



Embracing Diversity

Meeting Community Needs For Over Fifty Years

Annual Report
2002-2003



Adaptation is the key.

President's Report



COSTI's ability to adapt to changing times over the last 50 years has been the main reason for its success.

Throughout this long period of providing services to immigrant communities, COSTI has never remained stagnant. Its ability to move ahead and plan programs, within the new emerging realities, has been key to the agency's many achievements.

Historically, the organization has always sought out new and innovative ways of meeting the needs of Toronto's ethnically diverse population, and has responded effectively to each "new wave" of immigrants. The immigration wave of the fifties brought mostly unskilled, manual labourers to the city. At this time, COSTI provided basic language and employment training, as well as much-needed orientation to Canadian society.

With the advent of the sixties and seventies, the profile of the immigrant population changed, as more skilled individuals began arriving to Canada. COSTI again responded by providing the necessary training for certification by the Ontario government for this new group.

New groups of immigrants would arrive in the eighties; people from different parts of the world; including thousands of refugees from devastated, war-torn countries. Once again, COSTI provided training for these people with language services, employment assistance and housing.

By the early nineties, a new wave of immigrants arrived in Canada: professional people, who were highly skilled in various disciplines. They required a new type of assistance. COSTI established a centre to serve the foreign professionals, to help these individuals with job training, referrals, resumes, interview techniques, etc.

In addition to changing with the times, COSTI's success can be attributed to its skilled and dedicated staff, who have effectively implemented new and innovative programs over the decades. Furthermore, COSTI has always been equally fortunate to have a group of highly talented and exceptional volunteers (Board of Directors) – individuals who have developed and implemented policies at the most opportune time.

For their unique contribution, as well as that of staff and additional volunteers, my sincerest appreciation and gratitude.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Bruno M. Suppa".

Bruno M. Suppa
President

...immigrant youth can easily become discouraged and lost if they feel that they do not fit in...

Executive Director's Report



As COSTI closed out its fiftieth anniversary in 2002/03, its biggest service challenge continued to be assisting internationally trained immigrants to obtain suitable jobs in the profession in which they trained. COSTI expanded its services and worked with other agencies and government partners to respond to this big challenge. This issue deservedly received much attention from COSTI. However, one area of service that has grown quietly includes programs for children and youth. This is a critical area of service as immigrant youth can easily become discouraged and lost if they feel that they do not fit in socially or scholastically.

This discouragement can lead to poor self-esteem, which can manifest itself in withdrawal and passive behaviours that result in underachievement, or it can result in aggressive, antisocial behaviours. To address this issue, one of the initiatives that COSTI has been supporting is the Out of School, Out of Work program operated by a small agency named Somali Canadian Mothers for Youth and Family. This program redirects youth into constructive life choices by providing counselling, workshops, volunteer opportunities with Somali seniors, and work internships. The results have been outstanding with the majority of youth returning to school. COSTI acted as trustee to the organization and provided pre-employment workshops to the youth.

Another program where COSTI is working in partnership with an agency named ORT Toronto is the Technology & Mentor Program. Operating out of COSTI's Caledonia Road location, this program enrolls children and youth whose families do not own a computer. It provides computer training and a young adult mentor, and gives each program graduate a computer system at the end of the term. Given that computers are a fundamental tool in education, this program, operated by ORT Toronto, gives the participants an opportunity to compete academically with more economically privileged students.

COSTI has established a number of youth programs in Scarborough to reach newcomer and low-income youth aged 12 to 19 in this underserved community. The Crime Prevention program engaged youth around computer assignments that addressed issues of peer pressure, anger management and violence prevention over a 16 week period. The success of this program can be measured by the fact that many of these youth went on to become peer mentors to other youth in their school.

Another program offered in Scarborough is the COSTI/3T Track Club. This program aims to develop character and leadership in youth by engaging them in organized basketball and track activities. The program is designed to accommodate the casual and the serious athlete. Competent coaching has led to many successes in the Ontario Championships, with one girl placing fourth overall in her event.

In addition to these services, COSTI is developing a training manual to instruct immigrant and refugee families on child rearing practices in Canada; a children's day camp is operated in North York during the summer months; child care is provided for the children of those attending English language classes; and employment counselling, summer jobs and apprenticeships are offered to youths seeking meaningful employment.

Immigrant and minority youth can easily feel out of place in our society, and this can lead to maladaptive behaviours. What are needed are opportunities to interact constructively with others in order to build their self-confidence. These opportunities have a lasting positive impact on these individuals and on society as a whole. COSTI will continue to provide youth with opportunities for positive engagement.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mario J. Calla".

Mario J. Calla
Executive Director



Newcomers (particularly highly trained professionals) were a primary focus of attention in our employment activities in 2002/03.

Programs & Services



Employment Services

With 22,922 clients served and 13,138 job placements secured, COSTI's Employment Services continue to balance universally accessible services for all unemployed individuals with those specifically targeted to disadvantaged communities - newcomers, women and at-risk youth. Statistics Canada, and other research, indicates that these three populations continue to face greater barriers to employment and have lower than average income levels.

Newcomers (particularly highly trained professionals) were a primary focus of attention in our employment activities in 2002/03. In addition to the Centres for Foreign Trained Professionals & Tradespeople (CFTPT) and Employment Assistance Services (OUTLET) programs, COSTI had the opportunity to pilot a Job Connect service for internationally trained professionals, partner on Bridging Programs and participate in many inter-agency and community development activities related to the economic integration of newcomers. As newcomers came to represent an increasing proportion of the GTA population at large, so too did our client demographics.

Assessment, Counselling and Placement Services

Clients Served: 11,388 Placements: 8,657

5,334 youth and adults accessing the provincially funded Job Connect program in Toronto and York Region received vocational counselling and were placed in jobs in 2002/03. The program saw an increase in services to adults, primarily as a result of increased referral and the introduction of a provincial pilot project to serve internationally trained individuals. Young people, particularly those who are newcomers to Canada, received caring and sensitive support through our employment services.

In response to population growth and demographic changes, the Employment Assessment Centre, funded by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), expanded and relocated from its Richmond Hill office to our existing Vaughan site. 2,364 individuals received employment assessment, referral and case management services. In Toronto, 3,788 unemployed individuals looking to re-enter the work force sought assistance through our Employment Counselling Centre at Dufferin Mall. The centre provides clients with employment assessment, career planning, referral services and client case management.

In 2002, the Employment Assistance Services (OUTLET) program relocated to the Corvetti Education Centre and faced a 50% program reduction, having a drastic impact on services to the community. Today, the service continues to fill a niche among the various newcomer employment services in Toronto by focusing on longer term immigrants facing unemployment resulting from labour market changes and non-professional newcomers.

Language instruction represents a key stage in the settlement process of newcomers and a stepping stone to higher education, meaningful employment and successful careers.

Programs & Services

Centres for Foreign Trained Professionals & Tradespeople

Clients Served: 1,744

Operated in partnership with Humber College, the two Centres for Foreign Trained Professionals & Tradespeople continue to be our most sought-after programs for this target group. While the structured program has a maximum capacity of 420 participants, more than 1,700 foreign trained professionals applied for admission and were provided with an assessment, information and referral to other appropriate services. To complement the existing service, a new website was launched - Hire Solutions - targeting employers wishing to access the pool of professionally trained prospective employees.

Employment Resource Centres

Clients Served: 9,790 Placements: 4,276

Located in Toronto, Markham and Vaughan, the Employment Resource Centres provide a good starting point for anyone looking for work. Clients have a variety of resources available to assist them with their job search including: computer and internet access; informative employment seminars and customized workshops for foreign trained professionals; as well as a diverse library of employment and labour market related materials. The Markham Employment Resource Centre saw a dramatic 41% increase in the number of new clients served, with the Vaughan Employment Resource Centre, experiencing a 25% increase. The increases are due in large part to the population growth in York Region as well as the implementation of a broad and coordinated marketing strategy, and the relocation of the Vaughan Centre to a highly visible and accessible storefront location at Jane and Highway 7.

Education Services

Through its various educational training services, the Education Division continues to experience steady growth, with over 11,000 students enrolled.

Language Instruction

Clients Served: 11,483

Language instruction represents a key stage in the settlement process of newcomers and a stepping stone to higher education, meaningful employment and successful careers. Language training, either through Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program or through the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, continues to be one of COSTI's most popular services.

To remain relevant and responsive to the ever changing need of its clients, a number of new classes were introduced including: a full-time Intermediate ESL Program, a part-time Saturday Pronunciation Program, and a part-time Evening Business English Program.

A full-time preparation Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) program commenced at our Richmond Hill location. The program was designed for students who plan to take a Test of English as a Foreign Language for entrance to college or university or to qualify for professional certification.





Clients seeking assistance for Settlement Services were primarily looking for support in the areas of immigration documentation, referral, and supportive counselling.

Programs & Services



Skills Training

Clients Served: 286

COSTI's computer and skills training courses, provided on a fee-for-service basis, offer yet another range of options from which clients can select the most appropriate intervention relevant to their specific needs. Programs that are currently offered include ACCPAC, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, and Microsoft Word.

164 women graduated from COSTI's Home Childcare program. Through funds received from the United Way of Greater Toronto and the City of Toronto, this program prepares immigrant women to become self-employed as Childcare providers or to seek employment through childcare agencies.

The Newcomer Professionals Program, a 12-week program combining job search training, business English and work placement opportunities for internationally trained professionals, ran six sessions this past year. Recognizing the program's ongoing achievements, Toronto Social Services has agreed to support the program's expansion for 2003.

Social Services

With a 38% increase in clients accessing services in 2002/03, Social Services staff provided over 66,000 services to 23,970 individuals seeking settlement, family counselling, housing, and rehabilitation services. The ongoing challenge for many programs is maintaining the same level of service that responds effectively to community needs, given the limited resources.

Settlement

Clients Served: 12,476 Services Provided: 31,601

Clients seeking assistance for Settlement Services were primarily looking for support in the areas of immigration documentation, referral, and supportive counselling. In addition, as a result of long waiting lists and a lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate services in the community, families in crisis - primarily from the Albanian and Russian communities, were seeking assistance in the areas of family conflict, mental health and abuse situations.

With the support of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the COSTI Reception Centre continues to provide temporary accommodation and initial settlement services to government assisted refugees from around the world. 997 refugees were proud to call the COSTI Reception Centre their first home in Canada. Committed to ongoing service improvements to newcomers, staff worked on the development of the new Children in Transition project. A training module for facilitators, the curriculum will provide new immigrant and refugee parents with valuable information on the upbringing of their children in Canada.

Through subcontracting arrangements with 30 service-providing organizations from across the province, the Job Search Workshops program was accessed by over 9,700 clients. The JSW program, run in partnership with OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants) and funded by CIC, assists recent immigrants in securing employment by providing them with culturally sensitive pre-employment training.

Having a long history of dealing with clients who face barriers to employment, staff were successful in helping clients cope with their disabilities and in dealing with the challenge of securing employment.

Programs & Services

Housing

Registered Clients Served: 1,076 Non Registered Clients Served: 7,941

Despite an increase in rental units available, the clients served by the Housing Help program continue to be affected by systemic issues - the refugee claimant, the single parent household, the young and the old are most vulnerable. On a daily basis, staff work with the homeless and the near-homeless to help them find solutions to their housing problems and in educating landlords and the community about systemic issues faced by this vulnerable community.

Through the support received from the City of Toronto, staff continue to provide housing search assistance and crisis intervention, informal mediation, information, referral, personal identification and immunization clinics, and educational workshops for tenants and landlords. The Volunteer program introduced last year, provides additional supports through the Drop-In for women.

Family and Mental Health

Clients Served: 1,810

There continues to be a high demand for mental health services in Italian as witnessed by the 46% increase in the number of clients accessing services in 2002/03. Efforts to respond to the increased demand and to reduce the six month waiting period, have resulted in innovative approaches to service delivery. Group-based services and the adoption of a joint assessment model for mental health services were implemented.

2002/03 marked the successful completion of the three-year pilot project on Problem Gambling in the Italian, Hispanic, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Tamil, and Vietnamese communities. It is estimated that over 250,000 people were reached through the public education campaign. The prevention and treatment activities in the ethno-cultural communities will continue, and expand to include the Sinhalese and Hindi communities.

Rehabilitation and Training

Clients Served: 667

As the Rehabilitation Centre continues to focus on training and employment for the disabled, there has been a significant shift over the last several years from serving clients who are physically disabled to assisting individuals who have mental health issues. Having a long history of dealing with clients who face barriers to employment, staff were successful in helping clients cope with their disabilities and in dealing with the challenge of securing employment.



MISSION STATEMENT

COSTI provides educational, social, and employment services to help all immigrants in the greater Toronto area attain self-sufficiency in Canadian society.

COSTI, founded by the Italian Community to meet a shortage of services for immigrants in the post war era, is today a multicultural agency that works with all immigrant communities having a shortage of established services.

Board of Directors



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OPERATING FUND STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSE

For the years ended March 31	2003	2002
Revenue		
Grants and subsidies	16,313,204	15,519,683
Fees for service	976,461	922,235
United Way grants		
Toronto	526,998	502,312
York Region	59,247	59,247
Sales of goods and services	104,158	109,232
Rental income	105,962	115,651
Donations, memberships, fundraising	167,884	48,898
Foundation grants	214,814	648,070
Interest and other income	145,026	81,095
Total Revenue	18,613,754	18,006,423
Expense		
Salaries and benefits	7,937,162	7,308,234
Program partnerships	4,083,912	4,220,548
Client services	2,013,344	2,142,373
Building occupancy	1,844,913	1,718,390
Secondments	1,028,738	978,173
General	502,606	442,490
Office	725,072	647,288
Costs of goods and services sold	51,181	49,491
Amortization	11,553	15,813
Total Operating Expense	18,198,481	17,522,800
Excess of Revenue over Expense	415,273	483,623
Less payment of mortgage principal	(415,668)	(394,905)
Excess of Revenue over Expense after mortgage payments	(395)	88,718

The Board of Directors of COSTI Immigrant Services acknowledges with thanks, the outstanding contributions, support, and inspiration received from our funders, donors, partners, clients, volunteers, and staff, for over five decades.

Funders



GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
Job Search Workshops Program
Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
Resettlement Assistance Program

Department of Canadian Heritage

Human Resources Development Canada

Employment Assistance Services
Summer Career Placement

GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

Ministry of the Attorney General

Victim Services Division

Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation

Newcomer Settlement Program

Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services

Community Service Unit
Ontario Disability Support Program

Ministry of Health and Long Term Care

Long Term Care Division
Mental Health and Addictions Branch

Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities

Job Connect
Summer Jobs Service

The Ontario Trillium Foundation

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

CITY OF TORONTO

Community & Neighbourhood Services
Shelter, Housing & Support

Community Services Grants Program
Homelessness Initiatives Fund
Ontario Works

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

GOVERNMENT OF ITALY

ONTARIO PROBLEM GAMBLING RESEARCH CENTRE

TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

UNITED WAY OF GREATER TORONTO

UNITED WAY OF YORK REGION

FOUNDATIONS

The Acapella Foundation
Children's Aid Foundation
CHUM Charitable Foundation
The Counselling Foundation of Canada
F.K. Morrow Foundation
Maytree Foundation
Raptors Foundation
Sir Joseph Flavelle Foundation
Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund

It is COSTI's philosophy that productive membership in our society and good citizenship are enabled when individuals are given the means to fully participate.



Service Partners

AGENCIES

Abrigo
Accessible Community Counselling and Employment Services (ACCES)
African Canadian Social Development Council
African Community Services of Peel
Alternative Youth Centre for Employment
Arab Community Centre of Toronto
Canadian Arab Federation
Canadian Mental Health Association, Toronto Branch
Career Navigators
Catholic Community Services of York Region
Catholic Cross Cultural Services
Catholic Family Services of Toronto
Catholic Immigration Centre
Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS)
Centre for Information and Community Services
Centro Anziani
Chinese Community Services
Chinese Family Services of Ontario
Community MicroSkills Development Centre
Crèche Child and Family Centre
CultureLink
Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Centre
Delta Family Resource Centre
Dixie-Bloor Neighbourhood Services
Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre
Ethnoracial Coalition: Access to Addiction Services
Family Service Association of Toronto
Flemingdon Neighbourhood Services
Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines
Greek Orthodox Family Services and Counselling Wife Assault Program
Halton Multicultural Council
Hispanic Development Council
Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Against Abuse
Immigrant Women's Health Centre
India Rainbow Community Services of Peel
Intercede
Jamaican Canadian Association
Jewish Family and Child Services of Toronto
Jewish Family Service of Ottawa-Carleton
Jewish Vocational Service of Toronto
Job Skills
JobStart
Kitchener Waterloo Multicultural Association
Lebanese and Arab Social Service Agency
Le Caravelle
Local Agencies Serving Immigrants
London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
Dr. Salvatore Mallia
Malton Neighbourhood Services
Metropolitan Toronto Police

Midaynta
Multicultural Council of Windsor Essex County
Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel
National Congress of Italian Canadians – Toronto District
Neighbourhood Information Post
North York Women's Shelter
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Services Organization
Ottawa Chinese Community Service Centre
Partners for Access and Identification
Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services
Punjabi Community Health Centre
Rexdale Women's Centre
St. Christopher House
St. Stephen's Community House
Settlement and Integration Services Organization
Share the Warmth
Skills for Change
Somali Canadian Mothers for Youth
South Asian Family Support Services
South Asian Women's Centre
Sudbury Multicultural/Folk Arts Association
Tamil Eelam Society of Canada
Thornccliffe Neighbourhood Office
Toronto Fire Department
Toronto Public Health Department
Toronto Social Housing Connections
Vietnamese Association of Toronto
Villa Charities
Windsor Essex County Family YMCA
Woman Abuse Council of Toronto
Woodgreen Community Centre of Toronto
Working Women Community Centre
YMCA Newcomer Information Centre
YMCA, Toronto and York Region
Youth Employment Services

COLLEGES

George Brown College
Humber College
Seneca College

HOSPITALS

Humber River Regional Hospital
Toronto Hospital
Toronto Western Hospital

SCHOOL BOARDS

Toronto Catholic District School Board
Toronto District School Board
York Catholic District School Board
York District School Board



Locations

TORONTO

CALEDONIA CENTRE

Centre for Foreign Trained Professionals & Tradespeople
CBITS
Computer Training
Employment Services
Language & Skills Training Services
Rehabilitation and Training
700 Caledonia Road
Telephone: 416-789-7925 Fax: 416-789-3499

CENTRE FOR FOREIGN TRAINED PROFESSIONALS & TRADESPEOPLE, ETOBICOKE

1620 Albion Road, 2nd Floor
Telephone: 416-745-0281 Fax: 416-745-5718

CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE

760 College Street
Telephone: 416-534-7400 Fax: 416-534-2482

Employment Assistance Services (OUT.L.E.T.)
Telephone: 416-534-8437 Fax: 416-534-8425

EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING CENTRE, DUFFERIN MALL

900 Dufferin Street, Suite 102
Telephone: 416-588-2240 Fax: 416-588-9512

FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Sheridan Mall, 1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 105
Telephone: 416-244-7714 Fax: 416-244-7299

NORTH YORK CENTRE

Sheridan Mall, 1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 114
Telephone: 416-244-0480 Fax: 416-244-0379

Housing Help

Telephone: 416-244-0724 Fax: 416-244-0379

RECEPTION CENTRE

100 Lippincott Street
Telephone: 416-922-6688 Fax: 416-922-6668

SCARBOROUGH CENTRE

55 Town Centre, Suite 700
Telephone: 416-296-9393 Fax: Same

YORK REGION

EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTRE, MARKHAM

4961 Highway 7
Telephone: 905-947-0172 Fax: 905-947-0195

LANGUAGE AND SKILLS TRAINING SERVICES, MARKHAM

8515 McCowan Road
Telephone: 905-472-4688 Fax: 905-472-5143

LANGUAGE, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICES, RICHMOND HILL

129 Church Street South
Telephone: 905-884-5235 Fax: 905-884-4261

VAUGHAN CENTRE

7800 Jane Street, Unit 1
Telephone: 905-669-5627 Fax: 905-669-1127

Employment Assessment Centre - Unit 9

Telephone: 905-669-6967 Fax: 905-669-9421



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