



**QUAKERS**

# Canadian Friends Service Committee

## Annual Accountability Report 2019-2020

“True faith is not assurance, but the readiness to go forward experimentally, without assurance. It is a sensitivity to things not yet known.”—Charles Carter



CFSC members and staff meeting via Zoom, October, 2020.

## Throwing windows wide open

2020 has been anything but easy. Walls of fear and distrust were built up. A global pandemic, increasing inequality, systemic racism laid bare—these are just a few of the issues impacting each of us in different ways. We're tired. We're discouraged. **We need some positive signs.**

At Canadian Friends Service Committee, we feel these sentiments. But our work includes discerning and revealing pathways for justice and peace. When you support this work, **you turn what seem to only be walls into windows.**

You recognize the truth: there are many barriers between us and the world we long for. There are many different walls. But they can appear more solid than they really are. What we need are windows, ways to see what lies beyond the barriers. **We need creativity and vision.**

There are **always entry-points** for creative people like you to foster positive changes, to throw windows wide open. This report will highlight how, through your support, you did just that this during a particularly challenging year.

In Friendship,



Lana Robinson,

Clerk, Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

## Indigenous Peoples' Human Rights



*Haana Edenshaw at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2019*

*The main goals of CFSC's Indigenous rights work are the implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and enhanced understanding and engagement in the activities recommended in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).*

This year has seen a renewal of our efforts, as an active member of the Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to work together in pushing for the full implementation of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in Canada. The *Declaration* is the primary framework for advancing the rights of Indigenous peoples. We saw a major step forward when British Columbia became the first province to adopt legislation to implement the *Declaration* provincially.

Throughout the year we continued to hold meetings between the Coalition and federal government representatives to advance Coalition priorities within government.

We worked with expert partners to help the University of British Columbia host a major international event on the repatriation of human remains and sacred items.

We created an educational handout to counter common myths circulating about the *UN Declaration*. We produced multiple educational statements on emerging issues

of concern such as statements about the complex national conflict over the Coastal GasLink pipeline project going through Wet'suwet'en territory, and one about the federal and provincial governments needing to honour and uphold Mi'kmaw fishing rights.

We recorded a series of short videos in which we asked several of our Indigenous partners to answer common questions about reconciliation: What does reconciliation mean to you? What suggestions do you have for non-Indigenous people to respectfully engage in reconciliation? Have you seen a change in how people are engaging in reconciliation in recent years? If you had to choose one thing that you wish every person knew about reconciliation, what would that be? What are your thoughts on how to be a good ally?

## Criminal Justice



*The main goal of CFSC's criminal justice work is to eliminate the punitive mindset that pervades society and justice systems by transforming harmful approaches to ones that are healing.*

We continued our work in support of the children of incarcerated parents this year, providing community grants to initiatives working directly with these children. We

also took a lead role in facilitating the activities of the Canadian Coalition for Children of Incarcerated Parents.

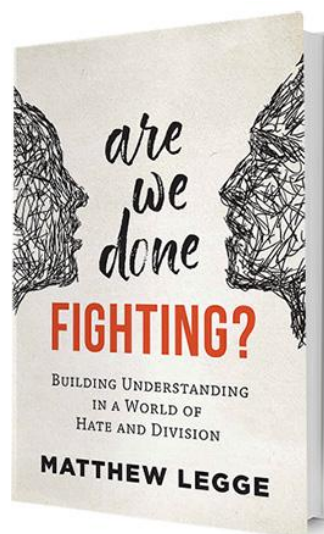
We engaged in many meetings and consultations and contributed to policy submissions together with partners to advance our vision of a justice system that is healing rather than causing further harms.

We submitted an Alternative Report to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which resulted in an invitation from the Canadian Government to sit on an Advisory Committee with the Department of Justice Canada.

We hosted film screenings and an intensive learning and discussion series called The Only Way Forward, which focused on how policing and the criminal justice system disproportionately harm Indigenous people and people of colour in Canada.

The Only Way Forward series unpacked the impacts of the current system, alternatives, and ways forward. This content was developed through intensive work with an advisory panel of external experts with lived experience in the criminal justice system, from diverse racialized backgrounds, and with professional expertise in working for effective alternatives to the current criminal justice system. We look forward to building what was started in this series in the coming year.

## Peace



*The main goal of CFSC's peace work is to contribute to creating a culture of peacebuilding to identify, engage constructively with, and transform conflict.*

To help us achieve our goal, the peace committee was busy sharing ideas and exercises from CFSC's award-winning 2019 book *Are We Done Fighting? Building Understanding in a World of Hate and Division*. The book is full of carefully collected research, stories, and practical tips. We were pleased when it was made into an audiobook in the summer.

Much of our energy this year went into giving radio, TV, and podcast interviews and answering people's pressing questions about conflict and societal polarization. Presentations and workshops delivered this year helped bring the issues to life for audiences from across the country.

We started the year with in-person events, including a speaking tour of BC and multiple presentations in Ontario, and when physical distancing became necessary, we moved everything online, developing a six-week-long workshop series.

The series was delivered for over 100 participants, and every one of them who responded to our anonymous feedback survey said they got a lot from the course and would recommend it to others.

A regular blog we wrote for *Psychology Today* further helped the peace skills and ideas coming up in our workshops to spread to a wider audience.

We continued our support for refugees who've arrived in Canada, and for grassroots community peacebuilders in DR Congo, Burundi, and Israel/Palestine. And we acted as a voice for Friends nationally on key arising peace issues from diplomacy with Iran to Canada's involvement in the arms trade.





## **In Closing**

Much of our work is done behind the scenes, providing space and light to important issues in quiet ways, working with partners and fostering dialogue among parties who may not have the chance to talk to each other otherwise.

We hope this *Annual Accountability Report* has given you a simple overview of just a few of the many accomplishments donors like you have realized in the past year. For more in-depth information on everything discussed above, please visit [our website](#) or [contact us](#).

**As a supporter of Canadian Friends Service Committee, you make a difference every day in ways you aren't even aware of.**