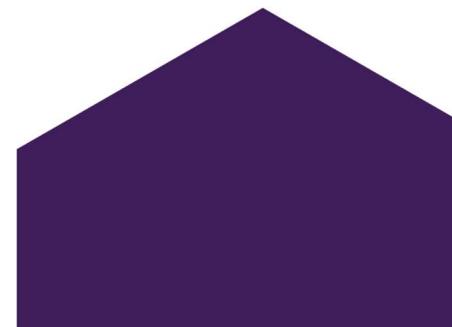




# CWICE Annual Impact Report

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2020-2021



Report Author: Danielle Ungara  
Child Welfare Immigration Centre of Excellence  
Spring 2021



# CWICE Annual Impact Report 2020-2021

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## CWICE Overview



CWICE is a provincial service and training centre, recognized nationally for its leadership & innovation.

CWICE's foundational values are the safety, wellbeing and permanency for individuals and families within child welfare.

CWICE promotes early and pro-active child welfare practices, grounded in anti-racism and anti-oppression, to remove barriers in unresolved immigration, settlement and border-related issues. CWICE raises awareness of opportunities and creates permanency pathways for children, youth, and families.



## The Year at a Glance

There was a lot to learn in this third year of service amidst a global health pandemic, which directly affected international borders. It is more important than ever to analyze trends and identify the needs of children/youth and families within the child welfare sector. At the same time, this past year reinforced the need for increased attention to issues of systemic racism, and to ensure appropriate systemic responses, including increased understanding of intersecting identities and vulnerabilities. This is particularly important when considering the issues facing refugee and immigrant children and families in Canada.

Today, one in five people in Canada were born in another country (Statistics Canada, 2018). This statistic has implications for service delivery in the child welfare sector. This year, CWICE continued to provide service to any child, youth, young adult or family receiving child welfare services in Ontario with an intersecting need. We expanded efforts to build capacity and awareness of the intersection of child welfare with issues related to unresolved immigration status, settlement needs or border-related concerns. CWICE introduced a new 8-part certificate training series for child welfare workers. Incorporating this knowledge creation into practice will support our sector's continued evolution in service approaches. Of significance, there has been interest across Canada for these training sessions, and feedback confirms its overall benefit to child welfare practice.

We continue to focus on building collaborative service approaches, to streamline referrals and processes, including citizenship applications. In addition, there are a number of significant achievements to highlight this year. Minister Jill Dunlop, of Ontario's Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, touted CWICE as an example of modernization in child welfare. Lastly, CWICE signed a service contract with Global Affairs Canada to provide them critical value-added services.

This report highlights the sector-wide impact that our services, and growing capacity building program, have had between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

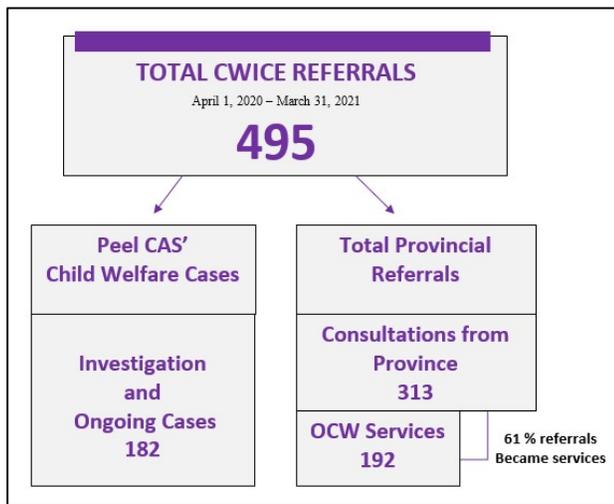


## Consultations & Services Impact

Since June 2018, CWICE has provided a province-wide centralized consultation centre, responding to the needs of children, youth, and families across Ontario. Our work is built upon specialized knowledge and new knowledge creation, surrounding the intersectionality of child welfare with unresolved immigration, settlement or border-related issues.

We received **495** new referrals and provided service to **911** individuals (chart 1, 2020/21). In its first three years, CWICE has responded to **1413** referrals (chart 2).

**Total CWICE Referrals, 2020/21 (Chart 1)**



**3-Year Total Referrals, 2018-2021 (Chart 2)**



### Child Protection Cases – Peel Region

Peel Region is one of the largest and most diverse regions in Canada, with more than 50% of its residents born outside Canada (Region of Peel, 2017). During the pandemic, Peel Region has been one of and “possibly the hardest hit region in Canada” (Insauga, 2020). As Peel Region, and other parts of the Greater Toronto Area, faced the lengthiest public health physical distancing measures in Canada, families experienced disruption to daily routines and increased stressors over the months.

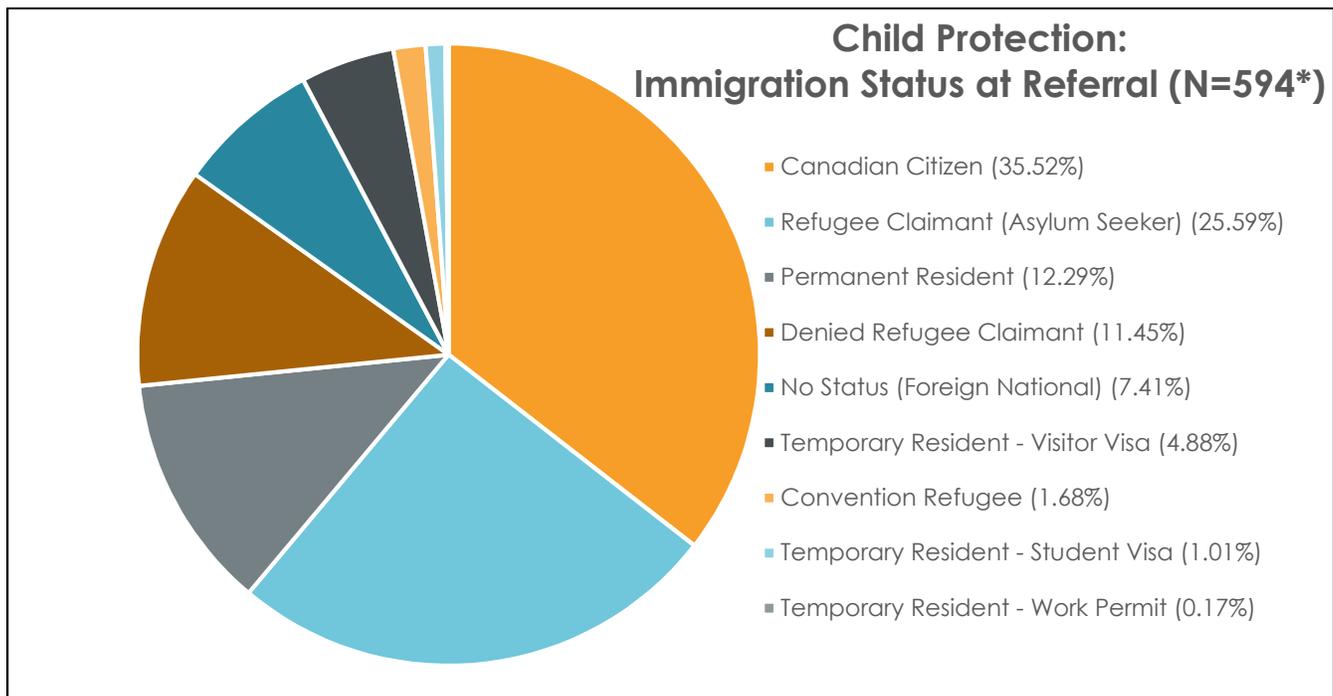
This past year, our incredible team of child protection workers, led by Liz Okai, pivoted quickly to provide virtual services, and then resumed in-home services for nearly 600 individuals. This dedicated team also worked with Peel Children's Aid Foundation, volunteering their time, to deliver meals and meal kit packages to many families.



From April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, 182 referrals were received based on a spectrum of needs. The top three reasons for child welfare referrals accounted for nearly 70% of all referrals and were for concerns about adult conflict (32%), caregiving skills (21%), and neglect of basic needs (16%) [As coded in the Ontario Child Welfare Eligibility Spectrum]. The top five referral sources were Justice/Police professionals (28%), Public Health/Medical/Mental Health Service Providers (22%), Parents/Self-Referrals (14%), Educational Personnel (10%) and Community Organizations (8%). Overall, there were fewer referrals from Pearson International Airport than the previous year.

Families receiving assessment and ongoing service from our CWICE team also faced intersecting needs in addition to the child welfare concerns. The top three CWICE-service needs for families were outstanding settlement needs (36%), unresolved immigration status issues (27%), and families requiring referrals to access services (21%). CWICE continues to provide services to individuals with a range of immigration status in Canada, and 64% of child welfare clients had non-Canadian citizen status (chart 3).

**Child Protection: Immigration Status in Canada (Chart 3)**



\*N=594 – total number of individuals receiving service



Aligning service responses to changing service needs during COVID-19

Liz Okai, CWICE Team Leader

CWICE Child Protection Workers: Abimbola Fajobi, Abimbola Oyeyinka, Bahja Nassir, Gillian Tennyson, Mandisa Sifelani, Mohamed Shaw, Yvonne Dewornu-Keys

Compiled by: Natalia Valencia, CWICE Data & Research Coordinator

Our child welfare workers found families' needs changed as a direct result of the pandemic, and have shared their practice observations and reflections.

Many individuals lost employment or had reduced hours this past year, and it was more difficult for these individuals to conduct job searches during the pandemic. Many families experienced inadequate space in their homes to accommodate and support online schooling, as well as challenges ensuring each child had space and necessary devices to attend school online. Some parents faced additional stressors such as internet quality/accessibility, food security, and access to Personal Protective Equipment. Many families expressed worries about the impact of COVID-19, including delays to their immigration applications - pending work permits, and refugee hearings. There was acknowledgement that rates of mental health concerns had increased, with parents and children having general anxieties about the virus, and one child welfare worker found their clients were *"terrified of catching COVID-19 as they have no OHIP, have low income employment where there is large spread of COVID-19"*.

CWICE child welfare staff described increased need for services and referrals related to food security and shortages of affordable housing leading to needs for rent supports. There was recognition flexible service approaches were required because online programs/meetings did not meet all families' needs. As well, some families found community service closures and delays quite impactful.

This past year, child welfare staff spent increased time:

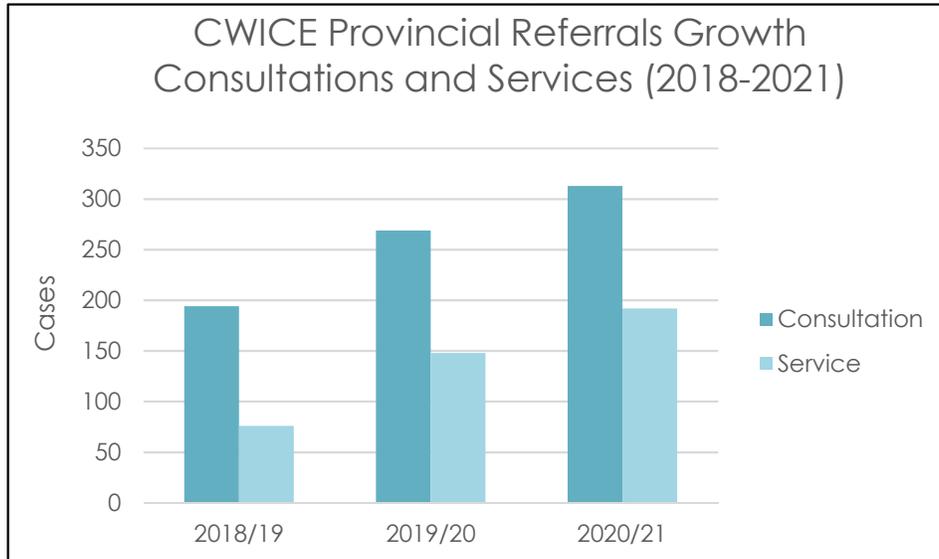
- Educating families on how to navigate the new virtual realities – how to obtain information, participate in meetings/schooling/work, and how to maintain networks/social supports;
- Problem solving and supporting families to access food security assistance; volunteering to deliver donations to families;
- Advocating with families facing evictions, canvassing rent assistance programs, and referring to any available affordable housing/programs;
- Liaising with border officials about trends/issues, staying connected with Public Health regarding quarantine requirements, and coordinating services with quarantine facilities;
- Completing visits and check-ins with families, and connecting more frequently with other supports/professionals.



Province-wide Consultation Centre

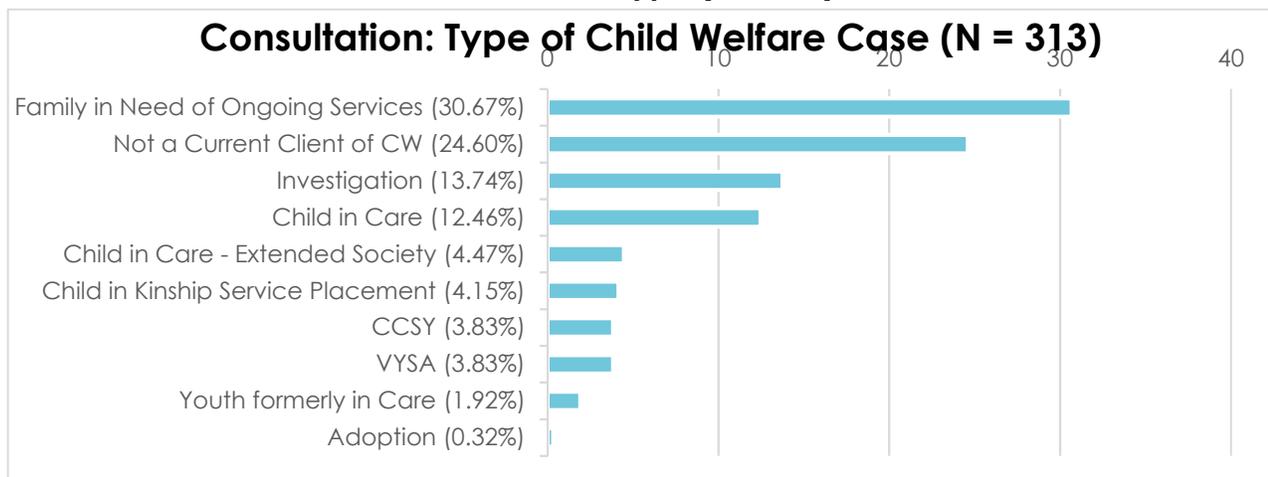
Our knowledgeable Immigration Specialists provided consultation and brief services, supporting child welfare workers across Ontario. There was volume growth in the total requests for consultations across Ontario (chart 4), and 313 requests were received. There was also notable growth in the complex nature of requests. This year, 61% of referrals required follow up through 192 brief services (chart 1), up from 55% last year.

**CWICE Provincial Referrals Growth 2018-2021 (Chart 4)**



Families receiving ongoing service in Ontario were the largest population served by CWICE Immigration Specialists (chart 5) and these trends have remained consistent over the last two years. This is consistent with service delivery in Ontario being predominantly community-based. Referrals were received for individuals not currently receiving child welfare services across Ontario, and approximately one third of the families were referred by CWICE for child welfare services in their local region.

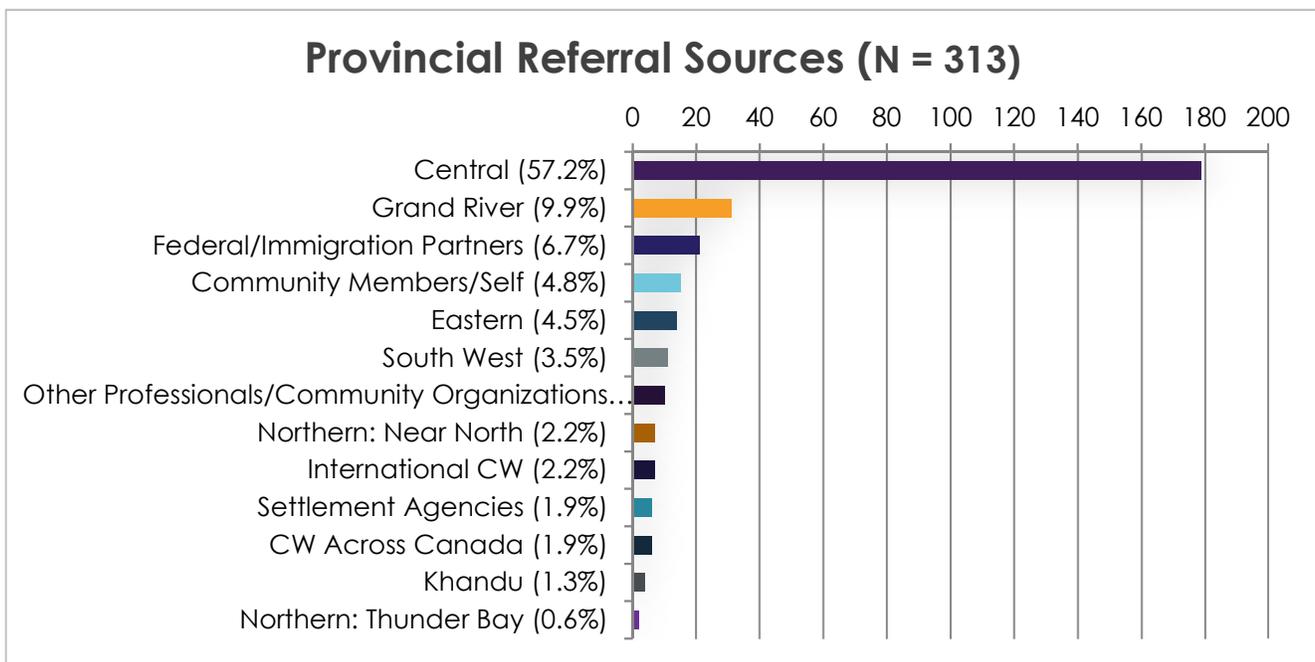
**Provincial Referrals: Child Welfare Case Type (Chart 5)**





The reasons for CWICE referrals centred around: unresolved immigration status inquiries (49%), citizenship inquiries (15%), cases abroad/repatriations (13%), general services (11%), resource information/referrals (7%), newcomer/settlement services (5%), and urgent/deportation support (1%). This year's referral source reporting incorporates the provincial zones used by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (chart 6). The largest referral source for provincial referrals was central Ontario zone (57%), however there was a wider variety of referral sources this year. Twenty-three child welfare organizations in Ontario made referrals. In total, child welfare service providers in Ontario, Canada & internationally made 84% of all referrals.

**Provincial Referral Sources (Chart 6)**

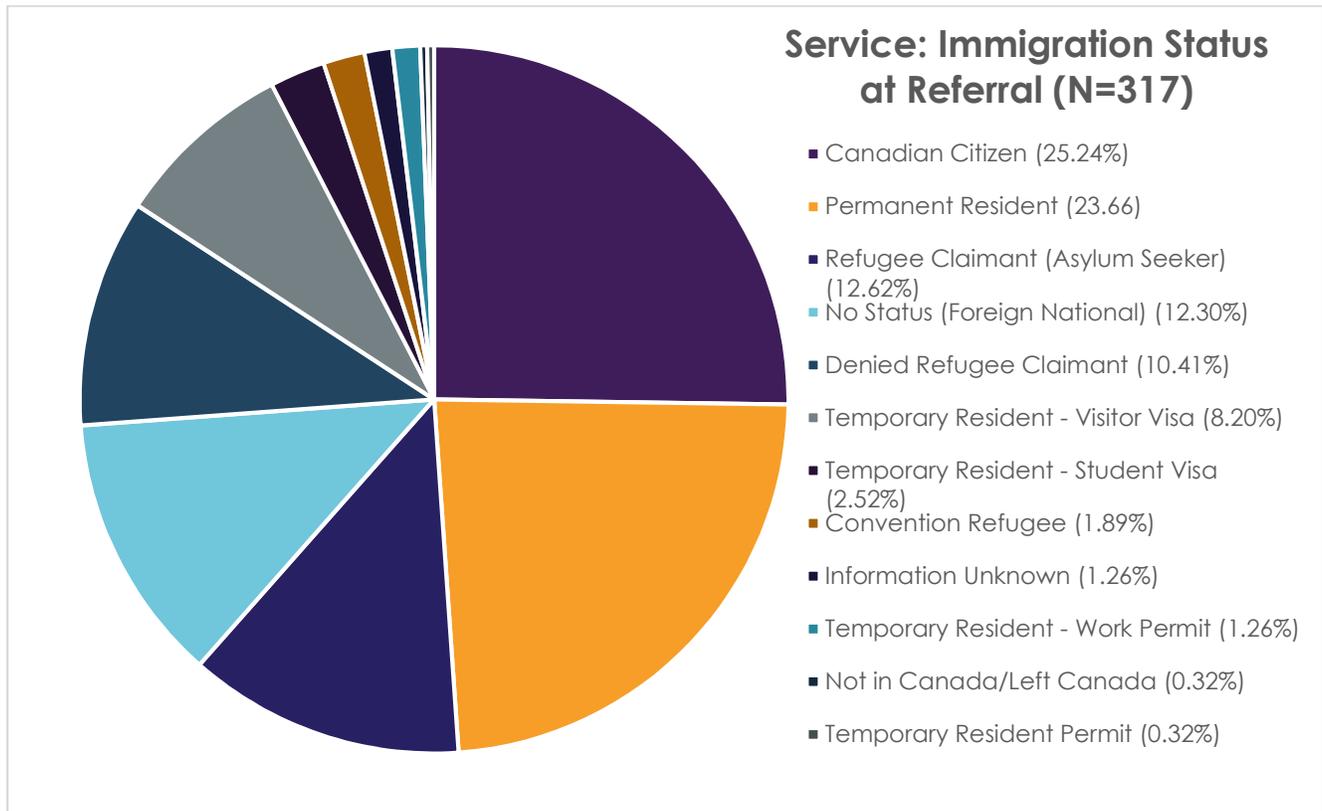


Brief Services

Immigration Specialists provided 192 brief services to 317 individuals across Ontario. We promote a service approach based on understanding identities. We recognize the diverse circumstances, unique experiences, and distinct identities embodied by our service recipients (Ungara, 2020). As our work is multi-faceted, and border-related, many individuals we deliver service to are Canadian citizens. This year, the individuals receiving service had a range of immigration status in Canada, including 75% which had non-Canadian citizen status (chart 7).



**Brief Services: Immigration Status at Referral (Chart 7)**

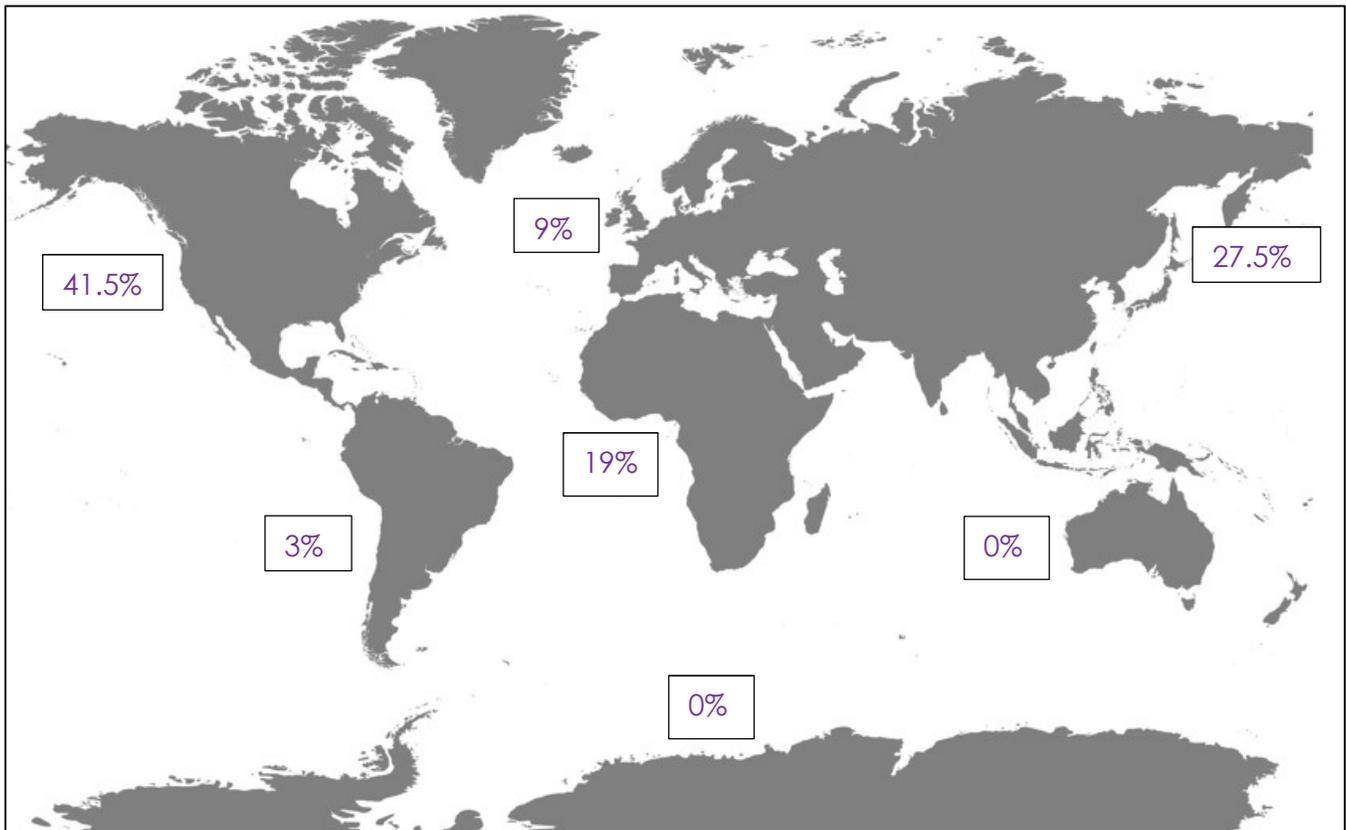


All CWICE Service Recipients

Within CWICE programs, we recognize and celebrate the identities of service recipients. To promote thorough understanding of identities, we recommend child welfare workers manage bias and assumptions, use identity based data tools, and ask individuals and families about their immigration status, migration stories, and experiences. Across all CWICE service types in 2020/21, we worked with a combined **total of 911 individuals from 76 unique countries of origin, across 5 continents** (Chart 8).



**All CWICE Clients by Continent of Origin (Chart 8)**



North America: 41.5%      Europe: 9%  
 Asia: 27.5%              South America: 3%  
 Africa: 19%                Antarctica & Australia: each 0%

Service Projects: Profile and Updates

**Unaccompanied & Separated Children (UASC)**

Alicja Grabarczyk, Child Protection Worker/Immigration Specialist

In March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the world, the Canadian Government announced border closures and travel restrictions for non-essential travel. Toronto Pearson International Airport in Peel Region was designated one of four international airports continuing operations with international commercial passenger flights to Canada. Over the last year, CWICE noted a significant decrease of UASC making refugee claims at the airport, while our U.S. neighbours are reporting the opposite, with UASC numbers ballooning to record levels (ABC News, 2021).

Inside Canada, there has been a shift in visibility of UASC who previously entered Canada. Over the last year, we continued to support children/youth who have been in Canada for some time; for example, those making new in-land claims or those who



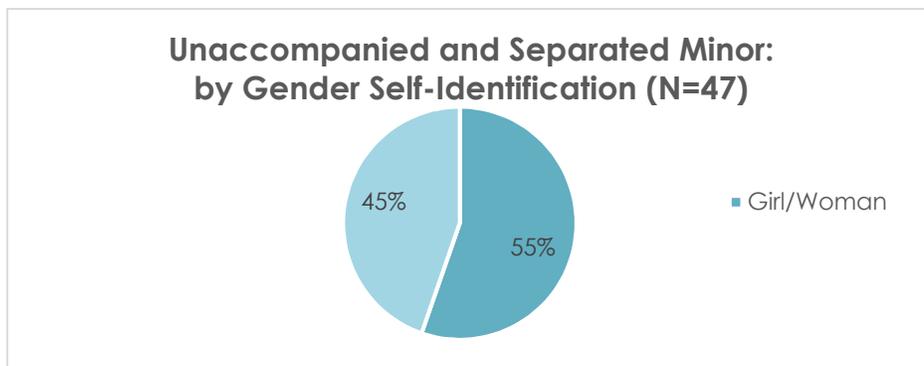
have claims in process and are relocating to Ontario. The Covid-19 pandemic has created delays in the process, preparation for, and attendance at refugee claim hearings. The delays and uncertainty has created feelings of insecurity and uncertainty for some youth. During this same time, restrictions to social interactions and distancing measures have meant children and youth speak with representatives virtually which can also pose some challenges. As the pandemic continued, refugee hearings resumed virtually, and we have been supporting some youth at our offices to ensure their attendance at their hearing.

In the last year, we also identified a number of youth with unresolved immigration status, some of whom may have lived in Canada for many years with extended family but are now separated from family members. Many of these young individuals have limited ties to their country of citizenship as they grew up in Canada and consider it home. Separated youth may have temporary status that expired, and they are unable to return to legal guardians. Some legal guardians/parents are experiencing various border measures internationally that lead to barriers entering Canada. In June 2020, CWICE presented at the Canadian Council for Refugees national consultations, about developing a strategy to support UAS children across Canada.

The needs for these children and youth range from managing quarantine needs to helping youth make meaningful connections or learn English. As with most minors, these children/youth are experiencing increased isolation, limited social interactions, transitions to online schooling, and we know these youth have added stressors as they worry about the health and well-being of family and friends abroad.

In total, both CWICE teams supported 47 UASC this past year. There was a slight increase in the number of girls/women receiving service – from 31% last year to 55% this year (chart 9). These youth had an average age of 17 years, and were from 22 countries across 5 continents.

**UASC, by Gender Self-Identification, 2020/21 (Chart 9)**



In the last three years, our program has supported 130 UASC across Ontario. We recognize UASC have distinct needs, and eight youth this year experienced the death



of one or both of their parents. In response to these unique needs, we designed a CWICE Youth Group. This group will launch mid-2021 to support refugee and immigrant youth, including UASC or repatriated youth, between the ages of 14-21 who are involved with a child welfare agency in Ontario. The program will bridge settlement in Canada, provide youth with information, resources, and opportunities to expand their networks.

### **Family Reunification & Repatriations**

Rosario Elmy, Child Protection Worker/Immigration Specialist

In the last year, we continued to support the safe return of children, youth, or families who find themselves in difficult circumstances and are unsafe abroad. CWICE team members coordinate and provide pre-arrival, arrival, and post-arrival service to Canadian citizens when returning to Canada. We work closely with federal partners, including Global Affairs Canada, surrounding these repatriation and reunification efforts. In November 2020, then Federal Minister The Honourable Francois-Phillipe Champagne wrote a letter of thanks to CWICE Team Leader Liz Okai for the continued collaboration efforts, stating,

“The exceptional generosity of Peel Children’s Aid Society is  
of enormous assistance to the Government of Canada”  
– Minister Francois-Phillipe Champagne

Over the past year, we have received 24 referrals to support individuals or families arriving from 16 countries from across 4 continents. These children, youth and families have returned and settled across three provinces in Canada. Our work with them included re-integration and the coordination of services in local communities. Over the past two years, we have supported 48 referrals for children/youth returning from abroad.

Moving into next year, we will continue to coordinate, collaborate, and increase our communication with federal partners, now including Public Health Canada. This coordination is key for successful service transitions, from consular services abroad to local supports back in Canada. The successful reunification or repatriation of any person can be complex and time sensitive, and we are proud of the seamless approach we have developed.



### Children & Youth: Immigration Status

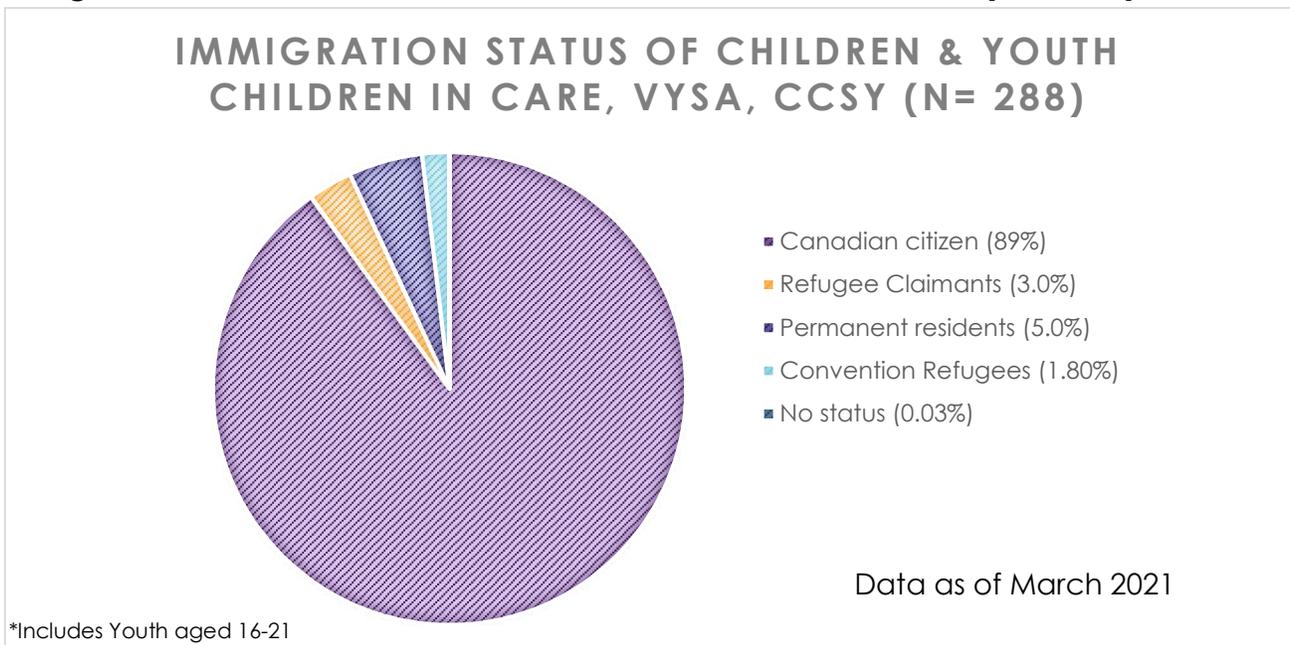
Celistine Frampton and Fatima Mukai, Child Protection Workers/Immigration Specialists

This last year, CWICE continued to engage in discussions about the immigration status of children and youth in all out-of-home placements. We continue to recommend gathering information related to a child/youth's place of birth, and an understanding of their immigration status in Canada, including any citizenship outside Canada. We promote processes and practices that ensure all children have identity documents, particularly when residing in out of home placements.

The immigration status of children and youth in out-of-home placements was collected in March 2021, and assists us to better understand issues faced by these children and youth, particularly those who have unresolved immigration status, or settlement needs. Peel CAS staff share a common goal of ensuring child and youth who reunify with family or transition to independence will leave placements with identity documents and outstanding immigration status issues resolved.

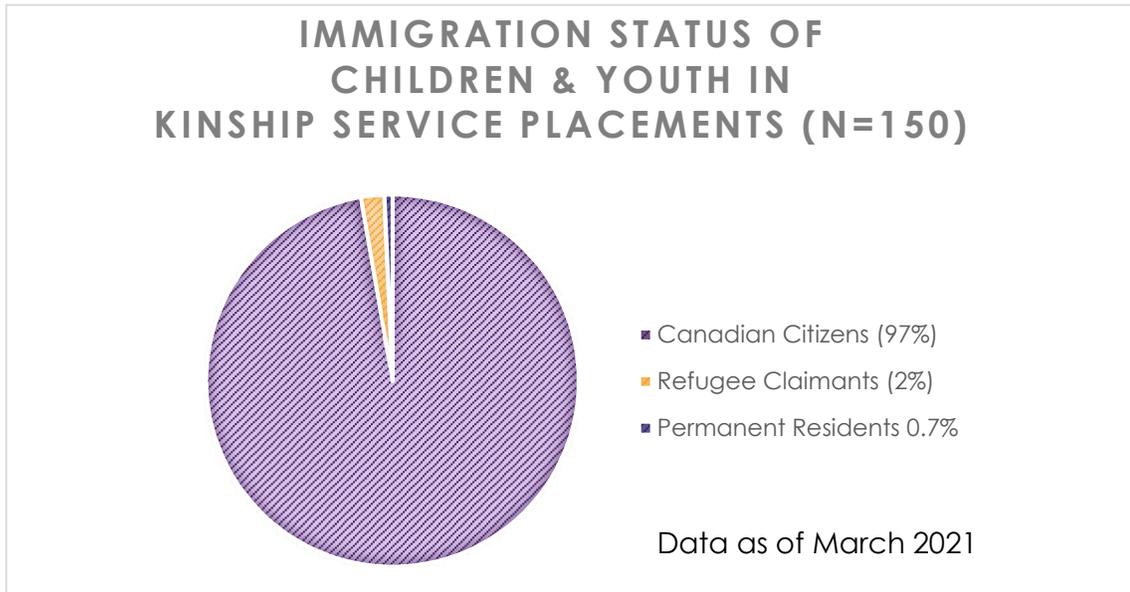
Our 2021 point-in-time analysis demonstrated that immigration-related identity data has become front and centre in the work of direct service staff. Our staff's early response with rapid resolution of unresolved immigration status issues led to a number of successful outcomes. As a result, in 2021 at Peel CAS we have seen a decrease in the number of children and youth in out-of-home placements with unresolved immigration status issues (Chart 10 and 11). This analysis includes children/youth in temporary and extended society care, and individuals receiving continued care and support for youth.

#### Immigration Status Out-of-Home – Children in Care, VYSA, CCSY (Chart 10)





**Immigration Status Out-of-Home - Kinship Service Placements (Chart 11)**



In the coming year, we will continue to encourage colleagues across the province to accurately document, and review the immigration status of the children and youth in all out-of-home placements. The collected data will continue to help us identify and address barriers, thus ensuring that equitable outcomes are achievable for all children and youth with immigration status concerns.

**Citizenship**

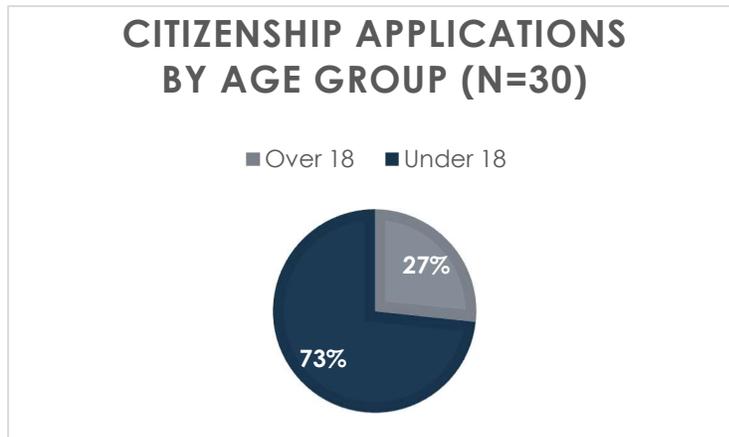
Shirley Asiamah, Child Protection Worker/Immigration Specialist

CWICE continued to promote and support, children, youth, and young adults formerly on extended society care to obtain their Canadian citizenship. Since the inception of CWICE, we have worked to support 87 applications for Canadian citizenship. Of these, 33 applicants have been granted citizenship already, and 6 applications were discontinued due to case complexities such as unmet eligibility and clients' request. Currently, 18 applications are awaiting a decision from Immigration, Refugee, Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and the CWICE team is still working on gathering information/documentation to submit 30 additional applications.

Within this fiscal year, CWICE received 30 new requests for citizenship applications, and this was an increase from last year. These children, youth, and young adults are connected to Canada by way of 18 countries, and the majority are seeking citizenship under 18 years of age (chart 12). These referrals are from 8 child welfare organizations across Ontario.



### Citizenship Applications by Age, 2020-2021 (Chart 12)



CWICE workers continue to find innovative ways to support individuals who may be experiencing barriers with their citizenship application, such as identity document issues and limited information on their pre-migration history. However, this information is vital in the application process and the lack of these can delay the application process.

This year, IRCC has experienced significant processing delays, which has resulted in longer wait times for all applications submitted including citizenship. As a result, IRCC has implemented measures, such as online citizenship tests and video oath ceremonies to mitigate some of the delays. We are happy to report that at least one youth attended a virtual citizenship ceremony during the pandemic, and these experiences continue to be important and memorable in the lives of children and youth.

As well, CWICE and IRCC have been working together collaboratively in an effort to streamline citizenship applications. CWICE will continue to liaise with IRCC for all citizenship applications submitted from the child welfare sector in Ontario, with a focus on improving processes and the experience for children, youth, and the young adults we serve.



### Evaluation of CWICE Services

This is the second year CWICE evaluated its services through survey feedback following service closure. There has not been consensus in literature on a specific range for “good” response rates (Morton, 2012), so importance is placed on respondent representation. We had a 52% response rate following closure of brief services, with participants providing feedback based on their experience with CWICE. This past year, 84% of the respondents were child welfare professionals in Ontario, 13% identified as child/youth and/or family, and 3% Community professional/partner organization.

There was consensus on a number of important indicators for service delivery, including quality of service. Most respondents (97%) agreed the CWICE team is knowledgeable when managing their request; most felt the team was helpful in their request (95%), and the CWICE team responded in a timely manner (95%). When asked about the specific impact to a child or family, respondents agreed there was a positive impact, and included: CWICE connecting children/families to culturally appropriate resources; CWICE supporting family reunification; CWICE assisting with citizenship applications; and CWICE provided referrals to legal supports. Additionally, respondents shared that CWICE service enabled youth to obtain identity documents, youth received advocacy, and CWICE indirectly helped the worker “by sharing their knowledge/expertise with me – the family’s worker – therefore improving service delivery.”

In an open-ended survey question, one respondent stated the service was a “collaborative approach between worker, family/youth/child and CWICE”. Another respondent shared this was a “great resource”, and another shared they were “impressed with the knowledge and expertise on immigration-related matters”.



## Capacity Building Impact

CWICE staff are not immigration experts, but they are experts on the intersection of child welfare with unresolved immigration et. al. Our immersion in service has helped in knowledge creation, and identifying emerging knowledge. Our role continues to enhance awareness within the child welfare sector, beyond case consultation.

### E-News/Newsletters

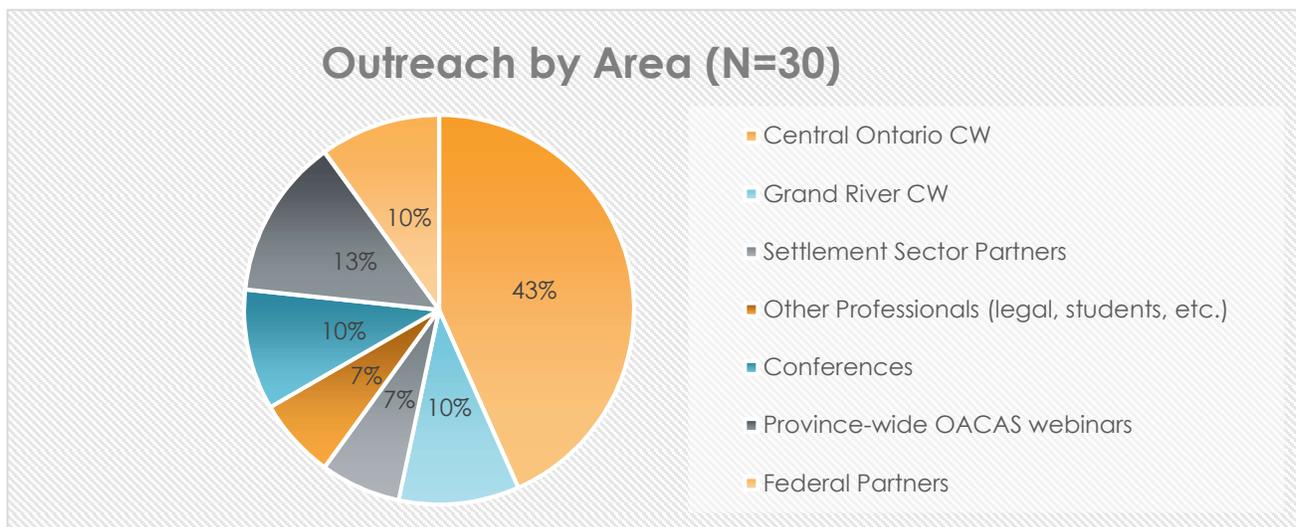
Over this past year, CWICE shared via newsletters information about immigration, decisions affecting border closures, and global trends. Feedback from service recipients showed 36% were interested in receiving e-newsletters. Initially, these e-news/newsletters were designed for CWICE to distribute relevant information to those supporting individual children and youth. For example, when the first COVID-19 stay at home order went into effect, we needed to communicate up-to-date information about refugee claim processes being temporarily put on hold. Since then, the CWICE e-news/newsletter grew organically over 11 months, from 15 individuals to **133 individuals** at year-end.

### Outreach Presentations

Shirley Asiamah, Child Protection Worker/Immigration Specialist

CWICE continues to build individual, organizational, and collective capacity through outreach presentations. These assist in raising awareness of CWICE services and provide a brief overview of the intersectionality of child welfare and immigration. In the last year, CWICE conducted **30 presentations to 1339 individuals** across several sectors. These outreach presentations were conducted virtually, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Outreach by Area, 2020/21 (Chart 13)





CWICE received survey feedback from 109 Individuals following agency presentations, and the overall feedback was positive. One participant shared their gratitude for the program filling a need. Another participant stated, "The presentation was very useful and provided me with the information that will be important for some of the clients that have issues with their documentation and status in Canada. This also can help the clients to get connected with community resources that are available for them and their children".

### Webinars

In collaboration with OACAS, the CWICE Issues and Trends webinar series continued. In May 2020, we held a webinar on trends impacting clients due to COVID-19, such as housing issues. In November 2020, we held a webinar spotlighting issues facing international students who are parents and involved with child welfare organizations. In February 2021, we held a webinar about partnering with community organizations to offer culturally safe services to Black newcomer and immigrant families. In March 2021, we held a webinar introducing Global Affairs Canada to the child welfare sector in Ontario. There were 422 individuals in attendance at these webinars, which are archived on the OACAS' member site. In March 2021, CWICE participated in a joint webinar on OACAS' platform with the Office of the Children's Lawyer and Justice For Children & Youth, speaking about issues facing older youth aged 16+.

CWICE continues to receive requests for presentations. Team Leader Liz Okai presented at an international conference, Canada Resettlement Conference, in February 2021 to settlement sector staff across Canada. In February 2021, Service Director Mary Beth Moellenkamp participated in a panel presentation with judicial and legal representatives, to family and immigration legal professionals across Ontario.

### CWICE National Virtual Dialogue

Led by Danielle Ungara, CWICE held a virtual National Dialogue event in June 2020. Senior child welfare leaders from across Canada attended for this follow up to the inaugural National Dialogue event in January 2020. This virtual event focused on emerging trends, including the first ever newcomer data collected as part of the Ontario Child Welfare Incidence Study, by keynote speaker Dr. Barbara Fallon from the University of Toronto. Other speakers included Global Affairs Canada who provided updates about repatriation efforts during COVID-19; and IRCC who provided updates to policy and practices during the pandemic. The roundtable discussion provided updates from across Canada on the efforts to deliver high quality child welfare services during the pandemic. An executive summary of the national dialogue was completed and is currently available on the Peel CAS website.



### CWICE Training Launch

Claudia Obreque, Child Protection Worker/Immigration Specialist

In 2020, CWICE embarked on creating and designing a new eight module training series. Developed and led by Danielle Ungara and Claudia Obreque, the series explores issues related to immigration, settlement, citizenship and border related concerns. The training series is the first training created for the child welfare sector that explores, in depth, the intersection of child welfare and immigration. These issues have a direct impact on assessments, service planning, and achieving equitable outcomes for children, youth and families.

Child welfare practitioners are well trained in child welfare practice but there is a need to learn about systems and processes that impact service delivery when working with immigrants, refugees, temporary residents, people with unresolved status, or those with permanent residency status (or Canadian citizenship) that lack identity documents. In addition, an emerging field of study within CWICE is the related issues when child welfare staff are considering placement across international borders.

Access to services in Canada is directly connected to a person's immigration status; therefore understanding types of immigration status is just one of the many topics covered in the training series. Throughout the series, CWICE highlights data that demonstrates Canada relies heavily on immigration for its population growth. Statistics Canada has released several reports that consistently supports these arguments:

One out of five people in Canada's population is foreign-born  
(Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity in Canada, 2011)

Immigration accounts for 80% of Canada's population growth  
(Canada's population estimates, first quarter 2019, 2019)

Furthermore, Statistics Canada currently estimates: "Immigration would remain the key driver of population growth over the next 50 years" (Population projections: Canada, provinces and territories, 2018 to 2068, 2019). Every year IRCC sets a total number of new immigrants that will be granted permanent residence status. Those numbers have been increasing steadily over the years. In 2019, 341,000 people were granted permanent residence status. In 2020, those numbers were going to increase but the country was impacted by a world pandemic that limited travel and the mobility of people. Canada is already planning to recover from the pandemic. In late 2020, Canada's Immigration Minister Marco Mendicino announced a new immigration plan, to increase permanent residence admission to 400,000 individuals for the next three years (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, 2020). This new plan will make up for the low numbers in 2020 and continue to keep a steady increase to support the population growth in Canada. However, the numbers presented only represent



permanent residents, and do not include the number of temporary residents in Canada or those living with unresolved immigration status, which researchers estimate to be more than half a million people (Armanyous & Hudson, 2019).

The new CWICE training series explores the different immigration programs in Canada and introduces recommended child welfare practices with a focus on equity practices, early intervention, and recommended practices, to achieve equitable outcomes for all children, youth and families working with a child welfare organization.

CWICE officially launched this training across Ontario in 2020. From June 2020 to March 2021, CWICE offered the first two training modules:

- CWICE 101: Introduction of the Canadian Immigration System & Intersection with Child Welfare
- CWICE 102: Refugees Part 1: Asylum Seekers & Denied Refugee Claimants

Since its launch, **254 individuals attended CWICE 101 and 78 individuals attended CWICE 102** (chart 14). Originally, the training was designed for the child welfare sector in Ontario, but soon after its launch, requests from other provinces (and other sectors) have been received. As a result of the requests, the training is now available and open to all child welfare staff across Canada. To date, training participants joined from **11 child welfare organizations in Ontario and 2 provinces across Canada.**

### Summary of CWICE Training, 2020/21 (Chart 14)

Summary of CWICE Training (June 2020 to March 2021)			
	CWICE 101	CWICE 102	Total
Total # of Sessions	15	4	19
Total # of Participants	254	78	332
Total hours of training	105hrs	28hrs	133hrs
Evaluations completed	176 (69%)	66 (85%)	242

\*Each module consists of two half-days delivered virtually; the total number of sessions represent the number of full modules completed



The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive; it demonstrates the interest and the need for additional training.

“I would definitely recommend this training to other workers because immigration is not something that is common knowledge or taught in school”

~ Samantha Jensen, Child Protection Worker, Government of Saskatchewan

“The training was so well done. It not only taught new information, brought in Signs of Safety, voice of the child, but was very sharp in DEI and challenging our own ideas and values” ~ Sara Goff, Signs of Safety Implementation Project Manager, Peel CAS

“The best practice framework that I have taken away from this training is the need to focus on the client’s migration and settlement story as part of their social history during the assessment process. Various international and national systems of oppression have impacted these families’ lived experiences and lead to involvement with the child welfare system. Developing an effective service plan is dependent upon understanding the lived experience of children and their families. I intend to incorporate this framework into my own work as the Anti-Black Racism Practice Integration Lead” ~Debra Musgrave, Anti-Black Racism Practice Integration Lead, Catholic Children's Aid Society of Hamilton

Both CWICE 101 and 102 modules found a high satisfaction rate:

- 97% of participants found the information learned in the training was relevant to their role
- 98% indicated the training provided a better understanding of the intersection of child welfare and immigration

Additional comments from anonymous training evaluations:

“This training was wonderful! The examples shared brought the information to life and allowed for a better understanding”

“The context of immigration cannot be separated from the family's involvement with CAS. It must be looked at as part of the process of involvement”

A full evaluation of the modules delivered in 2020-2021 is currently underway. The 2021/22 training schedule will be available May 2021 for all modules in this series.



## **Research & Partnerships Impact**

CWICE continued to maintain and build new partnerships this past year. Our research partnership with Ryerson University expanded to include collaborating with University of Toronto across several projects. Together, we continue to incorporate and try to elevate the experiences of children, youth, and families, as they navigate two complex systems – child welfare and immigration. We continue mapping, through institutional ethnography, the processes and systems that families will interface with across both sectors.

Over the last year, CWICE expanded its previous service partnership with Indus Community Services. Liz Okai is leading this new project to support newcomers with settlement needs. CWICE has also built a formal partnership with Refugee Law Office. This will enable any CWICE client to be referred to immigration counsel in a seamless manner. As well, we are continuing discussions on the numerous other ways collaboration can occur.

In early 2021, we signed a service contract with Global Affairs Canada. This will provide value added service to consular staff in Canada, and those around the world, who are supporting vulnerable children, youth, and families. Lastly, the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS) has demonstrated commitment to the important work of CWICE. We look forward to continued collaboration with MCCSS and an opportunity to coordinate with multiple levels of government together.

## **In Summary**

In our first 3 fiscal years, CWICE established itself as thought leader and forged ahead during this global pandemic from a service and training perspective. Minister Dunlop's acknowledgement CWICE is an example of modernization, and her funding announcement have confirmed the importance of this innovative centre of excellence. The totality of the data outlined in this report, statistical and experience-driven feedback, has confirmed the value CWICE brings to the lives of children, youth, families and staff in Ontario. These issues don't remain within the borders of Ontario and similar issues are experienced across Canada by children, youth, and families receiving child welfare services. We look forward to continuing relationships with child welfare staff across Ontario, and building collective positive outcomes.

Inspired by consular colleagues at Global Affairs Canada, we obtained our first brass bell for the new CWICE office at Peel CAS. The bell rings on occasion when a child, youth, or family achieves a success – arrives back in Canada safely, is accepted as a Permanent Resident or Canadian citizen. Recently, a youth rang our new bell following her successful refugee claim hearing. She was the first-ever client to ring the bell, and it was a sight and sound to behold.



As we begin our fourth year, we plan for anticipated continued growth in CWICE. We are reviewing our program design to adapt to new needs, and are developing a new website. International borders and restrictions will change, IRCC will process pending applications and accept new applications, and the surge of migration will arrive at our borders once more. As we prepare to continue exceptional service, we remain committed to expanding innovative and responsive programming with partners. This upcoming year, we aim to reach more staff across Ontario and Canada, and increase our network of ambassadors in the sector and beyond.

### **Expressions of Gratitude**

We would like to take the opportunity **to recognize and thank** our dedicated CWICE team members:

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In CWICE, we say 'we can't do this work alone' so we thank each of you that we have collaborated with this past year. We look forward to continuing these efforts in 2021/22.



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