

Speaker Biographies

Ahmad Fahim

Ahmad Fahim joined the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Islamabad, Pakistan in 1991 and worked there until 1998. Ahmad has been the IOM-Ottawa Head of Office since he moved to Canada in 1999. The IOM office in Ottawa supports Canada's refugee resettlement program. Its role is to provide advice and guidance to IOM.

Anne Sapir

Anne joined the African Refugees Development Center in Israel in 2013, after she earned a LLM in Public International Law from Leiden University. Today, she manages ARDC's Asylum Application Assistance project, which assists asylum seekers to enter the asylum process in Israel and to relocate to other countries.

Azaria Wolday

Azaria Wolday has been managing the Private Sponsorship & Settlement programs at Northwood Neighbourhood Services for the past five years. Previously, Azaria coordinated a Social Enterprise Bureau, a Distance Education and Training Programs and worked as Research Assistant at New Mexico State University. Azaria holds an MA in Management, a Certificate in Immigration Law and Forced Migration issues from Humber College & York University, respectively.

Betty Picur

Betty Picur is a Senior Advisor within the Refugee Operations Division (Operational Management and Coordination branch) of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Since August of last year, she has worked on streamlining the PSR process at CPO-W.

Brian Dyck

Brian Dyck has been Chair of the SAH Association Council for three years. In February he became Mennonite Central Committee Canada Migration & Resettlement National Program coordinator. Before that he was MCC Manitoba Refugee Assistance program coordinator for eight years. Brian has experience of working outside of Canada as a mission worker for Mennonite Church Canada in Mthatha, South Africa focused on African Indigenous Church leadership development and HIV/AIDS support program development in rural areas. He was in South Africa with his family from 1999-2005. Before that, his professional career started as a pastor of a Mennonite Church in rural Manitoba, a position that he shared with his wife.

David Manicom

David Manicom is Associate Assistant Deputy Minister for Strategic and Program Policy at Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), where he is responsible for overseeing policy and program development on a range of issues pertaining to Admissibility, Refugee and Immigration files. Previously, he was Director General, Immigration (Policy) Branch at Citizenship and Immigration. As Director General, he was responsible for policy development for all Permanent and Temporary entry categories, except Refugees. A graduate of University of Toronto and McGill, he is a career Foreign Service officer who has served in Moscow, Islamabad, Beijing, Geneva and as Immigration Program Manager, New Delhi. He is also the author of 9 books of poetry, fiction and non-fiction.

Elisha Kappell-Seguin

Elisha began her career with the federal public service in 2001 working both at the inland office and Regina Airport. She eventually became an Immigration Officer at North Portal Port of Entry in 2004 and worked in that capacity until 2007, at which time she moved to Winnipeg to work as a Hearings Officer with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). During her tenure at the CBSA, Elisha presented before the Immigration and Refugee Board on many occasions and became the lead Immigration Trainer in the Prairie Region delivering training to legacy customs personnel. In 2010, Elisha transitioned back to CIC as the Citizenship Supervisor in Winnipeg to pursue her career in management. In 2014, Elisha became the Acting Assistant Director for Immigration Operations responsible for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, NWT and Nunavut. Additionally, she is responsible for the Centralized Processing Office of Winnipeg (CPOW) which processes all sponsorship applications for the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program.

Elizabeth Walton

I have lived and travelled in much of the third world and have had a lifetime's interest in people and refugees from there. I was the refugee co-ordinator for the Diocese of Huron for about 10 years. I have been working with the SAH Secretariat as the Allocations Cap Tracker since 2012.

Emina Tudakovic

Emina is the Director of External Relations in the International Region of Citizenship and Immigration. Since October 2013, she has coordinated International Region's participation in the Refugee Resettlement program and its implementation in the overseas network. A graduate of the University of British Columbia, she joined the Foreign Service in 2000 and has had postings in New Delhi, India and Geneva, Switzerland.

Eugénie Hébert

Eugénie Hébert is an Assistant Director within the Refugee Operations Division (Operational Management and Coordination branch) of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Since August of last year, she has worked on streamlining the PSR process at CPO-W.

Gilbert Iyamuremye

The life of refugees and the work for refugees, even in the craziest conditions, are not stories Gilbert hears from refugees or reads. After the genocide that took around a million of lives in Rwanda, his country, Gilbert participated in UNHCR Emergency, Repatriation and Rehabilitation

programs. As a United Nations Volunteer from 1996 to 2000, Gilbert has been fully involved in the UNHCR's mandate of protection and assistance to one of the highest refugee-populations of around 350,000 Sierra-Leonian and Liberian refugees in Guinea. As SAH Contact for the R.C.E.C. Diocese of London since 2002 to now, Gilbert has the mandate of promoting and providing guidance and assistance to refugees and refugee sponsors under the Private Sponsorship of refugees program. Gilbert strives to fulfil this mandate by his involvement in advocacy for refugees through the CCR and other same minded organizations.

Jean-Marc Gionet

Since February 2014, Jean-Marc Gionet is the Director of Resettlement Division within Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Refugee Affairs Branch. The Resettlement Division is responsible for overall refugee resettlement policy. This includes leading refugee selection and program criteria, legislation, regulation and terms and conditions; leading on resettlement stakeholder engagement, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), sponsors, provinces and foreign states; and leading on strategic policy, program policy development, and analysis related to refugee resettlement. Prior to joining the Resettlement Division, Mr. Gionet occupied the position of Deputy Director, Identity Management and Information Sharing within Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Admissibility Branch where he worked on range of issues related to admissibility policy and immigration information sharing.

Jennifer Mpungu

Jennifer Mpungu is the Coordinator of the Migration, Resettlement and Newcomers programs of Mennonite Central Committee in BC. She completed her bachelor's degree in arts and her post-graduate degree in Economics at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. Before immigrating to Canada Jennifer spent 10 years as a Foreign Service officer before moving on to the Not-for-Profit sector for 12 years. Jennifer was first exposed to the global refugee problem when working with CARE International in the Dadaab Refugee camp, managing humanitarian-aid projects. Her one claim to fame in that season.....she founded the Girl Child Network and a Newsletter "Binti" as a tool for learning and sharing best practices for girl child initiatives. Today, the Network is an independent not for profit organization registered in Kenya with regional operation, including two offices in Somalia. Presently, Jennifer's work in the refugee sector is in the private sponsorship of refugees and in assisting refugee claimants. As well, she manages a number of local programs aimed at building the capacity of vulnerable newcomers to succeed in their new country. In addition to immigration consulting, she enjoys gardening, dancing, reading and event planning as hobbies. She currently resides in Abbotsford, BC, which her family has happily made their home for the past 12 years.

Lana Goral

Lana started her six month internship at the African Refugee Development Center in February 2015 as a Relocation Project Coordinator after graduating with a LLM in International Law and Human Rights from Lund University. At the ARDC, Lana coordinates the daily work of the Relocation Project which assists asylum seekers to relocate to other countries.

Luciano Moro

Luciano Moro is an Outreach Worker for ORAT – Office for Refugees, Archdiocese of Toronto. He has worked for ORAT - the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Toronto (SAH) for over five years. Resettled to Canada through the World University Services of Canada (WUSC) student refugee program, he trains resettlement groups in the Archdiocese of Toronto (including the Greater Toronto Area) engaging them to help resettle more refugees in need. He is also a volunteer board member of the “Catholic Refugee Sponsors’ Council – CRSC”. His extensive experience working with Resettlement Groups (RGs) is invaluable for SAHs in the making.

Michael Casasola

Michael Casasola has been a Resettlement Officer at UNHCR Canada since 2002. Prior to that he worked for eleven years as the Director of Refugee Office of the R.C. Diocese of London. During that time he served on the NGO-Government Committee on the Private Sponsorship of Refugees for six years along with a number of other NGO committees.

Michelle Manks

Michelle Manks has been working within WUSC’s Campus Engagement team since 2008 and is currently the manager of the Ottawa-based organization’s Student Refugee Program (SRP). In her role, she is responsible for engaging post-secondary students across Canada on refugee issues, and for providing refugee resettlement and integration training to WUSC’s 65 student-based constituent groups across the country. In addition to supporting and engaging partners in-Canada, her responsibilities also include the coordination of the program overseas and the organization's refugee-camp based initiatives in Africa, South-East Asia, and the Middle-East.

Nadine Nasir

Nadine Nasir has been a trainer at the Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) for one year. Prior to her current position at the RSTP, Nadine worked at the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) of Canada for three years, where she wrote human rights and country condition reports which were used in refugee hearings to inform decision-making. Nadine’s background in the provision of information and training includes training IRB adjudicators, university students, and NGO staff on a variety of subjects including research methodology and gender equity. Nadine also assisted with the development of a training institute in Amman, Jordan for the staff of UN agencies and NGOs that provide public health services to refugees in the Middle East.

Paul Carline

Paul works out of Saint John, New Brunswick as Director of Intercultural Ministries for the Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches. He encourages churches to be more engaged in cross-cultural hospitality with both historic and newcomer communities. The CAB’s involvement in private sponsorship has declined, so turning this around is a priority. From 1995 to 2012, Paul was with Canadian Baptist Ministries focused on rural and urban development in Kenya’s Somali community (In 1996, he and his family lived in Dadaab town where they still “unofficially” have a house).

Paula Marshall

Paula Marshall has been the Immigrant and Refugee Services Liaison for The Salvation Army since 2012, a role which includes managing the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program and providing Immigrant and Refugee related ministry resources to the churches and various newcomer services across the Canada and Bermuda Territory. She has served as Chair of the Southern Ontario Sponsors Group for the past year and a part of the Steering Committee for Lifeline Syria since February 2015. She holds a BMus and MA in Ethnomusicology, and is continuing course work in Immigrant and Refugee Law part time at Humber College.

Paulette Johnson

Paulette has been the Refugee Sponsorship Coordinator for the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton since 1997. She first served as an elected representative on the NGO/Government Committee on the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (when that was the name for the committee) from June 1998 to November 2001. She also served as a SAH Council member from November 2005 to May 2012. During this time she had the privilege of attending the UNHCR's Annual Tripartite Consultations in Geneva in 2006 and 2007 as the Canadian NGO representative from the Canadian Council for Refugees. She is once again serving as an elected representative on the SAH Council.

Rob Shropshire

Rob Shropshire is the Program Coordinator for Refugee Sponsorship and Special Projects, at Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D), the relief and development agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. He has worked there since March 2013. Rob first became involved in refugee sponsorship in 1985 as part of a G-5. Around that time, he wrote a dissertation on the (in-Canada) refugee sponsorship determination process as part of a Master's in Public Administration at Queen's University. He worked from 1987 to 1990 with the Working Group on Refugee Resettlement, which is today the Anglican United Refugee Alliance (AURA). From 1991 to 2004, he worked in international development for the (Anglican) Primate's World Relief and Development Fund with primary responsibility for the Great Lakes, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, and from 2004 to 2011 with Equitas - International Centre for Human Rights Education as Director of Programs. Today, he coordinates and supports sponsorships across Canada for Presbyterian churches across Canada, and he also volunteers with the Refugee Committee of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Toronto.

Ron Parent

Ron Parent has worked in CIC (and the Canada Border Services Agency) on immigration matters since 2002, and in the area of refugee resettlement since 2005. He is currently the Manager of the Refugee Resettlement Program Delivery unit, whose focus is on the GAR/PSR refugee movement and on the PSR, Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) and the Immigration Loans Program operations.

Shauna Jimenez

As a volunteer board of directors member with East Kootenay Friends of Burma, Shauna is responsible for liaising with refugees overseas, doing sponsorship paperwork and providing settlement services upon their arrival to rural communities in British Columbia. She constantly

seeks and trains new volunteers to do settlement services. Shauna has volunteered in this capacity since 1983. Since working with UNHCR on the Thai/Cambodian 1982, Shauna has initiated the formation of numerous sponsorship groups throughout Alberta and rural BC to sponsor and resettle refugees. Unlike many other SAH's, we have no faith-based affiliation and have no paid settlement services available in our rural towns. We still work on the original 1980's model of private sponsorship and resettlement by community volunteers. In 2011 and 2012 a Metropolis Dissemination Project provided a perfect inspiration for other rural BC community groups to begin privately sponsoring refugees, with many eventually becoming our permanent CG's.

Tom Denton

Tom served on the initial SAH Council, and was re-elected in 2014. He is a lawyer by training, and helped in the incorporation of our Association. Tom initiated his first refugee sponsorship 36 years ago. During his long tenure as Executive Director of Winnipeg's International Centre he secured the SAH agreement and started the PSR work that is now that of Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council. He has been Executive Director, Sponsorship, of Hospitality House Refugee Ministry since 2006 and currently manages over 1,300 open sponsorships covering about 3,000 refugees; these are being processed through all the principal PSR- processing missions overseas. Hospitality House, a Constituent Group, landed 601 refugees in 2014; it sponsors through two SAHs, the Anglican Diocese of Rupert's Land and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

Wally Boxhill

Mr. Wally Boxhill is Director of the Strategic Management and Coordination Division, in the Integration Program Management Branch at Citizenship and Immigration Canada, where he has worked since 2006. His Public Service career, which began at Statistics Canada, also included periods at the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat and the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada. And, he spent two and a half-years on an Interchange Canada assignment from Statistics Canada serving as a Technical Assistance Expert (Population Affairs) with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as periods as a Research Intern with the North-South Institute and as a Program Officer with the Overseas Book Centre (now the Canadian Organization for Development through Education). A graduate of the Norman Paterson School of International Affairs at Carleton University with a Master of Arts degree in 1978, he has authored several reports and publications on immigration, citizenship, families, Aboriginal peoples, visible minorities, ethnicity, and related subjects and was a principal contributor to the 1997 publication Diversity, Mobility and Change: The Dynamics of Black Communities in Canada.