded and captioned in Spanish.

In conjunction with the Mayoral event, the Community Engagement team produced a video named “I Vote” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvT7n0CZIWE>) with the goal of increasing newcomer participation in the municipal elections. Supplementary materials such as a brochure, translated into Spanish, about the voting process and a presentation on the municipal system and decision-making process were circulated and disseminated on all MNLCT social media channels.



Participatory Action Research (PAR) Project on Latin American Civic Participation

Through funding from the City of Toronto's Access, Equity and Human Rights Grant, the study investigated the complexities of civic and political engagement as it is understood and practiced in the newcomer Latin American community in Toronto and offers recommendations to the City of Toronto on innovative ways to renew interest in municipal elections for this community.

The initial findings summarized the various barriers faced by the newcomer Latin American community in Toronto as they relate to participation in formal political channels such as elections. This does not, however, mean that this community does not participate due to apathy; instead, as learned through focus groups and surveys, there is a rich variety of political engagement activities taking place in the Latin American community in the informal political sphere. This finding and others can offer important insights for generating interest in electoral politics. The Participatory Action Research Report will be available in 2015 and will outline key recommendations arising from the research.



FINANCES

Funding for all programs and services offered at the MNLCT comes from three main funding sources, specifically: government funding at the federal, provincial and municipal levels; foundations and like-minded organizations; and individual donors. In 2014, our primary funding contributor remained Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), providing over 80% of funding for core services in Settlement and Language Instruction. Likewise, the Ontario government, through the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade (MCIIT) continues to fund our Newcomer Settlement Program and the Bridge Training Program for Internationally Trained Psychologists and Allied Mental Health Professionals (BTMH). In 2014, as part of the funding agreement with MCIIT and for the first time since the program's inception, participants of the BTMH Program paid tuition fees which were used to off-set delivery costs for the program. At the municipal level of government, support services and mental health counselling is funded by the City of Toronto's Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund, and research activities by the City's Access, Equity and Human Rights Grant.

Foundations and like-minded organizations such as the Catherine Donnelly Foundation, the Mennonite Central Committee, local supporting Mennonite Churches, and Wallenstein Feed, among others, provided grant supports for Community Engagement activities including civic literacy and human rights training, as well as funding for core services activities.

The generous donations MNLCT received from our members, clients, and donors have made it possible to support necessary core and program activities that extend past our current funding agreements. Through the generosity of our donors, we are able to provide professional development and training for staff and leadership, support senior and youth programming, and pilot projects that are being developed to meet the emerging needs of newcomers and refugees.

The MNLCT would like to thank all of our funders and donors for their financial support. The Centre is very appreciative of the generosity exhibited by our donors and by the commitment of our funders to walk together with newcomers as they build a home for themselves and their families.

Summary of Audited Financials

Revenue	2013	2014	2015 (estimate)
Government	2,263,755	2,187,950	2,104,797
Churches + Individuals	50,269	36,487	49,886
Foundations + Other	69,226	31,746	46,436
Total revenue	2,383,250	2,256,183	2,201,119

Expenses	2013	2014	2015 (estimate)
Staff	1,512,896	1,583,858	1,529,956
Building	365,778	385,112	400,985
Program	360,852	158,575	161,153
Office + Other	131,966	131,773	109,025
Total expenses	2,371,492	2,259,318	2,201,119
Excess of revenues over expenses	11,758	(3,135)	0

Summary By Program	2013	2014	2015 (estimate)
Settlement & Language Instruction	1,551,092	1,722,385	1,638,580
Bridge Training and Mental Health	645,628	432,953	494,153
Community Engagement	97,484	38,168	11,886
Core Support	77,288	65,812	56,500
Total	2,371,492	2,259,318	2,201,119

SERVICE STATISTICS

We are excited to report that we continue to serve a diverse community of newcomers, coming mainly from Colombia, China, Mexico, India, and El Salvador. In 2014, our settlement programs served 3,164 newcomers to Canada, for a total of 6,249 visits. Of participants served, 45% received services in Spanish, 43% in Mandarin, 7% in Malayalam, 3% in English, and the remainder in other languages. The Community Mental Health Program served 332 clients during the year, for a total of 881 visits.

SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

3,164 clients

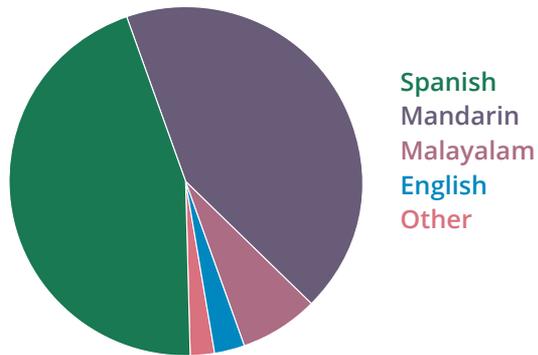
6,249 visits

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

332 clients

881 visits

BREAKDOWN OF LANGUAGES SERVICES PROVIDED IN



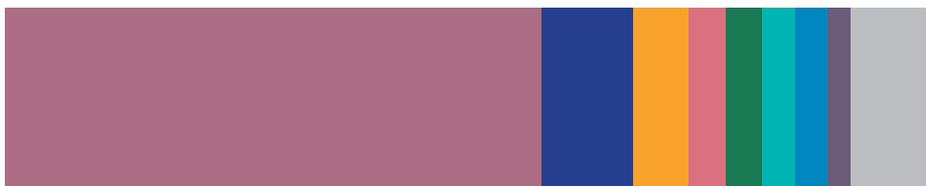
During the 2014 calendar year, 196 students attended our LINC Program; of these, 43% graduated by progressing at least one level. We continue to serve a diverse population of students, with Mandarin being the first language spoken by the majority of our students (58%), followed by Tamil (10%), Cantonese (6%), Farsi and Arabic (4% each), Urdu and Spanish (3.5% each), and Dari (2.5%), with the remainder made up of smaller minority language groups.

LINC PROGRAM

196 students

43% graduated

FIRST LANGUAGES OF PARTICIPANTS



Mandarin / Tamil / Cantonese / Farsi / Arabic / Urdu / Spanish / Dari / Other

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The 2014 Board of Directors, together with their affiliation, is as follows:

Miriam Reesor, Chair	Markham Area Mennonite Churches
Mohan Doss, Vice Chair	Community
Sam Sivarajan, Treasurer	Community
Miriam Wiebe, Secretary	Toronto New Life Mennonite Church
Leanne Buck	Toronto United Mennonite Church
Helen Griebeling	Mississauga Mennonite Church
Laurie Hadden	Markham Area Mennonite Churches
Julia He	Community
Evan Heise	Mennonite Central Committee
Suchana Pandey	Danforth Mennonite Church

The work we do in walking with newcomers as they begin a new life here in Canada is only made possible by the generosity of time, passion and dedication of our supporters and contributors. We thank our program participants, volunteers, donors, funders and community members for their continued support.

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