



# Annual Impact Report

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## 2020/2021

# 20/ 21

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Every service is as unique as the communities we serve  
Proudly serving newcomers of all cultures, religions, and ethnicities since 1972  
خدماتنا متميزة كالجاليات التي نخدمها نفتخر بخدمة القادمين الجدد من جميع الثقافات و الأديان و الأعراق منذ عام ١٩٧٢

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# Leadership MESSAGE

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the management of the Arab Community Centre of Toronto (ACCT), we are pleased to present the Annual Impact Report for 2020-2021.

To say 2020-2021 was an extraordinary year is an understatement. The year will always be remembered for how the COVID-19 pandemic profoundly disrupted and reshaped the way we live and work. It will also be remembered for how the community—including our staff and volunteers—responded to the challenge: with flexibility, resilience, courage, and caring hearts.

We began the year uncertain as to what lay ahead, or the impact COVID-19 would have on our community. All we knew was that we needed to adapt quickly to changes so we could continue to deliver on our mission and support our clients during these difficult times.

The first thing on our agenda was identifying the priorities that would guide our decision-making throughout the crisis: the health, safety, and wellbeing of our staff was—and is—our top priority; and we also wanted to ensure that there would be no interruption to our services. Our staff worked hard to move services online and find creative ways to connect and engage with our clients, community partners, and each other. Today, we remain committed to doing our part to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

While the impact of the pandemic was felt by all, it had a special impact on our community, as many before the pandemic were already struggling both socially and economically.

*Dima Amad*  
**Dima Amad**  
Executive Director

To support them during this period we expanded our programming to include a job readiness program for vulnerable youth, resources for women facing domestic violence, and an online homework club to help children keep up with their peers at school. We also joined hands with our community partners to address the broader issues of isolation and food insecurity facing our community.

We achieved a lot this past year, which you will read about in this report. None of it, however, would have been possible without the generosity, support, and flexibility shown us by our funders and community partners. We are forever grateful to them for believing in us and our mission.

In the spirit of giving credit where it's due, our staff and volunteers are more than deserving of acknowledgement. We would like to take this opportunity to express our admiration and gratitude to them for their incredible effort and commitment over the past year. We recognize that it was not easy having to balance working from home with responsibilities to family and we are enormously proud and humbled by their resolve, creativity, and resourcefulness. If this past year has taught us anything, it's that human connection and showing up for each other are vital to our mental health and wellbeing. It has taught us the value of community, reminded us what is most important, and emphasized the importance of building a better and more equitable tomorrow.

*Fathi Abu Farah*  
**Fathi Abu-Farah**  
President

# About US

Established in **1973**, the Arab Community Centre of Toronto (**ACCT**) is a non-political, non-religious, and non-profit organization that works with newcomers of all backgrounds across Toronto. In its early years, ACCT had set out to help Arab Canadians. Particularly in the past few years, the growing needs of vibrant communities for settlement and social services prompted ACCT to expand its services, programs, and outreach to accommodate anyone who comes in through our doors. As an advocate of self-sufficiency, ACCT works towards creating innovative programs and services that adapt to the ever changing needs of the communities we work with. This could not be possible without the support of our team members, partners, volunteers, donors, and funders.

## VISION, MISSION, VALUES

### OUR VISION



We envision a healthy, equitable, and inclusive community that works together to engage with and integrate newcomers and other community members into the Canadian lifestyle.

### OUR MISSION



We strive to enable individuals, families, and communities to lead informed, productive, and culturally sensitive lives. As a non-profit model of excellence, we honour our Arab Canadian heritage through community building.

### OUR VALUES

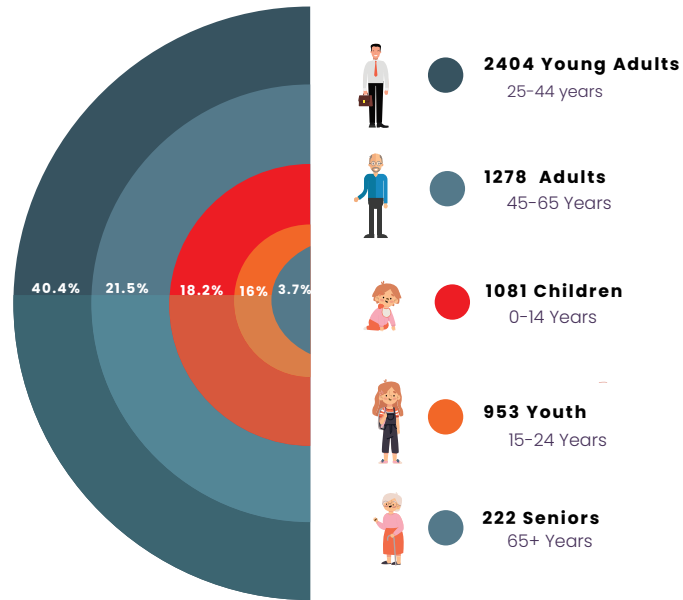


#### At ACCT, we are committed to:

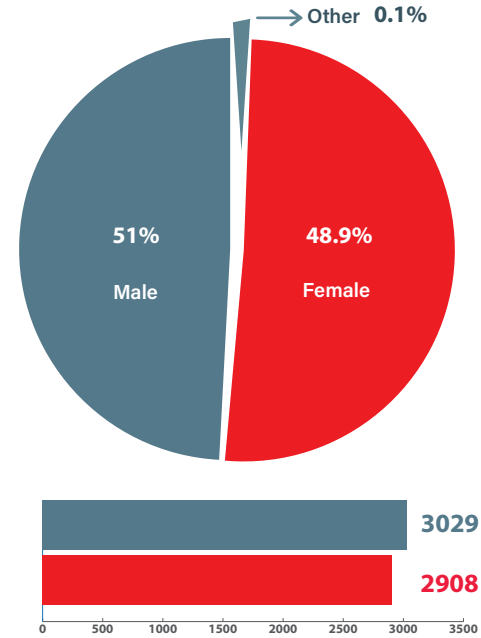
- ◆ Working within a **social justice/anti-oppression** framework that demonstrates our **respect** for newcomers and the broader community of individuals who seek our services;
- ◆ Recognizing our board, staff, and volunteers as individuals who are **client-centered** and **results oriented**;
- ◆ Being **accountable**; and
- ◆ Engaging in **continuous learning** and **improvement** to incorporate best practices and remain responsive.

# Impact & REACH

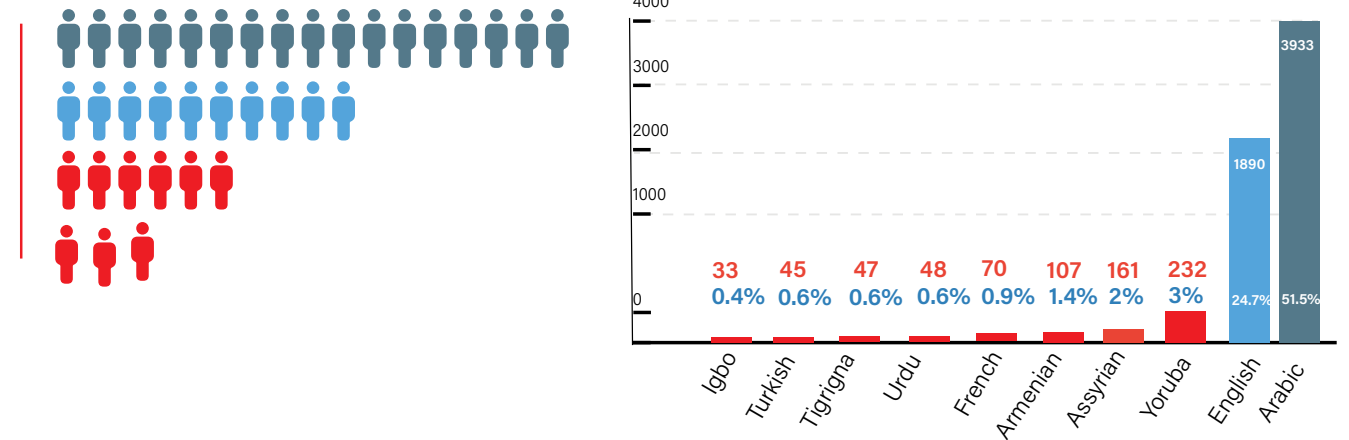
## Age Category



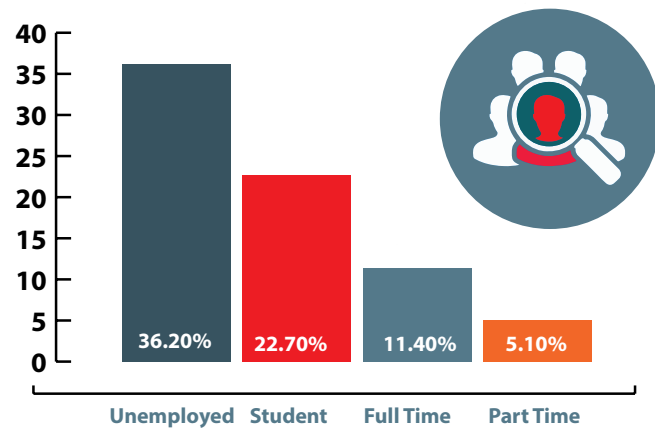
## Gender Group



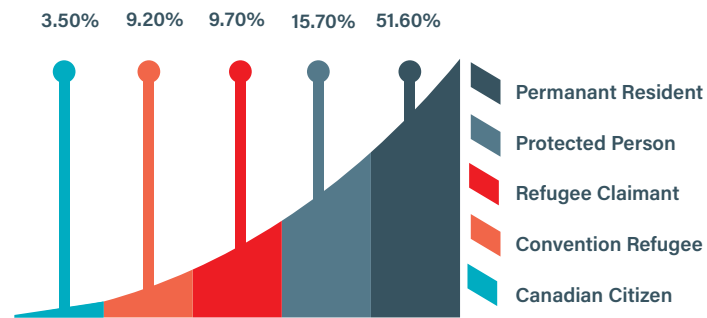
## TOP TEN Languages



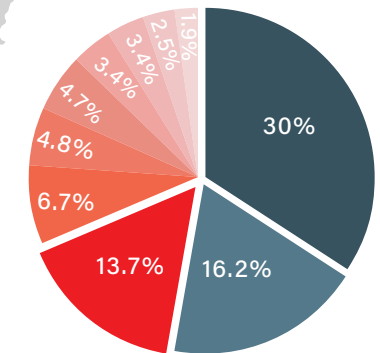
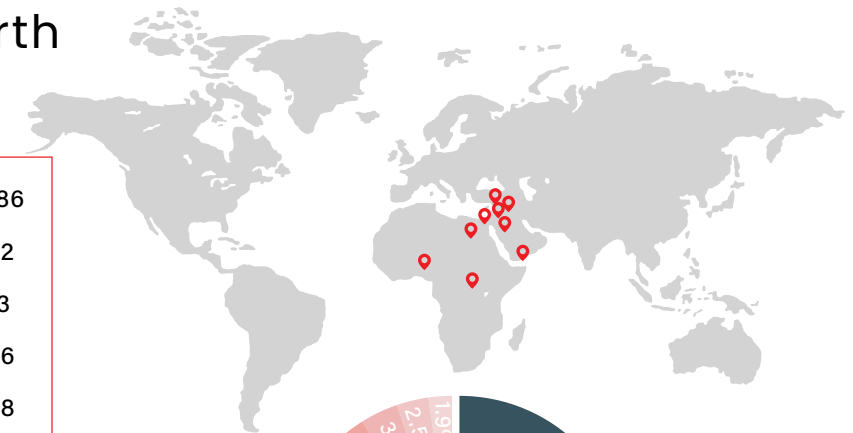
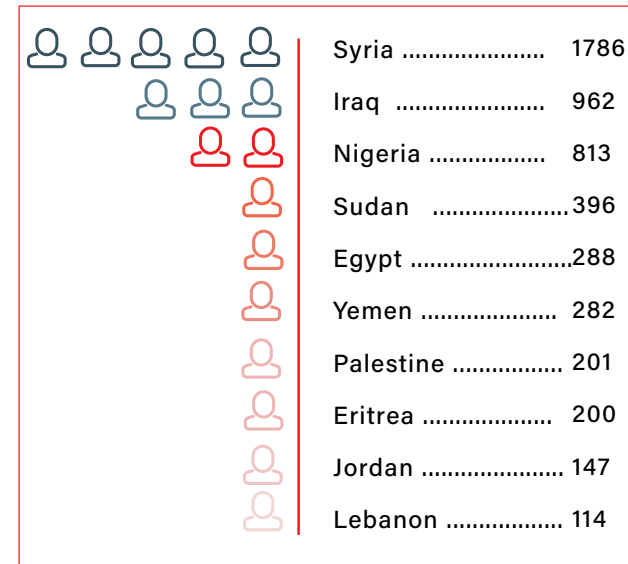
## Employment Status



## Immigration Status



## TOP TEN Countries of Birth



# Programs & SERVICES

## Settlement Services



In 2020-2021, we shifted our settlement services online and continued to support our newcomer clients to access information and resources needed to make informed settlement decisions. Our team of Settlement Counsellors connected with clients through various channels to identify their needs and establish a working plan to help them adapt to the new normal and integrate into the community during the pandemic. The majority of our clients needed help with employment, housing, accessing food security programs, and applying for government benefits. Other needs that were identified: mental health support, activities for seniors to combat isolation, resources for women experiencing family violence, and help with online schooling.

Funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, our Settlement Program provides newcomers to Canada with a comprehensive range of services to facilitate their settlement, as well as integration into society and the economy. Services delivered fall under four main components: Information and Orientation, Needs Assessment and Referral, Employment, and Community Connections. In addition, newcomers with more complex barriers receive support services such as translation and interpretation, transportation support, and crisis counselling.

In addition to one-on-one support, clients participated in virtual workshops that helped them adapt during the pandemic. Topics covered ranged from financial information to housing, ways to find employment in the city, healthy eating, mental health, well-being, and much more.

 **4,780**

Total number of clients served

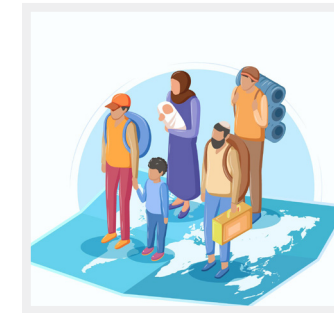
### Testimonial



I have been getting services from the center since 2018. I started with myself and ended up with all my friends and colleagues whom I referred to ACCT. Counsellors helped me obtain my work permit and apply for permanent residency and directed me to other resources. Thank you is not enough for such outstanding support from a great, dedicated, experienced, and professional team.

*Ahmed Bardar*

## NSP Program




The Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP), funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, provides one-on-one settlement assistance to newcomers that includes: needs assessment, goal setting and service planning; assistance with applying for government resources; and information and referral services. The program is especially important for newcomers who have obtained their citizenship and can no longer benefit from the federally funded settlement program. Under this program we serve refugee claimants, clients with temporary residence, student and work permits, as well as Canadian citizens.

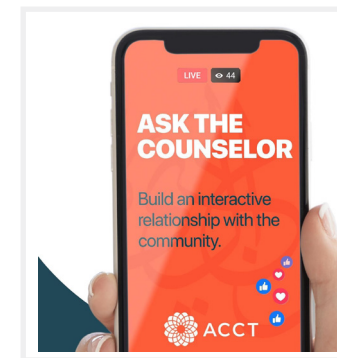
In 2020-2021 we continued to deliver our NSP services remotely, yet exceeded the number of clients served from previous years. Besides our one-on-one sessions held via Zoom or over the telephone we carried out a number of workshops that helped newcomers develop a better understanding of life in Canada. The group sessions covered various topics of interest to clients such as housing, job search, parenting, and managing personal finances during the pandemic.

 **1,392**

Total number of clients served

 **780**

Total number of youth served



## Ask the Counselor Bi-Weekly Facebook Sessions



Launched in June 2020, "Ask the Counselor" is a bi-weekly series of live Facebook sessions that we created in response to increased demand for reliable information during the pandemic. As our clients had many questions related to CERB, filing taxes, government support, online schooling, and a lot more, this series became popular quite quickly. The sessions, moderated by one of our seasoned counsellors, were highly engaging and gave our clients the opportunity to ask questions in real-time while simultaneously enhancing

our understanding of our clients needs and concerns. As the segment's popularity grew, so did our clients' questions and concerns. In response, we pivoted the series to "Ask the Expert", where subject matter experts on housing, health, banking, and education were invited to talk about topics of interest to our clients. "Ask the Expert" continues to be very popular to this day.



Sessions: **20**



Views: **90K**

## English Conversation & Digital Literacy



With the rising need for clients to improve their digital skills along with their literacy knowledge, we merged our English Conversation Classes with our Digital Literacy Classes during the pandemic. Both sessions give clients specialised digital literacy classes once a week. The objective of these classes is to help clients improve their skills and learn about internet safety and awareness, virtual learning and information literacy, social media and technology, computer literacy skills (email, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Office, etc), digital citizenship and digital skills training.

Living in a digital world, computer literacy classes are helping families develop skills which they did not feel were important before the pandemic. Currently, parents are interested in learning to assist their children and to help themselves.

With over 40 interested students, the online classes are a success and received a lot of positive feedback. Families are pleased to see other students through Zoom and interact with them.

Some students mentioned that joining classes and seeing other people positively impacted their mood and mental health. Others mentioned that they advanced in their morning LINC/ESL classes after joining the English Conversation Classes with ACCT because of the practice and extra assignments.



Sessions: **60**

Attendees: **300**

## Citizenship Classes



To continue helping clients prepare for their Canadian citizenship exams, we shifted our citizenship classes online this year. The content of classes continued as usual, with students spending class time to test their knowledge of Canadian history and cultures and participate in mock exams. To meet the high demand for these classes, we facilitated sessions twice a week throughout the year.

## Employment Services



Career Café, ACCT's Employment Services, was launched at the start of the province-wide lockdown in April 2020 to support the integration of newcomers into the Canadian labour market. The program offers both one-on-one and group support to increase newcomers' knowledge and understanding of the labour market. The sessions also equip them with the skills they need to search for and secure employment in their field or related field. With the high unemployment rate among our newcomer clients, the program grew in popularity within a very short time. Our clients' needs varied and included clients who lost their jobs due to the pandemic, clients who were looking to change careers, as well as clients who were recent newcomers and looking to

start their job search process. To accommodate their varied needs and provide them with comprehensive employment services, we developed an online portal of resources and workshop materials geared to their needs. We also enhanced our employer engagement and collaborated with our community partners such as NPower Canada, Resume Target, and Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC).

Our Employment Services continue to grow with the changes the job market is currently seeing. Accordingly, our workshops focus on "Resume and Cover Letter Writing", using "Job Search Techniques", "Optimizing LinkedIn", "Professional Branding", "Research and Networking", and much more.

 **200**

Total number of clients seen one-on-one

 **36**

Total number of workshops



### Testimonial

"I was connected with relevant opportunities and further guided step by step on resume fine-tuning. Thanks to ACCT Career Café I was connected with a hiring manager at Surrey Place. And after receiving an interview confirmation with the employer, Career Café also helped me with interview preparation and post-interview to-do's. And later when I secured the job I received amazing guidance on job professionalism and networking and future career advice."

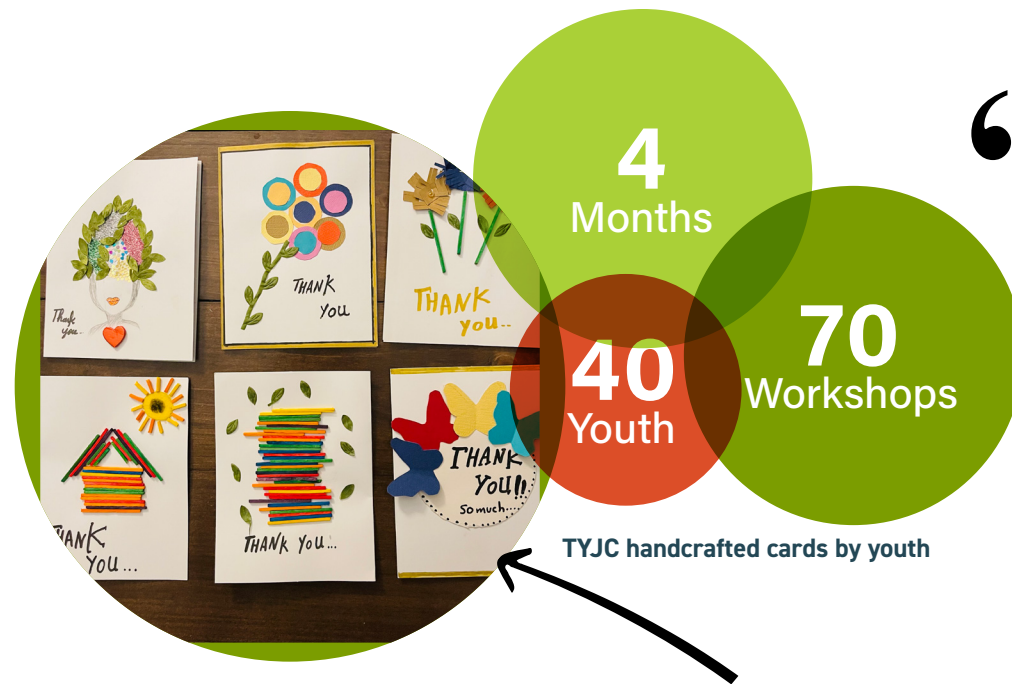
*A.M.*

# TYJC Program

In November 2020, ACCT launched Toronto Youth Job Corps (TYJC), a youth employment program funded by the City of Toronto and Service Canada.

The TYJC program offers employment and life skills training, pre-placement, and work placement opportunities to youth between the ages of 15 to 30 who are facing challenges in finding employment. The program also provides wraparound support and connections to other resources to help youth achieve their employment and educational goals.

In less than 4 months, TYJC has served more than 40 youth and conducted more than 70 workshops, organized multiple training sessions, and invited distinguished guest speakers to share their personal and professional 'journey to success' to motivate youth.



Youth in the TYJC program regularly work with the community as a part of the program. Over the period of 4 months, TYJC youth handcrafted over 700 personalized 'Thank You' cards for our heroes: the frontline workers.

“

## Success Story

Mohamed moved to Canada as a Syrian refugee with educational background in Journalism and Media. He pursued further education in Canada but struggled in finding a job in the field of his choice. He would only get casual labour opportunities which in return impacted his professional confidence. According to Mohammed, his barriers to employment were based on his religious beliefs, immigration status, racial background, and sexuality.

After joining the TYJC program, he regained his confidence. Mohamed successfully completed the TYJC training. Considering his educational and professional background, a placement was arranged for him with a media company. After finishing his placement Mohamed secured employment in the field of social media. Mohamed is now working in the field of his liking and attributes his success to the TYJC program.

*Mohamed Haj Ali*

## Success Story

“

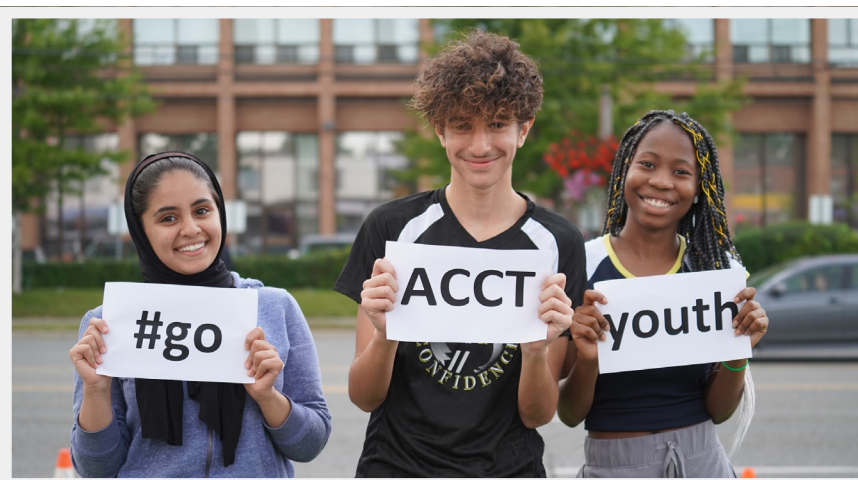
"I landed in Canada in August 2020 (right in the middle of the pandemic). With organizations across the world working from home, I was apprehensive of being able to find a job in my field after landing in Canada. However, only after I started my job hunt by myself did I realize that my problems were far more than being able to find a job. I had to change the style of everything I was used to in my home country - from my resume and cover letter to LinkedIn and networking with people. All of this played an important part in my job search journey. But I did not just stumble upon all this information. I was made aware of all this by the Arab Community Center of Toronto after having joined their Toronto Youth Job Corps (TYJC) program.

When I joined, little did I realize that this program would change my life for the better. We were a cohort of 13 individuals, with different learning abilities, experiences, ages, and ethnic backgrounds. But the support all of us received from the trainers at personal levels was incredible. It was during the training that I was made aware of the importance of networking and conducting informational interviews. Practicing these informational interviews with individuals in my field was what ultimately led to gaining insights to improve my LinkedIn profile and helping my profile get noticed by recruiters. Similarly, I was able to improve my resume and cover letter writing skills, interact with some established professionals in different sectors, support my job application with my trainers supporting me as my references, as well as secure a 2-month internship opportunity with a not-for-profit organization called Jumpstart Refugee Talent. Fortunately, I was able to convert this break into an 8-month long contract with Jumpstart and I continued working with them till I landed my first full-time opportunity in Canada. In short, I believe that ACCT and the TYJC program laid the foundations and gave me all the avenues that were required for me to set up a base to start working in a field related to my field of work. I strongly believe that what each one of us makes with the opportunities we get is up to us, but to be provided with the opportunities in a new country by itself is a big challenge and I would like to thank ACCT for laying the foundation to build up my career in Canada." *Aksa is working at Ryan ULC, as a Consultant, Government Grants and Incentives.*

*Aksa Rose Antony*



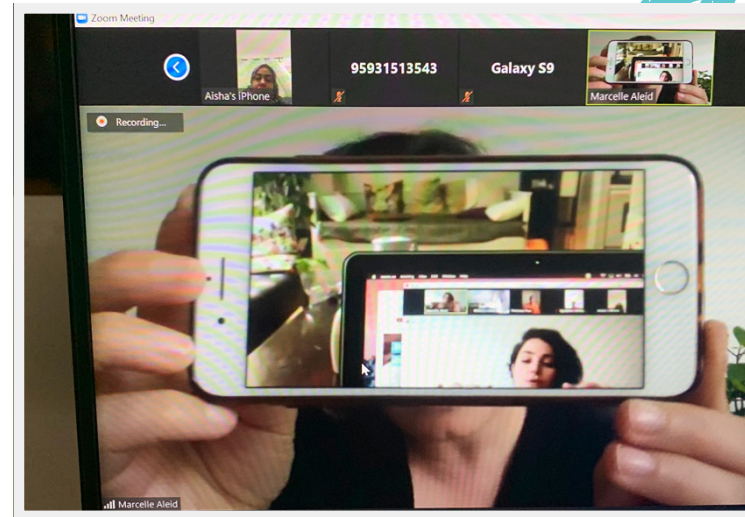
# ACCT Youth



## Youth Arts Programming

### How to make a film during the plague

In collaboration with our partner Charles Street Video (CSV) and Syrian director and writer Marcelle Aleid in the spring, this program consisted of 4 workshops that taught youth how to make a film using only their phones and things they had at home. Five youth were chosen for the program out of 18 candidates from Zoom interviews based on their project idea and anticipated engagement. Outside of class time, Marcelle additionally worked with youth one-on-one on their projects, with the resulting videos covering themes such as settlement and migration journeys. These short films were screened for the public over Facebook Live in August.



We have continued embracing collaborative approaches to program planning with youth during the pandemic. As a result, our programming continued to reflect what is important to youth when we pivoted activities to go online in response to COVID-19. This meant introducing new projects and sessions with youth, as well as reimaging existing programming to be carried out in a safe, virtual space. During this fiscal year, we carried out 80 virtual workshops, sessions, and classes for youth that expanded youths' knowledge on settlement issues; which built skills in leadership, facilitation, and the arts; and which facilitated community connections.

## Media Art for Newcomer Youth

Carried out in collaboration with CSV for the third year, Media Art for Newcomer Youth (**MANY**) is a summer and fall media art creation program that teaches youth photography and animation from culturally affiliated artists. Due to COVID-19, the program was delivered online for the first time this year. To make this possible, we delivered DSLR cameras and Macbooks to youths' homes so that they would be able to participate.

Funded by the Toronto Arts Council, MANY is a leadership arts opportunity that connects youth with culturally affiliated, artist role models and like-minded youth, builds technical skills, introduces them to the Toronto arts community, and enables them to experience the excitement of being part of a participatory arts project. Youth in the program receive professional fees of \$395 for exhibiting their work at the end of the program. MANY works to reduce barriers to accessing media arts programming that many newcomer youth face.

There was overwhelming interest in the program this year. Out of 78 applicants, and two weeks of back-to-back interviewing, 9 youth were chosen for

the program in July. In August and September, youth engaged in 60 hours of class time and accessed 65 hours of one-on-one time with their artist mentors. The project culminated in December with a virtual exhibit of youths' projects called "But I Can Create the Future: (Re)imagining possibilities with newcomer youth in Toronto". The virtual opening reception of the exhibit celebrated the youths' work and engaged the broader community.

Congratulations to Ahmad Lawal, Aseel Alzamel, Huda Abdi, Joelle Awad, Minoo Behradfar, Nikki Hall, Sarah Hamad, Saud Bahilah, and Yusuf Gokce for completing the 2020 program.

In February, we received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund to expand our capacity to deliver MANY. With this funding we procured media arts equipment as well as staff training on trauma-informed approaches to working virtually with refugee youth in arts programming. This equipment lessens our dependence on rentals and the training expanded our capacity to better serve vulnerable youth.





## Youth Leadership Programming



engagement activities, and rehearse their presentations. Youth have since presented on topics such as coding, body shaming, stress management, public image, yoga, scholarships, etc. Presenters receive volunteer hours for school as well as a \$200 honorarium.

### Career Checkmate

Career Checkmate is a question and answer series of virtual sessions that hosts professionals in careers that youth are interested in pursuing. We initiated this series at the start of the pandemic in April in response to one youth who had shared she wanted to become a lawyer. She shared that she did not know how to pursue this career, and asked if we knew any lawyers she could ask questions to. This gave us the idea to open up the opportunity to everyone. Throughout the year, we hosted 10 professionals for Career Checkmate, including a dentist, an engineer, a lawyer, and a UX designer.



**Hiba Rafh, UX Designer at the University of Toronto, spoke to our youth about what it is like working in her profession.**

### Made by Me

Made by Me is a leadership program for newcomer youth to create and facilitate their own virtual educational sessions with learning goals for other newcomer youth. Introduced at the end of the fiscal year, the program is for youth who want to improve their public speaking skills and build confidence in facilitating. Youth who are selected for the program are given a submission schedule for various deliverables, and then work with counsellors to research and improve their content, create

## Youth Community Connections Activities



*We delivered pumpkins and pumpkin carving kits to youth for a virtual Halloween activity and contest in October 2020.*



*Our participation in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon went virtual in October 2020, with youth participating in a photo contest, virtual bingo activity, and 5k virtual walk in their neighbourhoods.*



*Funded by Park People, a virtual scavenger hunt was organized for youth to take photos in Toronto parks in March 2020.*

### Success Story



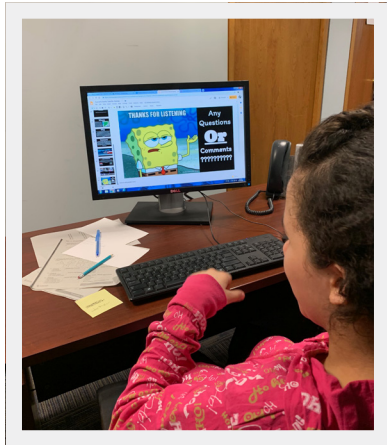
One youth who has been fully engaged with us during the pandemic is Etobicoke resident Joelle Awad, a 20 year old Humber College student from Syria. In the summer and fall, Joelle participated in MANY, our photography and animation program. In MANY, Joelle learned technical skills in animation and created a video to raise awareness on how to better treat folks with special needs. More recently in March 2021, we selected Joelle to be a youth presenter in Made by Me, our leadership program for newcomer youth where youth facilitate a virtual session with learning goals. As a Public Relations student, Joelle tapped into what she is learning in school, and created an engaging and professional workshop on how we can better curate our public image to achieve our desired life goals. She impressed both youth and staff: ACCT would love to have her return to lead another session.

*Joelle Awad*



# Hand in Hand

## Homework Help Online



With generous funding from the United Way of Greater Toronto, ACCT provided wraparound support to immigrant and refugee youth and their families through the Hand in Hand Project. The project addressed the impact of school closures and the transition to online schooling on immigrant and refugee children and youth, and mitigated the risk of them falling behind in their education.

Over the course of 9 months, 12 volunteers from the community who were university students or retired teachers spent more than 864 hours with 60 newcomer children and youth to support them in completing their homework when schools were in session. Through virtual bi-weekly sessions, children and youth between the ages of 8-16 received virtual homework help in math, science, and English.

Prior to the start of the virtual sessions, the volunteers received 35 hours of training on how to effectively engage children online from Edutechnoz, a social enterprise that specializes in online education.

The volunteers also checked on the families via phone calls twice a week, held conversations, and supported them to access various services and online activities based on their needs. Families also received educational board games, puzzles, and drawing materials to offset screen time with fun and interactive activities for the whole family to enjoy.



## Tax Clinic

Tax season and filing taxes are important for our clients. Without filing taxes, our clients are not able to access all the income support and tax credits they may be entitled to. For many of them however, preparing for and filing their tax returns is a cause of anxiety, especially that paying an accounting professional to have their taxes completed is not an option. ACCT's free tax clinic is an important service that we provide to newcomers and low-income clients annually, and this year was no

exception. In partnership with the CRA, we provided support to low-income families, seniors, and women to prepare and file their taxes online, enabling them to continue to access benefits during this difficult period of their lives.

Total number of clients served

**560**

# Women's Programming

## TawasolChat/ Sawa Support Group

TawasolChat/ Sawa Support Group provides a safe space for newcomer women to get together and talk about issues they face in their daily lives. This year we shifted our group workshops to present them virtually to clients, merging both TawasolChat and Sawa Women Support Group to introduce new topics and speakers of interest. Workshop topics focused on assisting clients with various challenges heightened by the pandemic, including unemployment, housing, financial constraints, physical health, weight management, as well as methods of entertainment during lockdown.



Workshops: **25** Attendees: **423**



## Nawafez El Rouh Windows to the Soul

Nawafez El Rouh, or "Windows to the soul" in English, is a women's peer support program that addresses unique challenges

facing newcomer women in the wake of COVID-19. Sometimes, when we are feeling stressed out, tired, or suffocated by life's circumstances, the best way to breathe new life and perspective into a challenging situation is to throw our windows open wide. Our recently introduced program Nawafez El Rouh is a timely initiative that aims to do just that. The program addresses many of the issues facing newcomer women during these unprecedented times, with the goal of cultivating a supportive environment for those feeling isolated, experiencing relationship or marital difficulties, or grappling with family violence.

Launched during the last quarter of the year with funding from the Canadian Women Foundation, Nawafez El Rouh offers women a safe space to share their stories and experiences as well as to gain effective coping strategies. Prolonged lockdowns, loss of employment, social isolation, homeschooling, added responsibilities, and mental health issues created new tensions and conditions that have made newcomer women more vulnerable to violence and abuse. Through a series of weekly sessions, newcomer women were introduced to information and resources in order to help them make informed choices and create positive change in their lives. To facilitate their participation in the virtual sessions, women were provided with tablets, wifi sticks, and digital literacy training.

# Walima

## A Women's Economic Empowerment Project

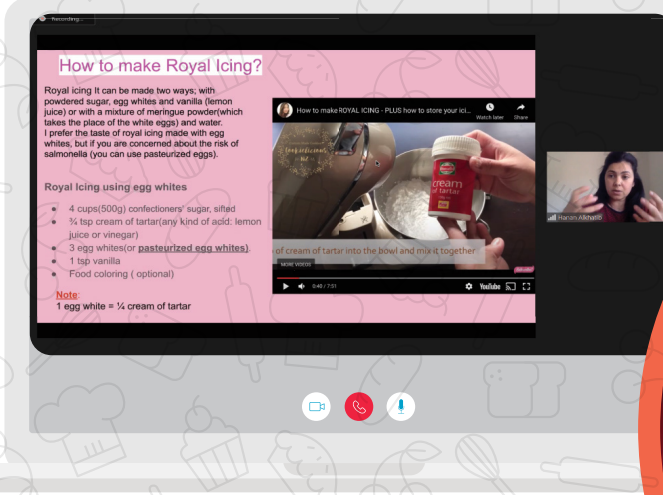
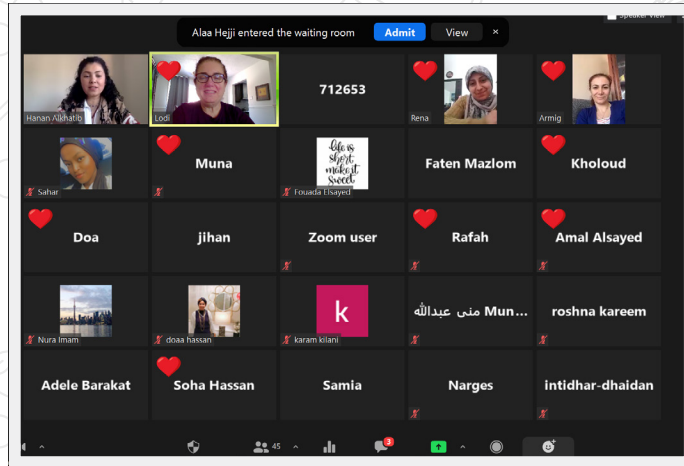


“Walima” means feast in Arabic. For centuries people have been gathering over food, and eating together has always been a sure-fire way to create bonding, facilitate sharing, and enhance cultural integration. Walima capitalizes on women’s love for cooking and the role food plays in bringing people together

to provide opportunities for participants to acquire skills and connections needed for their settlement and integration.

For its last and final year, Walima Arab Kitchen drew in more than 160 newcomer women in a series of virtual activities that combined informal language training, psychosocial support, employment readiness, entrepreneurial training, and safe food handling training and certification. Originally designed to run out of a community kitchen where newcomer women would cook and share a meal together, learn English, develop life and work-related skills, and support one another, the program was forced to pivot to virtual delivery during the pandemic.

In spite of the initial challenges of getting newcomer women accustomed to using Zoom and being comfortable with technology, the program eventually surpassed its objectives and reached newcomer women not just from across Toronto, but from Mississauga, Brampton, Milton, Whitby, Napanee, and Ottawa as well. We were able to turn the virtual delivery of the program into an opportunity: while it threatened to hinder our reach at the beginning, technology ended up expanding our reach and impact as the project progressed, and women picked up a new skill along the way!



Walima session on how to make royal icing



A virtual cultural evening with the community that shared food recipes from Walima and musical performances

### Walima’s final external evaluation indicated that the project succeeded in achieving the following:

- ◆ Providing women with a safe space to meet as a group and support each other.
- ◆ Improving their language, digital literacy, and coping skills through culturally trauma-informed support and an interactive learning approach.
- ◆ Reducing their isolation by connecting them to other women and to the wider community.
- ◆ Enhancing their labour market outcomes through training, language, as well as skill development and certification in safe food handling which enabled them to find employment in culinary positions or run their own catering business.

Total number of participants **370**

Tasting nights **12**

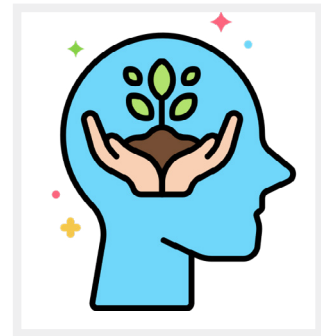
### Testimonial



“Through Walima I got to make new friends from different nationalities and cultures, an opportunity I am lucky to have experienced through the program. I also learned a lot about cooking where I passed the Canadian Food Handler Exam. Currently, I am preparing to open my small business.”

*Nedal Gamal*

# Well-being Program



This year we expanded our well-being services to address the growing need within the community to the challenges faced by the pandemic and several lockdowns. Increased divorce rates, domestic violence, and child abuse are but a few of the issues the well-being team faces daily.

Through one-on-one remote counselling, referrals, and workshops we were able to tackle some of the growing issues within the community. Workshops hosted well-being experts who focused on mental health and well-being, who were able to respond to client questions and concerns.



Workshops on 'Positive Parenting' presented by the Peel Children Aid Society, 'An energetic approach to dealing with stress', and 'Marital Challenges Steps to turn Problems into Solutions' are a few of the topics we covered over the past year.

# WES Gateway Program

World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping international students and professionals to achieve their educational and professional goals in Canada. ACCT continues to provide its WES services remotely to meet client needs in receiving Canadian credentials to their degrees, be it skilled workers or international students.



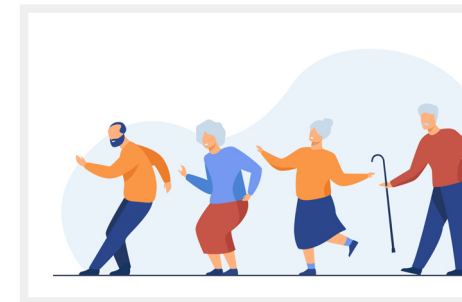
Total Number of Clients served  **80**

Top Three countries:  **Syria**  
**Iraq**  
**Egypt** 



# Seniors Programming

## Liqa'a



Federally funded by The New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) under Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Liqa'a, or "meeting" in Arabic, engaged a group of 15 senior men to support the social participation and inclusion of seniors. Twice a month, the men met virtually in educational interaction sessions that were planned by the participants themselves.

Through tablets loaned to them, the senior men were able to increase their interaction with one another through Zoom and WhatsApp for the project. The men took participatory decisions for the project operation, which helped them to feel more valued. Starting from selecting dates, deciding topics and

expert speakers, and then planning details of the Memory Book Launch event, the seniors participated actively to support the project's activities. Board games like chess and backgammon were gifted to the men in order to contribute to the sustenance of the project's impact.

The project hosted 7 sessions. These sessions covered topics such as: Key Risks for Retirement Planning and How to Avoid Them; Fraud and Scams related to Banking, Loneliness, Emotional Needs; Staying Active by Contributing to the Community; Real Estate and Mortgage; Aging and Exercise; Health, Nutrition and Eating Habits; Mental Illness and Mental Health. Hosted by the senior participants, speakers from specific fields of expertise were invited to facilitate the sessions.

To create intergenerational connections, 5 youths also engaged in the project. They collected and documented the memories of the senior men to produce a memory book with the help of a visual artist and content developer. The creative component of the memory book will highlight the senior's stories.

### Testimonial



"The project was an excellent experience for seniors during the COVID-19 pandemic. It gave them some relief from stress and anxiety, and learned some digital technology. Documentation of our memories will give it an exceptional success"

*Dr. Abdulkhalk Uramahei*

# Community CONNECTIONS

To work towards achieving our organization's vision, we regularly initiate and participate in initiatives that promote community engagement for our clients. During the first year of the pandemic, the focus of these activities was primarily on food distribution as so many members of the Toronto, Etobicoke, and Scarborough communities experienced increased poverty and vulnerability due to COVID-19. Food security consequently rose in the list of priorities for our clients to a very timely and critical concern, particularly for seniors, large families, and single parent households. Through the arts this year, our community connections activities also facilitated greater understanding between newcomers, more established Canadians, and Indigenous communities. Finally, as we had to pivot the delivery of all of our services and programs to go online, this enabled us to serve clients who otherwise would not have been able to visit our offices due to geographical distance. This increased the number of clients that we saw from previous years.

## Increasing food security

### Local Love Emergency Fund for COVID-19

Thanks to the Local Love Emergency Fund for COVID-19 from the United Way of Greater Toronto, ACCT provided 90 vulnerable families and seniors with food baskets, sanitary products, and grocery gift cards. These critical items helped our clients sustain their livelihoods, health, and dignity while mitigating the harsh impact of the pandemic.

The distribution of the food baskets and gift cards was carried out by our counsellors and volunteers in accordance with provincial health and safety guidelines and physical distancing protocols. Our counsellors took this opportunity to check in with clients in-person, see how they are holding up, and to offer additional support. In a way, and as the name suggests, the United Way of Greater Toronto enabled ACCT to extend real acts of "local love" without which many members of our vulnerable communities would have faced more dire consequences.



## Neighborhood Table @Home

For the third year, ACCT partnered with St. Philips Lutheran Church in Etobicoke for the Neighborhood Table program. Renamed to the "Neighborhood Table @Home" this year, the project sought to increase food security and facilitate community connections by providing engaging activities for the family centered around food preparation. Providing 27 clients with fresh food boxes from the St. Philips farmers market, Neighborhood Table @Home carried out four rounds of 8-week cycles that ran through the summer, spring, winter, and fall. Families were provided with recipes to practice that fit the season and were given the opportunity to join Zoom classes with professional chefs to learn how to cook new nutritional dishes.

During the summer cycle, families also received \$100 grocery gift cards from United Way. Neighborhood Table @Home provided an opportunity during lockdown to educate newcomers from the Arab world about cultural exchange, community involvement, understanding various religions, and appreciating the diversity of Canadian society.



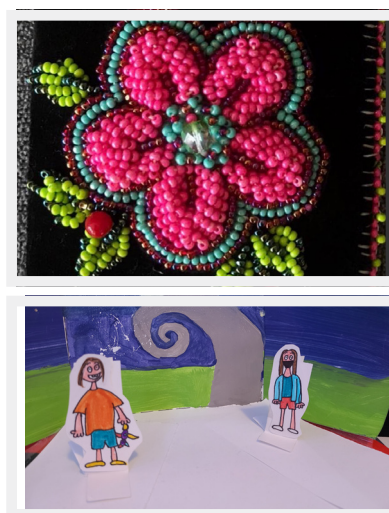
## Special thanks to

- ◆ The **Tzu Chi Foundation** is a local not-profit organization that has been providing donations and generous support to our clients for many years. This year, Tzu Chi provided Ramadan food bags for 80 ACCT clients and families to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan as well as back-to-school bags with educational material, books, and writing supplies for children and youth. The Tzu Chi Foundation furthermore delivered these donations to our clients' homes. Thank you Tzu Chi for your continued support to the community!
- ◆ This year, the **Al-Huda Institute** Canada provided **50 food baskets** and Eid gifts to our clients for Ramadan. These generous donations assisted our clients in alleviating food scarcity concerns during the holy month. In December, Al-Huda also provided new winter jackets and accessories to 50 families.

## Promoting engagement through the arts with MABELLEarts

The strongest determinants of integration in a society are people's ability to feel connected, to feel that they belong, and to feel "home". With our long-standing partner MABELLEarts, this year we strengthened this community connection for newcomers and refugees through several series of arts workshops. In 2020, MABELLEarts led, with ACCT and with generous funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), a workshop series that used art to deepen relationships among beneficiaries and their

communities, including more established Canadians and Indigenous populations. The workshops, which covered different themes, used art as a medium to further community engagement and build language skills. They increased the involvement of newcomers in local communities, provided them with means for universal self-expression, and improved their confidence and sense of belonging.

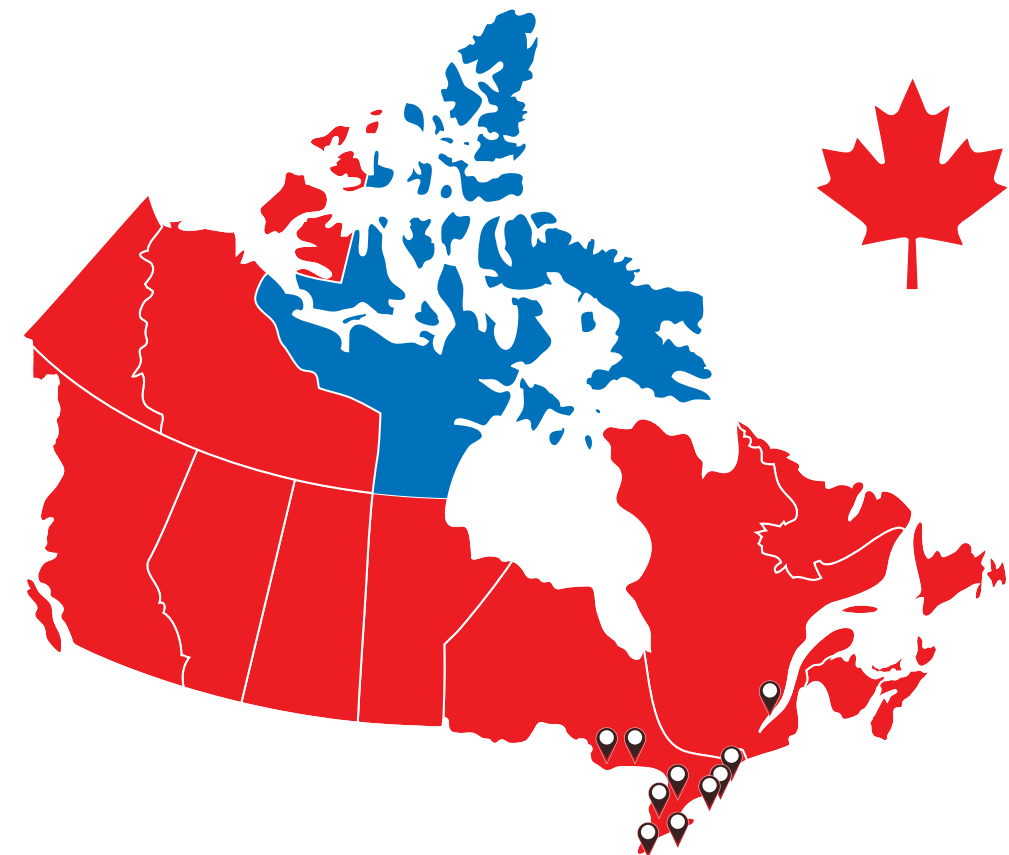


## Increasing reach through virtual delivery

One of the main outcomes of the pandemic was ACCT's ability to reach clients living outside of the Greater Toronto Area. Through virtual delivery of programs and services, we supported clients from all across Ontario and also supported clients living in Quebec. At the press of a button, clients were able to learn about our services and activities with great ease. Pivoting to virtual delivery also engendered innovation among our staff, with many team members continually creating new virtual activities and sessions to facilitate connections among the communities

we work with. Among these activities was a photography contest funded by Park People that we ran in the spring. For this contest clients had submitted photographs of natural spaces in Toronto parks and then the public voted on their favourite images.

Our community connections activities would not have been possible without the tireless work of our volunteers. To the **65** volunteers who contributed a total of **1300** volunteer hours towards our mission this year, thank you.



# Capacity Building for Grassroots Groups

As a trustee organization, ACCT provides support to grassroots groups to achieve their vision through mentorship and sharing of experience and expertise. From financial management to leadership development, grassroots groups have access to an array of services that enables them to implement initiatives that address needs identified by them. This year, we supported Say Somaali, Hooyo iHub, and Black New Youth in the 6ix.

## Say Somaali



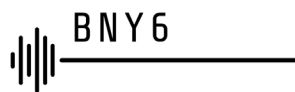
This year we supported Say Somaali, a Somali youth grassroots group with a mission to eliminate barriers, mint new leaders, and build the capacity of Somali youth to succeed. Say Somaali aims to bridge the disconnect between Somali professionals and Somali youth by providing holistic mentorship opportunities. The group is currently funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation Youth Opportunities Fund.

## Hooyo iHub



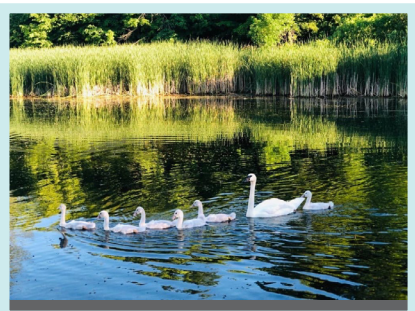
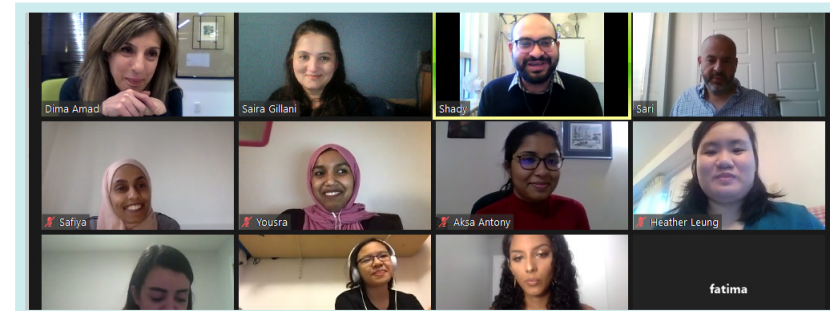
We also provided support to Hooyo iHub, a women's economic empowerment program that aims to build self-reliance and resilience of Somali single mothers in Etobicoke through weekly gatherings and semi-annual retreats. Hooyo works to strengthen employment skills and opportunities, while also providing a safe platform for information exchange, social cohesiveness and reducing social isolation. Hooyo, mothers in Somali, is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation Youth Opportunities Fund

## Black New Youth in the 6ix



This year, we supported Black New Youth in the 6ix (BNY6) in carrying out their first project entitled "What community safety means to us." Funded through the City of Toronto's Identify N' Impact grant, the youth-led project seeks to understand Nigerian youths' experiences of community safety in Toronto refugee shelters. The group facilitated group sessions and then created a booklet with recommendations for the settlement sector. The project directly impacted 50 youth, and engaged the youth leads in continuous project mentorship from January 2020 to March 31, 2021. It culminated in an end-of-project event where youth shared the project's findings.

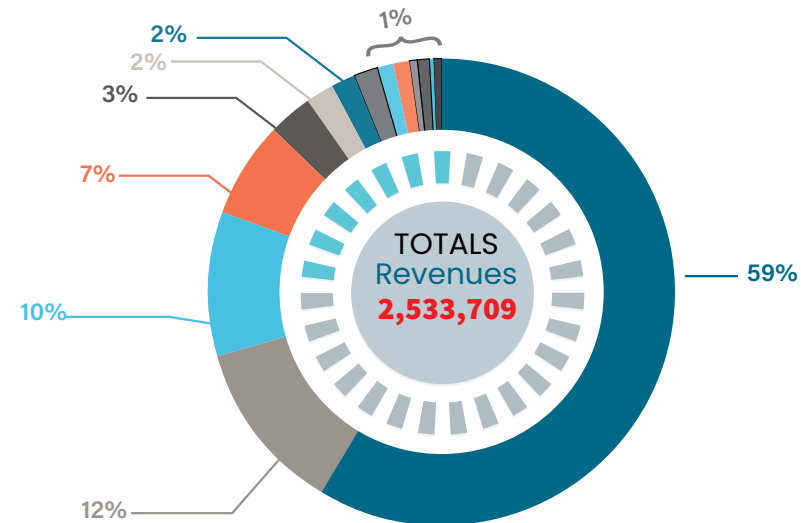
# Our favourite memories this year



# Financial STATEMENT

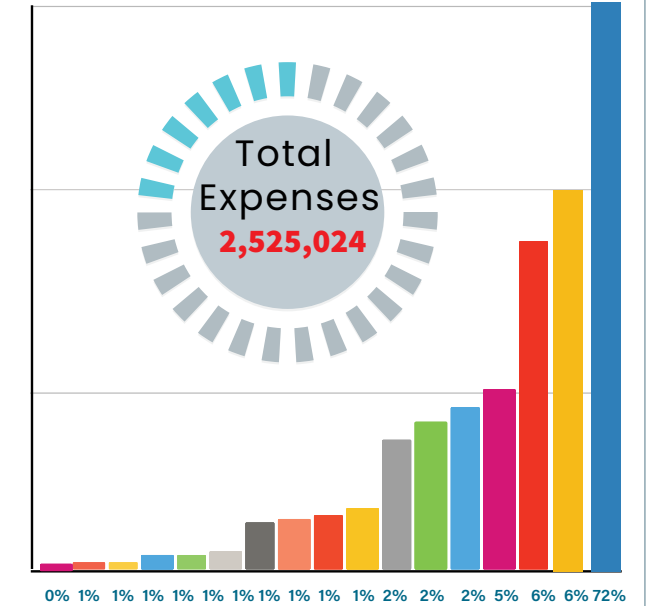
## Revenues

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| ● Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Settlement Program)   | \$1,488,329 |
| ● City of Toronto (Toronto Youth Job Corps)                           | \$304,064   |
| ● Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Walima)               | \$254,946   |
| ● Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (NSP)           | \$165,435   |
| ● Ontario Trillium Foundation   | \$78,199    |
| ● United Way of Greater Toronto                                       | \$49,966    |
| ● City of Toronto (CSP)   | \$43,010    |
| ● Other Grants and Donations  | \$37,772    |
| ● Canadian Women's Foundation   | \$30,704    |
| ● Employment and Social Development Canada (Canada Summer Jobs)       | \$25,642    |
| ● Toronto Arts Council  | \$20,000    |
| ● Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (Pay Equity)    | \$15,369    |
| ● City of Toronto (Investing in Neighborhoods)                        | \$10,827    |
| ● Employment and Social Development Canada (New Horizons for Seniors) | \$9,446     |



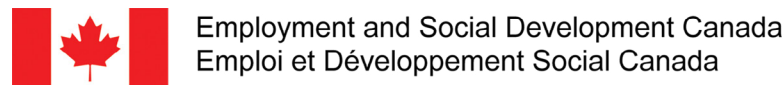
## Expenses

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| ● Salaries and wages                   | \$1,824,993 |
| ● Rent                                 | \$162,536   |
| ● Contractual services                 | \$161,948   |
| ● Workshops and conferences            | \$118,571   |
| ● IT support expenses                  | \$50,996    |
| ● Professional fees                    | \$46,223    |
| ● Provision for facilities improvement | \$42,199    |
| ● Amortization                         | \$37,165    |
| ● Telephone                            | \$17,758    |
| ● Advertising and promotion            | \$15,862    |
| ● HST expense                          | \$14,710    |
| ● Office supplies                      | \$13,558    |
| ● Repairs and maintenance              | \$4,987     |
| ● Insurance                            | \$4,187     |
| ● Client transportation                | \$4,029     |
| ● Other expenses                       | \$2,659     |
| ● Travel and parking                   | \$1,966     |
| ● Bank charges and interest            | \$677       |

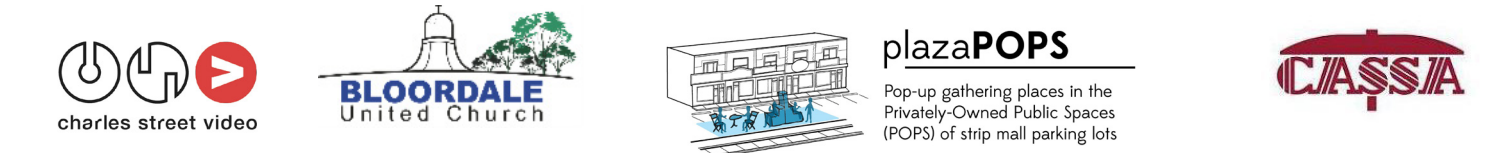
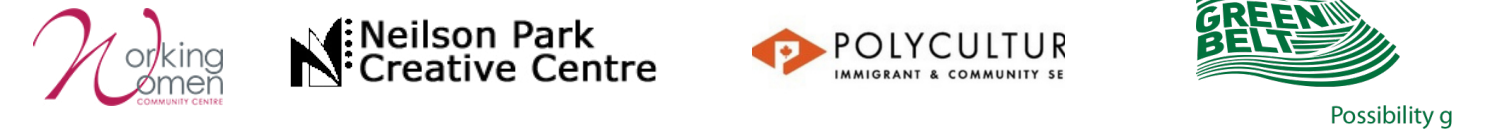




# Our FUNDERS



# Our COLLABORATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS





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### Main Office

555 Burnhamthorpe Road, Suite 209  
Etobicoke, Ontario M9C 2Y3

### Scarborough Office

1855 Lawrence Avenue East  
Scarborough, ON M1R 2Y3



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### Phone & More Info

Phone: (416) 231-7746  
Fax: (416) 231-4770



### Online Information

Email: [info@acctonline.ca](mailto:info@acctonline.ca)



[@acctonline](https://www.acctonline.ca)

