



# ANNUAL REPORT 2013



Mennonite  
**new life**  
centre



Walking Together with Newcomers

## Celebrating 30 Years of Walking Together with Newcomers

The Mennonite New Life Centre of Toronto (MNLCT), founded in 1983, is a vibrant, member-based, community-oriented settlement agency serving immigrants and refugees. Our many programs and services help newcomer families from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds build new lives in Canada. Our holistic approach brings together practical assistance, emotional support and community engagement practices within an anti-oppression and gender-justice framework.

The Mennonite New Life Centre offers a wide range of programs and services to help newcomers integrate and contribute their skills and voices to their communities. We bring together experience in the areas of settlement services, language instruction, mental health supports, leadership development through community engagement initiatives and employment integration services such as a bridge training program for internationally trained mental health professionals. We are a welcoming place within the community where newcomers are guided and encouraged to participate and contribute in all aspects of Canadian life.

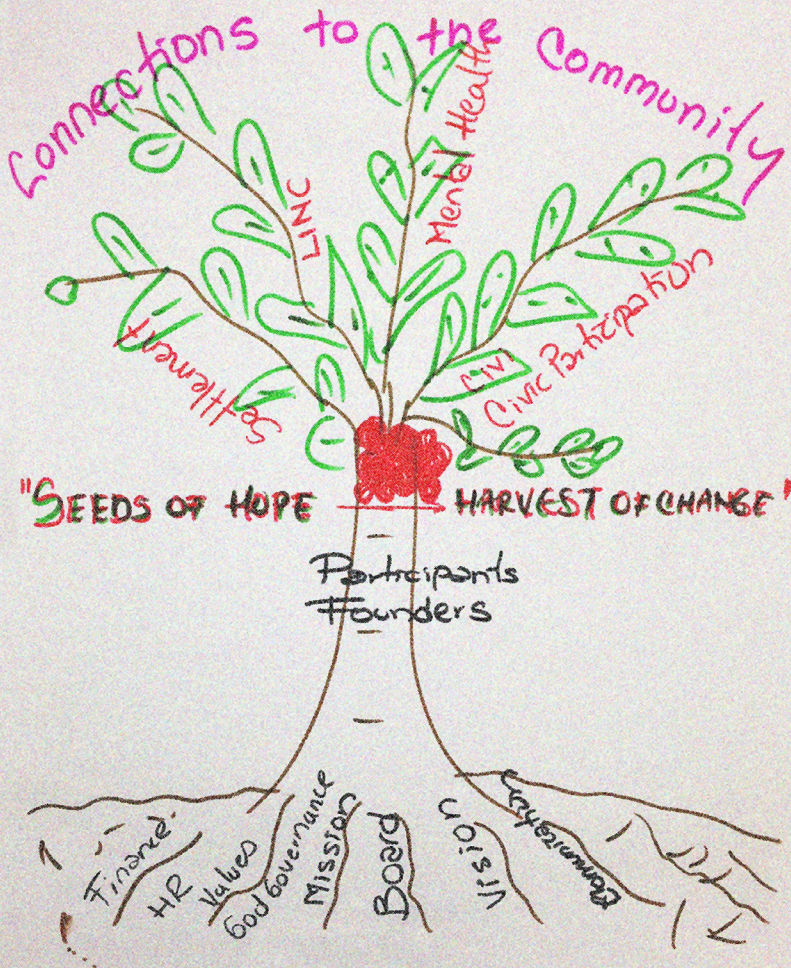


## Mission

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.



In 2013, MNLCT marked its 30th year of helping immigrants and refugees build new lives in Canada. Our history is steeped in the heritage and shared values of our founding member Mennonite Churches and the vision of founders Adolpho and Betty Puricelli who believed *"it was a call to humanitarian service that inspired and created this organization."* We hold close and dear the values of respect, community building, participation, equity and social justice.

Over the last three decades, the Centre has evolved to meet the changing needs of newcomers. In most recent years, specifically from 2010 to 2013, MNLCT has been guided by a Strategic Plan that focused on creating Strong Programs and Partnerships for Full Integration, Community Engagement for Social Justice and Social Change and strengthening Organizational Capacity. As a Centre, we have accomplished many of the goals and objectives outlined in the plan with the assistance of talented staff, dedicated volunteers, engaged community members and the generosity of our funders and donors.

As we look forward to the future, we will continue to listen to the communities we serve, to collaborate and to discuss. We will continue to embrace change, planned growth and innovation. We will dream and envision, and will build upon a foundation that is steeped in 30 years of walking together with newcomers.

# Strong programs and partnerships for full integration



**Design new programs and community partnerships to facilitate full participation of newcomers in all aspects of community life.**

## **Emotional Intelligence: Promoting Mental Health Wellbeing in Children and Parents**

In response to supporting newcomer children and their parents to integrate more effectively, MNLCT has designed a pro-active Emotional Intelligence Program meant to prevent anti-social behaviour and promote academic success of immigrant students within a school context.

Newcomer children are provided with Emotional Intelligence training to better understand and manage their emotions, collaboratively resolve conflict through communication and apply themselves to attainable goals by improving their self-awareness. Newcomer parents accompany their children on this journey to better understand the stresses children experience, provide emotional support, and negotiate discipline and authority in ways their children will accept.

This project was piloted in partnership with Settlement & Education Partnerships in Toronto (SEPT), and is offered to newcomer children ages 7 to 12 years old and their parents. Participants explored values and emotions such as honesty, respect, self-knowledge, initiative, happiness and collectivism. Over the course of the training, participants developed conversational skills and increased their ability to identify their feelings and those of others while exploring anger management and problem-solving techniques.

## **Personalized Learning Plans for LINC Students**

The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) team concentrated efforts on formalizing personalized learning plans for students. The LINC teaching staff worked with students to set goals for each session, and progress is monitored and reported back to students through a developed report card that students can use as a development and learning tool. As a result, LINC students have more control over their progress and learning in the classroom, and course curriculum can be enhanced by delivering class content relevant to the needs of our students. Likewise, our comprehensive curriculum aims not only to help students with language acquisition, but also to gain a better understanding of Canadian culture and society as the foundation to successful integration.



# Community Engagement for Social Justice & Social Change



**Design new programs and community partnerships to facilitate full participation of newcomers in all aspects of community Support newcomers to be empowered leaders for social change in their communities.**

## **Unlocking Newcomer Civic Participation**

The Mennonite New Life Centre was awarded a two-year grant by the Newcomer Settlement Program Innovation Stream to deliver a training program designed to promote greater involvement of newcomers in civic life by providing an opportunity to learn about how government works and how to participate in civic processes. The training program is designed for and delivered to newcomers across the greater Toronto area with specific concentration on vulnerable groups such as newcomer women, seniors and members of the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Intersex (LGBTI) community.

During the first year of this grant, over 230 newcomers completed all modules in the training program, which was delivered in English and Spanish. This was accomplished through our partnership with the Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership (LIP). This project is expected to continue to be an in-demand civic participation and literacy training for newcomers especially in light of upcoming/anticipated elections in 2014 and 2015 at all levels of government (municipal, provincial and federal).

## **Breaking Down Barriers**

Our Community Engagement Program continues to move forward issues that are important to the integration needs of newcomers. Our continued partnership with the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), the Latin American Civic Participation Campaign (LACPC) and our active involvement with the Beyond Canadian Experience Project (BCEP) have resulted in greater access to information for newcomers about their human rights within the province of Ontario.

With the launch of the OHRC policy statement on removing the Canadian experience barrier, the Community Engagement team worked closely with the OHRC and the BCEP to ensure newcomers were given an opportunity to share their challenges in accessing meaningful employment. The Centre also hosted the OHRC's launch of the Human Rights 101 e-Learning Module in Spanish, which aims to provide an overview of the human rights systems in Ontario. Over 100 members from the LACPC and the Latin American community at large participated in the event.

# Organizational Capacity



**Building organizational capacity and infrastructure is important to organizational effectiveness.**

## **Planning For the Future**

Although 2013 marked the last operational year of the 2010–2013 Strategic Plan, the Centre engaged staff, board and the community to participate in a full review of our organizational effectiveness over the course of the last four years. Early on, the Cross-Cutting Team, made up of staff from all program areas in the Centre, reviewed our outcomes against our goals and objectives. Through an Employee Engagement Survey and a Core Capacity Assessment Test, the adaptive capacity of the Centre was evaluated in order to provide feedback on areas of opportunity and concentration for the future.

A concise environmental scan was also conducted and community members including clients, students, participants, funders and employers were interviewed to inform and guide the development of a relevant and responsive strategic plan. As a result, the board will be announcing details of the new strategic plan in June 2014 that builds upon the strengths of the last four years, and will ensure that MNLCT furthers its mission and vision in the future.

## **A Resilient Organization**

MNLCT was chosen, along with other sector agencies, to participate in the “Supporting Resilience in the Settlement Sector: Pilot Project” funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the United Way of Toronto and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. Through this pilot, members of the leadership team explored the capacity of the Centre to adapt positively in times of change by responding to opportunities and minimizing losses. The pilot project provided leaders with an in-depth look at their leadership styles and encouraged incremental development through one-on-one coaching and peer learning reflections.

The leaders, who participated in this year-long project, have shared their learning with the rest of the organization through process improvements that increase the adaptive capacity of their teams. As a result, these leaders continue to develop the leadership skills of their teams by providing room for cross-program collaboration and responsive programming that adapts to meet the changing needs of the Centre’s clients and participants.

## Finances

Funding for all Centre programs and services comes from a wide variety of funders and donors including Citizenship and Immigration Canada as our primary contributor. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, which funds our Bridge Training Program for Internationally Trained Psychologists and Allied Mental Health Professionals and the Newcomer Settlement Program, provides much-needed funds used to offer re-training services to internationally trained professionals, settlement services for refugee claimants and immigrants, as well as civic literacy training for newcomers. Our community mental health program continues to be funded by the Investing in Neighbourhoods Fund of the City of Toronto.

Our Community Engagement Program received an Access, Equity and Human Rights Grant from the City of Toronto that funds a Participatory Action Research project within the Latin American community. Community Engagement initiatives are also made possible through the continued support from various foundations, organizations and individual donors such as the Wallenstein Feed Charitable Foundation. The Mennonite New Life Centre also received financial support from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the local supporting Mennonite churches, other church groups and likeminded 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. It is with their support that we are able to continue to offer relevant and meaningful programming to newcomers, refugees and their families.

### Summary by Program

	2012	2013	2014 (est.)
Settlement & Language Instruction	1,576,797	1,551,092	1,539,884
Bridge Training and Mental Health	627,989	645,628	507,259
Community Engagement	99,611	97,484	136,512
Core Support	81,421	77,230	74,647
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,385,818</b>	<b>2,371,434</b>	<b>2,258,302</b>

### Summary of Audited Financials

	2012	2013	2014 (est.)
Government	2,202,847	2,263,755	2,133,448
Churches + Individuals	50,807	50,269	53,848
Foundations + Other	127,319	66,189	71,006
	<b>2,380,973</b>	<b>2,380,213</b>	<b>2,258,302</b>
Staff	1,457,652	1,512,896	1,559,655
Building	349,421	365,778	383,497
Program	408,400	360,852	274,702
Office + Other	170,345	131,908	40,448
	<b>2,385,818</b>	<b>2,371,434</b>	<b>2,258,302</b>

<b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b>	<b>-4,845</b>	<b>8,779</b>	<b>0</b>
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*Copies of the 2013 Financial Statements are available upon request at [www.mnlct.org](http://www.mnlct.org)*

## Settlement Statistics

7,254 Settlement Visits

### Top 4 Countries Served across Settlement



Colombia



China

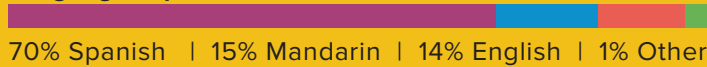


Mexico



India

### Languages Spoken



## LINC Statistics

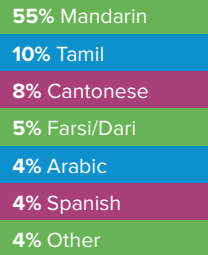
269

Students  
registered

92

Students  
Graduated

Languages of Students



## The Board of Directors

The 2013 Board of Directors, together with their affiliation, is as follows:

Mohan Doss, Chair	Community
Miriam Reesor, Vice Chair	Markham Area Mennonite Churches
Sam Sivarajan, Treasurer	Community
Miriam Wiebe, Secretary	Toronto New Life Mennonite Church
Sandra Cordero	Community
Helen Griebeling	Mississauga Mennonite Church
Laurie Hadden	Rouge Valley Mennonite Church
Julia He	Community
David Nelligan	Toronto United Mennonite Church
Evan Heise	Mennonite Central Committee

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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. As we embrace a new strategic plan in 2014, we will engage with newcomers and communities to build responsive programs and meaningful partnerships resulting in greater community impact and relevant social change.



