

The Maytree Foundation

Annual Report 1998

The Maytree Foundation's Vision

The Maytree Foundation is a Canadian charitable foundation established in 1982. Maytree believes that there are three fundamental sets of issues which threaten political and social stability: wealth disparities between and within nations; mass migration of people because of war, oppression and environmental disasters; and the degradation of the environment.

Of these, Maytree is active in funding projects which address wealth disparity and migration. We view our society's toleration of poverty as a fundamental threat to stability both in the world at large and in Canada in particular. Systemic poverty is an unjustifiable burden to millions of people, and bears paralyzing costs to society. It perpetuates a vicious cycle by limiting opportunity and repressing the human spirit. The correlation between poverty and most serious social problems is a stunning indictment of society's continuing tolerance of poverty.

Maytree grants aim to combat poverty by creating opportunities for people to break the poverty cycle. We view migration as an opportunity if we recognize the strengths of the immigrants. We believe that newcomers offer tremendous benefits to the Canadian society and economy. Therefore, programs which facilitate their settlement enrich Canada. Further, we believe that urbanization is a powerful force. Programs which support the strengthening of communities are supported by The Maytree Foundation.

As its resources are few relative to the magnitude of the needs, Maytree looks for ways to maximize the impact of its grants. It focuses on empowering individuals, funding innovative projects, supporting effective

Message from the Chairman and President

During 1998, The Maytree Foundation strengthened and deepened its work in a number of areas. Ratna Omidvar joined Maytree at the start of the year to lead the Refugee and Immigrant Program, and to put in place a strategic review which rededicated the Foundation to the settlement of newcomers to Canada. Diane Varga, Andrew Brouwer and Violeta Li also joined Maytree.

The Foundation continued its important work in scholarships and parenting. It also strengthened its work in enhancing the public discourse, often in collaboration with other funders, in such projects as the Values in Contemporary Society series, Taking Toronto's Vital Signs project, and Ideas That Matter. All of these activities are grounded in the Foundation's commitment to social justice. Much of the public discourse work is managed under contract by Mary Rowe.

The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, of which Maytree is a key funder, continues to produce work of the first order in researching poverty and well-being. It informs and influences public and expert opinion and fosters discussion on social policy. Caledon develops and promotes concrete, practicable proposals for the reform of social programs. External validation of Caledon continues at a high level.

In the coming year, we look forward to a further strengthening of our work. By bringing on qualified staff to manage our key programs, we feel that The Maytree Foundation can better serve the needs of Canadians.

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MAYTREE INITIATIVES

Refugee and Immigrant Program

In 1998, the Foundation decided to focus its energies on those social problems facing immigrants and refugees where our resources might make the most meaningful impact. After consultation with a wide variety of stakeholders, we identified the most critical factors which facilitate or hinder the effective settlement of refugees and newcomers. For refugees in search of protection from persecution, this means receiving the permanent protection of Canada through permanent residence. For immigrants in search of a better life for themselves and their families, it is the opportunity to work, preferably in the field of their experience and education.

The Foundation adopted these two issues as priorities for the coming years and developed a new granting framework which rests on three essential and, we hope, interactive components: direct service, public education, and community capacity-building. We therefore continue to seed projects at the grass roots level that improve the lives of immigrants and refugees. Lasting and meaningful social change, however, requires a corresponding investment in improving the policies and systems that govern the lives of immigrants and refugees. We therefore chose to supplement our more traditional interest in direct service with two new program directions: public education and community capacity building. By increasing the capacity of immigrant and refugee organizations and their leaders, we are making a longer-term investment in the abilities of newcomer communities to engage effectively in their own settlement and related social change. A public education effort will explore different approaches to solving social problems and build support and understanding in the public for these solutions. An important element of this approach is a new partnership with the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. The first product of this partnership, **Refugees in Legal Limbo** was published by Caledon in October, 1998. This paper is the first in a series designed to highlight the problems and policy issues that affect refugees and immigrants to Canada and to propose practical solutions to these problems.

The program is still too new to claim any success. Our effectiveness will evolve as we gain experience, test new ideas, learn hard lessons and take outside events into account. However we do know that we can do nothing alone. We look to immigrants and refugees, the organizations they work with and our partners at other foundations to help us forge a lasting contribution to the settlement of newcomers. We are very grateful for the support of all our community partners who have given us invaluable advice and support during this last year.

Grants made in 1998 reflect the transition to the new program directions and our commitment to previous activities.

Direct Service

Centre of Advancement for Work and Living, Toronto

\$14,000 to explore the feasibility of replicating an education program with a focus on volunteer mentoring for foreign-trained information specialists.

India Rainbow Centre, Mississauga

\$22,455 to pilot test the feasibility of English language training by telephone for isolated Tamil newcomers.

New Experiences for Latin American Women, Toronto

\$22,240 towards the final year of a 2-year project (total grant of \$47,739) to support immigrant women to gain knowledge of the Canadian working environment.

Rexdale Microskills, Toronto

\$45,000 to provide education and information services to immigrant job seekers during evenings and weekends.

Roma Advocacy Centre, Toronto

\$38,291 to develop and deliver, in collaboration with Skills for Change, a language and orientation program for members of the Roma community with previous experience in the construction trades.

Muslim Community Services of Peel

\$19,151 towards the final year of a 3-year project (total grant of \$96,755) to support the education and settlement of refugees seeking employment.

Skills for Change, Toronto

\$48,904 for the final year of a 2-year project (total grant of \$97,808) to develop and evaluate an education program using mentoring modules which match unemployed foreign-trained engineers and accountants with their employed colleagues to share professional networks and gain employment.

Training Renewal Foundation, Toronto

\$4,815 to pilot test a training model for immigrants to successfully complete the General Equivalency Diploma.

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Building the Capacity of Organizations and Communities

Canadian Council for Refugees, Montreal

\$15,000 of a total grant of \$20,685 to expand its funding base and continue to function independently from government.

Ethiopian Association of Toronto

\$2,000 of a total grant of \$3,215 to review and amend the organization's personnel policies.

FCJ Hamilton House, Toronto

\$47,500 to train settlement workers for appropriate interventions in their counseling of inland refugee claimants.

Somali Immigrant Aid Organization, Toronto

\$20,000 to learn the skills required to effectively provide business counseling to existing Somali small businesses. This project was delivered in partnership with Self Employment Development Initiatives.

Umugenzi for Refugees, Toronto

\$2,500 of a total grant of up to \$15,000 to develop a financial and operational plan to seek alternative sources of funding for the Rukundo Club program which engages newcomers in the volunteer sector.

Public Education and Awareness

Citizens for Public Justice, Toronto

\$1,800 of a total grant of \$2,500 to explore and present policy options to the federal government on landing fees (Head Tax) levied on Convention refugees.

Skills for Change – New Pioneers, Toronto

\$16,700 towards support of the Youth Award in 1998 and 1999.

Other Projects -

The Canadian Red Cross, Toronto

\$8,740 for a special one-time only grant for the organization of the Striker Spirit Soccer Tournament.

Special Projects

The Maytree Foundation also supports the following two projects which fall outside of our regular funding mandate. *We do not accept applications in these areas.*

Maytree Service Fellowship

The *Maytree Service Fellowship* is a three-year pilot partnership with the York University Steps to Arts Program. Steps to Arts is an access program for capable students who face barriers to their education and whose circumstances may prevent them from achieving their academic potential. Students who are accepted into the Steps to Arts program may apply for a *Maytree Service Fellowship* grant. Successful applicants for the *Maytree Service Fellowship* must demonstrate a willingness and a potential to participate in meaningful community service throughout the academic year. They are required to volunteer for several hours a week in a placement approved by Maytree, as well as maintain an acceptable academic standing. Each grant covers the student's tuition with an amount allocated for books. Eleven students were funded in 1997-98 and fourteen in 1998-99. The *Maytree Service Fellowship* is committed not only to assisting vulnerable young people reach their academic potential but also to influencing their development as community service leaders. York University is undertaking a research study of this project.

Roots of Empathy

The Maytree Foundation is funding an innovative program at the Toronto Board of Education that helps educate children for their future role as parents. *Roots of Empathy* is a classroom-based parenting program designed to foster the development of empathy and teach child development. The program revolves around a class of students monitoring the needs, growth and development of an infant. The "class baby" is brought to the school for a visit by his or her parent at least once per month during the academic year. The material that arises during the visit is integrated into the general curriculum. *Roots of Empathy* was launched in the Fall of 1996. Four early primary classrooms in two inner-city schools participated. In the Fall of 1997, the program expanded to seven inner-city schools and fourteen classrooms, ranging from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 7 and in the fall of 1998 it is taking place in ten schools and nineteen classrooms. A CD ROM is available. Evaluation of the project is underway, funded jointly by the Toronto District School Board and The Maytree Foundation.

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Public Discourse

In the fall of 1997 the Jane Jacobs: Ideas That Matter gathering took place in Toronto, bringing together hundreds of 'urban practitioners': economists, activists, architects and planners, all of whom shared an interest in the ideas of Jane Jacobs. A variety of spin-off activities have been developed to foster dialogue on issues in the public interest: a series of convened discussions on various topics (Values in Contemporary Society); the development of a set of community indicators to measure Toronto's vitality (Taking Toronto's Vital Signs – in conjunction with a number of Toronto-based foundations); and a quarterly newsletter (Ideas that Matter). These activities are designed to be inclusive, engaging, and provocative: to provide a variety of forums for the exchange of ideas and experience – and to enhance the public discourse.

The Caledon Institute of Social Policy

The Caledon Institute was founded by Maytree in 1992, in collaboration with Ken Battle. Caledon is an expression of our belief in the importance of effective public policy in a healthy and cohesive Canada.

The Caledon Institute has made important contributions to social policy in Canada. Caledon has played an influential role in the reform of public pensions, child benefits, programs for Canadians with disabilities, tax policy and federal social transfer payments to the provinces. With its capacity to write about complex issues in clear and accessible language, Caledon has been instrumental in stimulating public interest in and understanding of social policy. Caledon's innovative *real leaders* and *community stories* series have provided a voice for community leaders and social entrepreneurs. In addition to writing Caledon commentaries and reports, staff delivered several papers on various social policy issues to conferences and seminars that are being published in journals and books in Canada and abroad.

During the past year, Caledon was commissioned by the federal government to continue working on two major policy initiatives – design options for the second phase of the Canada Child Tax Benefit and the national framework on income and supports for Canadians with disabilities. Caledon's Toronto-based *Speaking Out* project on the impact of public policy changes in Ontario entered its second year and published several major reports. Caledon's work extends beyond federal and provincial social and economic policies. Caledon also is engaged in policy development at the community and municipal government levels. At the request of the Chairman of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, Caledon prepared a labour force strategy that is being used to guide the work of a newly created regional Task Force on Employment. The Social Partnerships Project continues to document the work of exemplary partnerships across Canada; staff gave presentations on this work to a conference in Norway and during a cross-country tour of New Zealand. Caledon has partnered with the Community Opportunities Development Association (CODA) in Waterloo Region on an innovative poverty-reduction campaign.

Reports and commentaries were published on a variety of social and economic issues, including: community-based poverty reduction, the social dimensions of climate change, the impact of deindexation on the income tax system, strategies for a caring society, fiscal policy and the national debt, the ethics of legislation prohibiting panhandling, the strengths and weaknesses of social partnerships, an agenda for social policy reform, home care, welfare and workfare, refugees, training, the growing influence on public policy of polling, and health spending. Caledon completed work on a book on solutions to unemployment, with contributions from leading experts and a summary paper prepared by staff.

Ken Battle, President

Sherri Torjman, Vice President

Michael Mendelson, Senior Scholar

The Maytree Foundation

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