Message from the President

For refugee resettlement programming, 2019 was a challenging year. The admissions ceiling for the U.S. Refugee Admissions program was set at 30,000; far lower than the 95,000 historic average. Additionally, there was a moratorium on refugee arrivals in October: delaying arrivals and creating uncertainty for individuals, families, and organizations across the United States and globally.

Despite the challenges posed this year, ECDC continues to work to ensure that refugees and immigrants can become self-sufficient and lead meaningful lives as integrated members of their new communities. We do this through the support of our partners, donors, and our affiliate network and staff.

In 2019, ECDC’s national activities included the Resettlement and Placement (R&P), Matching Grant (MG), and Preferred Communities (PC) programs which reached 2,988 individuals. Our branch offices in Denver, Colo., Arlington, Va., and Las Vegas, Nev. provided direct services to more than 3,200 clients. ECDC’s Enterprise Development Group (EDG) provided $3,100,125 in business loans. In Ethiopia, ECDC’s Axumite Heritage Foundation (AHF) completed the new AHF library, which opened to the public in 2019.

Thank you for your continued support.

Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.
President and CEO
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Haddish Welday, Finance Manager
Esayas Gebrehiwot, Senior Loan and Technical Assistance Manager

African Community Center, D.C. Metropolitan Area
Sarah Zullo, Director
Bethlehem Desta, Senior Programs and Grants Manager
Yariana Rodriguez, Resource Development Manager

African Community Center, Denver, Colorado
Ron Buzard, Managing Director
Haider Khalaf Twaige, Finance Manager
Chelsea Primak, Program Manager
Mani Dahal, Resettlement Manager

African Community Center, Las Vegas, Nevada
Milan Devatak, Director
Elizabeth Wemmagegnhu, Administration & Finance Manager, ACC Las Vegas
2019 AT A GLANCE

PROGRAM FUNDING

$16M

NUMBER OF PROGRAMS OFFERED

30

CLIENTS SERVED

6,405
OUR APPROACH

ECDC works and advocates with and on behalf of refugees and immigrants to lead a life of dignity, attain self-sufficiency, and integrate successfully into their new communities. ECDC defines integration as a dynamic, two-way process in which immigrants and the receiving community work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities. Driven by core values of diversity and minority leadership, ECDC works in collaboration with its affiliate network of Ethnic Community Based Organizations (ECBOs) to help communities achieve successful integration.
Refugee Resettlement

In FY19, ECDC resettled 1,284 refugees and 419 SIVs across our network through the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program: Reception & Placement (R&P). The majority of those resettled were Congolese (39%), Afghan (28%), and Burmese (11%). The Matching Grant (MG) Program enrolled 668 clients. This program supplements refugee resettlement programming by providing employment services, which include job placement, preparing a resume, interviewing and completing job application skills among others.

Intensive Case Management

ECDC provides training, technical assistance, monitoring, evaluation and oversight to affiliate ECBOs to deliver the Preferred Communities (PC) program. The PC program provides individualized case management (ICM) to refugees and other eligible populations with vulnerabilities, including youth and young adults, single parents, women-at-risk, elderly refugees, refugees with psychological difficulties (including emotional trauma resulting from war, sexual or gender-based violence), LGTBQ refugees, survivors of torture, refugees who are HIV-positive, unanticipated refugee arrivals and secondary migrants.

In 2019, 617 clients were enrolled in the PC program, and 7,123 hours of specialized case management was delivered in mental health counselling, medical, social adjustment services, and assistance services. Community partnerships are key to meeting the individual needs of clients in the PC program. Across our network of ECBO’s, 16 new community partnerships were established in 2019.
Small Business Loans

Through our subsidiary, the Enterprise Development Group (EDG), $3,100,125 was disbursed via 136 loans, which are given to former refugees, immigrants, and low-income individuals. EDG is a cornerstone of our approach to ensuring self-sufficiency among the populations we serve.

Women & Youth

Women and youth programs continue to serve as a bridge to the communities we serve. We Made This, a social enterprise run by ECDC’s local office in Denver, Colorado, provided training to 82 women. We had 283 youth participate in the Mambo Youth Life Skills program in Northern Virginia, and 355 students attended programs at our local East Colfax Youth Center in Denver.

Direct Services & Training

$2.2 Million was spent on legal, immigration, and information referral, health and employment services, and community leadership programs. ECDC’s 25th annual conference and national training were held April 17-20, 2019, in Alexandria, Va., where all affiliate program staff attended.
Axumite Village Development

Axumite Village is a condominium development consisting of 35 units in three separate four-story buildings being built on South Highland Street in Arlington, Virginia, a block from Columbia Pike. Axumite Village is being developed by Axumite Village LLC, of which ECDC is the sole owner. The estimated completion date for the construction is July 1, 2020.
Program Highlight

Ambassador Program

The Ambassador Program, offered at ECDC’s ACC Denver’s, East Colfax Youth Center, is a **10-week leadership program** for high school seniors designed to grow their leadership skills, engage with their biases, and develop their communication skills while earning a scholarship.

In 2019, **15 students** participated in and completed the program. **12 students** received $1,000 college scholarships; **2 students** received $5,000 scholarships and **1 student received a full-ride scholarship**.

The Ambassador program is made possible through the generosity of donors and collaboration with local high schools, universities, foundations and the hard work and commitment of volunteers and the East Colfax Youth Center staff.
**Program Highlight**

**Axumite Heritage Foundation**

ECDC has worked in the Tigray region since 1993 through its subsidiary, the Auximite Heritage Foundation (AHF). AHF oversees the Auximite Heritage Library, which will include an ethnographic museum and the Institute of Axumite Studies.

**Less than 25% of children in Ethiopia finish grade 8.** In rural areas, such as Dimbaza, this is simply because a school does not exist.

In 1995, **ECDC built the first primary school in the area.** Currently serving more than 1,600 students, the school only goes to grade 8. In 2019, ECDC committed to building a secondary school to ensure that the children in Dimbaza are able to continue their education after completing primary school.

The first phase of the project, which includes administrative office space, a 4-room laboratory, one block for a library, and four classrooms, was completed in 2019. September saw the first enrollment of about 140 9th grade students. **ECDC in collaboration with the local community and donors is working on the second phase of the project- the building of 12 more classrooms in the coming year.**

AHF completed the new AHF library, which opened to the public in 2019. The reading rooms and the children’s library are open right now. The library is normally open six days a week, 12 hours each day. The Ethiopian studies collection is not yet open, AHF is still collecting material for it.
**Success Story**

Finding a job is key to newcomers’ ability to work towards achieving self-sufficiency. Through our local offices, ECDC works to provide services to ensure that refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants have the resources that they need to be successful in this process. We provide a range of services to make this happen. We also work to develop connections with local businesses that hire refugees to create a direct link for our clients.

A story from an asylum seeker from Kenya:

As an asylum seeker without some of the required documents such as a social security number and an employment authorization card, she struggled to secure employment after obtaining the necessary paperwork. With the help of the ECDC team, she was introduced to various services that she did not know she was eligible for. The client stated: “I will forever be grateful to ECDC because I have greatly benefited from the assistance offered to me.” The client was assisted with scheduling an appointment to receive the I-94 card. She received Cash Assistance and Medicaid. She also attended job placement, job interview, resume writing, and employment readiness training. An ECDC employment specialist took the client through resume writing and linked her with Foodhini, a local food company. Staff followed up with the client from the hiring process to settling in at work.
OUR TEAM

Our team is comprised of 95 hard-working, generous, and culturally diverse individuals who are committed to helping newcomers become self-sufficient, integrated members of their new communities across the U.S.

In 2019, we welcomed Milan Devetak to the team as the Director of the ECDC African Community Center in Las Vegas and Ron Buzard as the Managing Director of ECDC’s African Community Center in Denver.
ECDC is as an Ethnic Community-Based Organization. Originally established to help the Ethiopian Diaspora, the organization quickly expanded to help not only Ethiopians but also the wider African community. Today, ECDC serves not only Africans but also refugees who come to the United States from around the world through the U.S. Refugee Admissions program.

This was a challenging year for the reception and placement program - the admissions ceiling for FY19 was set at 30,000, a historic low. Arrivals for ECDC continued to decline with just 1,705 refugees and SIVs resettled across the network. This is compared to 1,874 in FY 18; 4,278 in FY17; and 5,614 in FY16. The R&P program also experienced additional disruptions, including a moratorium on arrivals, which extended into November.

ECDC remains committed to serving refugees and SIVs despite the challenges. Our staff are key to making this happen.

"2019 was certainly a challenging year for resettlement. In addition to the historically low presidential determination (the maximum number of refugees permitted to enter the U.S.), resettlement offices across the country also had to cope with major fluctuations in arrivals, serving dozens of arrivals one month and then having several months without a single arrival.

During this tumultuous time, our affiliate directors and case managers have remained a continual source of inspiration. Every time we gather the network together, they remind us of the resilience of the refugees they and the welcoming communities across the country. These energizing gatherings help remind the R&P department of the continued value of refugee resettlement, even in deeply challenging times. The R&P team has taken this energy and driven it into supporting affiliates, from sharing resources about how to work with refugee minors to walking affiliate staff through applying for family reunification visas, step by step, to exploring new models of in-person and remote training. — Carolyn Lamere, Associate Director of the R&P program.
OUR COMMUNITY

ECDC is able to meet the individualized needs of the clients we serve across the country because of the dedication and commitment of our affiliate network members; volunteers who offer their expertise and time; through partnership and collaboration with local businesses and foundations; and because of individuals who give generously.
COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

Volunteers

In 2019, **403 volunteers** contributed their time, expertise, and energy to ECDC. We could not be more grateful for their generosity.

Each volunteer plays a different role; helping to make our programs possible. Michele Fisher is one individual who has made a notable impact in our Las Vegas office. Michele has volunteered with our ACC LV office for the past two years. She teaches Cultural Orientation classes to newly arrived refugees.

We asked her to share the most rewarding part of being a volunteer with us: “The most rewarding point of ECDC/ACC-LV is when clients become independent people contributing to the economics of LV. I have this ultimate joy when clients learn English, build friendships and learn to drive in LV. These accomplished feats by clients certainly create a superior joy within my heart. I believe it touches my soul each day I participate at the Center. The independent people are now a new friend of mine and we all contribute to the economics of Las Vegas, Nevada.”

If you would like to learn more about ECDC’s volunteer programs or apply to become a volunteer, please e-mail: info@ecdcus.org.
COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

2019 Partners & Major Donors

We are grateful for the significant contributions made from the following individuals, businesses, and organizations in 2019. Our programs would not be possible without their support.

FINANCIALS
TOTAL REVENUE IN THE PAST FISCAL YEAR: $16M

2018 Revenue Sources

- 84% Federal, state, and local grants
- 8% Income generation
- 5% Other grants and contracts
- 3% Contributions

NET ASSETS

- $17.7M 2019
- $16.3M 2018

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FINANCIALS

Program breakdown

- Refugee Reception and Placement, 68.70%
- Employment Services, 17.14%
- Health Services, 0.68%
- Legal, Immigration, and Information Referral, 0.99%
- Microenterprise Development, 10.11%
- Community Leadership, 2.38%

Ethiopian Community Development Council, 2019 Annual Report
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