



ANNUAL REPORT 2011

CICS SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1968
WE SERVE FOR A BETTER FUTURE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2011

This year we saw innovation and integration of our many services. We worked on improving and streamlining our programs to give a greater variety of resources and information to our clients. CICS at the Immigrant Resource Centre also started taking on more community initiatives, such as seeking the support of the community and advocating for a traffic light to be built at Midland Avenue and Emblem Court with the help of Councillor Chin Lee. A benefit concert was held in April by the Toronto Chinese Orchestra with net proceeds going to CICS.





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Left to Right: Ms. Moy Wong-Tam (Executive Director), Ms. Yonnie Chung, Ms. Fina Ching (President), Mr. Krish Thurairajah, Mr. Samuel Luk, Mr. Nasir Kashem, Mr. David Pao, Dr. Thomas Chung, and Mr. Raphael Lai

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Report from the Board President and Executive Director

Year 2011 has witnessed an increase in immigrant population in York Region, resulting in greater demands on community services. In order to better co-ordinate services to effectively serve newcomers, CICS has been actively involved in the Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) as well as Human Services Planning Body in York Region. Additionally, we have been participants in other Local Immigration Partnerships in Toronto to produce action plans. We continued to strive and collaborate effectively with partners to provide a wide range of services amid budgetary cutbacks and resource restraints.

We have been working with various community partners and cultivating new ones. Last year, we began a partnership with York Region District School Board (YRDSB) to provide language training to newcomers. Our collaboration was taken one step further last summer when YRDSB opened its Reception Centre adjacent to the Markham South Welcome Centre. While newcomer students get their academic standing assessed, newcomer parents are able to have their settlement needs met, all in one convenient location. With the support of Immigration and Citizenship Canada, this is another instance of how collaboration made York Region more welcoming to newcomers.

We continued to innovate, engage various communities, and strive to meet community needs. One example is our successful Woman Abuse Prevention Ambassador Project which was launched last spring. Our community engagement began with petitioning for a traffic light at Midland and Emblem. We celebrated our success last summer as it made the busy crossing much safer for staff, clients and community members. We also began planning for a community garden in Scarborough to engage the local community and newcomers. We envision that our community building endeavours will uncover many talents and assets within our immigrant communities and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

At the organizational level, a strategic Planning exercise was undertaken toward the end of last year. The plan will serve as the road map that will guide our strategic directions and operational priorities for the next three years.

In summary, 2011-2012 was a year of transitions as we sought new opportunities and partnerships to fulfill our mandate. We will continue to facilitate and accelerate the accumulation of social capital for newcomers, as well as providing them with vital information and services, so that they can launch their new lives in Canada with greater confidence and ease.

Fina Ching

Board President, Fina Ching

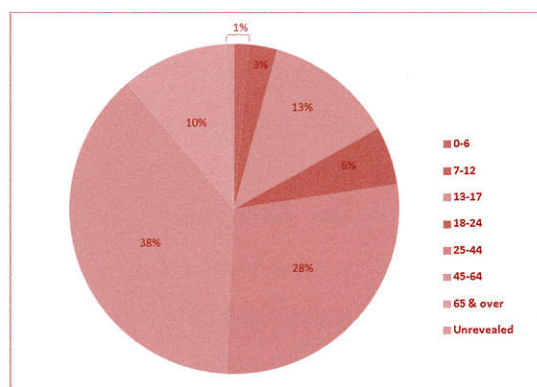
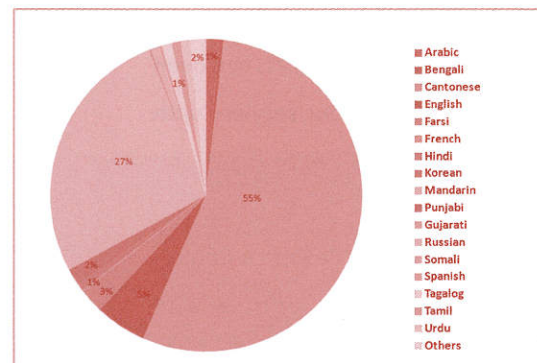
Moy Wong Tam

Executive Director, Moy Wong-Tam

Community Services

We have services for everyone is a fact that CICS can proudly communicate in this report as a community organization that serves newcomers, refugees, immigrants, and citizens. In the year of 2011, we served about 20,000 individuals and had over 66,500 participants in our workshops, classes, seminars, and/or recreational programs. Of the clients that we served, 59% were women and 41% men. They come from diverse ethnic backgrounds and all walks of life. To the right are pie charts showing the age and language distributions of our clientele.

Except some services delivered from the venues of our community partners such as schools, community centres, public libraries, churches, temples, and mosques, most of the individual and group activities took place in our different office locations in the GTA (i.e., Scarborough, North York and York Region). Our services are grouped in three major areas as listed below.



CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

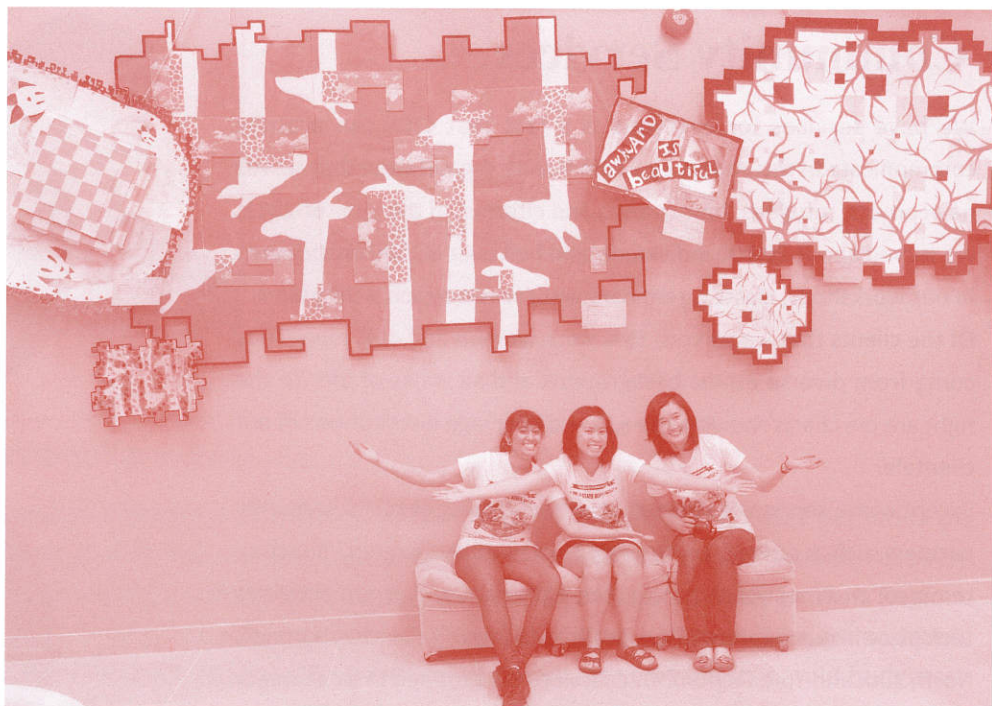
Our children services include 15 different programs held year-round such as Students Smart, Parents Smart, Parenting Workshops, Fun with Drawing, Twinky Dance, Peer Nutrition, Making the Connection, Learning with Babies, Summer Camp, Nobody's Perfect, Kinder's Cool, Reading Circle, Get Ready for School, Mother Goose, Infant Hearing Clinic, and Drop-in Program of various topics. While part of the program aimed at preparing preschoolers and for structured learning, proper socializing with others in the school environment, increased literacy from a young age; a component assists parents and caregivers on effective parenting support for the children; and another component aims at increased parent/child interaction, health promotion, mutual support for parents, and awareness of children's potential.



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Altogether, the Early Years Program served 562 children and 759 adults in 2011. Continuous efforts had been made to improve our services with the feedback provided by participants.

At our Immigrant Resource Centre, Immigrant Youth Centre and Welcome Centres, we offered a wide range of programs to youth. While some programs were designed to enhance their academic and language skills (e.g., Homework Club, English Circles, Writing Workshop, Basic French), others were developed to



educate them on healthy lifestyle and physical fitness, engage them in community events and activities, help them to become more expressive and creative, prepare them for future vocation or employment, train them to become leaders, and provide them with various opportunities to discover their full potential.

In addition to the youth programs delivered at CICS office locations, many others were delivered at other community locations such as schools and community centres. In the Settlement and Education Partnership, our settlement workers worked with 78 schools in North York to provide supportive services to newcomer students and their parents. SEPT team offered individual services to clients and group programs and topical workshops. The NOW and WIN programs in the summer were definitely one of the successes in promoting welcoming communities at schools. Working in partnership with teachers, peer leaders and student volunteers from the schools, the programs were attended by nearly 400 newcomer students and parents during the orientation week alone. Participants reported that the programs had helped them reduce their sense of uncertainty and isolation in Canada and helped them integrate more smoothly into the new schools.

"I signed up for the leadership camp as a volunteer so that I can earn volunteer hours. I met so many nice people there and made friends. ... I still go to IYC for the lab and to meet my friends. I hope that there will be another workshop for me to go. I don't want volunteer hours anymore, I just want to learn something and meet other new friends."

*Yongtian Chen
from Youth Program*

We developed services and programs catering to the needs of individual adults, including women and seniors. While most workshops were conducted in Mandarin and Cantonese, quite a number of them were conducted in English and South Asian languages such as Urdu, Tamil, Hindi or Bengali. Our staff team has initiated various outreach activities and built a very good rapport and reputation in the community. Continuous efforts will be made to build more partnerships to deliver new programs.

Our women's programs were provided both in Toronto and York Region. The Women's Groups were conducted in three welcome centres in York Region, focusing on effective communication in relationships, second career exploration, mutual support, nutrition, and positive parenting. In partnership with the School of Women's Studies of York University, we had a Bridging Course for Women delivered from our Immigrant Resource Centre, helping women to upgrade their academic skills and regain their confidence in the pursuit of higher education. In addition, with the support from different funders and collaboration with other agencies, we trained women to become community ambassadors who would raise awareness in the immigrant and refugee communities of issues related to woman abuse, child abuse and elder abuse. Our services to women indeed start at a young age with a few girls programs such as the Girls Guide, Girls' Nights and Healthy Cooking for Girls, preparing them to form a healthy concept of self and feel proud of who they are.

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"It was so amazing to know I don't need to fear expressing myself in front of a group of people. I made a grand discovery that I can't help another individual without first helping myself."

A Women's Group participant

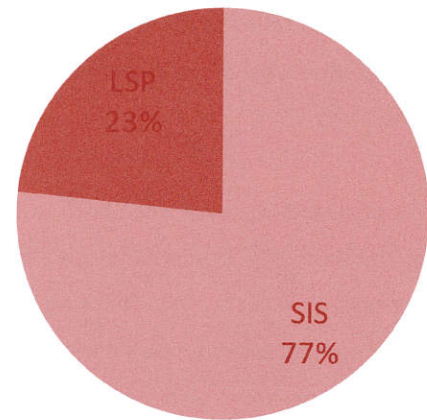
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SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION SERVICES

The settlement Service unit was renamed Settlement & Integration Services in 2011 to better reflect the scope of services provided to new immigrants. There have been significant changes in the mode of service delivery. Service components include Orientation, Community Connections and Library Settlement Partnerships. With funding from both the federal and the provincial governments, we strive to achieve service excellence despite funding reduction.

Under the Orientation service, we provide new clients with needs assessment which usually resulted in a settlement plan and follow-up action. Settlement workers organized topical sessions and intensive group sessions; innovative programs such as Discover Your Community, Job Readiness Clinic, Networking Mentorship event in specific professional fields, Resume Critique were the most popular and met the specific needs of new immigrants. The annual Job Fair attracted about 3000 participants. The senior computer club, the youth drop-in-program, the newcomer students club, the legal education series for newcomers, citizenship groups, parenting support groups, partnership projects with other service providers, were a few of the specialized programs that we designed to meet the emerging settlement trends and service gaps.

Client Contacts



Number of Client Contacts	
SIS	14955
LSP	4563
Total	19518





Group mentoring



Newcomer seniors English conversation group

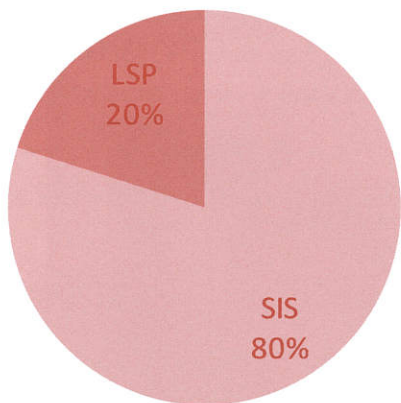
The streamlined Host program was renamed Community Connections, with emphases on professional career mentorship, cultural orientation, community engagement and volunteerism. The mentors were volunteers with various professional backgrounds who were matched with newcomers of similar backgrounds. They maintained good relationship through which newcomers were assisted to get back to their own professional fields. Newcomers also learned to become volunteers in order to be engaged in their communities and make connections.

The Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP) continued to partner with library branches to organize workshops related to settlement issues in the libraries. The citizenship group sessions were popular and met the needs of those who were preparing for citizenship tests and those who wanted to know more about Canada. Special cultural events were organized to celebrate different cultures in Canada.



Info session on Citizenship

Individual Clients



Number of Client Contacts	
SIS	7213
LSP	1813
Total	9026

"Today we see ourselves on the path of success. We as a family are moving towards bigger goal and have a clear vision ahead."

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada LINC Program-Toronto

Operating since 1992

The CICS LINC program started serving the community at our Sheppard location in September 1992. This site has been a gravitation point for newcomers ever since then, with many new immigrants and their families coming in for settlement and integration support in addition to English language training. Entering the 20th year of service to the community, our LINC program offers 30 classes out of 3 locations in Scarborough: 4002 Sheppard, 2330 Midland, the Woodside Square Shopping Centre at Finch and McCowan. Apart from 4 full-time classes, we have a range of part-time programs ranging from basic to Levels 6/7.

The profile and characteristics of our students have certainly changed over time and so have our program contents and teaching strategies. In recent years, the LINC students have become much younger and many have come from professional backgrounds. While a small number are still in need of survival English, the majority of our students now seek to acquire English language skills to broaden their horizons and achieve social, cultural, economic and political integration. In short, our goal is to enable new immigrants to play an active part and function well in Canadian society.



LINC students decorated doors in a competition

"... I am very happy about it because it means that the program really helps the new immigrants both in speaking English and finding jobs..."



Newcomer senior English conversation group volunteers