



# 2014 Annual Report



# level

changing lives through law

## **Toronto Office**

Centre for Social Innovation  
215 Spadina Avenue, Unit 400  
Toronto, ON M5T 2C7  
Tel: (647) 880-2160

## **Ottawa Office**

University of Ottawa  
Room 530, Fauteux Hall  
57 Louis Pasteur Street  
Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5  
Tel: (613) 562-5800 x 3091

## **Mailing Address**

220 Fifth Avenue  
Ottawa, ON K1S 2N2

Charitable Registration #: 864513783RR0001



# LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

At the centre of our work are the volunteers and local communities that we serve. Whether you are a youth, student, teacher, parent, legal professional, human rights expert, Advisory Board member, Elder, partner or sponsor - I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your contributions and support. We know that our success is a direct result of your time, energy and commitment.

2014 was a notable and transformative year for our organization. Founded in 2004, Canadian Lawyers Abroad celebrated ten years of advancing the rule of law and human rights worldwide.

We also reached new heights in terms of our program delivery and impact. We engaged and collaborated with more university students, legal professionals and international civil society organizations than ever before to advance innovative social justice initiatives.

Our on-campus Chapters elevated the rights of refugees in 15 universities and eight provinces by conducting research and hosting conferences. We also provided 23 law students with in-the-field learning opportunities in Africa, Asia, U.S. and Canada, where they supported grassroots efforts to increase access to justice and combat poverty, inequality and exploitation.

Through Dare to Dream, we empowered more than 150 of Canada's First Nations, Metis and Inuit youth in Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan to see the justice system in a new light and to believe in their own capacity to succeed. By building trust and mentoring relationships we created and continue to create powerful dialogues between Aboriginal communities and justice professionals, supporting the path to reconciliation.

For me, the importance of Dare to Dream is evident in the words of Madison, a grade six student in Saskatoon, following her mock trial, "I expected a lot of drama and yelling, guilty not guilty...I see that it's more professional, more complicated and more simple than I expected. I want to be a judge because when I was a judge it was fun." Her smile and enthusiasm continue to inspire me.

2014 was also a year of reform and conversion across our organization. After a year-long rebranding process, lead by the Traffik Group, we are proud to unveil our new name, logo and website, as well as re-focused mission and strategy for sustainable development.

Canadian Lawyers Abroad's evolution to Level is more than just a fresh look. This is a new direction that celebrates our organization's role in creating opportunities for justice in Canada and abroad. It captures our belief that uniting the power of people, education and law will lead to a more equitable and just society. It reflects our commitment to substantive equality. It illustrates a simple truth — when you support Level you change lives.

On behalf of our Board of Directors and Executive, I invite you to join our network of global justice champions, and to support our efforts to combat injustice and promote equality in rights and opportunities.

Yours very truly,



Brittany Twiss  
Executive Director



# Our Team

## **Advisory Board**

Yasmin Shaker  
Allan Rock, Q.C.  
Madeleine Redfern  
Éloge Butera  
Pearl Eliadis  
Jamie Furniss  
Janice Stein  
The Hon. Henry  
Jackman, O.C.  
Simon Lockie  
Armand de Mestral  
Greg Kane, Q.C.  
David Winfield

## **Board of Directors**

Catherine McKenna  
Monique Moreau  
Jennifer Guerard  
Susan Spence  
Alexandra Dostal  
Jake Whalen

## **Staff**

Brittany Twiss  
Josh Smith

## **Volunteers**

Fallon Melander  
Ashley King  
Chloe Mathioudakis  
Roxanne Seekins  
Kelsey O'Brien  
Kurtis MacDonald  
Khorshid Rad  
Nicole Walton  
Johnna Van Parys



# ABOUT LEVEL

## VISION

We believe that uniting the power of people, education and law will lead to a more equitable and just society.

## MISSION

Level is a charitable organization that brings together progressive thinkers and leaders to break down barriers and increase access to justice for marginalized populations worldwide.

## OBJECTIVES

We pursue our mission through **education** and **mentorship**:

### *Youth Outreach (page 6)*

We empower Canada's First Nations, Métis and Inuit youth and their communities through justice education and mentorship.

### *Global Internships (page 13)*

We enhance the capacity of international and Indigenous human rights organizations and facilitate beyond the classroom learning opportunities for Canadian law students.

### *Canadian Chapters (page 18)*

We work with law students to elevate important issues relating to law and development and promote social justice careers.

### *Research*

We form strategic partnerships to tackle pressing access to justice issues and provide legal education to the communities we serve.



# YOUTH OUTREACH







Success Criteria for writing narrative on STORYBIRDS

- ✓ Introduction (characters, setting, problem/conflict)
- ✓ Rising action
- ✓ Climax (where characters succeed or fail at solving problem or both)
- ✓ Falling Action
- ✓ Resolution
- ✓ Proper spelling/grammar/punctuation
- ✓ Illustrations complement text
- ✓ Use of descriptive words

The Honourable Mr. Justice Harry LaForme of the Ontario Court of Appeal presides over criminal mock trial with students from the First Nations School of Toronto



# DARE TO DREAM

## **Overview**

Dare to Dream is a public legal education program for First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth aged 11-14. The program aims to increase students' knowledge about the justice system in a fun and positive way, while at the same time enabling them to develop leadership skills and empowering them to envision a positive future (and potentially a career in justice). The program also challenges negative assumptions and raises awareness about Aboriginal history, cultures, traditions and practices in the legal, justice and business communities.

## **Why the Program Exists**

Historically, First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth in Canada have had an imposed system that denied any emphasis on their own languages, cultures, traditions and laws. The legacy of residential schools in Canada has left a Euro-centric and paternalistic view that continues to affect First Nation, Métis and Inuit children today.

The recent *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* report includes calls to action to improve education attainment and success rates, develop culturally appropriate curriculum and to ensure reconciliation takes place between both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada through cultural competency training.

Dare to Dream directly responds to this report and aids in reconciliation and community building by providing critical cultural competency training for both Canadian Aboriginal youth and the legal and business community.

**[Click here to read Dare to Dream endorsements from Canadian leaders.](#)**





# DARE TO DREAM

## **2014-15 Program Delivery**

In 2014-15, Dare to Dream was delivered in six urban and on-reserve schools across Canada with over 150 students and 80 volunteers participating. Specifically, the program was delivered:

In Alberta at:

- Thomas B. Riley and Mount Royal schools in Calgary
- Siksika Storefront School in the Siksika Nation

In Ontario at:

- First Nations School of Toronto
- Rideau High School and Queen Elizabeth Elementary School in Ottawa

In Saskatchewan at:

- St. Frances School in Saskatoon

## **Outcomes**

After concluding this year's Dare to Dream program, we surveyed our volunteers, teachers and students. These surveys were conducted both on paper and online and we also conducted in-person small group interviews with the students and volunteers in all five locations.

Both the quantitative and qualitative feedback received from the survey and interview process were overwhelmingly positive. The analysis of the results shows that the Dare to Dream program met its goals during the 2014-15 year. The students reported that their knowledge about the justice system increased, they benefitted from meeting role models from the legal community, gained increased confidence and self-esteem, and identified the criminal mock trial as their favourite activity.

Additionally, all of the volunteers reported that they enjoyed seeing the students excel during the program and most found that their own knowledge of Aboriginal customs, traditions, practices and legal principles improved.

**[Click here to review the full copy of the 2014-15 Dare to Dream Evaluation.](#)**



The Honourable Madame Justice M.C. Erb of the Calgary Court of Queen's Bench presides over mock trial in the Siksika Courthouse



## Saskatoon

Saskatchewan Provincial Court Judge Gerald Morin of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation presiding over St. Frances students' mock trial at University of Saskatchewan Faculty of Law



## Calgary

Students from Thomas B. Riley and Mount Royal schools in Calgary posing for picture outside of University of Calgary Faculty of Law



## Toronto

First Nations School of Toronto students visiting McMillan LLP in Toronto, ON



## Ottawa

The Honourable Mr. Justice Hugh Fraser, Regional Senior Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice, presiding over mock trial at Rideau High School's Aboriginal Learning Centre in Ottawa, ON





# DARE TO DREAM PRESS

## Saskatoon

- **Global Saskatoon:** [Saskatoon Students Stage Mock Drug Trafficking Trial](#)
- **CTV Saskatoon:** [Students Stage Mock Trial](#)
- **CBC Saskatoon (Radio):** [Aboriginal Students Hold Mock Trial & Consider Law Careers](#)
- **The Star Phoenix:** [Provincial Court Judge Gerald Morin of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Grade Eight Students from St. Frances School Participate in Program Called Dare to Dream](#)
- **ICI Radio Canada:** [Un tribunal-école pour des élèves autochtones de Saskatoon](#)
- **CKOM:** [Mock Drug Trial Gives Aboriginal Students Lessons in Legal Ropes](#)
- **Eagle Feather News:** [St. Frances Students Learn Legal Ropes](#)
- **SHAW TV Saskatoon:** [Campus Court Mock Trial](#)



## Ontario

- **CBC Aboriginal:** [Aboriginal Learning Centre Becomes Makeshift Courtroom for a Mock Trial](#)
- **CBC Metro Morning (Radio):** [A Mock Trial is Healing Rift Between First Nations Communities and Justice System](#)
- **CBC Ottawa Morning (Radio):** [Sentencing Circle - It's a Different Kind of Courtroom](#)
- **Toronto Star: Dare to Dream:** [Lawyers inspire Aboriginal Kids to Pursue Legal Careers](#)



## Calgary

- **Calgary Board of Education:** [Aboriginal Students Learn the Ins and Outs of Justice System](#)

## International

- **Radio Canada International:** [Indigenous Youth Participate in Mock Trial And Get Inside Look At Canada's Legal System](#)

# DARE TO DREAM SUPPORTERS

## Platinum

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RBC Foundation  
RBC Fondation

Law Foundation of  
Saskatchewan

## Gold

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The Law  
Foundation  
of Ontario



GE Capital

## Silver

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mcmillan

## Bronze

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## In-Kind Partners

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The Law Society  
of Upper Canada | Barreau du  
Haut-Canada



LEGAL AID ONTARIO  
AIDE JURIDIQUE ONTARIO



uOttawa



Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations



UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN



PB  
SC

UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY CHAPTER

pro bono  
students canada  
réseau national  
d'étudiant(e)s  
pro bono



# **GLOBAL INTERNSHIPS**





Photo by Kenya-Jade Pinto, 2015 Intern  
with the International Commission of  
Jurists in Nairobi, Kenya





# GLOBAL INTERNSHIPS

## **Overview**

Global Internships provide law students with important learning experiences beyond the classroom, and enhance the capacity of international and Indigenous social justice organizations.

Through Level's Global Internship Program, passionate and talented JD/LLB students from across Canada have a unique opportunity to spend a summer working for an NGO in Canada or overseas on pressing and often groundbreaking legal issues.

Since 2005, 130 students have provided valuable legal assistance to 35 organizations in 15 countries.

## **Why the Program Exists**

Aspirant lawyers and advocates obtain challenging hands-on legal experience and return to their studies with a new and enriched perspective to share with others and build their legal careers.

Other non-profit organizations gain the invaluable asset of hosting an enthusiastic and bright student to help in the achievement of their important objectives and goals.

“Working at the Commission gave me the opportunity to see administrative law and human rights law in action. Although I had studied both areas of law in school, it was a refreshing opportunity to see a concrete incarnation of both the principles and the procedures. Apart from the legislative framework and legal processes, I also learned about the subtle yet crucial ‘human’ elements in between...”

—Sandra Gaballa, Université de Montréal, 2014 Intern with the Yukon Human Rights Commission

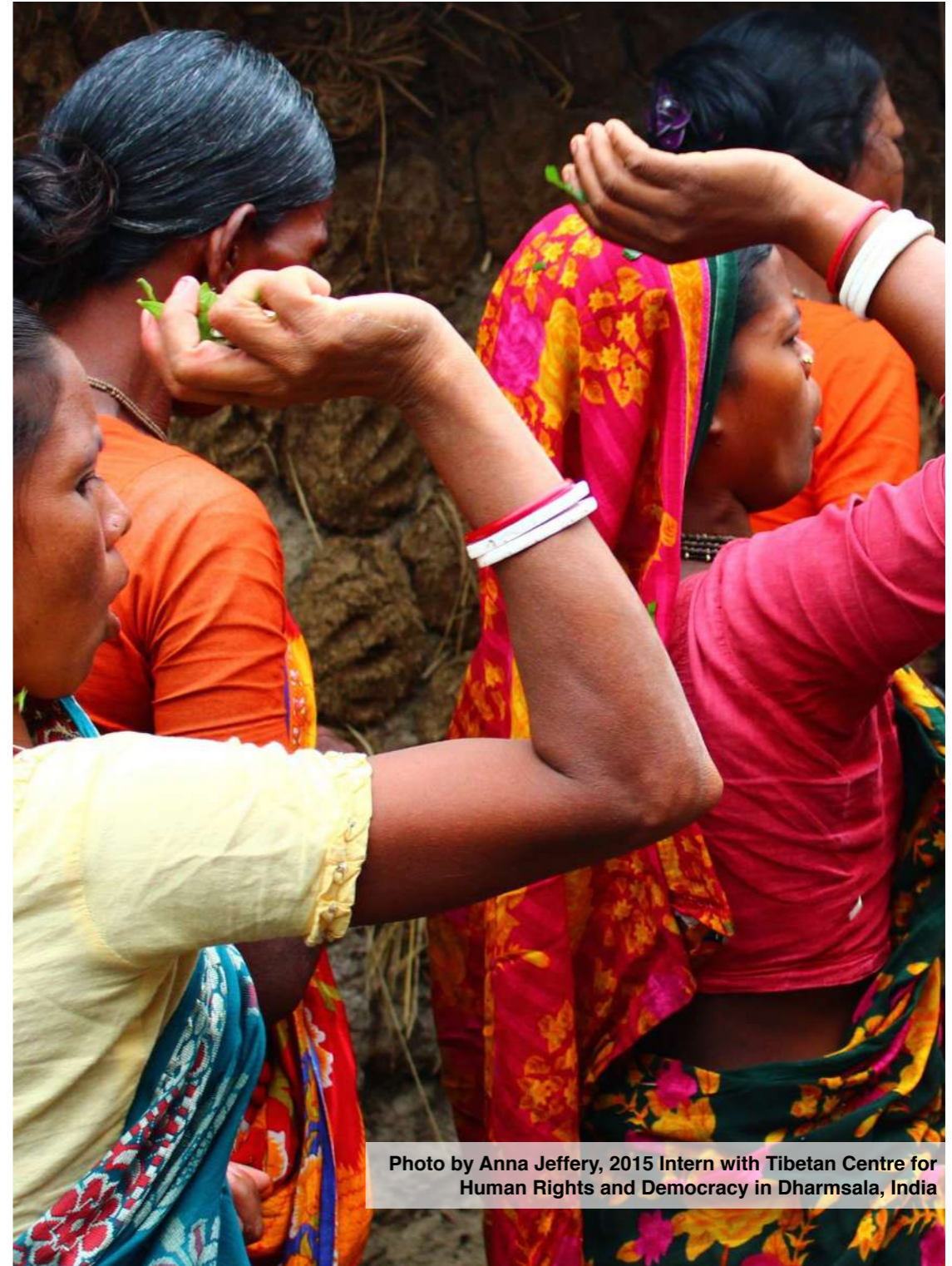


Photo by Anna Jeffery, 2015 Intern with Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Dharamsala, India



# GLOBAL INTERNSHIPS

## 2014 Placements

In 2014, Level placed 19 interns at the following incredible organizations:

- [ECPAT International](#) in Bangkok
- [Federation of Women Lawyers-Kenya](#) in Nairobi
- [International Commission of Jurists-Kenya](#) in Nairobi
- [Centre for Democratic Development-Ghana](#) in Accra,
- [Beyond Borders](#) in Ottawa
- [Avocats Sans Frontiers](#) in Quebec City
- [Mikisew Cree First Nation](#) in Fort McMurray
- [Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council](#) in Whitehorse and Alaska
- [Yukon Human Rights Commission](#) in Whitehorse
- [Law Society of Nunavut](#) in Iqaluit
- [Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.](#) in Iqaluit
- [Chiefs of Ontario](#) in Toronto.

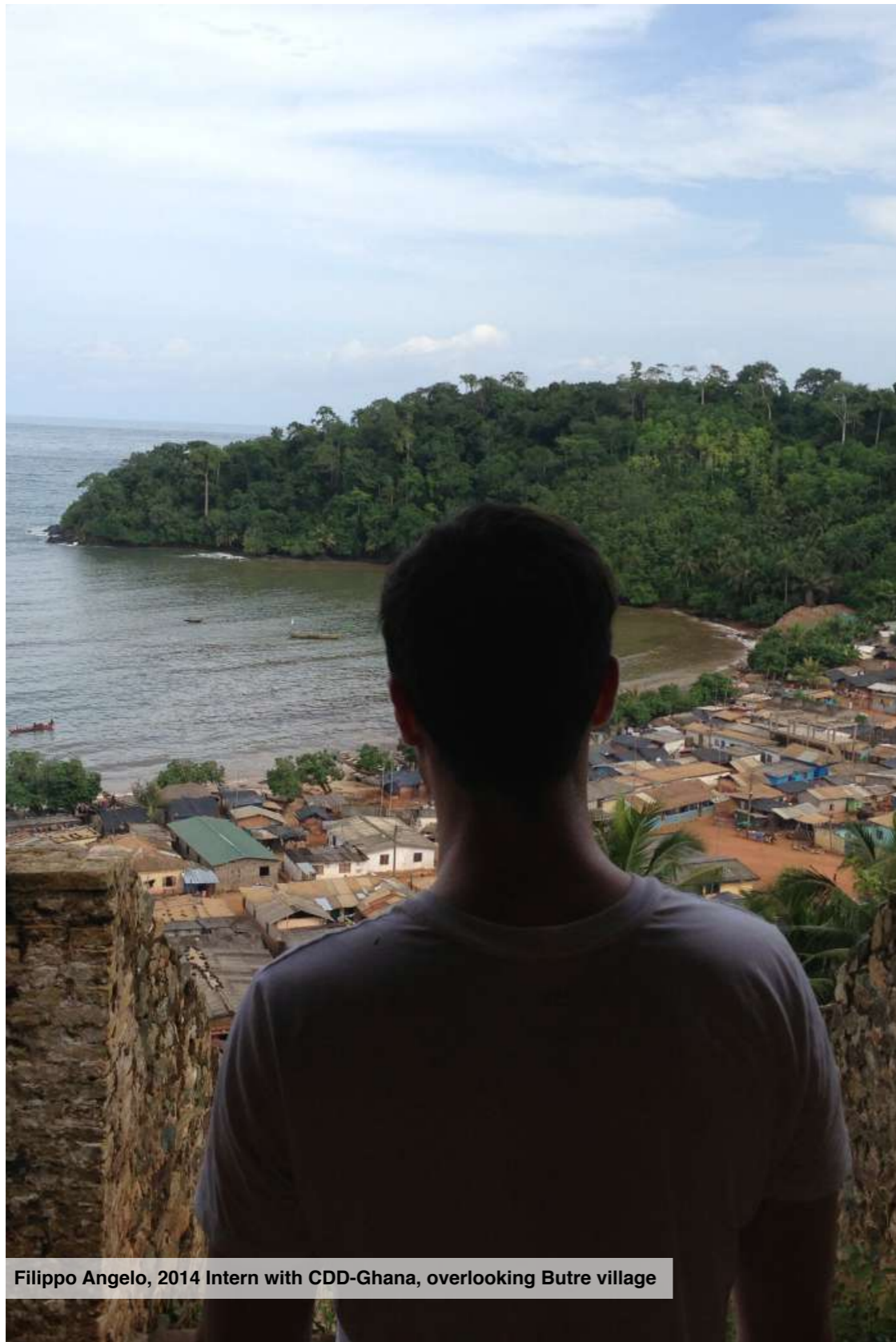
## Outcomes

Our students were exposed to a wide range of legal issues and tasks including conducting women's rights research, prosecuting crimes against humanity, representing low income clients at legal clinics, promoting environmental sustainability, and supporting the work of Aboriginal communities.

***Visit our website to see our students' reflections from the field.***







Filippo Angelo, 2014 Intern with CDD-Ghana, overlooking Butre village



Craig Mracek, 2014 Intern with ICJ-Kenya, camping with colleagues outside of Nairobi



Interns at Yukon River Inter-Tribal Watershed Council cooking dinner in Unit 3, Denali National Park



# CANADIAN CHAPTERS









# CANADIAN CHAPTERS

## **Overview**

Level brings together Canadian law students with an interest in equality and human rights issues to elevate important causes and effect substantive positive change.

Chapters organize events, speakers and conferences on Level's annual theme, which changes each year. In 2014-15, students were focused on "access to justice for refugees." In past years, Level has explored topics such as refugee rights, children's rights, indigenous rights, transitional justice and corporate social responsibility.

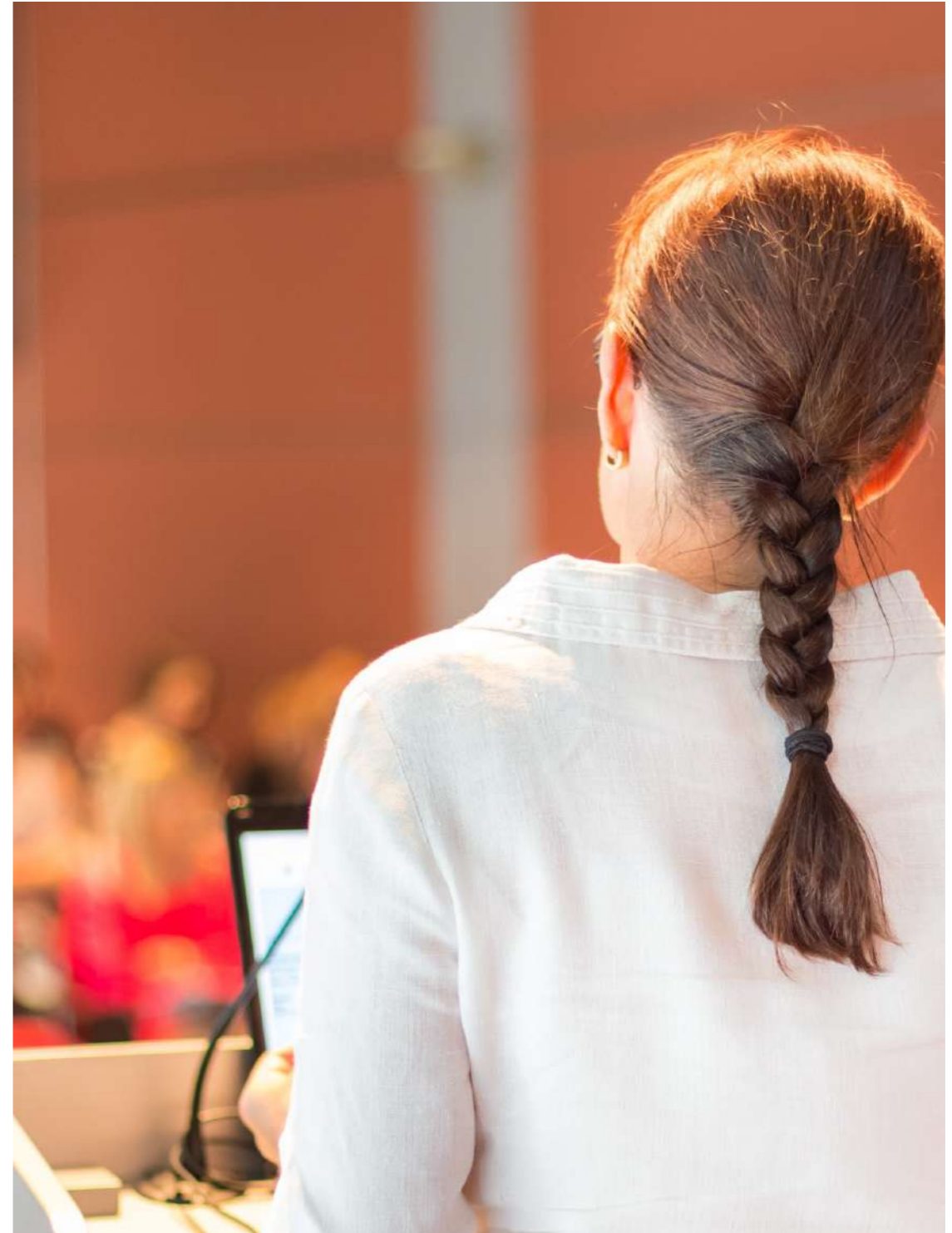
To kickoff the 2014 academic year, we brought our Chapter presidents from 15 campuses across Canada to Ottawa to learn about refugee rights as well as social justice careers, from various experts including Alex Neve (Amnesty International), Arghavan Gerami (Gerami Law Corp.), and Peter Showler, Professor Jennifer Bond and Professor LaViolette (University of Ottawa).

## **Why the Program Exists**

Level believes in socially conscious career development and we acknowledge that today's students are tomorrow's lawyers. Our Canadian Chapters are creating a more aware, diverse and responsive bar.

"The 2014 fall conference was a valuable experience on many levels. The various workshops and lectures from leading academics and lawyers in the field of refugee rights was helpful in further identifying key areas of interest to take back to my Chapter at UBC. The training also helped me appreciate the national reach of the charity; I had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with Chapter presidents from 12 other law schools. It was such a rush to realize how many intelligent, kind and fun people are working together for a common goal. I am thankful to Level (formerly CLA) for the opportunity to attend such a great event!"

—James Hsu, 2014 Chapter President at the University of British Columbia





# CANADIAN CHAPTERS

## **2014 Activities**

We were thrilled with the level of engagement of our Student Chapters across Canada in 2014, most of which hosted impressive events aimed at challenging their fellow students to think critically about international and domestic refugees and the law.

For example:

- University of Western - Panel discussion with Peter Buza, a former member of the UNHCR, and Lev Abramovich, a Refugee Law Practitioner with Levine and Associates.
- University of Saskatchewan - Lecture series with Dabid Matas, an internationally renowned refugee lawyer and UN advisor, and Haidah Amirzadeh, an immigration Professor at the U of S who was also a refugee herself.
- Queens University - Panel discussion with Sherry Aiken, the former president for the Canadian Council for Refugees, Michael Bossin, experienced practitioner and community legal services lawyer, and Nicole LaViolette, LGBTI refugee rights expert from the University of Ottawa.
- University of Manitoba - Documentary screening of *Last Chance*, a film about five asylum seekers that fled their home countries to escape homophobic violence. This film was also screened by the *University of Victoria Chapter*.
- University of British Columbia - Panel discussion (in association with the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers' student group) on the topic of "government cuts to refugee health care" with Lobat Sadrehashemi, a staff lawyer with the BC Public Interest Advocacy Centre; Aris Daghighian, an immigration, refugee, and criminal lawyer with Edelman & Company; and refugee law Professor Efrat Arbel from Peter A. Allard School of Law.



John McManus, Jayne Stoyles, Catherine McKenna, and staff members Brittany Twiss, Ahsin Rafi and Sephra Smith at the Social Justice Careers Panel, HUB Ottawa



Professors Sherry Aiken, Michael Bossin, and Nicole LaViolette at the Queen's University panel discussion

We are very saddened by the news of Professor Nicole LaViolette's passing on Friday, May 22, 2015. She was an incredible scholar and advocate, and shared our passion for mentoring law students to pursue meaningful and impactful social justice careers. She was a true role model and trailblazer and will be deeply missed by Level's staff and the legal community at large.





2014-15 Student Chapter Presidents visit the Supreme Court of Canada during fall conference in Ottawa, ON



Queen's University Chapter conference on "Access to Justice for Refugees"



Alex Neve, Amnesty International gives lecture on the human rights of refugees at University of Ottawa



# STUDENT PROGRAMS SUPPORTERS

## Gold

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## Silver

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## Bronze

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## Partners

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# “RIGHTS OF SPRING” FUNDRAISER

On May 29, 2014, the SHAMBA foundation hosted our fourth annual “Rights of Spring” cocktail party and fundraising event. This was a particularly special year as the organization celebrated its 10 year anniversary — drawing in the largest crowd to date.

Approximately 150 members of Toronto’s legal and business communities came out to celebrate Level’s work and achievements throughout the past decade.

Yasmin Shaker and Catherine McKenna, CLA-ACE co-founders, spoke movingly about transforming the organization from just an idea and domain name to an international NGO that has provided legal support to over 30 organizations in 10 countries. Executive Director Brittany Twiss highlighted Level’s accomplishments and discussed the organization’s short term strategic plan including program development and expansion, rebranding and capacity building.

Thank you to the SHAMBA Foundation, Root Cellar Juicery, Steam Whistle, and Iceberg Vodka and our media sponsor, ZSA Recruitment, for making the event a huge success.

**[Click here to see Precent Magazine coverage of the event!](#)**



Laura Simhoni, Hannah Riding and Laura Stradiotto, The Traffik Group



“Rights of Spring” crowd at the SHAMBA Foundation



Nizam Ahmed and Ameena Bajar, The Daily Pixel



# Level's 2014 Reach

- 15 human rights organizations in eight countries received legal support
- 23 law student interns obtained practical social justice skills beyond the classroom and in the field
- 150 Aboriginal youth in 10 schools across Canada were empowered through justice education
- 80 legal professionals supported Aboriginal youth and enhanced their cultural competency
- Law students at 15 campuses across Canada raised awareness about the rights of refugees





# Financial Summary

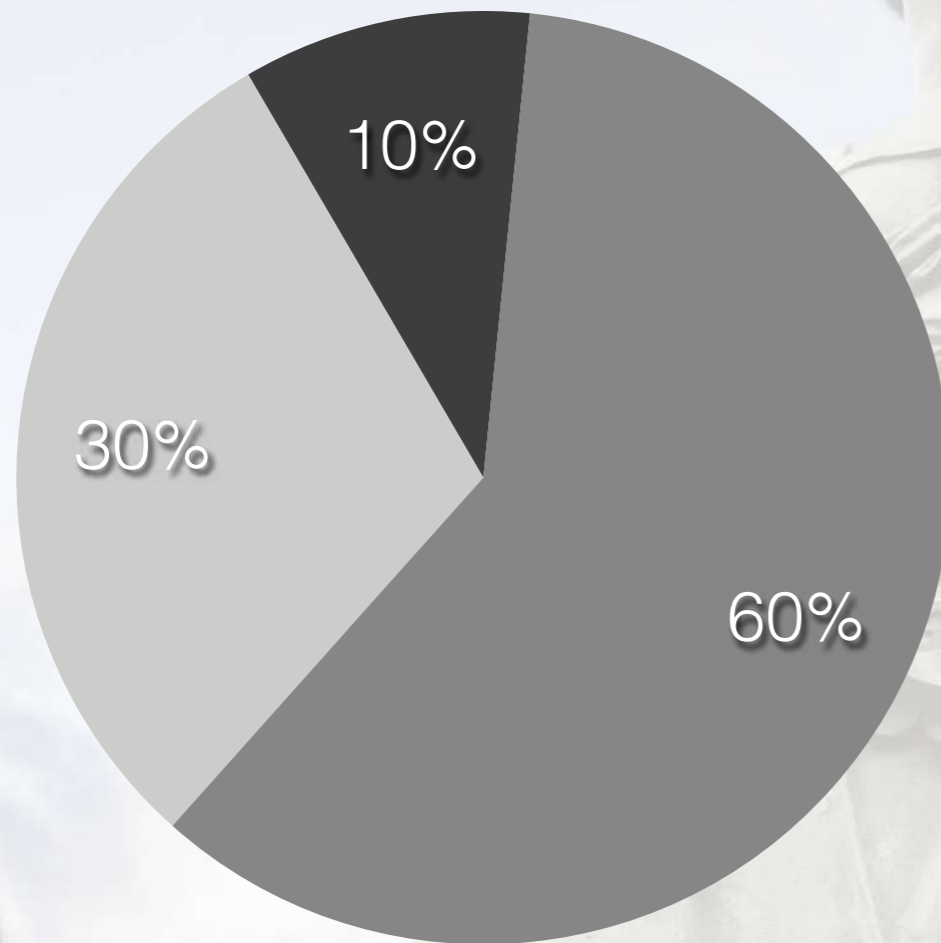
<b>Statements of Operations and Changes in Net Assets</b>	
For the Year Ended December 31, 2014	
<b>Support</b>	
Donations/Grants	\$90,509
Other Income	\$5,264
	<b>\$95,773</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Consultancies	\$65,999
Bank Charges	\$118
Insurance	\$1,292
Office and Miscellaneous	\$3,878
Professional Fees	\$1,400
	<b>\$72,687</b>
<b>Direct Project Expenses</b>	
Rights of Spring Fundraiser	\$3,188
Student Programs	\$16,507
Dare to Dream Program	\$9,310
	<b>\$29,005</b>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$101,692</b>
<b>Excess (Deficiency) of support over expenditures</b>	<b>-\$5,919</b>
<b>Net Assets (Deficiency) Beginning of year</b>	<b>\$56,288</b>
<b>Net Assets (Deficiency) End of year</b>	<b>\$50,369</b>

<b>Operating Budget (Sept. 2014 to Aug. 2015)</b>	
<b>REVENUE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Donations	\$97,500
Other	\$12,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$109,500</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
General/Administration	\$10,300
Dare to Dream	\$65,616
Student Programs	\$33,583
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$109,499</b>





# Funding Allocation



**90% of funding directly supports Level's programming**

- Dare to Dream
- Student Programs
- General and Admin.







# How to Donate

When you support Level,  
you change lives.

Make an online donation today through our secure **CanadaHelps** account, or donate **Aeroplan** points to help cover the cost of Level's travel and supplies.



# Stay in Touch

Get inspired by signing up for Level's Newsletter,  
and join the conversation by following us on  
Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.





