

Canadian Centre on Statelessness

Annual Report

2017



canadian centre  
on statelessness

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On November 17, 2015, Industry Canada under the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* recognized Canadian Centre on Statelessness as a non-profit corporation. The Corporation Number is 951450-3.

Canadian Centre on Statelessness is located at 57 Louis-Pasteur, Room 550, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5.

## **CCS MISSION: Why we exist**

The Canadian Centre on Statelessness exists to defend and promote the wellbeing of stateless persons, in particular those within the Canadian context. We aim to

- Bring together allies in a community of partners committed to overcoming societal, political and legislative challenges in the area of statelessness.
- Co-generate knowledge and foster horizontal and reciprocal exchanges of knowledge.

## **CCS VISION: Where we are going**

The Canadian Centre on Statelessness envisions a society in which a sense of existence and belonging of all people, however they define themselves, is reciprocally recognized and protected. For those stateless persons, and potential stateless persons, who seek Canadian citizenship, we advocate the acquisition of citizenship. We are working towards

- A Canada committed to the protection of stateless persons and prevention of statelessness by ratifying and adhering to international human rights standards including but not limited to the 1954 *Convention on the Status of Stateless Persons* and the 1961 *Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness*; and
- A Canada committed to law and policy reform including but not limited to implementing statelessness determination procedures; and
- A community that works toward societal, political and legislative change that is informed by sound participatory research and policy analysis.

## **CCS Guiding Principles**

CCS is inspired by the voices of people experiencing statelessness and guided by the following principles:

- Everyone deserves the same level of support in having their right of belonging recognized, especially those who struggle in having this right fully acknowledged.
- To the extent possible, and as defined by the by-laws, every member benefits from the same right to participate in the decision-making processes of the organization.
- All members are encouraged to voice their opinions, share their perspectives, and honour their values in a respectful manner so as to build a strong, participatory, and consensual decision-making process.
- Every member is responsible for fostering a learning environment conducive to supporting individual and collective participation, commitment, and engagement.
- Collective decision-making will be informed by a commitment to truthfulness and it shall be congruent with the vision, mission and principles of CCS.

## Letter from the Board of Directors

Dear Members,

The inaugural years of any endeavour are always the thrilling ones. Everything is a first — first events, first reports, first meetings. What really starts to test the spirit of any organisation are the adolescent years. These are the years where an organisation's fortitude, commitment and vision are truly tested.

Now in our third year, CCS has matured into an effective and skilled organization that is having a significant impact on the issues of statelessness.

Each of our three years has seen progressive accomplishments. In our first year we worked to build a robust network of allies from all factions of the statelessness agenda — activists and practitioners from across the country in academia, law, immigration, criminology, and politics and, most importantly, stateless persons. In our second year, we continued that work. We incorporated as a federally registered non-profit organisation, and we partnered with UNHCR, University of Ottawa and OPIRG Ottawa to host the First Summit on Statelessness in Canada.

This past year, our work, while behind the scenes, has been significant. We worked to enhance our advocacy efforts both internationally and at home. The completion of our study, *Data Collection on Stateless Persons in Canada* — the first of its kind — helped to establish CCS as an organisation that provides sound data that can inform policy and legislative change. With our study in hand, we met with key stakeholders including decision makers in multiple levels of government. Shortly thereafter, *Canada's Citizenship Act* was reformed and for the first time in Canada statelessness is now recognized in humanitarian applications for Canadian residency. We didn't stop there. Drawing upon our research, we submitted a proposal to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada to enhance their internal practices concerning statelessness. Looking further down the road, we partnered with the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion and submitted a brief on Canada's record on statelessness to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review, where Canada will be evaluated in May 2018.

In three short years CCS has evolved from an idea into an organisation that is beginning to affect change, and it is our hope that CCS won't need to celebrate too many more anniversaries. But until statelessness in Canada and around the world no longer exists CCS will be present to help end it.

Yours Sincerely,

Board of Directors  
Canadian Centre on Statelessness

## Board of Directors

The Canadian Centre on Statelessness (CCS) Board of Directors was elected on November 2, 2016, and comprises Y.Y. Chen, Claire Delisle, Michelle Quigg, and Marc Valade.

**Y.Y. Brandon Chen** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law (English Common Law Program). He holds a Bachelor of Science from Emory University, as well as a Master of Social Work and a Juris Doctor from the University of Toronto. He has been a licensed lawyer in Ontario since 2011. He is currently completing his Doctor of Juridical Science at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. Y.Y.'s scholarly interests lie at the intersection of health care and international migration. He also works closely with racialized newcomers living with HIV/AIDS.

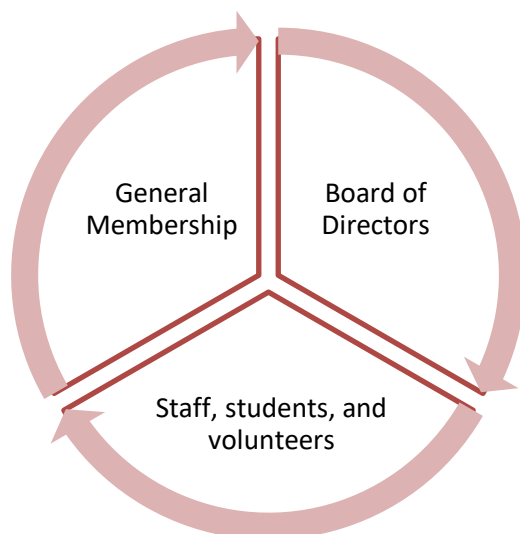
**Claire Delisle**, Secretary, teaches criminology and sociology at the University of Ottawa. Her experience includes solidarity work for the peace process in Ireland, and anti-prison struggle. Claire's praxis is focused on decolonization, anti-oppression, and horizontality. She has experience in policy analysis and the development of policy alternatives.

**Michelle Quigg** is the Roster (Legal Representation) Coordinator at the Access Pro Bono Society of BC ("APB"). She is also an immigration lawyer whose most recent work has been representing stateless clients. She is passionate about increasing access to justice, particularly as it relates to helping individuals who have fallen through the cracks of Canada's immigration, refugee and citizenship system.

**Marc Valade**, Treasurer, is a Doctoral candidate in Policy Studies under the Immigration, Settlement and Diaspora stream at Ryerson University. Marc brings a decade of work experience in public administration as an executive director of a socioeconomic regional development agency in Quebec. Marc is currently involved in several research projects, including a study on the integration trajectories of immigrant families in the Greater Toronto Area.

## Operations

The CCS organisational structure is based upon a participatory approach in which our members, Board of Directors, and staff work together and make decisions within a horizontal consensus model.



CCS operational targets for 2017 were to enhance our research programme, expand our network, and enhance our organisational capacity.

In March 2017 we published our *Data Collection on Stateless Persons in Canada* study, highlighting gaps in existing data collection and reporting practices of four government immigration and statistics agencies. Details on this study are provided below.

Publishing our *Data Collection* study enabled us to organise meetings with stakeholders in government. This opened the door for discussion with key decision and policy makers, creating a space for constructive and informed dialogue.

Following suggestions from our members at the 2016 AGM we created a By-Law Committee to refine our draft by-laws. This process helped us ensure that CCS values are enshrined in its governing documents, policies and procedures. With the help of CCS membership, the Committee consulted allies in the field on their practices concerning the protection of those they work with, how to ensure safe relationships with the media, and what our rights and responsibilities are as a federally incorporated non-profit organisation.

Finally, in response to interest from community members CCS has held discussions on forming a Litigation Committee in the 2018 year. The Litigation Committee will follow cases concerning statelessness in Canada and intervene where appropriate.

## Achievements

CCS' 2017 year can be characterised as 'behind the scenes'. Taking a break from the event-centred 2015/6 years, CCS worked this year to strategize our research activities, and arrange meetings with stakeholders in the field of statelessness.

## Research

CCS published its "[Data Collection on Stateless Persons in Canada](#)" in March 2017. This report is a follow up study to the 2012 UNHCR report *Statelessness in the Canadian Context* and investigates the statelessness data collection practices of Statistics Canada, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (IRCC), and the Canada Border Services Agency. Access to Information requests were submitted to these government agencies, and we found that, overall, data collection and reporting practices are poor and in need of significant improvement in four broad ways: defining statelessness, collection practices, reporting practices; and adherence to the 2012 UNHCR report's recommendations. This report is the first of its kind in the country and has opened the door for discussions with public decision makers.

Partnered with Professor Y.Y. Chen, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa, CCS received a Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) Planning and Dissemination Grant in order to carry out research into the relationship between the national belonging and health outcomes of non-citizens in Canada. Our research will take place from 2017-2018. Findings from this study will enable policymakers and service providers to better understand non-citizens' health and wellbeing, and to identify appropriate health interventions for them.

In the 2016/2017 school year, CCS embarked on an Education Pilot where we explored the possibility of engaging with primary and secondary school teachers in Ontario to introduce statelessness into classrooms. We interviewed several teachers in Toronto, London, and Hamilton and learned what is needed to teach issues of statelessness in Ontario curriculum. Our goal is to develop a learning tool for teachers to use in classrooms that is applicable for secondary school students in multiple courses including history, Canadian studies, civics, and geography.

## Advocacy

In April 2017, CCS was featured in The Walrus' story on statelessness "[No Job, No Car, No Bank Account: What It's like to Be Stateless in Canada](#)". This story was the first investigative news piece in a national circulation that featured statelessness in the many facets of law, policy and the lived experience.

Spring 2017 was a busy time for CCS. We organised meetings with a few key stakeholders to discuss the findings of our *Data Collection* report including the policy team of the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship's cabinet office, the Ministry of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship executive policy branch, and Independent Senator Ratna Omidvar. These meetings established CCS as a data-driven organisation concerned with informed policy and legislative change, and created a space for future dialogue with law makers. During these meetings we discussed the importance of establishing a definition for statelessness in citizenship and immigration law. A few weeks later, Canada's *Citizenship Act* was reformed whereby for the first time in Canadian history statelessness was recognised as a factor of 'unusual hardship' in humanitarian applications for Canadian residency and citizenship. Furthermore, Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada released a definition of statelessness and a set of guidelines for lawyers working on cases. These are small – but major – steps toward addressing statelessness in Canada.

In September 2017, CCS partnered with the [Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion](#) to submit a brief on statelessness in Canada for Canada's third cycle [Universal Periodic Review](#) at the United Nations Human Rights Council. We discussed statelessness in Canada with respect to the lack of a statelessness determination procedure, children's right to a nationality, and detention. This brief continues our international advocacy work but is the first time we have spoken about statelessness in Canada within the United Nations environment. For a copy of the brief please visit [www.statelessness.ca](http://www.statelessness.ca).

In October of this year, CCS partnered with Professor Jamie Liew of the University of Ottawa and submitted a proposal to the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) to improve its practices concerning statelessness. Drawing upon our findings from the *Data Collection* study, we proposed that the IRB adopt a definition of statelessness, enhance information gathering and data collection practices, and create Chairperson guidelines on statelessness. We also proposed that CCS collaborate with the IRB in developing these tools.

## Networking

In addition to our research and advocacy work we embarked on several meetings with allies in the field of citizenship and immigration in Canada. Over the spring and summer 2017 we met with FCJ Refugee Centre, St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, No One is Illegal, the City of Ottawa Sanctuary City movement, the Central Asian Network on Statelessness, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees offices in Ottawa, Washington, and Nairobi, and several individuals and academics from in Canada and abroad. Through these meetings we communicated CCS activities and objectives, and learned of the practices carried out by those who share similar goals.

In addition to meeting with individuals and organisations, CCS has met with several stateless persons over the year. Though CCS does not provide direct services to stateless persons in



Canada – we refer stateless persons we meet to appropriate legal and social service organisations across the country – one of our Directors, Michelle Quigg, began this year to provide pro bono consultations to stateless persons on a case by case basis. Michelle draws on her experience working on cases concerning statelessness to provide guidance to those in similar situations. Through these informal consultations we are able to further support our community – thank you Michelle.

## Events

In June, 2017 Jocelyn Kane was invited to participate in the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion’s Statelessness Academic Workshop organized by the [Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion](#) in collaboration with [New York University's Center for Global Affairs](#) and [Open Society Justice Initiative](#). The event explored how scholars have approached statelessness in the past and how we can engage with statelessness in



a multidisciplinary way going forward. This intensive week-long programme of activities for academics included an exchange of experiences on teaching statelessness, a dialogue between scholars and practitioners, masterclasses and workshops, and a two-day meeting of over twenty expert academics and practitioners in the field.

In June 2017, one of our Directors, Professor Claire Delisle presented issues of statelessness at Canada’s first Human Rights Conference. Held at University of Ottawa’s Human Rights Research and Education Centre, Claire presented the gaps in legislation and policy concerning statelessness in Canada and CCS’ activities.

## Financial Report

The following statement is unaudited.

### Canadian Centre on Statelessness Profit and Loss YTD Comparison December 2015 through October 2017

**Accrual Basis**

	1 Dec 15 - 1 Oct 16	2 Oct 16 - 10 Oct 17
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>		
<b>Income</b>		
<b>43400 · Direct Public Support</b>		
43450 · Individ, Business Contributions	1,035.00	250.00
<b>Total 43400 · Direct Public Support</b>	<b>1,035.00</b>	<b>250.00</b>
<b>45000 · Investments</b>		
45030 · Interest-Savings, Short-term CD	0.69	0.41
<b>Total 45000 · Investments</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.41</b>
<b>47200 · Program Income</b>		
47230 · Membership Dues		375.00
47200 · Program Income - Other		1,462.50
<b>Total 47200 · Program Income</b>		<b>1,837.50</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,035.69</b>	<b>2,087.91</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
<b>62800 · Facilities and Equipment</b>		
62890 · Rent, Parking, Utilities	600.00	
<b>Total 62800 · Facilities and Equipment</b>	<b>600.00</b>	
<b>65100 · Other Types of Expenses</b>		
65160 · Other Costs	16.32	17.74
<b>Total 65100 · Other Types of Expenses</b>	<b>16.32</b>	<b>17.74</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>616.32</b>	<b>17.74</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>419.37</b>	<b>2,070.17</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>419.37</b>	<b>2,070.17</b>

CCS has received numerous in-kind donations from stakeholders that have allowed CCS to carry out various activities, including office space, promotional tools, and financial assistance for attending international events.

Marc Valade  
Treasurer, Board of Directors  
Ottawa, ON  
October 10, 2017

## Our 2017 Supporters

We would like to thank our supporters for their generosity and commitment to working towards eradicating statelessness in Canada and abroad, and for their invaluable efforts in helping CCS grow.

Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness

Patrick Balazo

Maria Basualdo

Luke Cole

Claire Delisle

Theresa Dillon

Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights

Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa

Institute for Statelessness and Inclusion

Jocelyn Kane

Jamie Liew

Ontario Public Interest Research Group - Ottawa

Adam Pomper

Michelle Quigg

Fiorella Rabafuetti

Marcelo Saavedra-Vargas

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Marc Valade

Y. Y. Chen

And all of our members!

CCS is also grateful for the efforts of those not named here.

## Contact Us

Canadian Centre on Statelessness

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[www.statelessness.ca](http://www.statelessness.ca)



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