



Centre for Information & Community Services of Ontario



Annual Report 2012



(Left to Right) Ms. Carol Simpson, Mr. Xihao Hu, Ms. Anna Wong (Secretary), Ms. Moy Wong-Tam (Executive Director), Ms. Barbara McCann (Vice Chair), Mr. Derek Ho (Chair), Ms. Yonnie Chung (Treasurer)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair:	Mr. Derek Ho	Treasurer:	Ms. Yonnie Chung
Vice Chair:	Ms. Barbara McCann	Secretary:	Ms. Anna Wong
Directors:	Ms. Carole Simpson Ms. Eleanor Wang Dr. Faisal Saeed Dr. Ruth Hayhoe Mr. Xihao Hu		

VISION STATEMENT

Fully integrated immigrants participating in and contributing to all spheres of Canadian society

MISSION STATEMENT

To empower immigrants in settling and integrating as contributing members of Canadian society through diverse, professional and innovative services

CORE VALUES

- Cultural diversity
- Integrity
- Compassion
- Solidarity

LANGUAGES

English, French, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Farsi, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Tamil, Taiwanese, Urdu, Ukrainian.



Report from the Board Chair and Executive Director



In the past year, CICS provided numerous programs to newcomers and immigrants in seven key office locations as well as in libraries in Toronto and York Regions, and approximately 70 schools in the North York area. This was accomplished by a staff of 130 and over 1,000 volunteers.

CICS continued to be actively involved in the Community Partnership Council of the York Region Local Immigration Partnership (LIP), the York Region Human Service Planning Board, as well as the Toronto East LIP. These platforms have allowed for cross-sectorial co-ordination and collaboration to strengthen the fabric of services to newcomers and changing demographics. Furthermore, the partnerships with boards of education, public libraries, public health departments, and other community agencies have continued. Specifically, as a principal partner of the York Region Welcome Centre system, last year saw the extension of its co-ordination with the newly established Durham Welcome Centre system.

There were also several new initiatives at the program and service level. Past spring, over 30 community members, young and old, were mobilized to plant a native flower garden, and to start our community vegetable garden on the land adjacent to our Scarborough head office. It was truly a community building exercise that engaged local schools, a church, local environmental groups, and newcomers to work together to prepare the soil and plant the seedlings. Although the first harvest was modest, the garden project was nonetheless a source of pride and a rewarding experience for all those involved. It laid the foundation that will allow for growth in subsequent years.

After much anticipation and work, the Immigrant Resource Centre in Scarborough was equipped with a community Kitchen that will broaden our program offerings. It will facilitate inter-cultural, inter-generational programs, as well as prepare newcomers for work in the food industry. We appreciate the contribution of Ontario Trillium Foundation to make this possible.

Last year witnessed the launch of our first-ever Youth Talent Showcase, which was the culmination of many months of learning and practice by our newcomer youth. CICS also formed an Entrepreneur Club, following the graduation of the newcomers and immigrants in our first Entrepreneur Course. This has allowed prospective and new small business owners to network and support each other.

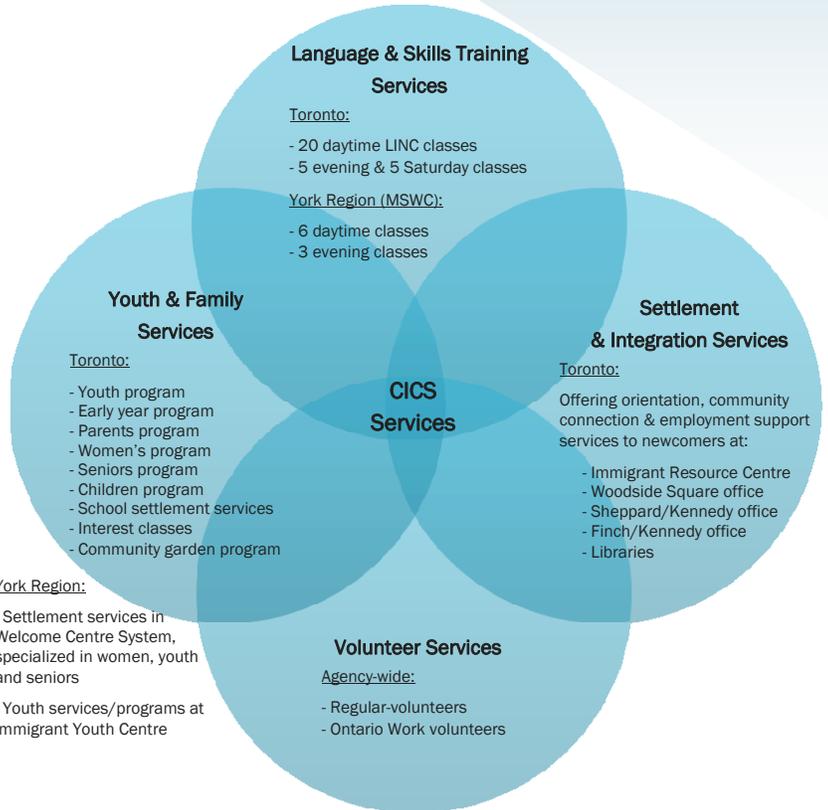
There have been significant changes in the funding of immigrant settlement sector accompanied by the changes in immigration policy over the past year. CICS has not been exempt from the impact of the changes but has been fortunate to be able to continue to respond to community needs. As we steer through what may be described as a mutable policy and fiscal environment, we will continue to rely on our stalwart community supporters, committed board members, dedicated volunteers and staff to innovate and make transformative changes at CICS. In our 45th year of service to the community, we will continue to strive to be a bridge for newcomers to access local resources and opportunities, so that they can settle and integrate in Canada, unleash their talents, and realize their full potential and dreams.

Derek Ho
Board Chair

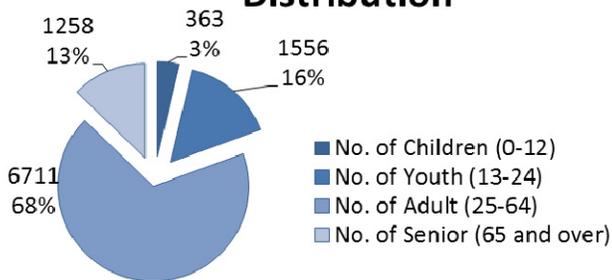
Moy Wong-Tam
Executive Director

Overview of Agency Successes in 2012-13

This report will highlight some of our achievement in the past year. We are proud to say that we have continued providing services that address the needs of the local communities, raising people's awareness of the support needed by newcomer families, reducing and removing the language, culture and social barriers they face, helping them to connect with others and be socially included, and delivering programs to children, youth, men, women, and seniors accordingly. We have provided a wide range of services and programs to newcomers and citizens, all these activities are offered in our seven locations across Toronto and York Region through the Youth and Family Services, Settlement and Integration Services, and Language and Skills Training units.

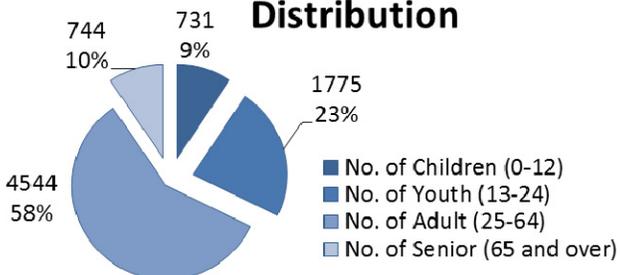


Individual Clients' Age Distribution

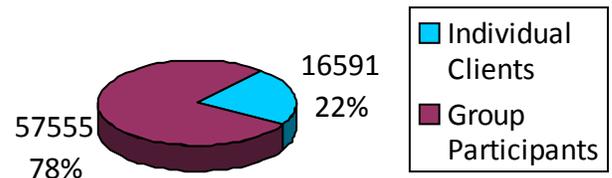


In the year of 2012-2013, we served a total of 16,591 clients individually. In addition, we offered numerous workshops, classes and group sessions over the year enjoyed by over 57,555 head counts.

Group Participants' Age Distribution



Individual Clients vs. Group Participants



In addition to serving the many individuals in the GTA, we have also made some significant progress in the past year. For example, partly funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation, the renovation for the community kitchen was completed in early 2013. In addition, our Immigrant Youth Centre has been incorporated as one of the five key deliverables in the action plan for the York Region Community Partnership Council from 2012 to 2015 to ensure that the needs of newcomer youth and their families are adequately addressed across the region. We had our first Youth Talent Showcase held in May 2012, attended by an audience of 200 and reported in United Way York Region's e-newsletter "In the community" (<http://york.unitedway.ca/2012/in-the-community/showcasing-the-talented-youth-of-the-immigrant-youth-centre/>), which stated "A United Way of York Region member agency, CICS is a multi-service agency that provides support to newcomers and immigrants, while IYC is a centre dedicated to youth who are newly settled in Canada. This facility provides young immigrants in our region a place to go to polish up their English skills, build their self-esteem and create friendships and bonds with their peers who share similar experiences. Throughout the year, IYC has a variety

of creative activities that aim to help these youth establish roots in the community by getting involved, some programs include: English conversation circle, writing workshop, drama, dance, life skills training, music, arts and crafts, as well as March break programs and summer camps."

Many of the youth who performed in the Youth Talent Showcase were new to Canada and had been learning English for under a year, therefore, it took them a tremendous amount of effort and courage to be able to perform in front of an audience and showcase their talents. The event was empowering to newcomer youth as well as a source of motivation to learn English and a range of other skills. Our Executive Director said "I was blown away by the success of the show and the passion that our youth exhibited." While the newcomer youth often come to us feeling lost as they deal with teenage challenges and the difficulties of settling in a new country, we have been privileged to help them with their transitions by providing a place where they can meet other teens to develop friendship, learn English and build confidence.



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Furthermore, we trained 25 Community Ambassadors to help educate the Chinese and South Asian communities in GTA on how to recognize signs of and prevent woman abuse. Overall, we outreached more than 1,100 individuals.

Moreover, having noticed some trends and needs in 2012-13, such as the language requirement change for newcomers, the

“super visa” grandparents who come to Canada to help raise their grand children, and the youth and women who are increasingly interested in becoming more engaged in the community and the job market, we predict that there are a lot more work for us to take on as we continue to commit ourselves to providing newcomers and citizens with equal access to services, helping them to becoming contributing members in all spheres of society and empowering them to enjoy the abundant resources that we have in Canada.



A health related phenomenon where many immigrants' health deteriorates significantly several years after immigration has led us to develop more programs teaching newcomer clients to live and eat healthily. On this track, our community garden and community kitchen were developed to help youth and women to understand the importance and means of maintaining good health through nutritious meals and positive lifestyle. The new kitchen facility in our Midland Ave. office will also help facilitate programs that assist seniors who cope with chronic illness to adopt better health management, in addition to participating in physical activities.



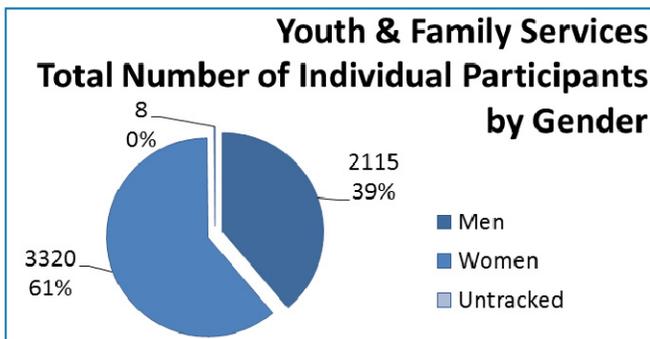
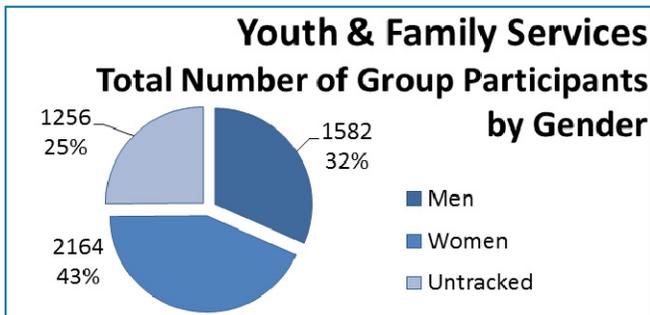
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The Stories from the Youth and Family Services Unit



Within the Youth and Family Services Unit, we served children, youth, adults, and seniors in six office locations as well as over 70 schools. Among our clientele, we served more women than men due to various reasons.

We run women’s support groups and programs year-round to help women develop a positive self image and identity, particularly during the time when they are settling in a new country. We also offer different workshops on topics that interested women such as self-employment, health, women’s food circle, and exercise classes. Being a part of the Neighbours, Friends and Families Campaign, we successfully passed on the message of “no violence against women will be tolerated” to women and men in 26 community training, education sessions and special events. The following are some comments from participants.



Client Testimonies

“I have gained an understanding of woman abuse by attending this training program. From the time when a girl is born till she gets old or even till she dies, she is going through a lot of abuse. Women who should have been placed high in a society are being pushed to a second class due to several reasons. This training has helped me understand clearly the importance of identifying these types of situations that affect women and to be awakening. Through the training I was also able to understand in detail how a woman should protect herself from different types of abuse.”

- A woman abuse survivor



“The campaign opened up my eyes regarding the cultural difference on marriage and family. It allowed me to know how to better protect my friends and families in this new country. Let us live happily in Canada.”

- Melisa Lei

“Taking part in the Neighbors, Friends and Families project and the Woman Abuse Prevention Program has been one of the greatest experiences I have had in my life. Firstly, I must say that I have learnt so much from this program about woman abuse and the importance of educating the public. Before taking part in this program, I thought of woman abuse as one of those million other issues that need to be addressed. However, after taking part and listening to stories and facts, I came to understand that it is an extremely important issue that definitely needs to be addressed. Every single human being deserves dignity of life. Abusing women and allowing them to be abused is certainly not right. As neighbors, friends and family, it is definitely our responsibility to take a stand, raise awareness and put an end to it all. I am extremely proud to have been a part of this project because today I am able to go out, provide that correct information and facts and educate people on this issue. I have become extremely knowledgeable on this topic and I truly believe that I am able to help make a change. If we truly want to put an end to woman abuse, it is through the process of educating and raising awareness which will lead us to achieve solutions.”

- Yalini



Let's drum it loud until we are heard!



The Filipino Club in one of our SEPT schools

"I didn't know [of any place] that's for newcomers until one of my friends introduced IYC to me. Now I have been to IYC for almost one year and I think this is a very nice place. I've attended some programs such as Kick-start English, Drama and Beginner Photoshop. I learnt many useful skills through these programs. ...one thing that I feel I have made the most improvement is my English. I've learnt many new words and practiced my oral English. ...I feel more confident when I speak English now. I've made lots of new friends in IYC and I'm becoming more outgoing."

-A newcomer youth

"I came to Canada about four years ago. When I first came to Canada, I didn't like it. I was upset and disappointed because I had to leave all my friends and start a new life in a completely new place. I also hated that I had to communicate [with others] in English. The first day at school was scary.... After a few weeks of attending school, I finally started finding friends and getting used to the language. ...My English [isn't] perfect yet and sometimes it [is] difficult [for me] to understand the lessons. One day at school, everybody in ESL were called down to attend an event. That's when I heard about IYC for the first time. I decided to give IYC a try and started to attend one of the classes. IYC was amazing and it made me feel like I belonged. The atmosphere was also incredibly friendly. I am still attending IYC and I found many great friends there. My experience in Canada had [its] ups and downs but I really [love] it. Canada gave me so many memories that I would never forget."

- Rosita



Youth Night to show parents what the youth have accomplished



What is it about writing essays?

Client Testimonies