



CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE



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Questions of Food Security

Questions of food security have come up repeatedly over the last year at the Centre for Studies in Social Justice. Food security and insecurity, both locally and internationally, have been discussed in a variety of fora including a guest lecture by Melody Gonzalez of Fair Food Across Borders and a panel discussion on Food Security and Homelessness. Stephanie Segave and Steve Green, whose articles are included in this issue of the Newsletter, contributed to the panel discussion on Food Security and Homelessness. Last May, the topic of food security also came up at an event entitled: Community Economic Revival in Windsor During the Recession. One of the participants was Adam Vasey whose article appears in this issue of the Newsletter.

In addition to these events, security, broadly defined, was the topic of a special issue of the journal *Studies in Social Justice* published last summer. In it, Jamey Essex has an article discussing food aid in Indonesia as an issue of both food security and geopolitical security (see the Ab-

stract of this article in the Box).

Reflecting this growing interest in the topic of food security, a number of articles in this issue of the Social Justice Newsletter deal with food and people's access to it, both locally and abroad. The articles by M. Ruggles and S. Green focus on local, community-based efforts to make people food secure by providing them with the skills and space necessary to grow their own food. The article by S. Segave focuses on issues of food distribution to marginalized populations in Brazil showing how municipal policies can benefit producers and consumers thus increasing food security. A. Vasey's article on Pathways to Potential describes how people are coming together in Windsor-Essex to engage the community in a poverty-reduction strategy with food security as a part of the strategy.

At the time, when homelessness and poverty have been on the increase, due to the economic recession and cut-backs to social programs, it is important to consider alternative strategies for providing affordable and nutritious food to all. These issues, and more, are addressed in this issue.

STUDIES IN SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Work of Hunger: Security, Development and Food-for-Work in Post-Crisis Jakarta

Jamey Essex

ABSTRACT *Food-for-work programs distribute food aid to recipients in exchange for labour, and are an important mode of aid delivery for both public and private aid providers. While debate continues as to whether food-for-work programs are socially just and economically sensible, governments, international institutions, and NGOs continue to tout them as a flexible and cost-effective way to deliver targeted aid and promote community development. This paper critiques the underlying logic of food-for-work, focusing on how this approach to food aid and food security promote labour force participation by leveraging hunger against poverty, and how the ideological and practical assumptions of food-for-work become enmeshed within discourses of geopolitical security. I rely on a case study examination of US-funded food-for-work programs implemented in Jakarta, Indonesia following the 1997 financial crisis. The crisis produced acute food insecurity and poverty in Indonesia, provoking fears of mob violence by the hungry poor and the spread of radical Islamism in the post-crisis political vacuum. Food-for-work programs were, in this context, meant to resolve the problems of both food insecurity and geopolitical insecurity by providing food to targeted populations, employment to those otherwise thrown out of work, and resituating the hungry poor in relation to broader scales of local, national, and global power.*

The full article is available at:
<http://www.studiesinsocialjustice.org>

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Food for Change: Strengthening Food Security in a Brazilian City

By Stephanie Segave



Diners at a "People's Restaurant" in Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Over the summer of 2008, I travelled to Brazil's fourth largest city, Belo Horizonte as part of a study abroad opportunity with the Ryerson University Food Security program. The city of Belo Horizonte is gaining international attention for the success of its municipal food security strategies that have allowed the city to overcome high rates of hunger and provide healthy food for its residents through a series of innovative policies and programs.

In 1993, a newly elected administration declared food a right of citizenship. The new mayor, Patrus Ananias, who now leads the federal anti-hunger effort, began by creating a city agency, which included a 20-member council of citizen, labour, business, and religious representatives who advised in the design and implementation of a new food system.

The city agency focused on the interests of farmers and consumers. It offered local family farmers preferred spots of public space on

which to sell to city residents. Farmers' profits grew, since no wholesaler was taking a cut, and at the same time, city residents, including those living in poverty, gained greater access to fresh, healthy food.



Stephanie Segave is co-chair of Food for Change, a newly formed association that is promoting food security issues within Windsor and Essex County and Regional Manager for the Ontario Student Nutrition Program.

In addition to the farmer-run stands, the city gave business people the opportunity to bid on the right to use prime retail locations within the city to set up what they called "ABC" markets. In exchange for rent-free use of the city land, the city

determines a set price (about two-thirds of the market price) for about twenty healthy items and the storeowner must adhere to these low rates for the key products. All other items can be sold at whatever prices the retailer sets. Retailers with the best spots are also required to deliver produce in a "travelling market" to the poor neighbourhoods outside of the city centre, so that everyone may access the produce.

Belo Horizonte's municipal food security programs include extensive community and school gardens as well as nutrition classes for parents. In addition, the federally funded school lunch program in Belo Horizonte was transformed and no longer serves expensive processed food. Instead, schools support the local food system by serving whole food that is generally sourced from local growers. One teacher at the school I visited told me that since the transition her students never miss a day of school because they do not want to miss out on the good food.

Another cornerstone program is the "People's Restaurant" (Restaurante Popular). More than 12,000 people show up for lunch and dinner each day to receive a meal of mostly locally grown food that costs them only one Brazilian *real* (which equals approximately \$.50 CDN). Although the restaurant caters to lower income residents, everyone is welcome to participate and on the day that I attended I met people from all walks of life, from homeless people to students and businessmen. The restaurant I ate at was bright, clean and very cheery and it was obvious that people were not ashamed to eat in such a nice place, especially

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Focus on Research: Dr. Anna Lanoszka

Professor Lanoszka is a well-recognized researcher in international relations and global political economy. She has made important contributions to our understanding of international economic relations and particularly of: trade, policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank, changing North-South relations, approaches to economic development, and the new geopolitics of energy. For over two years she worked in the Accessions Division of the WTO. As a consultant for the World Bank she completed a report titled: Handbook: Negotiations on Liberalization of Trade in Services Logistics and Health. She has participated in a numerous technical assistance programs in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, the Caribbean islands, and Africa. She has published book chapters and articles in journals such as *International Political Science Review*, *International Journal of Political Economy*, and *Journal of World Trade*. Her recent book is titled: *The World Trade Organization: Changing Dynamics in the Global Political Economy*.

Currently Dr. Lanoszka is working on her second book. "International Trade and Energy Security—Towards Functional Cooperation in the WTO" This research

project begins with the recognition that countries must begin to work in concert to address the problems associated with the instability of the global energy markets and the growing environmental costs of non-cooperation. The book addresses the following issues.

Oil, one of the most sought after commodities, remains unregulated on the international level. Over the years, countries had employed different strategies meant to ensure energy security. Most of these strategies resulted in bilateral arrangements. Even the most substantial international treaty on energy, Chapter 6 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) remains a two-country deal despite being part of a regional trade agreement. Such bilateral arrangements, however, have done little to stabilize global energy markets.

The most familiar organization that has influenced the world's prices of oil, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a cartel that infused the world's economy with uncertainty and politics that, over time, has been increasingly harmful even to its own Members, notwithstanding the financial benefits they have enjoyed. The first multilateral arrangement to manage international trade, the 1947 GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), contained provisions intended to prevent international cartels, yet these provisions were never used given the provisional status of the GATT. As the global economy expanded, the growing dependence on oil provided a rationale for countries to engage in negotiating investment and trade deals outside the GATT's scope of influence, while keeping the international trade and exploration of oil detached from the purview of multilateral organizations.

Bilateral and regional initiatives signed over the years to ensure sustained delivery of oil often resulted in unfair trade practices, environmental degradation, and price speculation without necessarily benefiting consumers even in the oil producing countries. As demand for oil continues to rise together with its price, this situation becomes unsustainable both environmentally and geo-politically.

According to Anna Lanoszka, "it is important to create a formalized relationship between the energy sector and the international trade system in an effort to ensure that international trade and investment in energy-related goods and services becomes rules-based and hence more secure and sustainable under the principles of international law." Her goal is to provide policy recommendations intended to facilitate international cooperation with respect to exploration, distribution, and sale of oil and gas in a way that prevents environmental degradation, social insecurity, armed conflict, and market speculation.





Spotlight on Teaching & Creative Activity: Professor Gail Murray

By Tina Pugliese

Professor Gail (Campbell) Murray is an Associate Professor in the School of Dramatic Art at the University of Windsor. She has been teaching in the Drama in Education and Community Program since 2003. Her research is in the area of Applied Theatre with particular focus on Theatre for Social Action. She has an extensive background in Playback Theatre and Forum Theatre.

Professor Murray is recognized in the School of Dramatic Art for her brilliant work with students both in and out of the classroom. She introduced a new drama course, *Theatre for Social Action*, shortly after arriving at the University of Windsor which has become a fundamental class in providing students with the knowledge and skills to work with social issues through theatre and drama while fostering social awareness and responsibility. Her teaching is inspired by her research. She has published articles and book chapters, in collaboration with other scholars, on such topics as popular theatre with young offenders and participatory research with marginalized populations.

Professor Murray regularly inspires and facilitates a variety of student and community driven social action projects. Some projects since her time at the University of Windsor

include: *All I need is a Miracle* (a student devised theatre piece based on the stories of individuals from the local Windsor Downtown Mission that was recorded and used as an instructional tool with local secondary schools studying the issues surrounding homelessness); *Welcome to Canada* (a community initiated project with new Canadians involved workshops and the creation of a play); *Gimme the Keys* (a forum theatre created on the topic of drinking, drugs, and driving that was a collaboration with David Diamond from Headlines Theatre, Vancouver); and *The Windsor Report* (a collective creation on the topic of sexual identity and bias produced in collaboration with Norma Bowles, Fringe Benefits, LA).

Her work also reaches out to local elementary and secondary schools. As a Theatre Director, she brings social justice issues to the main stage for young audiences with such plays as: *Danny, King of the Basement* by David S. Craig (a 2009 story about a young boy dealing with homelessness); *See Saw* by Dennis Foon (a 2007 play about bullying performed through the use of life size puppets); *Wiley and the Hairy Man* by Suzan Zeder (a 2006 play that explores young people facing their fears); and *New Canadian Kid* by Dennis Foon (a 2005 play that follows a young boy's challenge of fitting in, learning a new language, and making friends).

In addition, Professor Murray established a Playback Theatre group called *Random Acts* where students engage audiences in playing back personal stories. The company also performs annual shows on human rights. Finally, Professor Murray is a puppeteer. One of her current research interests is Wayang Kulit (Balinese Shadow Puppetry). Traditionally, stories are chosen for presentation based on current local

events in a village; the story is used to help illustrate issues and/or solutions. She is currently working on adapting this form for Western audiences.

Dr. Tina Pugliese is an Assistant Professor and colleague of Dr. Murray, at the School of Dramatic Art, University of Windsor.

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since they had paid for their meal (albeit for a nominal price).

In just a decade Belo Horizonte managed to cut its infant mortality rate (a statistic widely used as evidence of hunger) by more than half, and today these initiatives benefit almost 40% of the city's population of 2.5 million. The city is able to deliver these extensive programs for an annual price of \$10 million or less than 2% of the city budget. That's about a penny a day per Belo Horizonte resident. The Belo Horizonte experience shows that even in the poorest of cities, hunger can be dramatically reduced if municipal governments and community partners come together to invest in local food systems and strategic programming.



Harvest direct from the field

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my former Ryerson University professor, Dr. Cecilia Rocha, for providing me the documents on food programs in Belo Horizonte.

Windsor Essex Community Supported Agriculture

By Steve Green

Some years ago I became concerned about the corporatization of agriculture and food distribution. I began to wonder if agro-industrial corporations could be trusted to provide safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable food. I also became concerned with the distance that so much food in my local grocery store had travelled and the effects of the globalization of food production on local farmers. Concerned about the disconnect between the city and farms, I felt that our community needed to take action and come together to work towards a more sustainable, safe, and secure food system and that this could not be left to government alone.

Here in Windsor a hodgepodge of rural and urban dwellers decided to take matters into their own hands to begin the process of building local food security. We formed Windsor Essex Community Supported Agriculture (WECSA), a response to many of the above concerns. Some of us are well-versed in agriculture. Some of us have never seriously planted before, but all of us have a common goal. We want to be more connected to our food system. We want more security in our food system. We want to know where our food comes from and how it grows. We want our children to know what food tastes like fresh from the ground, not transported 3000 miles to our grocery store after it has been sprayed, packaged, and harvested before its prime. We worry about the effects of children ingesting chemicals and fertilizers used to grow many crops today. We believe our children need fresh, organically-grown produce for their health.

As the members of WECSA plant and harvest together, we are not just putting food on our tables.

We're teaching the next generation how to practice sustainability: how easy it is to grow one's own food even on one square foot of land! Anyone can be a part of this revolution even with just a patio or a deck or a windowsill in an apartment.

On our farm, just outside the city of Windsor, we have been fortunate to have many excellent participants in this muddy adventure. We just finished our first full test year at our new site. We share the hardships and the bounty. We share knowledge and old practices passed on from generation to generation, from culture to culture. Together we all pull together to create our farm. We beg, borrow, and trade for new plants, seeds and supplies and we put out money from our own pockets because we believe in something that is larger than just a small vegetable farm. And while we sow, weed, and harvest, we have built a new community. At one time none of us knew each other. Now, we know we are not alone in our concerns. Our children know that there is more to life than travelling to the grocery store, which has become a cornucopia of international foods. Almost all of what we really need can be grown locally.

I believe economic revival in the Windsor-Essex area will only begin when we start to question our own consumerism. By questioning what we consume, where it came from, and how it was produced, we can create our own agricultural economic revival in our area. I believe that it is our responsibility as residents and citizens of this community to be agents of change, ensuring that the policies and processes of our community, our governments, and our agencies should all pursue the achievement of food security for



Samples of WECSA produce

all persons. We need more cooperation, more commitment, more understanding, more humility, and a desire to transform our community into a place where it is not acceptable for our citizens to go hungry. Everyone needs access to good, safe, and healthy food.

Steve Green is a caseworker and program facilitator at St. Leonard's House Windsor, a Federal Halfway House for offenders. He's an active member of the Homeless Coalition of Windsor, founder of Windsor Essex Community Supported Agriculture, a volunteer Pastor at New Song Church, and a Coach with South Windsor Youth Soccer Club, among other interests and hobbies. His family includes his wife Suzanne and two daughters Jasmin, 13 and Jade, 11. He can be reached by e-mail at steve-green@ymail.com or through his blog at <http://windsorca.blogspot.com>.

FedUp: a brief personal history of food activism

By Maya Ruggles



Participants on a bicycle tour of FedUp community gardens

In a few months I'll be moving back to my home province of British Columbia. I'm particularly excited about this new direction in my life because I'll have the opportunity to "farm" some land and apply a lot of what I've learned in the last few years. My intensive foray into the world of food production and food activism began in the Spring of 2007, when I and a few others decided to start a food activist project, FedUp Windsor. While FedUp is by no means an individual project, I tell this story from a personal perspective hoping, in doing so, to illuminate one of the threads that run through the fabric that is FedUp.

Let me start with the name. In the late 1960s my parents left Ontario, joining several other people in B.C. to create a different kind of life, one that strove to challenge the norms by which their own parents lived (often in suburban settings). Many of the projects that my parents' new

community built (some of which still exist today) were structured around principles of cooperation and equity. Many of these projects were, indeed, called co-ops, collectives, or unions, including Isadora's Cooperative Restaurant, the Women's Health Collective, the CCEC Credit Union (founded by the Community Congress for Economic Change Society), and various housing co-ops. (Of course, these sorts of projects were not distinct to B.C.) One such project in Vancouver was FedUp, a consumer co-op. Both my parents tell me stories about the massive amount of work and detailed planning that had to go into receiving, separating, and distributing piles of organic produce, barrels of molasses, and mountains of rice and lentils. At one point, FedUp bought a second-hand cube truck, which my mom would use to make deliveries for the co-op, with me sleeping in my car seat as she drove around.

This "hippy" movement of which my parents were part was an experiment in living sensitively to both social and environmental justice. Many of the cultural elements that are associated with that time and place have been co-opted and transformed into a present that is so wholly unlike that time that recalling it is generally taken as purely nostalgic. While I certainly have feelings of nostalgia for my childhood and the world of solidarity and vital activity where I spent my formative years, I am not calling for a return to that time. I do recognize, however, that there are many aspects of that world that are trying desperately to find air, space, and attention here and now.

The new incarnation of FedUp, FedUp Windsor, is one such attempt. The concern for food, which easily extends into concerns for social and environmental justice, is central to the work that FedUp Windsor has been doing since Spring 2007. My own experience has led to a much deeper understanding of the interdependence between agriculture and human culture; as our food provisioning system has become more global, industrial, and trade-centred, the communities that work to support healthy, sustainable, food-rich and diverse agricultural systems have come under attack.

Annette Aurélie Desmarais outlines the distinction between a "dominant" agricultural paradigm and an "alternative" paradigm: where the former is based on centralization, dependence (on scientific and technology experts, high cost inputs and distant markets), competition, domination of nature, specialization, and exploitation, the latter is based on decentralization, independence, community, harmony with nature, diversity, and restraint (2007, 69-

70). FedUP represents such an “alternative” paradigm.

FedUp Windsor has been a learning experience for many people, and I believe (supported by comments from several individuals) that our presence has helped enliven the general discussion in Windsor of food security and the rise of food activism here. It has recently become clearer to me that one of our greatest difficulties has been in matching our visions and desires (which only grew broader as we learned about all the issues involved with food) with our resources (mostly made up of people’s time, effort, and skills). There is so much that can be done, so much we want to do, and so little time! The challenges that we all face are many: soil contamination, dispersed communities, irresponsible use of land, the misguided priorities of most City Councillors (for example, supporting road building over efforts to build local food security¹), to name a few. But if we truly want to live in a world that takes care of its environment and its people, where the important and imperative work of growing food for all to eat is supported and respected, we must take on those challenges, one step at a time. And, trust me: being involved in food activism is fun and inspiring... and tasty!

Here is what I recommend to those interested in local food security:

- Grow some food and learn from the experience. Some of the issues and concerns that farmers have to contend with are presented at a smaller scale for amateur gardeners, and can be understood at a deeper level when actually doing the work of growing food.
- Start a community garden with your neighbours, or start with a

community compost that can be donated to someone who already gardens (who can then share some of their produce with you).

- Have a potluck, meet some new people, and find out how others relate to food.
- Plant a wildflower garden for pollinators, or put up a house for birds.
- Become more familiar with existing food sources in your neighbourhood (wild and/or unharvested). Contact the Windsor Guerrilla Gardeners for advice on how to prepare some of our more common wild edible plants.
- Do a “community food mapping” exercise, on your own or, better yet, with your neighbours. If you have kids, suggest doing such an exercise with them and their friends or classmates.
- Start a Community Supported/ Shared Agriculture project (contact the Canadian Organic Growers local chapter to get in touch with local organic farmers <http://www.cog.ca/chapters/esssex-kent-lambton/>).
- Contact your local governmental representatives and tell them that local food security is important. Petition to amend by-laws to allow backyard chicken coops.
- Tell the supermarket where you shop to stock local, organic options (though be advised that large supermarkets are tied to a mandatory distribution system that ships local produce to an inspection depot in the GTA, then back to us).
- Take a trip to Detroit to visit (and volunteer at) Earthworks, another community garden <http://www.detroitagriculture.org/>).
- Send information about all local food-related initiatives to

fedupwindsor@gmail.com, to be distributed to our updates via listserv.

Some important concepts in food activism

A **consumer co-op** is a group of people who jointly source food in bulk, which is delivered to a central location, separated according to individual orders and redistributed or picked up.

Food Security means long term access for all to nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food. **Food Sovereignty** means utilizing (and supporting) the diversity of local/regional skills to produce a sustain-able and available food supply (for that region). Food is valued for its nutritional value, not its trade value, and trade in food is done through direct, small-scale relationships where producers/farmers are valued and receive the benefits of trade. **Food Democracy** means that decisions regarding food production, distribution and preparation are made by the community within which food is produced and consumed (and the production/ consumption cycle is much shorter than it is with global, industrial trade-based food), and those decisions benefit that community.

¹The benefits of keeping “backyard chickens” are numerous. It provides healthy, pesticide-free eggs and reduces weekly food bills. Additionally, chickens consume kitchen wastes and chicken manure is great garden compost. Raising backyard chickens is also a hands-on way to teach kids about food sources. They make great pets, and serve as a lesson in local action leading to global environmental sustainability; less food transportation means less greenhouse gases.

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FedUp Online: www.fedupwindsor.blogspot.com. See Food Justice links at this site.

Maya Ruggles is a PhD student in Sociology at the University of Windsor and is a past member of the Centre for Studies in Social Justice Co-ordinating committee.

Pathway to potential: Tackling poverty in Windsor and Essex County

By Adam Vasey

With more than 38,000 people living in poverty in Windsor and Essex County, there is a clear need for a poverty reduction strategy in our community. Pathway to Potential ("Pathway") is a poverty reduction strategy for Windsor and Essex County that aims to address local poverty-related issues in a collaborative and comprehensive way. The idea for a local poverty reduction strategy was developed in 2008, thanks to the dedicated efforts of community leaders from the City of Windsor Social and Health Services Department, Legal Assistance of Windsor, the United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County, and the School of Social Work at the University of Windsor.

The collaborative nature of the strategy stems from the fundamental belief that poverty is a shared responsibility. Since the entire community stands to benefit from poverty reduction, it only makes sense to engage the entire community in this strategy.

Pathway, which has been endorsed by the City of Windsor and the County of Essex, is aligned with the Ontario Government's Poverty Reduction Strategy, which initially aims to reduce child poverty rates by 25% by the year 2013.

The Pathway Roundtable was formed in January of 2009, bringing together a broad cross-section of the Windsor-Essex community. The Roundtable reflects the fact that people experiencing poverty, business leaders, all three levels of government, and public sector and not-for-profit organizations all bring valuable expertise and perspectives to the table. The work of the Roundtable is supported by action-oriented Subcommittees, each of them focusing on one of five key areas of pov-

erty reduction: affordable housing, childcare and early learning, education and skills training, health and income support. This structure helps ensure that the strategy addresses the interlocking aspects of poverty in a comprehensive way. The Roundtable and the Subcommittees are currently consulting with and assessing the needs of the community, researching the most effective ways to reduce poverty, advocating for policy changes, leveraging resources toward poverty reduction, and developing and recommending solutions that will ultimately reduce poverty in Windsor and Essex County.

Given that a crucial part of Pathway's mandate is to broadly engage the community, I was pleased to participate in the Centre for Studies in Social Justice's panel discussion on "Community Economic Revival in Windsor during the Recession" held on May 14, 2009 at All Saints' Anglican Church. A common theme that arose from the discussion was the need for a local response to the challenging times facing Windsor and Essex County. While the impact of the recession on Windsor-Essex residents has been particularly harsh, it has also forced us, as a community, to consider the ways in which we might need to work together differently in the future.

As a starting point, we need to challenge the widely held assumption that poverty reduction and economic growth are mutually exclusive. As countless studies and reports have recently highlighted, investing in poverty reduction can produce widespread social and economic benefits for communities. There is hope that mainstream perceptions of poverty are beginning to shift. In a recent Environics poll

commissioned by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canadians were found to overwhelmingly support their political leaders taking concrete action to reduce poverty. With public support growing, many communities across Canada have begun to develop local poverty reduction efforts, focusing on such issues as food security, affordable public transportation, and a living wage. Regardless of which aspect of poverty a community chooses to focus on, the decision to work collaboratively helps lay the foundation for success. And the Windsor-Essex community, with its long history of generosity, resilience and collective action, certainly has what it takes to make poverty reduction a success.



Adam Vasey is a Coordinator of Pathway to Potential, Windsor Essex County's Poverty Reduction Strategy. He can be reached at 519-966-8203 ext. 224, by email at avasey@cogeco.net, or join our Facebook group at www.facebook.com/pathway.rep.

Social Justice Practicum at the Windsor Refugee Office

By Fadia Ibrahim

Being enrolled in the University of Windsor's Social Justice Program has broadened my insight into the issues that affect the world's most vulnerable populations. It provides students with the tools to critically examine issues, making sense of causes and consequences, thus allowing for the conceptualization of real social change. One of the courses offered in the program is the Social Justice Practicum. The practicum presents students with the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in a practical setting. It was through this course that I was able to fulfill my placement at the Windsor Refugee Office.

The Windsor Refugee Office is an organization based on the values of social justice and is committed to advocacy and providing vital services needed by refugees. They are one of a kind in the city of Windsor, helping vast numbers of individuals and families each year. Their services offer hope and assistance to those who would otherwise be left feeling isolated and desperate. The Office is funded by the Diocese of London. There are two sections, one which assists sponsored refugees, and the other, which assists refugee claimants. For both of these groups, emotional, financial/material, and legal support is provided. The office's success is based on their ability to provide an environment that is welcoming, safe, and respectful. The staff is empathetic, attentive and hardworking, often meeting with individuals for hours at a time. The Windsor Refugee Office's capacity to touch the lives of many individuals is not hindered by their lack of funding and resources. In my opinion, their work is unprecedented in this region.

My placement at the Windsor

Refugee Office met all my expectations as a student looking for an opportunity to expand my knowledge and gain insight into the issues and processes surrounding refugees. Since I had an interest in refugee and immigrant populations, I felt that this organization would be the perfect fit. During the duration of my placement I was able to complete a variety of diverse and interactive tasks. A great deal of work at the office involved gathering research and I specifically assisted with two sensitive client cases. In the first case, I wrote a letter of appeal to Amnesty International regarding its denial to assess the case and advocate for the individual concerned. In addition, I corresponded with the clients' legal representatives both locally and overseas.

Secondly, at the onset of my placement I expressed my interest in the issue of trafficked individuals. Sister Helen, the office's Refugee Co-coordinator, invited me to join The Windsor Essex Anti-Human Trafficking Action Coalition and attend its monthly meetings. She also invited me to attend a workshop held for various service providers and community members, entitled "New Home, New Hope, New Normal." The workshop addressed issues and barriers faced by refugees and immigrants, and included topics like adaptation/settlement, human trafficking, the impact of torture, multiple-traumatization, and the role of agencies and their services.

I also prepared and hosted a workshop on the topic of human trafficking at the University of Windsor. I worked with Bachelor of Social Work student Lacey Prail and together we presented this information in the CAW commons area on March 27, 2009. We described dif-

ferent scenarios of trafficking and offered current information regarding the statistics, legislation and policies regarding victims and traffickers.



Furthermore, this past summer I produced an educational display addressing the controversial issue of bottled as compared to tap water. This display was featured at the refugee office to inform refugees about the misconceptions regarding bottled and tap water and the consequences of the widespread use of bottled water. Sister Helen also brought a picture of the display to a Social Justice conference in Montreal this summer.

Overall, my experience at the Windsor Refugee Office was eye-opening and invaluable, not only as an academic/professional experience, but as a personal experience as well. Although my placement has concluded, I continue to volunteer at the office and I hope to maintain close ties for years to come.

The Diocese of London Windsor Refugee Office received the Social Justice Person of the Year Award – for a full story please see Vol. 1 Issue 1 of this newsletter.

Fadia Ibrahim graduated from the University of Windsor in Spring 2009. She received a Combined Honours degree in Social Justice.

Building Welcoming Communities **Canadian Council for Refugees Fall Consultation in Windsor**

By Colleen French

Building Welcoming Communities **Canadian Council for Refugees** **Fall Consultation in Windsor**

Over the past months and years, Canada's vision of refugee protection and immigration and how they contribute to building stronger communities has been the subject of much debate. The realities that refugees and immigrants face have received less attention, however. Here are a few examples:

- *Challenges to Canada's refugee claim process:* Canada's refugee determination system has been the subject of recent public commentary, much of it focusing on "abuse" and alleged problems in the system. Refugee determination is complex and challenging. It is not easy to decide who needs protection and who does not—whether a person is in a refugee camp overseas or living down the street from us. How can we ensure that those who need Canada's protection receive it? How can we ensure that refugees are not sent back to face persecution?
- *Temporary migrant workers:* Canada is bringing in more and more workers on temporary work permits, rather than as permanent residents. This shift in temporary migration is a dramatic change in policy, yet there has been little public debate. What does temporary status mean for workers? What does it mean for Canadian society? Why should we be concerned?
- *Protection for trafficked persons:* Trafficking happens in Canada

and Canadian law sets out to punish traffickers. But Canadian law does NOT protect trafficked persons. Currently, women, children, and men who are trafficked into or within Canada often fall between the cracks in the system. Detained and deported, they may be treated more as criminals than as victims of a crime. How can we improve protection and services for trafficked persons in Canada?

These questions and many others were the focus of the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) Fall Consultation on the theme *Building Welcoming Communities* in Windsor from 3-5 December, 2009. Twice a year the CCR organizes national conferences, or consultations, in different cities on different themes. This fall, it was held in Windsor for the first time. With Windsor's status as a key Canadian gateway, *Building Welcoming Communities* was a unique opportunity to explore together how to improve protection and services for newcomers and to build communities across Canada that are welcoming to refugees and immigrants. Windsor-based organizations and individuals played key roles in organizing and leading discussions. More than 300 participants gathered at the conference to share information, network, develop strategies, and discuss emerging issues. The Consultation resulted in new approaches on these key issues and plans for future actions.

For more information on future consultations see:
<http://www.ccrweb.ca/eng/about/meetings.htm>

About the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR):

Founded in 1978, the Canadian Council for Refugees is a non-profit network of more than 180 organizations across Canada involved in the settlement, sponsorship, and protection of refugees and immigrants. The CCR is committed to the rights and protection of refugees in Canada and around the world and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada.



For more information about the Canadian Council for Refugees and the CCR's work, check out the website at: <http://www.ccrweb.ca>

Colleen French is a Communication and Networking Coordinator, Canadian Council for Refugees.

Centre for Studies in Social Justice Upcoming Events

Monday, February 1, 7:00pm

Burning Issues in Social Justice Discussion Sries: "Canadian Immigration Policy and the Increasing Insecurity of Migrants"

Windsor Workers' Action Centre, 328 Pelissier, Windsor, ON



A Panel Discussion with

Tanya Basok, Director, Centre for Studies in Social Justice
"Temporary Migrants in Canada: Unprotected and Insecure Workers"

Emily Carasco, Professor, Faculty of Law
"Temporary Workers: Systemic Gender Discrimination in Canada's Immigration System"

Shelley Gilbert, Co-ordinator of Social Work Services,
Legal Assistance of Windsor, and, Co-chair,
Windsor-Essex Anti-Human Trafficking Action Group
"Temporary Foreign Workers and the Potential for Human Trafficking"

As the Canadian government opens up temporary migrant worker programs to more sectors and employers across the country, independent contractors are getting in on the business of bringing workers to Canada both through legal and illegal channels. Labour, legal and community activists, as well as academics, have become progressively more concerned with the increasing number of temporary migrants recruited to work in Canada as well as the working conditions they face here.

The Centre for Studies in Social Justice invites nominations for its "SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARD."

The Centre for Studies in Social Justice invites nominations for its "SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARD." This year the Centre wishes to honour a student group. Eligible nominees include student groups whose project(s) have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to the rights of the marginalized or oppressed, the health of people and the environment, or the well-being of animals.

Nominations should include:

- a letter from the nominator explaining why the designated group deserves the award
- two supporting letters from individuals familiar with the nominated group's contributions or a brief overview of the project from the participants
- any appropriate supporting documentation (articles that describe the project, testimonials, etc.)

Deadline for Nominations: Feb 22, 2010

* Send nominations and all supporting documents to the Centre for Studies in Social Justice, 251-1 Chrysler Hall South, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4.

Please direct any questions to Dr. Tanya Basok, Director, Centre for Studies in Social Justice, at 519 253-3000 Ext. 3498 or E-mail: basok@uwindsor.ca.

The award will be presented at a reception to be hosted by the University of Windsor Centre for Studies in Social Justice in early April.

Monday, March 1, 4:00pm

Dr. Wayne Lewchuk, Working Without Commitments: The Health Effect of Precarious Employment.

Windsor Workers' Action Centre, 328 Pelissier, Windsor, ON

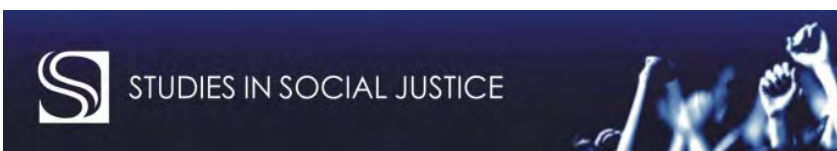


Dr. Wayne Lewchuk,
School of Labour Studies and Department of Economics
McMaster University

Across Europe and North America, employers searching for greater labour market flexibility are increasing the use of temporary employment contracts and the hiring of employees through temporary employment agencies. The already limited commitments between employers and employees are eroding as terms of employment become shorter and employers provide fewer employee protections and benefits. From this perspective, employment has become more precarious and commitments between employers and employees more tenuous. Are there health implications of this shift from the perspective of workers, their households and our communities? This talk will present evidence that this is the case, and that the cost of increased labour market flexibility is being born by those dependent on working for a living. It has resulted in a new type of occupational risk that we call "Employment Relationship Strain."

CALL FOR PAPERS

www.studiesinsocialjustice.org



Studies in Social Justice publishes articles on issues dealing with the social, cultural, economic, political, and philosophical problems associated with the struggle for social justice. This interdisciplinary journal aims to publish work that links theory to social change and the analysis of substantive issues. The journal welcomes heterodox contributions that are critical of established paradigms of inquiry.

The journal focuses on debates that move beyond conventional notions of social justice, and views social justice as a critical concept that is integral in the analysis of policy formation, rights, participation, social movements, and transformations. Social justice is analysed in the context of processes involving nationalism, social and public policy, globalization, diasporas, culture, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, welfare, poverty, war, and other social phenomena. It endeavours to cover questions and debates ranging from governance to democracy, sustainable environments, and human rights, and to introduce new work on pressing issues of social justice throughout the world.

Involved in Social Justice Research?

Contact the Center for Studies in Social Justice if you want to form a research interest group in your field of research.

FREE MEMBERSHIP!

If you are interested in joining the Centre for Studies in Social Justice you can join on-line by visiting our website, www.uwindsor.ca/socialjustice, and following the links to Membership. Membership gets you invitations to our events and you will receive our email announcements and newsletter.

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