Canadian Centre on Statelessness

Annual Report

2024

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 envisions a society in which a sense of existence and belonging of all people, however they define themselves, is reciprocally recognized and protected.

CCS VISION: where we are going

The Canadian Centre on Statelessness exists to defend and promote the well-being of persons with lived experiences of statelessness, in particular those within the Canadian context, through:

- Research: We co-generate and foster reciprocal exchanges of knowledge created by lived experiences of statelessness, participatory research, and policy analysis.
- Community: We work together as stateless persons and allies in a community that practices and cultivates respect for the rights, choices, and belonging of persons with experiences of statelessness.
- Advocacy: We amplify emancipatory knowledges and action, through intersectional allyship, for the purpose of influencing legislative, policy and social change.

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 thesame 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, andconsensual 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 shallbe congruent with the vision, mission and principles of CCS.

board of directors

HEATHER ALEXANDER

Heather Alexander is an expert on refugee law, forced displacement, and statelessness at Carleton University and the research coordinator for the IDRC Research Chairs Network on Forced Displacement. Her academic work focuses on statelessness among nomadic and mobile peoples, legal identity, refugee law and climate change. She has a PhD from Tilburg University in the Netherlands, a JD from Golden Gate University School of Law, and a BA from Boston University in the United States. She was an Associate Protection Officer for UNHCR in Chad and Sri Lanka. She has served as a consultant for UNHCR, the US State Department, the University of Melbourne and the GlobalCit project at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies. She is also a former US Peace Corps volunteer in Gabon and a co-founder and former board member of United Stateless, an advocacy group for stateless people in the USA.

JOCELYN KANE

Jocelyn is the founder of CCS and is a PhD candidate in Political Studies at the University of Ottawa where she researches voluntary statelessness.

GEZY SCHUURMANS

Gezy Schuurmans is currently a PhD Candidate with the Joined-Up Justice Project at Tilburg University, conducting empirical legal research in the field of criminal law and migration law. In 2018, she began supporting the work of the Canadian Centre on Statelessness as a Research Assistant. Previously, she has worked on the topic of statelessness by interning with the Institute on Statelessness, the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the UN, and a migration law firm.

DESALE TESFAMARIAM

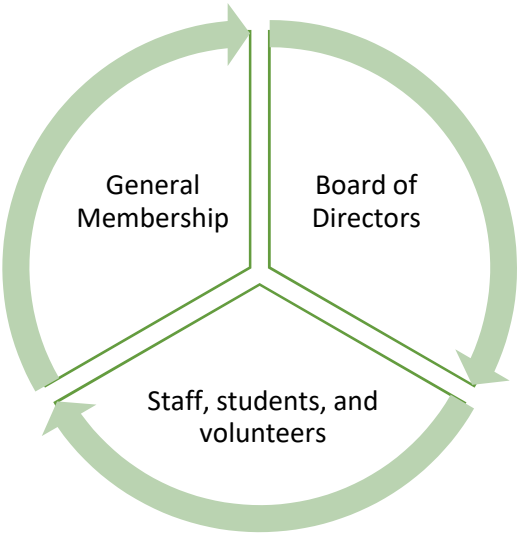
ABRAHA Desale Tesfamariam is pursuing a PhD at the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies (GSAPS) at Waseda University in Japan. He specializes in the fields of international development and international human rights. Desale's research interests encompass examining human rights, political economy, blockchain technology, and development, specifically focusing on underdeveloped nations. While enrolled at Waseda University, he earned a Graduate Certificate from the Institute of Human Rights (IHR).

TSERING THONSUR

Tsering is currently an advisor with the Refugee Advisory Network of Canada and has engaged in advocacy work and promoting refugee, stateless, and people with displaced rights at the local, national, and global platforms. Tsering was born in India as a stateless refugee as a result of the occupation of Tibet by China. She arrived in Canada as a refugee claimant and has many years of professional and personal experience working with refugees, Stateless, and new immigrants in Toronto. She is very passionate about advocacy for refugee and women's issues. Tsering is active in community engagement and development and has built successful partnerships with community and service providers within the settlement sector. Tsering has volunteered in the community in various capacities, including as a board member with the Tibetan Democracy and Human Rights, South Asian Women's Centre, and Parkdale Community Health Centre. Tsering's resume brings many years of experience in social service, grassroots activism, and leadership skills. She graduated from the University of Windsor with a Master of Social Work, a Bachelor in Social Work from TMU School of Social Work, and has a diploma and certificates in Social Service Management from George Brown College and Refugee and Migrant Issues from York University. She has a master's in political science from Mysore University in India.

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.



research

CCS team members Yuriko Cowper-Smith and Jocelyn Kane collaborated on a chapter in an edited volume on *Forced Migration in Canada,* which was published with McGill Queens University Press in 2024. The chapter, **"The Shifting Landscape of Statelessness in Canada",** is a comprehensive introduction to statelessness in Canada in the context of forced migration, and identifies key debates in the field and ways in which statelessness occurs in Canada – forced migration, Indigenous disenfranchisement, second generation children born abroad, and crimmigration – and the gaps inherent in both the ways of thinking about statelessness in Canada generally and Canadian protection strategies. You can access this article here.

- ✓ To raise awareness about this issue to a wider audience, Yuriko and Jocelyn also prepared a short video on the chapter, accessible here https://collabzium.com/en/articles/statelessness-in-canada.

- ✓ The chapter is also due to be published in French in Spring 2025!

We are excited to announce an important publication by CCS Board members Heather Alexander and Jocelyn Kane. Together they published **"Case Note: Statelessness, Gender, and Intersectionality in Bjorkquist et al vs. Attorney General of Canada"** in the journal *Statelessness and Citizenship Review*. This article responds to the 2023 Ontario Superior Court decision which overturned the provision in Canadian citizenship law that risked causing harm to children and families. Importantly, Heather and Jocelyn found that while the Court applied a holistic approach to the case through the lens of intersectionality, the Court did not consider the case vis-à-vis its obligations to international law on statelessness, the impact of which will be significant in global socio-political and legal circles. You can access the article here.

CCS researchers are also completing our second publication of our National Belonging and Health Outcomes Of Non-Citizens In Canada project. In this article, "**Belonging and Status in Canada: A Comparative Study of Permanent and Stateless Residents**" Jocelyn Kane, Gezy Schuurmans, and Miho Kitamura are comparing lived experiences of connections to Canada and belonging between permanent residents and stateless persons.

funding

This year our team applied for the UNHCR Refugee Led Innovation Fund, an annual competition that aims to enhance participation of stateless and refugee participation in humanitarian work. The Fund provides holistic support – combining financial resources, mentoring, and other expertise – directly to refugee-led organizations, to enable them to design and deliver new interventions that have a lasting positive impact on their communities. We will learn of our funding decision in early 2025! For more information see https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/refugee-led-innovation-fund/.

advocacy

CCS continued our work advocating for legislative and policy change on statelessness in Canada on the national stage. Canada underwent its **fourth cycle review at the United Nations Universal Periodic Review** (UPR4) in November 2023. Canada's UPR is a mechanism that enables the Human Rights Council to examine whether Canada is meeting its human rights obligations and commitments. At UPR4 Canada received two recommendations on statelessness: Malta recommended Canada consider acceding to the 1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and Côte d'Ivoire recommended Canada to amend the Citizenship Act to include a definition of stateless person in accordance with international law. This marks Canada's third consecutive UPR appearance where Canada has received recommendations on statelessness but has not implemented them. To help inform its response to these recommendations, Canada's Department of Heritage invited civil society organisations to comment on the recommendations. The process was coordinated by Equitas, and CCS submitted a brief that addressed the two recommendations Canada received, and included our own regarding how Canada could implement legislative and policy change in response. Equitas prepared a report compiling responses from civil society across Canada and submitted that report to Canada's Senior Officials Committee Responsible for Human Rights in January 2024. You can consult the reports submitted as part of Canada's Universal Periodic Review here.

CCS team members Heather Alexander and Jocelyn Kane were excited to participate in McGill University's **Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism conference** on the review of the UN Global Action Plan to End Statelessness. The conference showcased whether there has been significant progress by states on the protection of stateless persons and prevention and reduction of statelessness, what legal and policy gaps and restrictive practices still exist, and what can be done to accelerate state's response to address statelessness. The conference also aimed to identify opportunities for collaboration and exchange of best practices, policy recommendations among stakeholders, including civil society actors, policymakers, and members of the academic community.

Following the conference, Heather Alexander participated in a week-long workshop hosted by The Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism. The workshop hosted lawyers, advocates, academics, professionals in government, and NGOs and aimed to

- increase the ability of participants to address the issue of statelessness using the relevant international and regional human rights systems,
- to equip participants with various creative advocacy initiatives to support the advocacy moves in the regions raising more awareness of statelessness,
- to equip participants with the required knowledge and expertise to influence constitutional and legislative reform processes,
- and to share good practices among participants on how to better reduce and prevent statelessness and protect stateless persons.

In September 2024, CCS completed its two-year term on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees **Global Alliance to End Statelessness Taskforce**. The Taskforce supported the establishment of the Global Alliance and comprised a small but esteemed group of stakeholders in civil society, academia, international organisations, and foundations. The Global Alliance to End Statelessness was launched on October 14, 2024, and we are excited for what is to come! You can read more about the Taskforce here https://www.unhcr.org/ibelong/the-new-global-alliance-to-end-statelessness.

We are excited to announce our membership in the **Global Alliance to End Statelessness**. CCS became a member of the Global Alliance after having pledged to do so at the December 2023 Global Refugee Forum. The Global Alliance is a global advocacy movement comprising a broad range of stakeholders including governments, regional organizations, stateless-led organizations, UN Agencies, civil society groups and networks and faith-based organizations, and is charged with mobilising the protection of stateless persons and prevention of statelessness.

Global Alliance to
End Statelessness

This year, CCS continued to build our relationship with Canadian government officials. At the 2023 Global Refugee Forum, Canada pledged to explore joining the Global Alliance to End Statelessness as a member, and CCS is happy to report that we had productive discussions with government officials this year about Canada's membership in the Alliance. We were also invited by Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada to a meeting on Bill C-71, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, 2024, which establishes a revised framework governing citizenship by descent and restores citizenship to lost Canadians and their descendants.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada | Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

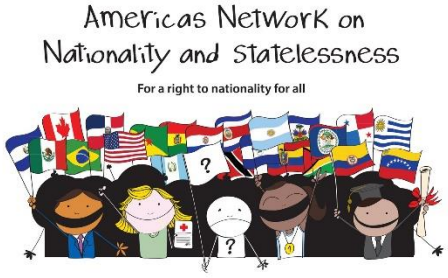
We also worked with the UNHCR Ottawa office on both of these developments and discussed ways that we can work together to improve advocacy on statelessness and Canada.

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | Canada

networking and raising awareness

In 2024, CCS continued to maintain and build relationships with its supporters and allies worldwide.

Since its founding in 2014, CCS has been a member of the Americas Network on Nationality and Statelessness. The Network comprises civil society organizations, academic initiatives, and individual experts committed to address statelessness in the Americas.



Since 2015, CCS has been a member of the Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights which mobilizes international action to achieve law reform in countries that deny women equal nationality rights with men.

In the winter of 2022, CCS became a member of the Canadian Council For Refugees (CCR). The Council is a national non-profit umbrella organization committed to the rights and protection of refugees and other vulnerable migrants in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada.

CCS made a new organisational friend this year in PEN Canada. We met to discuss ways that our two organisations can collaborate on raising awareness on statelessness in Canada and showcasing the creativity of stateless authors in this country. We look forward to making this happen with PEN Canada!

financial report

Since its foundation, 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. A very special thank you is extended to the Human Rights Research and Education Centre, University of Ottawa.

Jocelyn Kane, Treasurer, Board of Directors, December 13, 2024 Toronto, Ontario Canada.

	Jan - Dec 13 24	Jan - Dec 23	Jan - Dec 22
PROFIT AND LOSS 2022 - 2024			
INCOME			
Individual Donations	325.00	375.00	450.00
Interest	0.54	0.59	0.26
Membership Dues	75.00	125.00	75.00
TOTAL INCOME	400.54	575.59	525.26
EXPENSE			
Business Expenses (business cards, annual corporation registration, CCR membership, events)	12.00	181.85	148.88
Communications (website)	288.79	0.00	218.12
Other (PayPal fee)	0.00	5.51	5.26
TOTAL EXPENSE	300.79	187.36	372.26
NET INCOME	**99.75**	**388.23**	**153.00**
BALANCE SHEET 2022 - 2024			
ASSETS			
Current Assets	2,206.98	2144.78	1,780.19
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
Current Liabilities	-198.13	-160.58	-136.94
Equity			
Unrestricted Net Assets	2,305.36	1917.13	1,764.13
Net Income	99.75	388.23	153.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	**2,206.98**	**2144.78**	**1,780.19**

contact us

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