



ACCT

ARAB COMMUNITY CENTRE OF TORONTO  
مركز الجالية العربية في تورنتو

2018-19

**ANNUAL  
IMPACT  
REPORT**





# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2018-19

Every service is as unique as the communities we assist.  
Proudly serving newcomers of all cultures, religions and ethnicities since 1973.



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# MESSAGE FROM ACCT BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

It gives the Arab Community Centre of Toronto's (ACCT) Board of Directors and Staff great pleasure to introduce the 2018-2019 Impact Report. This fiscal year marks the ACCT's 47<sup>th</sup> year serving newcomers of all cultures, religions and ethnicities across the Greater Toronto Area.

In cooperation with communities, ACCT continues to assist families to build lives in Canada through a multi-service, inclusive and culturally sensitive approach. Through programming and service delivery, ACCT meets the changing settlement needs of newcomers. With an eye on the longer term impact, our work this year focused more on programming and strategic partnerships.

We introduced a variety of innovative programming for youth, women and families this year. We created TawasolChat and SawaWomen, two series of workshops that cover different topics to equip newcomers with pertinent knowledge and skills for day to day life in Canada. These programs are in addition to the weekly English Conversation Circles, Computer Classes and Citizenship classes offered to clients. We partnered with other organizations to carry out green projects in the city.

This year, we also introduced two in-house programs for youth and women: ACCT Youth and Walima. Previously known as the ACCT Kitchen Project, Walima is an economic empowerment program for newcomer women that utilizes culinary skills women already possess and equips them with business knowledge and improved English language skills. Upon completing the program they receive foodhandler certificates and go on to open their own catering business.

ACCT Youth was created to build skills, access leadership opportunities, and develop a sense of belonging within an engaged community of youth. Teens accessed our Youth Drop-In in Scarborough two evenings a week, martial arts classes in both our locations, Homework Club in Etobicoke, and ongoing educational trips across the city. Additionally, as creative self-expression is a priority for youth, we piloted Media Art for Newcomer Youth (MANY) this year and participated in the Myseum of Toronto's Intersections Festival for a second year in a row. With the dramatic increase in youth engagement at ACCT this year, our theme of this impact report is youth-focused.

We thank all of our partners, sponsors, and volunteers for their generous support. With your commitment and energy we are able to continue serving the ACCT community and achieve goals we set out for the organization.

Overall, the past year has been filled with program successes, new opportunities, a new level of enthusiasm and vision for the ACCT. We look forward to the new fiscal year and what it holds.

**-ACCT Board of Directors and Staff**

# 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 have prompted ACCT to expand its services, programs, and outreach to accommodate anyone who comes in through our doors. As an advocate for 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.

## 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 and empower 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 broader community of individuals who seek our services
- ▶ Recognizing our board, staff and volunteers as individuals who are client-centered and result oriented
- ▶ Being accountable
- ▶ Engaging in continuous learning and improvement to incorporate best practices and remain responsive

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Rania Younes

- President

### Ahmed Afheel

- Vice President

### Malika Mounir

- Secretary

### Fathi Abu-Farah

- Treasurer

### Jehad Aliweawi

- Member

### Nazar Poladian

- Member

### Osman Hamid

- Member

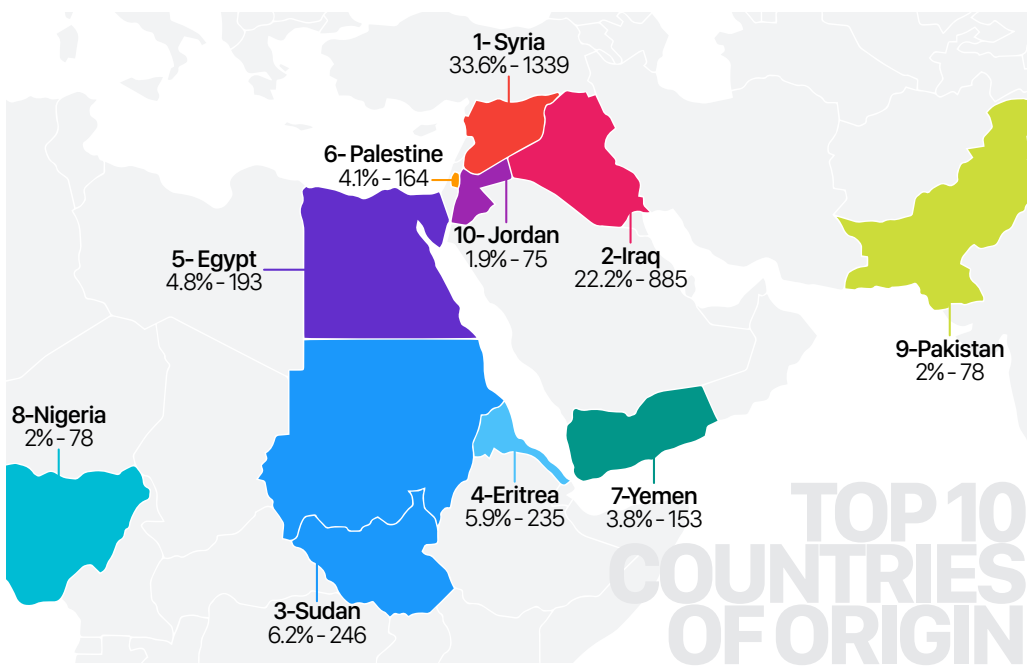
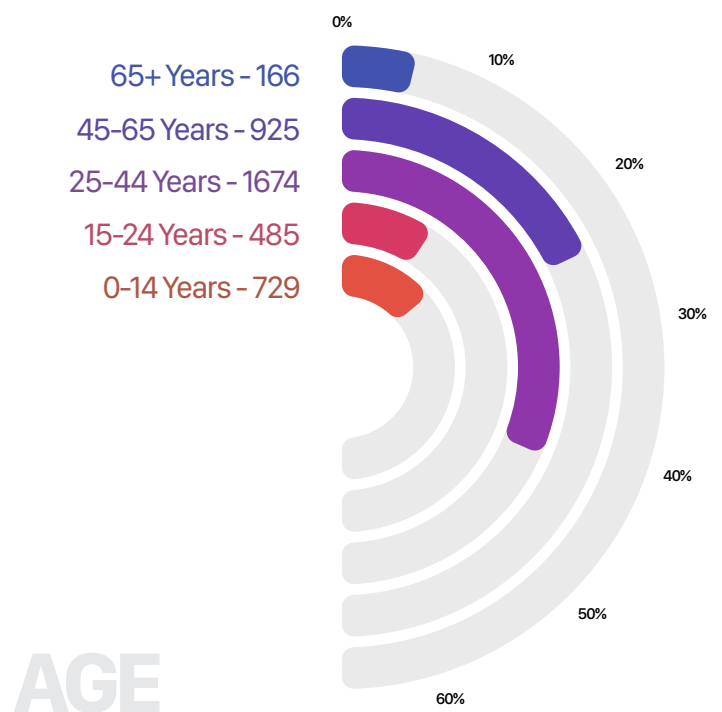
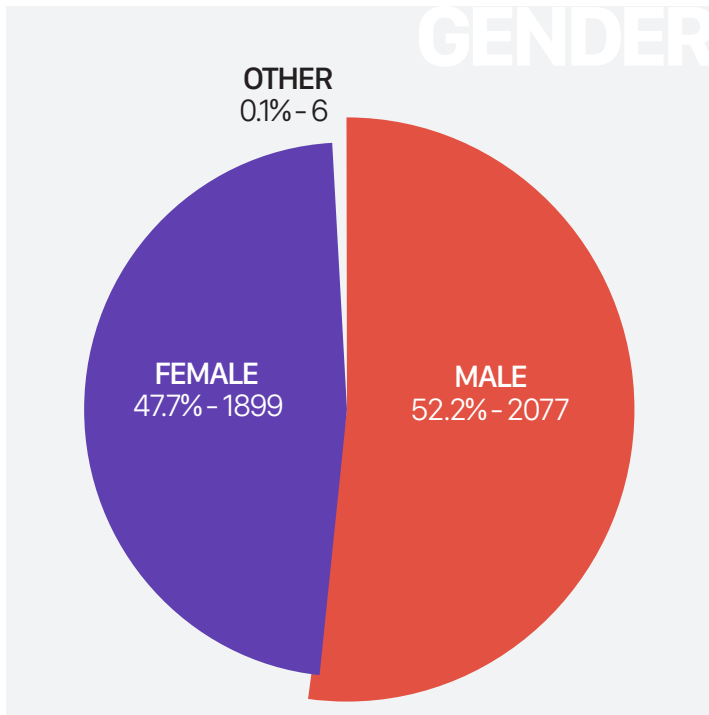
### Richard Szudy

- Member

### Sarah Razzouk

- Member

# ACCT IMPACT AND OUTREACH



## TOP 10 LANGUAGES

Arabic	63.5%	2924
English	12.4%	569
Assyrian	3.8%	175
Tigrigna	1.8%	83
Urdu	1.7%	76
Armenian	1.0%	48
Kurdish	1.0%	45
French	0.9%	42
Turkish	0.4%	18
Yoruba	0.3%	15



# ACCT SERVICES

ACCT is a hub for client services that facilitates the settlement of newcomers to Toronto. Our work is focused on one-on-one settlement counselling and support.

## Settlement Services

### Counselling

- ▶ Newcomers & Refugees
- ▶ Clients with disabilities
- ▶ Youth
- ▶ Seniors
- ▶ LGBTQ+

### Programs

- ▶ ACCT Youth
- ▶ Capacity-Building for Grassroots Organizations
- ▶ Internships & Canada Summer Jobs
- ▶ Community Engagement

### Weekly Sessions

- ▶ Workshops TawasolChat & Sawa Women Support Group
- ▶ Citizenship Classes
- ▶ English Conversation Circles
- ▶ Computer Literacy Classes
- ▶ Information Sessions

### Clinics

- ▶ Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)
- ▶ Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)

## Support Services

- ▶ Translation
- ▶ Interpretation
- ▶ Transportation

### Spotlight on Citizenship Classes

We facilitate citizenship classes in both our locations for community members to learn about Canadian history, geography, and improve their English language skills in a supportive environment. Students who take this class have a 95% success rate passing the citizenship exam. This year we ran 108 classes with a total enrollment of 667 clients.

### Volunteer - Success Story

ACCT has over 200 volunteers who actively participate in providing services in interpretation, translation, assisting in events and office logistics.

Ubay Abdulaziz is a Syrian newcomer who landed with his family in Toronto in 2018. He heard about ACCT through friends and social media. Accordingly, he applied to become a volunteer with the organization. Ubay has actively participated in events, in providing interpretation services and assisting in office logistics. Having completed 60 volunteer hours with ACCT he was able to apply for job vacancies. Currently, Ubay works as a barrister at Starbucks and studies at Burnhamthorpe Collegiate Institute.

## Spotlight on TawasolChat & SAWA Women

Realizing the pressing and expressed needs of newcomers to access opportunities that facilitate their economic and social integration into the Canadian society, ACCT initiated a new series of workshops entitled TawasolChat in September 2018. The main objective is to equip newcomers with the knowledge and skills needed, link them to educational and employment opportunities while raising their awareness on important issues pertaining to their Canadian day-to-day life.

The name TawasolChat is derived from the Arabic word "Tawasol" which means interacting in English and "Chat" reflects the informal and friendly nature of these workshops.

Under the umbrella of TawasolChat ACCT initiated its SAWA Women Support Group. The name of the support group "SAWA" is an Arabic word that means "together" to reflect the objective of bringing women together to share their experiences, interact and support and from the belief that together we can be stronger and make a difference.



**19** SESSIONS  
FACILITATED  
**269** PARTICIPANTS  
ACCESSED

TawasolChat

## PROGRAMS

This year we established ACCT Youth and Walima Kitchen and prepared for introducing Walima by Seniors in our next fiscal year. These major programs mark a turn towards programming which reflects what is happening in the settlement and social services sectors. With holistic and innovative approaches to settlement, these programs have high engagement rate which involves the communities we work with.

### YOUTH PROGRAM

Youth engagement has never been higher at ACCT! In April of 2018, we began building our youth program and started working with more youth than ever before. Our goal is to create and sustain anti-racist/anti-oppressive programming that youth of all backgrounds regularly engage in, not just access once.

ACCT Youth program is successful because it reflects the priorities and demonstrates a commitment to the lives of the youth we work with.

With 557 new youth clients, this demographic is supported through Instagram chat groups where we plan activities together and discuss issues they are facing.



**244** SESSIONS  
**557** FACILITATED  
 NEW YOUTH  
 CLIENTS

## Youth Drop-In

The cornerstone of ACCT programming, our Drop-In is a safe space co-created with teens for newcomer youth to adapt to their needs. It is a place where youth can access leadership opportunities, socialize, play games, access computers for homework and recreational purposes, get help with resume writing and work permits, plan outings, discuss issues they are facing and earn volunteer hours. We facilitate special workshops and events for youth based on their needs. Drop-In aims to alleviate isolation that newcomer youth often experience, and helps youth develop a sense of belonging. As our Scarborough office is located in an area with no targeted programs for newcomer youth, our Drop-In is the only programming close by for youth living in the area.

Drop-In developed organically out of an outreach session we held at the refugee shelters in North York. Through a participatory approach we invited youth to see our space in Scarborough and asked them: "What would you like us to change so you will want to hang out here? What would you like to do?"; We followed up on youths' requests and witnessed the program take-off.



## MANY - Media Art for Newcomer Youth

Exhibition: December 3 – 15, 2018, Expansion Space, Toronto Media Arts Centre

MANY was a pilot program ACCT ran in collaboration with Charles Street Video over a period of five months. It reduced barriers to media art creation, supported youth through tailored workshops and one-on-one mentoring in English and Arabic, culturally affiliated artists and worked towards promoting the capabilities that youth value. MANY culminated in "I am happy here, now": Identity searching among newcomer youth in Toronto. This was an exhibition of youths' independent media art works. In their photography, animation and video projects, youth explore how they negotiate their sense of self during a time of rapid change, adolescence and (re)settlement. The program introduced youth to photography and animation as well as the arts sector in Toronto, helped youth form meaningful relationships with their peers and artist mentors and enabled them to access an opportunity

that is out-of-reach to newcomer youth. Youth received artist fees above the CARFAC minimum recommended fee for exhibiting their work in a group show. Youth from MANY have remained engaged in our other programming and report using skills they learned in the program in school projects.

### Youth Artists

Bayan Abdelkarim  
Chioma Okogbue  
Jesse West  
Majd Alsheblaq  
Mary Osuiwu  
Pelumi Kehinde  
Reem Zeyada  
Temy Ibikunle  
Zahraa Wohaib



## “Finding where I need to be”: Placemaking strategies of newcomer youth in Toronto

Exhibition: March 10 – 16, 2019 at the Scarborough Civic Centre

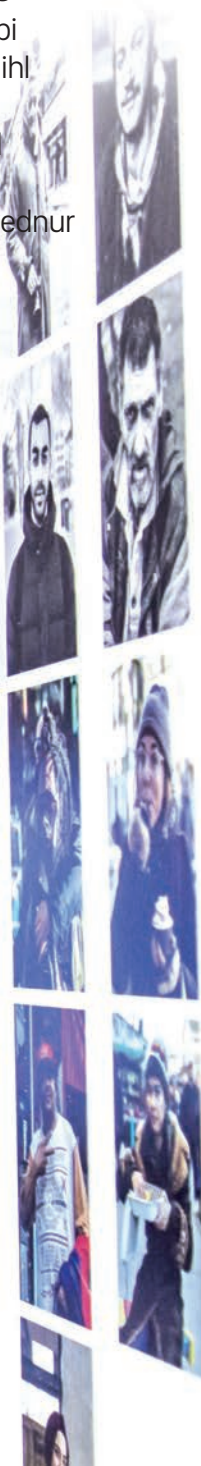
How do the experiences of newcomer youth in Toronto differ based on markers of identity and status? How are they similar? “Finding where I need to be”, a project in partnership with Charles Street Video for the Myseum of Toronto. The project addresses questions youth ask themselves through photography, pictures reflect the day to day habits newcomer youth engage in to make Toronto their home. The Annual Intersections Festival, seeks to address these questions through a photography project reflecting on the everyday practices Arab and African newcomer youth perform in order to make Toronto their home. The project contributes to knowledge about how to better support newcomer youth and humanizes migration, displacement, and settlement. The project was an opportunity for youth to express themselves in a medium they are interested in and have that self-expression celebrated at a public exhibition.

### Youth Artists

Amir Mughrabi  
 Ammar Bowaihl  
 Erica Eweka  
 Ihsan Rashed  
 Jesse West  
 Yazid Mohamednur



**Elizabeth Dowdeswell**  
 Lieutenant Governor of Ontario



## Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon (STWM)

October 2018

ACCT was a charity participant in the annual STWM this year! In preparation, ACCT held a weekly running club for interested youth in Scarborough and created a promotional video in which youth expressed the reason for supporting and running for ACCT. Staff, youth and friends then ran during the event in October. ACCT raised \$1700 which were used for 3 months for youth martial arts classes both in Scarborough and Etobicoke as well as a trip to Skyzone during the March Break.

#infinitepotential



## Youth Martial Arts

February - June 2019

Martial arts classes increase confidence, improve physical and mental fitness, and help youth make new friends - all while making us feel great! Introduced at the end of February, classes were taught by Self Defence and Martial Arts Training and made possible by the money ACCT fundraised through the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon.





## Interfaith Camp

August 27 – 31, 2018

For the second year, we partnered with “The Go Project - Islington United Church” to provide a summer camp experience for newcomer youth at the Five Oaks Educational Retreat Centre in Paris, Ontario. The camp led to greater intercultural understanding among youth, greater awareness of different faiths, encouraged creativity, physical activity and promoted social connectivity during the last week of summer break before the teens returned to school.



## March Break

March 11-15, 2019

Every year ACCT plans a jam-packed week of fun and educational activities for our youth. This year we:

- Planned educational team scavenger competitions at the ROM and AGO
- Participated in a multicultural potluck and activities that celebrated our cultures.
- Jumped at Skyzone
- Attended the opening reception of "Finding where I need to be"
- Had fun at all day Drop-Ins
- Caught a showing of Captain Marvel
- Played laser tag
- Went bowling

## Success Stories

### MAJD ALSHEBLAQ

Majid is a girl who has been involved with the ACCT programs since her family arrived from Syria three years ago. At that time, ACCT assisted her family with settlement and familiarized them with Toronto in an effort to make them feel at home.

Majid started attending ACCT's Homework Club to improve her English language skills. She focused on developing her writing, reading and verbal skills. Later on, she joined the ACCT's youth summer camp, which enabled her to visit places she would not have otherwise known to explore.

Last summer, ACCT created MANY, a program for youth interested in learning about creating media art from culturally affiliated, Arabic-speaking artists. Majid has a keen interest in animation and was selected to be one of 10 youths in the program. During the program she learned the basics of photography and animation to develop a personal project. With the support of the artist mentor, she spent several months working on an animation video that illustrated her family's journey from Syria to Canada. The film was displayed in a public exhibition in December 2018 and was well-received by the audience. Majid proudly went on to show it at the Toronto Youth Shorts Festival in August 2019. She is now using the skills she learned in MANY to create compelling projects for school.

Majid's experience in MANY was meaningful to her because it helped her connect with people with similar interests and gave her the opportunity to reflect and share her story of displacement and migration with others.

### AMIR MUGHRABI

Amir spends his time helping out because he has carved out a place for himself at ACCT and feels ownership in the youth programs offered at the centre. As a bonus, he is also collecting volunteering hours for school.

He is currently spearheading a youth-led initiative that aims to build youth confidence through sports. ACCT has a thriving group of youth who participate in programming and are active volunteers. Amir sets an example for other newcomer youths to integrate with Canadian Culture.

Amir took the lead as a youth representative in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon to raise funds for youth programs.

This year he was awarded a certificate for exceptional performance as a volunteer by MP Boris Wrzesnewskyj. This is how capacity is built in youth, when youth find meaning and purpose in the work they do and it comes from them, not other people.



## ACCT WALIMA

Walima is a women's empowerment project designed to support newcomer women with low level of English language skills, lack of social connections and no Canadian work experience.

In Walima we offer wraparound services to women's settlement. We provide community cooking sessions for cohorts of 30 women that incorporate informal and occupational English language learning, safe food handling information and skills, small business start-up information as well as interfaith community engagement. At the end of the program we hold a sampling night for the public where the graduates have a chance to promote their food, culture, music, henna, arts and crafts, as well as interact with the wider community.

The success of this program is reflected in the pride women exhibit upon graduating, the high rate of women who set up their own catering businesses upon finishing the program, long waitlists for the program, and the broader community's positive response during the end of program sampling nights.



## LAMA AL MULLA - THE FASHION CAKES

To the sound of pots and pans in the Kitchen, Lama El Mulla is busy decorating her cake to present at Walima's third tasting night at Bloordale United Church. Lama, an Iraqi convention refugee landed in Toronto from Jordan in September 2016.

A mother to three teens, her eldest daughter landed with her in Toronto, leaving her two boys behind with their father in Saudi Arabia. During the first year of her arrival to Canada, Lama's husband passed away. Lama struggled living in a new country, unemployed with poor language skills. Lama became so weak she would trip when walking in the street, and would not cook for her family nor leave the house.

Lama's friend who was a student at ACCT's Walima project told her about ACCT and their services. She introduced Lama to the Scarborough office and signed up for the new round of Walima's course.

Lama reflects: "From the first Walima session I attended, I felt I was back home in Iraq with family and friends, everyone was so warm and kind. I walked back home from the kitchen that day, and for the first time in a long time I cooked dinner for my children".

Learning new recipes, and how to open her own business, Lama passed her foodhandler exam in the winter of 2019. She completed the Walima program having made new friends, gained experience and learned to express herself without fear, all while breaking the language barriers she faced.

Lama developed an interest in cake decoration, joining a course at ACSA to improve her skills. Having passed the course with flying colours, Lama opened her own cake catering business naming it "The Fashion Cakes".

Today, Lama also attends a sewing training course with Canada Goose and her daughter studies interior design.





## Tree for Me

We partnered with Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation (TPTF) for a campaign that enables Toronto residents to obtain native trees at no cost for their backyards. Tree distribution events were held across the city with the goal of achieving 40% tree cover in Toronto. ACCT had over 58 registrations with over 70 trees provided by TPTF. The event attracted ACCT neighbours, clients, as well as multi-faith communities.



## Maalumat Qanuniyah

A pilot project in partnership with Al-Qazzaz Foundation for Education & Development (QED), Maalumat Qanuniyah aims to raise awareness on Canadian Family Law for Arabic-speaking newcomers. Knowledge gaps found in a focus group are addressed over five creative videos. The project addresses what Family Law in Canada stipulates as well as the similarities and differences between Canadian Law and Sharia Law and videos can be found on QED's Youtube channel.



# COLLABORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS & JOINT PROJECTS

ACCT collaborates and partners with a variety of organizations within and outside the settlement sector to facilitate projects.

## Raising Community Awareness Projects

- ▶ White Ribbon Campaign against domestic violence

## Interfaith Projects & Activities

- ▶ Interfaith Youth Camp with The Go Project
- ▶ Ramadan Iftars with Bloordale United Church

## Legal Education Projects

- ▶ Legal Education Toolkit for Refugee Youth with Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)
- ▶ Maalumat Qanoniua with QED
- ▶ Mujtama with Canadian Arab Institute (CAI)

## Art-based Projects

- ▶ Media Art for Newcomer Youth with Charles Street Video
- ▶ Finding where I need to be with Myseum of Toronto & Charles Street Video
- ▶ Take my hand for Arts in the Park with Mabelle Arts

## Giving Back to the Community Projects

- ▶ Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) with CRA
- ▶ Seasonal donation baskets from Tzu Chi

## Social Inclusion & Community Building Projects

- ▶ TawasolChat with Access Alliance, ACCES Employment, Starbucks, and Toronto Social planning
- ▶ ACCT Youth fundraising campaign through Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon
- ▶ Youth Martial Arts with Alex Ramirez Self Defense and Martial Arts
- ▶ Neighbourhood Table with St. Philip's Lutheran Church

## Economic Empowerment Projects

- ▶ Walima
- ▶ Irshad with Canadian Arab Institute (CAI)
- ▶ MoneyMind with ENACTUS York University

## Educational Projects

- ▶ Catch-Up with Al-Qazzaz Foundation for Education & Development

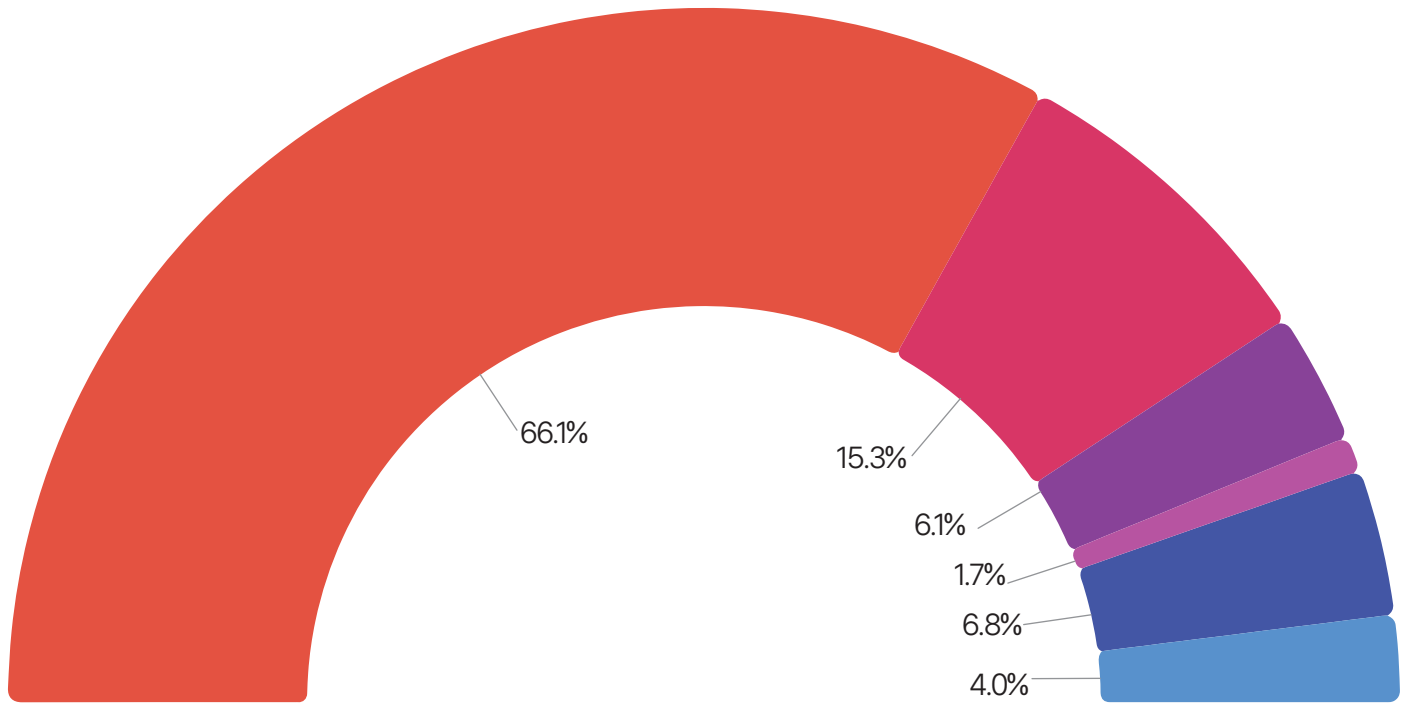
## Green Projects

- ▶ Tree for Me with Toronto Parks & Trees Foundation (TPTF)
- ▶ Shajarat, Every Tree Counts with TPTF

## Research Projects

- ▶ Ryerson University for Elder Abuse Research
- ▶ University of Windsor for Access to Justice Research

# REVENUES



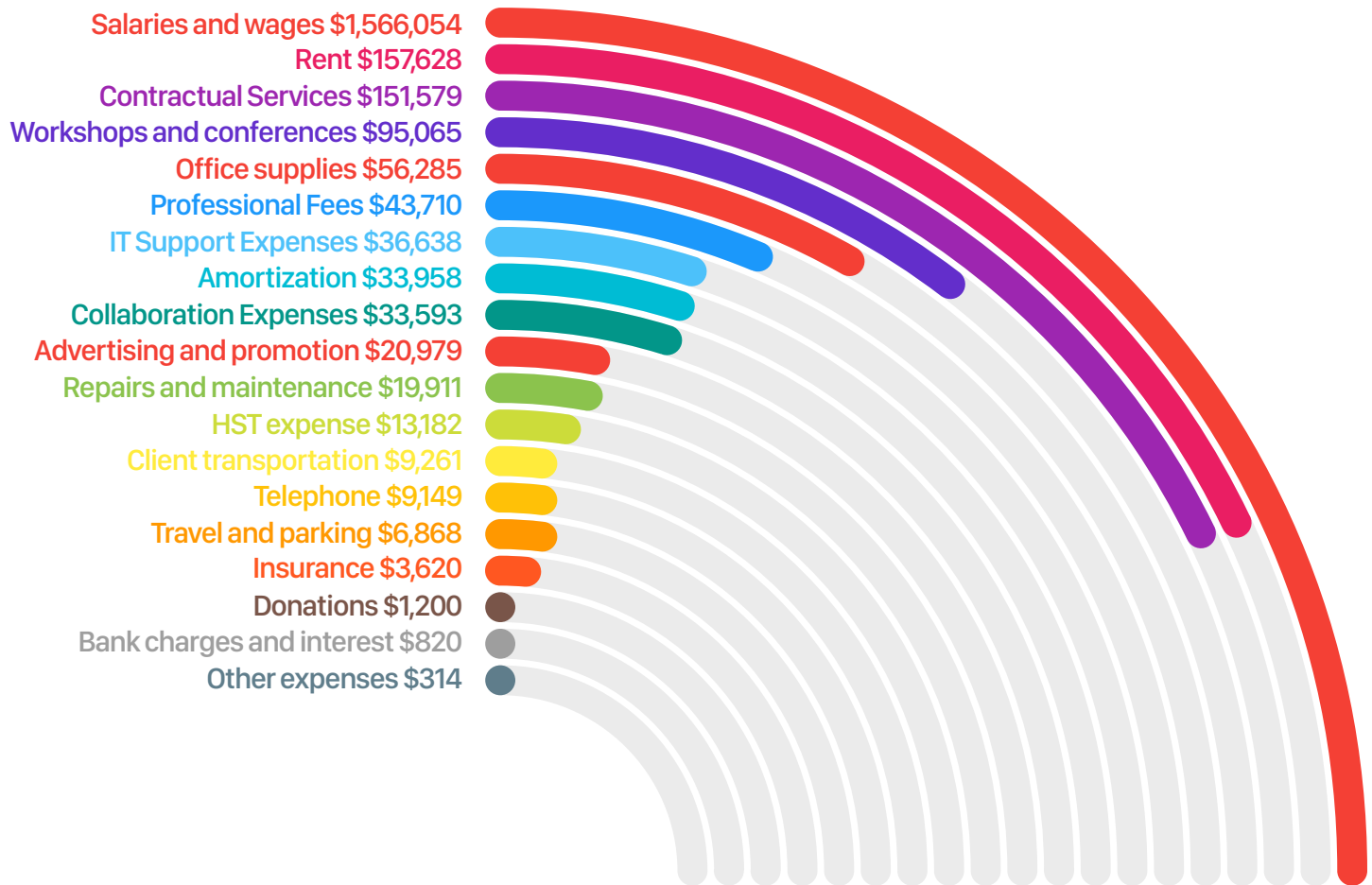
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada 66.1% (\$1,522,656)
- Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration 15.3% (\$353,174)
- City of Toronto 6.1% (\$140,910)
- Employment and Social Development Canada 1.7% (\$38,112)
- Other Grants and Donations 6.8% (\$156,566)
- Other Receipts 4.0% (\$92,012)

## TOTAL REVENUES

\$2,303,430



# EXPENSES



## TOTAL EXPENSES

\$2,259,814

## EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES

\$43,616

Based on Audited Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2018-2019.

## DONATIONS

Tzu Chi Foundation Canada is a Taiwanese international humanitarian and non-governmental organization (NGO) with over 10 million members worldwide throughout 47 countries. It is operated by a worldwide network of volunteers and employees and has been awarded a special consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Over the past year, ACCT has been working closely with Tzu Chi who has been providing donations to over 200 of our clients and community members. Within a festive atmosphere, Tzu Chi gives a presentation about their organization, their methodology and community work they carry out throughout the world, with special focus on the Middle East. Donations such as food bags are then handed out to clients observing the start of Ramadan, new clothing donations to celebrate Eid, and with the start of the school year Tzu Chi hands out new school bags to newcomer children.



**3 EVENTS**  
**200 ATTENDEES**

# FUNDERS



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and Citizenship Canada

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## **HEAD OFFICE**

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


## **SCARBOROUGH OFFICE**

1855 Lawrence Avenue East  
Scarborough, ON M1R 2Y3

Tel: 416-231-7746

Fax: 416-231-4770

info@acctonline.ca  
acctonline.ca

   @acctonline  
 @acctyouth

Charitable Registration No. 10671 9495 RR0001

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