



Ottawa Community  
Immigrant Services  
Organization



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# Annual Report **2019** Rapport Annuel



Ottawa Community  
Immigrant Services  
Organization



## OCISO President and Executive Director Report



This was an exhilarating year for the extended OCISO family as we celebrated 40 years of service to newcomers and community building. The fortieth celebration began with a spring event where employees and legacy members were treated to a “trip down memory lane”, continued with many smaller festivities throughout the year and ended with a spectacular community celebration event in November with more than 200 attendees who contributed to and celebrated our success over the years.

While delivering settlement services in some 19 languages and providing programs for women, seniors and the LGBTQ community our Settlement and Integration Program (SIP) provided support to 23 groups submitting private sponsorship applications. SIP also engaged the community with its Friends of the Family project, where volunteer groups and newcomer families came together to enjoy social activities.

Our Counselling program continued to respond to the pre and post migration mental health challenges of clients. The Counselling program strove to forge partnerships with mainstream mental health providers, improving access for newcomer populations and expanding community-based youth mental health supports in response to increased demands.

With rising numbers of participants in its flagship Career Mentorship program for economic class migrants, the Community Economic Development program also had a successful year.

It collaborated with partners to build best practises and resources for work-place-based language training through the Refugee and Immigrant Supports to Employment (RAISE) program and began a further expansion of the Federal Internship for Newcomers (FIN) mentorship program.

The Multicultural Liaison Officer (MLO) program collaborated with school board partners to deliver needs assessment, orientation, referrals and interpretation to a growing number of newcomer parents and students. A trend toward greater numbers of refugee claimants and international students was evident. To ensure effective service alignment and welcome supports, the MLO program engaged in a needs audit and redeployed its team accordingly.

YOCISO’s “Wrestling with Champions” program was enthusiastically received by the community, with many youth receiving top notch wrestling and fitness instruction, as they made friends and developed enhanced social skills.

The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program had a busy year with steady class attendance and fully booked childcare services. LINC worked to reach non-progressing and isolated language learners through the Real English program, providing a modified curriculum, with delivery in the community and childcare.

## 2018 MDSF Recipients



My name is Assile Moussaoui and originally I am from Lebanon. I aspire to develop a career with the central objective of helping others, and so I decided to pursue a career in Biotechnology. My goal is to use my knowledge and skills to help those around me, especially with the research and development skills that Biotechnology will teach me. Currently I am studying Biotechnology at the University of Ottawa.



My name is Samra Brkic, and I am from Bosnia. I am studying a Bachelor of Science Honours with a major in Neuroscience and Mental Health at Carleton University. My future goals are not focused on attaining only one specific career. Instead, my vision of success includes any future where I am able to use my knowledge to help others.



My name is Mouhamad Al Aarab, and I am originally from Syria. I am currently studying Aerospace and Mechanic Engineering at Carleton University. I hope to learn new engineering theories and practices to develop innovative aerospace technologies.



Valued Funders



In partnership with many community stakeholders such as the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) Local Agencies Serving immigrants (LASI) , Refugee 613 and the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP), we strategized around supporting the increasing number of refugee claimants; the need for additional childcare spots so that newcomer women can receive language training; the lack of affordable, suitable housing for newcomers; and the gap in effective supports and advocacy on behalf of racialized and LGBTQ communities.

We strengthened our financial resiliency, with revenue up by eight per cent over the last year. This is due primarily to an expansion in youth, counselling and employment programming. We are pleased with the healthy surplus, enabling a contribution to our agency reserve fund.

On the fundraising front, our Run for a New Start campaign featured 165 volunteers who participated in Ottawa Race Weekend and raised a record \$33,418 to support high need youth in our community.

The OCISO Board of Directors had another very successful year, joining in the fortieth anniversary celebrations and reconnecting with past board members from the early days of OCISO. This served to further strengthen the resolve of the Board of Directors to amplify OCISO's work in support of newcomers in Ottawa - with OCISO's vision and mission being as relevant and urgently needed as it was 40 years ago. The Board of Directors had another incredibly successful year with the Run for a New Start Campaign, meeting its fundraising goal and increasing the visibility of OCISO in the community through active leadership and engagement. This was a critical year to remember OCISO's rich history. We now look forward to launching OCISO into another 40 years of service to the Ottawa community.

OCISO has received confirmation from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) that we will commence five-year funding agreements in April 2020 for all program streams. IRCC's long-term commitment enables us to forge ahead with confidence to offer and expand key services and deliver on our priorities as outlined in our strategic plan for 2017 to 2021.

In closing, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the many OCISO employees, volunteers, funders, donors and community partners, who together have made this a very successful year.

Board of Directors

<b>Jessie Thomson</b> President	<b>Rohit Samaroo</b> Director	<b>Eric Agyemang</b> Director
<b>Christopher Brauel</b> Vice President	<b>Daljit Nirman</b> Director	<b>Luz Maria De-Regil</b> Director
<b>Noah Ashinoff</b> Member at large	<b>Robyn Aaron</b> Director	<b>Gorav Chaudhry</b> Secretary
	<b>Kathy Lui</b> Treasurer	<b>Alan Hamson</b> Director

<b>Leslie Emory</b> Executive Director	<b>Jessie Thomson</b> Board President
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OCISO Vision

OCISO envisions Ottawa as an inclusive city in which all immigrants contribute their gifts, skills, values and culture; strengthening and transforming our community life.



# Rapport de la Directrice Exécutive et de la Présidente

Ce fut une année vivifiante pour la grande famille d'OCISO alors que nous célébrions nos 40 ans au service des nouveaux arrivants et du développement communautaire. Cette quarantième célébration débuta dès le printemps par un événement où les employés et anciens membres ont eu droit à un «voyage dans le passé», puis de nombreuses festivités à plus petite échelle ont ponctué l'année, pour enfin clore sur un événement communautaire spectaculaire en novembre, avec plus de 200 participants ayant contribué et célébré notre réussite au fil des années.

Notre Programme «Settlement and Integration Program (d'établissement et d'intégration)» (SIP) a soutenu 23 groupes présentant des demandes de parrainages privées et a impliqué la communauté à travers le programme «Friends of the Family (Amis de la famille)» où les bénévoles et les familles de nouveaux arrivants se rassemblent pour participer à des activités sociales, tout en fournissant ses services dans environ 19 langues et en offrant des programmes destinés aux femmes, aux personnes âgées et à la communauté LGBTQ.

Notre programme d'aide et conseils a continué de répondre aux défis de santé mentale des clients avant et après l'immigration, tout en faisant son possible de forger des partenariats avec des fournisseurs principaux de santé mentale, en améliorant l'accès aux nouveaux arrivants et en élargissant les soutiens de santé mentale pour les jeunes par la suite de demandes accrues

Avec le nombre croissant de participants dans le programme de Mentorat de Carrière pour les immigrants de la classe -

économique, le programme de Développement.

Économique Communautaire a également connu une année fructueuse en collaborant avec des partenaires pour mettre en place de meilleures pratiques et ressources en matière de formation linguistique en milieu de travail via le programme de Soutien aux Réfugiés et Immigrants à l'Emploi (RAISE).

Ceci a par la suite entamé une expansion du programme Fédéral de Stage pour les Nouveaux Arrivants.

Le programme de «The Multicultural Liaison Officer (l'agent de liaison multiculturel)» (MLO) a collaboré avec les partenaires du conseil scolaire pour évaluer les besoins, orienter et interpréter un nombre croissant de parents et d'élèves nouveaux arrivants. Une tendance à l'augmentation du nombre de demandeurs d'asile et d'étudiants internationaux était évidente. Pour assurer un alignement efficace des services et des supports d'accueil, ils ont procédé à un audit des besoins et redéployé l'équipe MLO en conséquence.

Le programme «Lutte avec les champions» de YOCISO a été accueilli avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme par la communauté. De nombreux jeunes ont reçu un enseignement de qualité en matière de lutte et de mise en forme pour se faire des amis et améliorer leurs aptitudes sociales.

Le programme de «Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (Cours de langue pour les nouveaux arrivants au Canada)» (LINC) a eu une année chargée, avec une participation en classe régulière et des services de garde d'enfants remplis. Ils ont travaillé pour atteindre les apprenants de langage non progressants et isolés par le programme Real English, qui leur offrait un curriculum modifié, et une aide communautaire et un service de garderie d'enfants.

# Summarized Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances

	2018	2019
<b>Revenue:</b>		
Grants	6,185,567	6,717,349
Fundraising and Donations	162,249	168,210
Other Revenue	51,202	38,078
<b>Expenses:</b>		
Program expenses	6,399,018	6,923,637
Occupancy	5,239,472	5,659,763
	718,933	718,760
Administrative and Related costs	302,682	333,380
	<b>6,261,087</b>	<b>6,711,902</b>
<b>Excess revenue over expenses</b>	<b>137,931</b>	<b>211,734</b>
<b>Assets:</b>		
Cash and prepayments	1,087,336	1,586,160
Investments	689,478	293,919
Grants and Trade Receivables	357,610	321,829
Long-Term Assets	413,161	355,492
	<b>2,547,585</b>	<b>2,557,400</b>
<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Bank debt and other payables	1,990,756	1,846,529
Long-Term debt and other obligations	316,906	259,214
	<b>2,307,662</b>	<b>2,105,742</b>
<b>Changes in Fund Balance:</b>		
Fund Balance (Deficit) - Beginning	101,992	239,923
Excess (Deficit) for the year	137,166	211,724
Fund Balance (Deficit) - Ending	<b>239,923</b>	<b>451,657</b>





## Refugee 613

This year Refugee 613 continued to support Ottawa's welcoming and integration of refugees, while also sharing our experiences and learning with colleagues beyond our city.

Staff delivered settlement service information, policy updates and educational content by answering public inquiries, delivering monthly newsletter bulletins, convening stakeholders and maintaining an active and growing social media presence.

In partnership with the local private sponsorship community, Refugee 613 presented a highly popular Settlement Information Fair and an all-day Learning Forum, both of which attracted more than 100 sponsors, and helped promote the Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR) Program Fund, resulting in 50 new sponsorship groups in Ottawa.

The Allies in Refugee Integration project produced reports on improving the settlement-sponsor relationship, and new digital pilots are being tested in four communities across Canada through our Digital Messaging for Settlement and Integration project.

In the spring, a packed house gave standing ovations to the dynamic speakers at the second edition of The Kindness of Strangers, a fundraiser in the style of Ted Talks on the topic of altruism and compassion.

We also organized workshops in Brussels and Ottawa on building the capacity of migration-sector organizations to communicate effectively, and continue to build an international network of communicators in this field. The year ended with the launch of a review of Refugee 613's stakeholders and governance, with the goal of ensuring that our sustainability, responsiveness and accountability remain strong in this period of rapid growth.

The team at Refugee 613 is grateful to OCISO for being an amazing partner, host and friend in all we do!

En partenariat avec plusieurs parties prenantes de la communauté, comme Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (Conseil ontarien des organismes desservant les immigrants) (OCASI), Refugee 613, et Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (Partenariat local en immigration d'Ottawa) (OLIP), on a élaboré une stratégie pour soutenir le nombre croissant de demandeurs d'asile; le besoin de garderies supplémentaires pour que les femmes nouvelles venues peuvent recevoir une formation en langage ; le manque de logement abordable et convenable pour les nouveaux venus ; et l'absence d'appui effectif et de plaidoyer pour les communautés racialisées et LGBTQ.

Nous avons renforcé notre résilience financière, avec des revenus en hausse de huit pour cent par rapport à l'année dernière. Cela est dû principalement à une expansion des programmes pour les jeunes, le conseil et l'emploi. Nous sommes contents de ce bon surplus, qui nous permet de contribuer au fonds de réserve de notre agence.

Sur le front de la collecte de fonds, notre campagne Run for a New Start «La course pour un nouveau départ» a réuni 165 bénévoles qui ont participé à la Fin de semaine des courses à Ottawa et ont amassé une somme record de 33,418\$ pour soutenir nos programmes de jeunesse.

Le conseil d'administration de l'OCISO a connu une année remplie de succès, en plus d'avoir célébrer ses 40 ans d'existence en compagnie de certains de ses membres fondateurs. Cette rencontre a servi à renforcer la détermination du conseil d'administration et l'appui qu'ils portent depuis longtemps aux nouveaux arrivants à Ottawa en plus de réaffirmer la pertinence et l'urgence du mandat de l'OCISO aujourd'hui comme il y a 40 ans. Le conseil a connu une autre année incroyablement réussie avec sa campagne Run for a New Start «La course pour un nouveau départ», atteignant son objectif de collecte de fonds et augmentant sa visibilité dans la communauté grâce à son leadership actif et à son engagement. Ce fut une année cruciale pour souligner la riche histoire de l'OCISO. Nous attendons maintenant avec impatience de maintenir l'OCISO dans la communauté d'Ottawa pour 40 autres années de service.

OCISO a reçu confirmation d'Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada (IRCC) que nous commencerons des accords de financement d'une durée de cinq ans en avril 2020 pour tous les volets de programmes référencés ci-dessus. Cet engagement à long terme par IRCC nous permettra d'avancer avec confiance afin d'offrir et d'élargir nos services clés et de mettre en oeuvre nos priorités comme elles ont été définies dans notre plan stratégique 2017-2021.

Enfin nous aimerions exprimer notre profonde gratitude aux nombreux employés OCISO, nos bénévoles, fondateurs, donateurs et partenaires communautaires qui, ensemble, nous ont donné cette année couronnée de succès.

**Leslie Emory**  
Directrice Exécutive

**Jessie Thomson**  
Présidente

## OCISO Mision

OCISO supports immigrants through the journey of making Canada their home by providing creative and responsive programs that are culturally and linguistically appropriate, by building community through mutual respect and partnerships, and by fostering healthy and inclusive spaces for open dialogue and healing.





## Settlement and Integration Program

OCISO's Settlement and Integration Program (SIP) engages with clients, volunteers and the broader community in supporting clients with their integration needs, as well as communities and organizations in their welcoming of newcomers.

SIP has a dynamic team with diverse language backgrounds, talents and areas of expertise, including 19 working languages and expertise in providing general programing and specific services to women, youth, seniors and the LGBTQ community.

During this fiscal year, SIP provided 10,569 appointments and group sessions to 3,181 clients throughout their settlement and integration process. The tax clinic was successful in supporting over 700 clients in many different languages, with the help of 30 volunteers. This service provides free income tax preparation to many vulnerable clients, low-income families and newcomers, who may struggle in completing their tax returns.

The Private Sponsorship of Refugees program supported 34 Group of Five applications, helping to sponsor refugees from abroad. This support reduces the anxiety of families by providing information, helping to fill out applications and following up.

In addition, our social integration program, Friends of the Family, successfully matched newly-arrived refugee families with volunteer groups of friends in Ottawa. It also organized 13 social events to help newly-arrived refugee families build networks, facilitate their integration process and reduce social isolation.

Our Diverse Seniors Support (DSS) program continues to help immigrant seniors ease their integration process and battle isolation. It provided English conversation group sessions, use of smart mobile devices training, picnics, trips to museums, other events, jewelry making and gardening. This year the DSS program organised 151 sessions for over 2,508 seniors, with the help of 227 volunteers.

In addition, the LGBTQIA+ program has been providing support to many LGBTQIA+ newcomers on navigating social, employment, health and other specific services for this community. This program organizes occasional social groups and all staff proudly participate in the yearly Pride parade.

The SIP program continues to work in partnership and collaboration with many organizations. We work with the Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI) coalition, regarding regular referrals and program information sharing. Our program hosts an employee from Housing Help, which supports easy access to housing referrals and services. We receive immigration law support from Connecting Ottawa. Our SIP outreach counsellors are based at OCISO's LINC location, Algonquin College, the Newcomer Information Centre, and other strategic places to that enable us to serve clients across the city.





## Saying Thanks to Our Supporters

### **Celebrating OCISO “Pioneers”**

Throughout the year, we were blessed to have so many OCISO “pioneers” share their stories of how OCISO grew from just an idea to become the valued organization that it is today. Special thanks go to Betty Bergin, Pat Marshall, Navin Parekh, the late Lucio Appolloni, Enrique Romo, John Macdonald, Sharon Rusu, Brian Murphy and Peg Deaton for sharing their “pioneer” stories, as well as Elizabeth Bigelow-Velasquez Guillen for sharing her family’s story of immigrating to Canada in the 1980s.

On November 16, 2018, over 200 individuals attended our special "OCISO 40th Anniversary Celebration". At the event, we celebrated and honoured our "OCISO family" throughout the years: our newcomer clients, dedicated volunteers, Board members and employees, funding partners, government agencies, individual and corporate donors, and partner organizations.

This past year also saw the continued blossoming of fundraising projects taken on by a diverse mix of groups and individuals, across all sectors of society. Thanks to you all!

### **Run for a New Start**

For the third year "running", OCISO registered as a charity in the Ottawa Race Weekend (May 2018), and we broke all previous records. In fact, OCISO’s Run for a New Start team of 165 walkers and runners had the largest number of fundraising volunteers among all the charities, and we were awarded a bonus Scotia-bank Charity Challenge cheque of \$4,250. This brought our total funds raised for OCISO's youth programs to a record-breaking \$33,418!

We would like to acknowledge a number of teams who helped us reach and surpass our fundraising goals: SurveyMonkey employees matched by their company, our own OCISO Board of Directors, our OCISO Mentorship team, a Glebe Collegiate Institute team, and many others including the 50+ Ridgemont High School newcomer students, who created quite a stir this year, with their story featured on CTV News!

Thanks go to Sole Responsibility for their grant of \$1,000 covering the registration fees of more than 30 Ridgemont students, as well as the \$1,000 donation from the Maple Wishes Foundation, sponsoring the whole Run for a New Start team. We salute the initiative of Avery and Rowan Parkinson, two girls who founded Maple Wishes, as they also supported our work as volunteers with our youth program. They also produced special 40th anniversary fridge magnets as a gift to participants at our celebratory event.

### **Marion Dewar Scholarship Fund (MDSF)**

A highly successful MDSF fundraising dinner was held on October 18, 2018 at the Restaurant International at Algonquin College. Over 90 generous participants attended the dinner and helped raise over \$10,800 for the fund. The MDSF provides financial support for three immigrant and refugee students going on to post-secondary education in the National Capital Region.

Sincere thanks go to our volunteer MDSF committee (Donna Holtom, Barbara Gamble, Jack McCarthy and Cathy Dewar) for organizing the dinner and to the late Paul Dewar for being our guest of honour. We also acknowledge WEunlimited, a local women’s group led by Dung-Chi Tran that raised close to \$3,000 in support of MDSF.

### **In Memoriam**

Everyone was deeply saddened by Paul Dewar’s passing on February 6, 2019. We were honoured that Paul served on our OCISO Board of Directors, and was such a strong supporter and advocate for making Ottawa (and our whole country) a welcoming community for newcomers to Canada. We would also like to acknowledge with sadness the passing of OCISO pioneers and long-time supporters Lucio Appolloni, Jonathan Wouk and Ann B. Denis.











## Multicultural Liaison Officer Program (MLO)

The Multicultural Liaison Officer (MLO) program, in partnership with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship (IRCC), the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) and the Ottawa Catholic School Board (OCSB), provided settlement needs assessment, information and orientation, referrals, language and cultural interpretation to newcomer parents and students. It also assisted school staff to create a welcoming school environment.

This fiscal year, the MLO program provided individual services, group orientation and information to 3,549 clients. In addition, MLOs delivered 303 workshops attended by 804 clients. Topics included Canada's education system, graduation requirements, pathways and course selection for high school students, Canadian culture and values, Canadian citizenship, summer employment, rights of girls, parenting, behaviour problems, discipline strategies, and the role of Children's Aid Society (CAS).

Our partnership with OCDSB and OCSB was strengthened. We provided support to the Family Reception Centre and Family Welcome Centre. We verified that OCDSB MLOs are allocated within the schools in need of settlement services at English as a Second Language (ESL) and English Literacy Development (ELD) school centres. MLOs supported special newcomer initiatives organized by both school districts.

As a team that works remotely, the MLO program used staff meetings to standardize best practices on needs assessment, action plans, case studies, communication protocols, role of MLOs at schools, and the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) client management system.

MLOs participated in a joint OCDSB and OCSB Professional Development Day on the topic of "Equity in Education," and MLOs were acknowledged as part of the Ontario Curriculum.

## Multicultural Inmate Liaison Officer (MILO) Project

The MILO project provided supportive counselling to multicultural inmates with an immigrant background at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre (OCDC). Direct individual services and group orientation were provided to 205 clients, as well as 103 information sessions. Topics included addiction, anger management techniques, prayers, depression from an Islamic perspective, patience, contributing to society's betterment. The project also supported inmates in rebuilding their relationships with family and community.





## Community Economic Development (CED)

The Community Economic Development (CED) program delivers employability development programming to support newcomers to obtain employment in their field, develop an understanding of the Canadian workplace culture, build networks and develop an understanding of employment maintenance and advancement within the Canadian workplace.

CED programs include Career Mentorship, Federal Internship for Newcomers Mentoring (FIN), Refugee and Immigrant Supports to Employment (RAISE), SDI (Service Delivery Improvement) Innovation -Workplace Language Training, Foreign Credential Recognition Mentorship, Ottawa Connector Program and pre-arrival Mentoring.

CED enjoyed another year of innovation related to the development of RAISE's Workplace Language Training model, through the SDI funding stream. In partnership with Carleton University School of Linguistics and Language Studies, a 10 module workplace language training curriculum has been researched and testing is underway with RAISE clients. Additionally, RAISE received funding from the Ministry of Ontario focused on Employment Counselling and the development of Workplace Health and Safety workshops.

CED mentored La Cité collégiale and Burundi We Want (BWW) through the process of embedding Mentorship within their programs for Francophone newcomers. OCISO signed an agreement with the Trillium Foundation to mentor BWW in the delivery of their first funded project. BWW now operates under OCISO's umbrella for operational and mentoring support.

The latter part of the fiscal year a new program, Federal Credential Recognition Mentorship Program, was launched to support predominately newcomer women in regulated professions, in partnership with the Ottawa Community Loan Fund (OCLF), WorldSkills and the Lebanese and Arab Social Service Agency (LASSA). Drawing on CED's considerable experience delivering Mentorship supports to newcomer women, in particular with the Immigrant Women Mentoring Network (IWMN), CED has adapted their successful Career Mentorship model to support women throughout their journey of navigating licencing with their regulated professions.

This year, CED programs matched close to 600 newcomer clients with Mentors (Ontario professionals), and case-managed a monthly average of 300 active Mentorship matches. Over 60% of exiting clients secured commensurate employment within their field.

Programming continues to experience growth through innovative and pro-active approaches to supporting newcomers to employment and beyond. At the core of programming is the continued support of Mentees, 380 active Mentors, and Connectors, representing over 100 organizations and federal departments.

CED's partnerships extend beyond the Eastern Ontario Region to not only Ontario wide, but other provinces of Canada through partnership with the FIN Program and national pre-arrival and e-mentoring programs.



**600**

CLIENTS  
MATCHED  
WITH  
MENTORS

**300**

ACTIVE  
MENTORSHIP  
MATCHES

**380**

ACTIVE  
MENTORS &  
CONNECTORS

**593**

CLIENTS IN  
THE PAST  
YEAR

**32**

CHILDREN  
PROVIDED DAILY  
DAYCARE

**39**

DIFFERENT  
LANGUAGES  
SPOKEN

## Language Instruction For Newcomers To Canada (LINC)

Our Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program provides English language training to newcomer clients in the context of settlement and community integration. Eight full-time classes, from literacy to advanced English, serve 152 clients per day. We also provide childcare to 32 children per day. As well, we offer two part-time evening classes serving an additional 44 clients and 21 of their children.

This past year, the LINC program saw 593 clients with 178 children come through our doors. LINC served clients from 58 different countries around the world – most arriving from Syria, Bhutan, Iraq, Somalia, and Eritrea – with over 39 different languages spoken.

LINC classes were actively engaged in the community this year, participating in Spring Cleaning the Capital and volunteering at the Salvation Army. Literacy classes continued to expand their outdoor and indoor gardens. More highlights included a Halloween party, a fundraising rummage sale, and a cultural games day. Field trip included Parliament Hill, Gatineau Park, Winterlude and Tulip Festival.

The volunteer program continues to be an integral part of LINC and the community. Volunteers ran reading groups, conversation circles, supported students one-on-one with academic tasks, and helped out in the childcare.

The LINC program worked with many partners this year: including Ottawa Public Health, Ottawa Public Library, University of Ottawa Community Legal Clinic, and City of Ottawa Recycling. We hosted Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language (CTESL), Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL), Childcare and Early Childhood Education (ECE) interns from Carleton University, Algonquin College and Ottawa Catholic School Board adult high school.

The creation of the Real English program has also allowed students, who would otherwise not be able to attend school, an opportunity to learn directly in their community through the weekly “Mom and Me” classes. A group of 14 non-progressing literacy learners has also been able to excel through project-based learning.

Many students marked some of their first Canadian milestones over the past year, including: learning how to take the bus on their own, getting their driver's licence, attending appointments without an interpreter, and accessing services directly without assistance. Through their hard work, with support from their dedicated teachers, many left the program for employment and post-secondary training.





918  
NEWCOMER YOUTH  
PARTICIPANTS  
IN SCHOOLS

2,276  
NEW YOUTH AT THE  
NEWCOMER  
YOUTH  
CENTRE

125  
GUEST SPEAKER  
WORKSHOPS  
THIS YEAR

## YOCISO (OCISO's Youth Program)

This year YOCISO continued to provide innovative, collaborative and youth-focused programming to immigrant, refugee, and first-generation immigrant, racialized and marginalized youth.

Through a youth-led approach, YOCISO provided in-school programming to immigrant and refugee youth ages 13 to 24 to assist in their transition and settlement to Canada. This was facilitated through employment and orientation workshops, weekly group leadership development sessions, academic support (homework club and tutoring), after-school recreational and sports programs (drop-in basketball), and opportunities for art expression through drama and dance to 918 newcomer youths in the Ottawa school system.

At the after-school Newcomer Youth Centre, YOCISO ensured accessibility of diverse, culturally, linguistically and socially appropriate programming and services that meet the needs of our clients. The programming was focused on ways to navigate the barriers, challenges and gaps youth are facing as immigrant, refugee or first-generation Canadians.

Newcomer youth accessed daily programming, drop-in mental health services and academic supports in an inclusive and safe environment. They participated in life skills workshops, creative expression, arts and music education, health and fitness workshops, social and civic engagement activities and English language support.

YOCISO addresses realities such as social isolation, self-esteem issues, language proficiency, mental health challenges, family dynamics disruption and intergenerational conflicts.

This year 2,276 newcomer youth participated in individual and group services at the Newcomer Youth Centre. The program facilitators along with guest speakers delivered 125 workshops to 706 newcomer participants. We participated in several key activities around the city such as WestFest, Herongate Summer Fun Activity, and Black History Month.

YOCISO launched a brand new initiative, the "Wrestling with Champions" program, which offers recreational wrestling classes to immigrant and refugee children and youth, and is the first of its kind in Ottawa. Youth have opportunity to take part in a high quality sport at no cost, to improve their physical fitness and provide them with a sense of social inclusion.





**150**COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS**358**HOURS OF  
INDIRECT  
SERVICE**2,961**HOURS OF  
DIRECT  
SERVICE

## Counselling Program

The Counselling program offers clinical support within a multilingual, culturally - diverse model, providing services to individuals, families, couples and groups. In 2018-2019, our languages of service included English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Farsi, Dari, Tigrigna, Somali, Tamil and Greek.

Many of these individuals are experiencing the consequences of having suffered traumatic life events prior to migrating to Canada or are victims of war trauma. They face the mental health challenges associated with the post-migration adaptation and integration process.

Our program continued to offer counselling onsite at OCISO and at other locations through our Mental Health Outreach program. We provide services in schools, community centres and other public locations to assist in making counselling services more widely available.

This year, the Counselling Program served 304 clients from 48 countries, for a total of 2,961 hours of direct service. The majority of clients originate from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Nigeria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Burundi and Congo.

We provided 358 hours of indirect service, supporting clients through case conferences, clinical consultations and the provision of reports for immigration hearings in collaboration with over 150 community partners.

OCISO Counselling continues to have membership in groups such as OLIP Health and Wellness, OLIP Mental Health Sub Group, Family Service Ontario and Crime Prevention Ottawa, in order to inform the larger community of mental health needs of refugees and immigrants. This year OCISO Counselling also contributed to Ottawa Public Health's Have THAT talk mental health promotion video series.

OCISO Counselling continued agreements with the Ottawa Carleton District School Board and the Ottawa Catholic School Board to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health supports to refugee and immigrant children in the school setting.

The Time for Change Program (T4C) continued as part of Counselling program this year. T4C is an initiative dedicated to male and female young adults, adults and their families who are impacted by gang involvement and street violence. This year the Counselling program benefitted from 500 hours of support from student, administrative and IT volunteers.







## Testimonials

"I have two kids participating and this is a good program. My kids are always talking about the program, they are practicing at home, and they are more active. Outside my kids would not have had this program. Wrestling is expensive and I don't know where to find it. It is free and the coach speaks my language so my kids and I understand. My kids are (developmentally delayed) and they feel included with the other kids."

"OCISO is one of the best organizations that addresses the needs of newcomers and provides specific solutions. Everybody at OCISO is very friendly and they are easy to reach at all times. I have never felt alone or forgotten. I had the chance to experience several programs that OCISO provides such as mentorship program, connector program, speed interview workshop and resume and networking strategies."

"I would like to thank OCISO for their endless professionalism, patience and sense of humour. Not only were the classes truly delightful, they were delivered."

"OCISO is welcoming with open arms to those who feel disappointed, lost, homesick and remorseful. It reminds people of their good qualities and help them establish their paths in their new home. It proves that kind and caring people are still alive."

"As a newcomer, understanding the Canadian school system was a big fear for me, until I knew about the OCISO program, and my participation in it during the summer holidays helped me a lot to be prepared for school. This amazing youth program helped me to meet new friends and to develop my communication skills with a lot of people. Thank you."