


**See your gifts at work
in Eastern Canada.**



2022/2023

Annual Impact Report

EASTERN CANADA



We hope you know how thankful we are that you are part of the MCC community. Together we have been able to do some amazing work. Take some time to read these stories and see the important work that's made possible because of your support.

See your gifts at work in Eastern Canada.

This year we watched prices rise around us, and we all had to make choices about how to adjust. We couldn't be more grateful that through it all you made the choice to keep giving so generously.

Your generosity is bringing more peace and restorative justice programs to families and local communities. It is providing a warm welcome to newcomers seeking a safe place to call home. It is working toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

We see the fruit of this work every day, and are so grateful for your support.

Thank you.

MESSAGE FROM THE CO-DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE & JUSTICE OFFICE, MCC CANADA

Considering the 2022-2023 year in Eastern Canada, I think about how this has been a time of transition, in ways large and small.

In Atlantic Canada, our regional representative, Dianne Climenhage, moved on from MCC, and we welcomed Passionate Ncube into the role. In Quebec, we had a brainstorming session with the advisory committee about how to engage with the church constituency more deeply in the future. In both contexts, we considered how our work needs to look different with the changing landscape — from changing post-pandemic realities to changing partnerships.

And how can the text from Lamentations help us in such a time as this? The author of Lamentations reminds us that we need not lose hope, nor be discouraged, because the faithfulness of God is greater than any transitions we weather, large or small.

We thank you for your continued prayers and encouragement as we strive to live out Jesus' love for all, in word and in action.



**RUTH PLETT, CO-DIRECTOR OF
THE PEACE & JUSTICE OFFICE,
MCC CANADA**



“Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

— LAMENTATIONS 3:21-23 NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV)

SUMMERBRIDGE

QUEBEC PARTICIPANTS

Alexis Lefebvre
Église le Portail,
Laval, Que.

Simon Lacroix
Église chrétienne de
Sainte-Thérèse,
Sainte-Thérèse, Que.

ATLANTIC CANADA PARTICIPANTS

Lily Krauss
The Well (MB Church),
Dartmouth, N.S.

Aaron Raymond
The Well (MB Church),
Dartmouth, N.S.

ATLANTIC CANADA

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Sandra Bunnett
Havelock, N.B.

Dave Drinkwalter
St. John's, N.L.

Stephanie Perry
Moncton, N.B.

Barry Smith
Dartmouth, N.S.

STAFF

Dianne Climenhage
regional representative
(ending Aug. 2022)

Passionate Ncube
regional representative
(beginning Jan. 2023)

QUEBEC

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Véronique Beaudin
Église chrétienne de
Sainte-Rose, Laval, Que.

Réal Bonneville
Église chrétienne de Saint-
Laurent, Montreal, Que.

Dora-Marie Goulet
Mennonite Fellowship of
Montreal, Montreal, Que.

Annie Labelle
Église chrétienne de
Saint-Eustache,
Saint-Eustache, Que.

Lyne Renaud
Église HochMa,
Montreal, Que.

STAFF

Daniel Genest
regional representative

Zacharie Leclair
research associate and
communication assistant for
the Peace & Justice office

MCC CANADA

STAFF

Ruth Plett
Co-Director of MCC Canada's
Peace & Justice Office
(Oversees program in
Eastern Canada)

MCC Eastern Canada
includes Quebec and the
Atlantic provinces.

*This report was written to reflect
the 2022/2023 fiscal year, which
ended March 31, 2023.

Material resources collected in Eastern Canada from April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023



375

Hygiene kits



65

Comforters



150

School kits



15

Relief kits



15

Infant care kits

MESSAGE FROM MCC QUEBEC REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

The year 2022 began with the conflict in Ukraine generating massive suffering and displacement of people. The Russian military invasion further increased the fragility of global supply chains and revealed, once again, the world's interdependence. Operating in 45 countries, MCC continues to stand by the most vulnerable in times of war and disaster.

After five years serving MCC, I suggested to the advisory committee for MCC in Quebec and to my supervisors that we hold a brainstorming session around the mission of MCC in Quebec to identify our next priorities. The discussion was facilitated by Jean-Raymond Théorêt, who, afterwards, presented us with a report of the session, as well as recommendations. We are very pleased to announce a feasibility study and pilot project around migration and resettlement in Quebec for 2023-2024, a two-year program funded in partnership with either our constituent churches or other evangelical groups. Wow!

Also of note is the support from École de Théologie Évangélique du Québec (Evangelical Theological Seminary of Quebec) for MCC Canada's annual student seminar in Ottawa. The seminar features discussions and training with federal politicians on current issues. This year's theme was climate change and was entitled "Rooted in Right Relationship: With One Another and Creation." With the help of Véronique Beaudin from ETEQ, two students from ETEQ and one from McGill accompanied us for three days of training with 22 other young people from across Canada.

Finally, our Quebec supporters outdid themselves in showing their compassion in 2022–2023. Your donations support hundreds of relief and peacebuilding projects around the world, as well as the pursuit of justice through advocacy with governments on behalf of the most vulnerable.

DANIEL GENEST,
MCC QUEBEC REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE



MCC'S CONTRIBUTION TO TEACHING IN CHURCHES

In 2022, MCC Quebec continued to speak in churches that support MCC. In all, we presented six different themes to congregations through a series of messages delivered by either Daniel Genest or Zacharie Leclair. Most notably, following the discovery of unmarked graves on former residential school sites in May 2021, Zacharie Leclair offered historically informed teaching on past relationships with Indigenous peoples in Canada and on the church's call to reconciliation. The response from the congregations was enthusiastic and committed. We are now reflecting on how to build on this call for reconciliation between Québécois and Indigenous peoples.



MORNING DISCUSSIONS BY ANABAPTIST CHURCHES ON THE BOOK *MENNO IN QUEBEC*

Taking advantage of the popularity of Richard Lougheed's book published the same year, MCC Quebec organized two morning discussions for pastors and leaders of Anabaptist churches in Quebec. On Sept. 2 and Nov. 18, 2022, at L'Église Chrétienne Évangélique de Sainte-Rose, in Sainte-Rose, Quebec, MCC led discussions on the history and the future of our

churches.

Through these rich exchanges inspired by this history book, MCC Quebec intends to continue dialogue with each church individually to tailor our support to each.



In the photo

Left : Zacharie Leclair speaks on the theme of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples at Saint-Eustache Church, May 29, 2022. (Photo/Elisabeth Franco)



In the photo

Above: MCC SALT participant Isaac Alderfer (front) shows Daniel Genest (left) and his son Samuel Genest the cover crops used to prevent evaporation, while explaining the drought- and flood-resilient fishpond model in Cambodia. (MCC photo/Charles Conklin)

Top right: Rath Morn checks on the fish in his fishpond constructed through a loan provided by MCC partner, Organization to Develop Our Villages, in Cambodia. (MCC photo/Isaac Alderfer)

YOUR SUPPORT IS TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY LIFE

DANIEL GENEST, MCC QUEBEC REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE REFLECTS ON A VISIT TO CAMBODIA

In early 2023, I had the opportunity to participate in a learning tour of Southeast Asia. Three flights took me to Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, where MCC has its Cambodia offices. I was graciously welcomed by MCC representatives to Cambodia, Charles and Crystal Conklin. After an introduction to the country's history and MCC's local programs, we took a walking tour of Phnom Penh: seeing magnificent Buddhist temples and the royal palace, but also narrow streets where the rich rub shoulders with the poor. We also saw the architectural traces of past occupiers, France and Vietnam, as well as the unmistakable Russian and American influences of recent decades.

I visited several local MCC partners who are doing impressive work. Most of these partners work with young people to promote social justice and peace. Their focus is on the healing and transformation of young people, who can then address the needs of the poor in their cities. The mission statement of MCC partner Mission Dove Cambodia states that if you don't



positively transform your personal suffering, you will end up transferring it to someone else.

One of the highlights of the trip was a visit to Prey Veng in Sepang County, where the famous fishponds of MCC partner Organization to Develop Our Villages (ODOV) are located. These fishponds are part of a project that helps people diversify and adapt their agriculture so they can generate enough income to lift their families out of poverty, all while using environmentally friendly farming methods. Rath Morn, one of the farmers who benefits from this project, states, “Addressing climate change means more peace. In my family, people live peacefully and there’s no separation from the family by going away to do migrant labour. In the community, people share with each other and help one another. I see improvement in the community.”

These fishponds and gardens are transforming community life and inspiring other farmers to re-examine their farming practices. As a result,

men no longer have to migrate to provide for themselves and their families. Not only can Rath Morn stay in his village, but he is witnessing positive changes in other families in his community. This combination of local fish farming and agriculture has been replicated thousands of times in this region of Sepang, and thousands of families are now living peacefully from their hard work, with enough to support their children and neighbours.

This learning tour convinced me even more of the impact that donations from people in countries like Canada can have. The pursuit of sustainable development through the establishment of fishponds, renewable agriculture and small animal breeding are three ways to help communities restore their villages, pursue peace in a practical way and address the consequences of climate change in a country striving to heal from the trauma and poverty suffered in recent decades. We are thankful for your continued generous donations.



In the photos

Above: David Perley, Wolastoqi elder and one of the course facilitators. (Photo courtesy of Walter Thiessen)

Top right: Participants in the Education for Reconciliation Certificate program gathered to learn, share and discuss topics relating to Indigenous culture, history and reconciliation in New Brunswick. (Photo courtesy of Walter Thiessen)

“The time at the camp was so eye-opening and such a gift to me.”

Brent Bilsky, Education for Reconciliation Certificate participant

YOUR SUPPORT IS WORKING TOWARD RECONCILIATION

The Education for Reconciliation Certificate program at New Brunswick’s St. Stephen’s University offers a variety of classroom and practical opportunities for students to learn about Indigenous culture and history from elders and community leaders. MCC provides financial support for the course, including the costs of inviting elders to come facilitate different sessions.

A highlight of the program this past year was a week-long, land-based course that allowed participants to experience Wabanaki ceremonies and traditions. The elders also shared traditional knowledge and discussed different worldviews. The program was developed in consultation with Indigenous elders, and this course was facilitated by David and Imelda Perley, Wolastoqi elders from Tobique, New Brunswick.

The course was held at Camp Chiputneticook, graciously offered by Chief Akagi of Peskotomuhkati Nation. Throughout the week, participants learned about Indigenous history and heard hard truths about elder David’s personal experiences in the larger context of the long-term oppression of the Wabanaki people. Students were also exposed to language, culture, customs and ceremonies through the teaching of elder Imelda. They participated in talking circles and learned to connect with each other and the natural world. “The time at the camp was so eye-opening and such a gift to me,” said participant Brent Bilsky.



“To be exposed to so much knowledge and ceremony in such a short span of time is something special.”

The highlight of the week came when participants helped build a sweat lodge and finished the day with a sweat lodge ceremony. Many of the participants were not Indigenous and were experiencing these ceremonies and activities for the first time. It was an opportunity for them to learn about and understand the value and significance of each ceremony, and to show respectful appreciation for Wabanaki culture. The week finished on a positive note with hope for the future of positive relationships between Wabanakis and non-Indigenous people.

“I believe that a strong partnership between Wabanakis and allies will lead to positive change and ultimately transform [New Brunswick] society into a welcoming, respectful and inclusive society,” says David Perley, a Wolastoqi Elder.



Students from the Education for Reconciliation Certificate program participated in a week-long, land-based course, culminating with the building of a sweat lodge. (Photo courtesy of Walter Thiessen)



In the photo

Katie Vhevha in front of Parliament Hill, during the MCC Peace & Justice Office student seminar in Ottawa in March 2023. (MCC photo/Ken Ogasawara)

“MCC helped me see that a few thousand kilometres or even my age should not be a reason to stop impactful change.”

Katie Vhevha, participant in the MCC Peace & Justice Office student seminar

INSPIRED TO CREATE CHANGE INTERVIEW FROM THE MCC PEACE & JUSTICE OFFICE STUDENT SEMINAR

Last winter, Katie Vhevha, a student from Zimbabwe studying civil engineering at the University of New Brunswick, had the chance to attend the MCC Peace & Justice Office student seminar in Ottawa. She shares her experience and the lessons she will take with her.

Tell us what you do and why?

I decided to pursue civil engineering, firstly, because I find the discipline interesting and, secondly, because I have found that this discipline of engineering is male-dominated, and I think to see that change in the future, it needs to start with me. At present, I am also an instructor at Worlds UNBound, a science and engineering program that aims at educating and exciting young minds about the true possibilities of the sciences.

What is something you learned at the seminar that you did not know before?

Before this seminar, advocacy was a word that I simply heard often but never truly understood. I didn't know what it meant to stand up for a cause you really believe in. I was always under the impression that making an impactful change was in the hands of people in charge, people of influence or people deemed worthy by society — basically, anyone besides me.

After attending question period in the House of Commons and conversing with an MP, things I never thought I would even attempt to do in Canada, it made me see that getting involved isn't as out of reach as I thought it was. I understood that you do not need to have won a Nobel Prize to start making steps toward a change you want to see.

What did you learn about peace?

To be honest, I did not know much about the history of Canada prior to this seminar. I learned a lot about the Indigenous peoples and the settlers. I also noted all the effort MCC put toward peace and reconciliation throughout this seminar.

The keynote speaker, Mary Anne, was Ojibwe-Anishinaabe, one of the Indigenous nations. I was really moved by how open she was sharing about her experiences and difficult stories in her past. It had me thinking of my country, Zimbabwe, where I don't think I had ever personally seen steps toward reconciliation treated so seriously.

Is there something that inspired you at the seminar?

What encouraged me the most was seeing MCC's partner SCORE Against Poverty making a change in my own country of Zimbabwe. They helped people in the Mwenezi district to have better stoves and to use biogas digesters. This not only helps to fight climate change but also empowers women.

I thought that while I studied in Canada, I wouldn't be of much use to my home country or my community, but MCC helped me see that a few thousand kilometres or even my age should not be a reason to stop impactful change. It was in the moment that I saw the SCORE video that had me thinking, "I really want to do something, too." I want to get involved in creating impactful change, whether in my own country or anywhere else.

For now, I am involved in Worlds UNBound. I believe my part in making a change begins there. I hope that we have a new generation with a genuine interest in solving problems and I believe the best way to nurture that is to start at an early age. One day I hope to run a similar program in my own country.

BUILDING TRUST AND WORKING TOGETHER

Members of the Peace and Friendship Partnership Project in Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia, achieved a significant milestone this year with the completion of a Wabanaki longhouse, a traditional building used for teaching and ceremonies. The organization's goal is for Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people to have a greater understanding of traditional teachings, knowledge, governance and each person's rights and responsibilities as treaty people. MCC provides financial support for gatherings and educational events offered by the organization.

Thirty-six Indigenous elders and community members came together on a weekend in August 2022, gathered the materials for the longhouse and worked together to build the structure. They each contributed to the project: some knew which saplings to select from the forest; others had skills using tools. Participants said the weekend carried a lot of impact because they learned to work together and trust each other.

After completing the longhouse, the participants held a ceremony, led by elders. The ceremony was a learning opportunity where elders took time to explain the significance of each part of the ceremony. It was a safe space for people to learn, without fear of judgment or doing something wrong. The elders also mentored two new firekeepers, who hold an important traditional role in the community.

For members of the Peace and Friendship Partnership Project, the journey toward completing the longhouse was as important as the destination. Together, they practised planning and organizing the event in a decolonizing way. They prioritized the Clan Mothers' knowledge and values, rather than the strict agenda, efficiency and written word which are often priorities for non-Indigenous people. The organizers received feedback during face-to-face closing circles, not written evaluations. They also discussed microaggressions: the indirect, subtle, sometimes unintentional acts of discrimination against members of a marginalized group, that continue to cause harm. Participants came away with an increased understanding of Indigenous culture, Wabanaki ceremonies, beliefs and history.