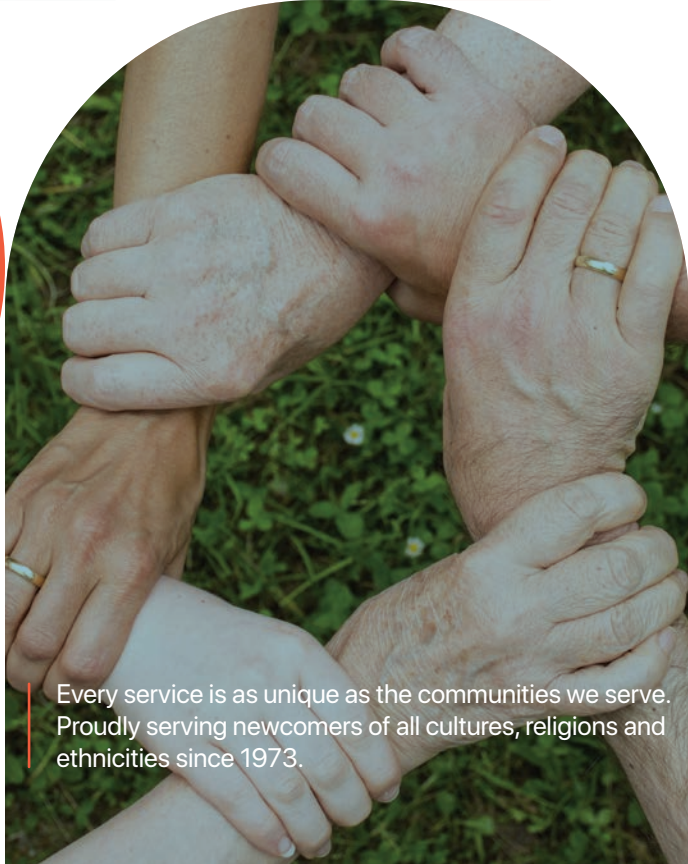




2021-2022

Annual Report



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



Land Acknowledgement

The Arab Community Centre of Toronto acknowledges that we are operating on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and that this territory is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We also acknowledge all Treaty people including those who came here as settlers, as immigrants, either in this generation or generations past, and those who came here involuntarily particularly as a result of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery.



2021-2022

Annual Report

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

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Leadership Message

On behalf of the board, management and staff of the Arab Community Centre of Toronto, we are pleased to present the Annual Impact Report for 2021-2022.

In many ways, 2021-2022 was no different than the year before. COVID-19 continued, through multiple waves and variants, to impact the way we worked and lived. We started the year with great optimism as vaccines became more readily available, however, with each new wave of the virus, our optimism turned to uncertainty. Despite this “rollercoaster” year, we grew our programming and partnerships to address pressing needs in our community and we feel incredibly humbled by our staff and volunteers who continue to serve the community with compassion, commitment and creativity.

The year kept us busy on many fronts. At our annual general meeting in October of 2021, we welcomed Inji Mekhemer, Mouna Gharsallah, Nawal Al-Busaidi, and Dalia Farra to our board of directors. Our new board members bring a wealth of experience and expertise in the areas of refugee resettlement, finance, research, equity and inclusion, and community engagement—both in the private and public sectors. We also said goodbye to two of our longstanding board members and we would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to Malika Mounir and Ahmed Afheel for their dedication and their contributions over the years.

Towards the end of the fiscal year, our search for a new location in Etobicoke landed us a new home at 295 The West Mall. It wasn't easy saying goodbye to the old office after such a long time, but we are excited about the opportunities the new space offers us to grow as a team while continuing to respond to the needs in our community.

Last year we were also busy laying the foundations for future growth by building our strategic plan for 2022-2025. We identified several key priority areas for the next three years: the continuous growth of ACCT, our staff and volunteers, as well as our impact in the community, and our ability to continue responding to the challenges and the opportunities created by the COVID-19 crisis.

In addition to our regular programs, we launched several new initiatives geared toward supporting women and youth who are overcoming new challenges brought on during the pandemic. AMAL, Josoor, and Halftime were born of the need for information, connection, and peer support during a time of increased isolation and disconnection. We also provided support to newly arrived Afghan refugees in hotels and shelters, and addressed food security and climate change in collaboration with our community partners. You will read about these initiatives and more in the pages ahead.

None of our accomplishments would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of our staff and volunteers. They have our heartfelt thanks. Our clients and community members also deserve thanks for their patience and flexibility as we moved between virtual and in-person services. Last but not least, a special thank you to our funders, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services, Canadian Women's Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way Greater Toronto, Ministry of the Solicitor General, ESDC and the City of Toronto for their continued involvement and support.

Fathi Abu Farah

Board President



Dima Amad

Executive Director



Board Members

Fathi Abu-Farah

President

Richard Szudy

Vice President

Jehad Aliweiwi

Treasurer and Secretary

Nawal Al-Busaidi

Member

Dalia El Farra

Member

Inji Mekhemer

Member

Mouna Gharsallah

Member

Bilal Hamadah

Member

Hani Al-Dajane

Member

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.

Vision

To contribute to a welcoming, inclusive society that accesses the full potential of newcomers and residents to constantly enhance and strengthen Canada's multicultural fabric.

Mission

To enable individuals and families from diverse communities to change their lives for the better by providing a range of settlement and social services that include innovative programs for family support, mental well being, women empowerment, youth skilling, and employment.

Values



Respect for privacy
and confidentiality



Efficiency and
effectiveness



Innovation



Diversity, inclusion
and accessibility



Transparency and
integrity



Quality and
excellence



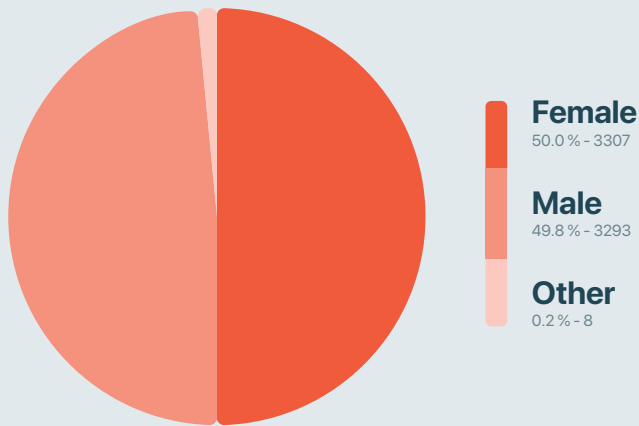
Volunteerism



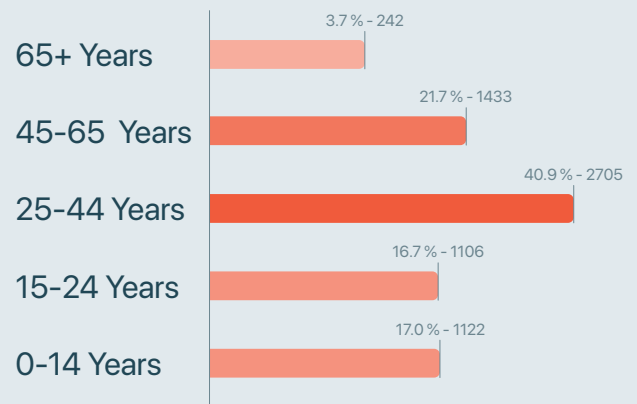
Caring and
compassion

ACCT Impact and Reach

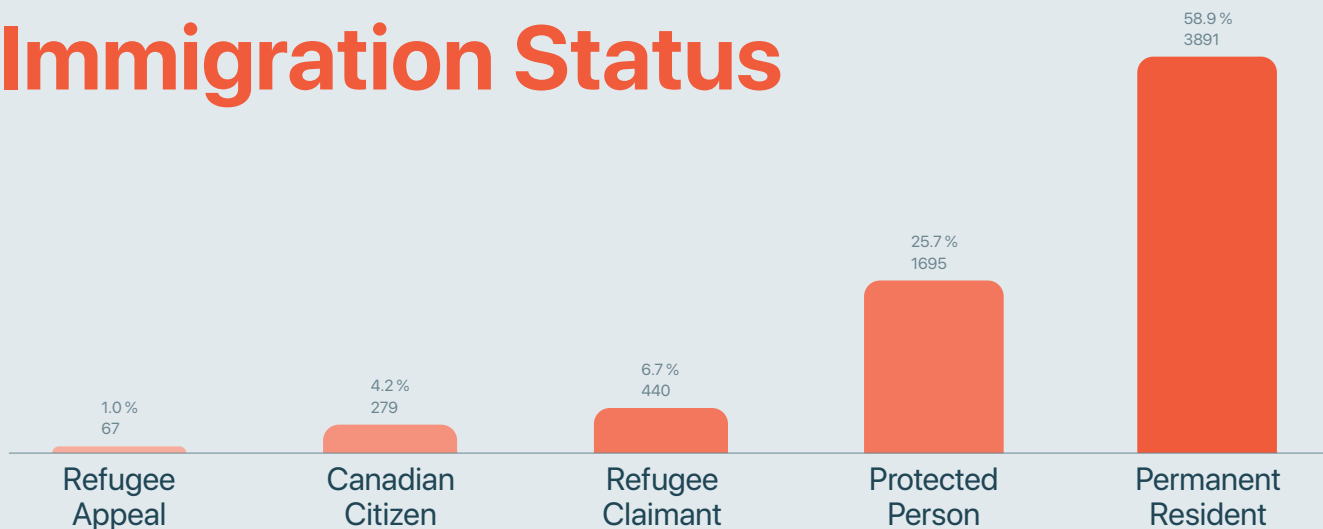
Gender



Age



Immigration Status



Top 10 Countries of Origin

1 Syria
25.5% - 1686

2 Iraq
14.6% - 966

3 Nigeria
12.8% - 849

4 Sudan
6.7% - 446

5 Yemen
5.5% - 366

6 Egypt
5.5% - 361

7 Eritrea
4.1% - 270

8 Palestine
3.8% - 253

9 Afghanistan
2.8% - 185

10 Jordan
2.7% - 179



Top 10 languages

1 Arabic
49.4% - 4332

2 English
28.9% - 2538

3 Yoruba
3.2% - 279

4 Assyrian
1.4% - 127

5 Armenian
1.3% - 113

6 Pashto
1.0% - 85

7 French
0.8% - 74

8 Tigrigna
0.7% - 58

9 Kurdish
0.5% - 44

10 Turkish
0.4% - 37

We provide information, referral, and support to newcomers to Canada from the moment they land until they become self-sufficient, productive, and engaged citizens.



Settlement Services

In 2021-2022, ACCT continued to effectively deliver its settlement services to newcomers remotely by adopting a hybrid model of virtual and telephone support. Our dedicated team of Settlement Counsellors connected with clients via different channels to carry out needs assessments and develop short and long-term settlement plans to guide and support them as they integrate into Canadian society. The majority of our clients needed assistance with employment, housing, banking, and accessing shelters and food security programs while also applying for additional government benefits offered during the pandemic. Other needs that were identified were mental health support, activities for youth and seniors, and resources for women facing domestic abuse.

Funded by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, our settlement program provides comprehensive, trauma-informed, and culturally sensitive wrap-around services to newcomers to facilitate their settlement and integration into Canadian society. ACCT services fall under four main components: Information and Orientation, Needs Assessment and Referrals, Employment, and Community Connections. In addition, newcomers facing additional challenges receive support services such as translation and interpretation, transportation support, and crisis counselling.

ACCT continued to offer its tailored one-on-one services to newcomers, in addition to holding virtual group workshops addressing common newcomer needs and concerns. The most in-demand services ranged from assistance finding employment to guidance in the process of accessing affordable housing and financial assistance.



5241

Clients



3767

Needs Assessment



"A friend introduced ACCT to me last year for a specific need. I was excited and pleased with the level of professionalism, prompt response, follow-up and outcome. I have also contacted the same counsellor again this year and they have been so accommodating. Thanks to ACCT for the selfless services, at no cost."

-Kolawole Olajubu

Citizenship Classes

ACCT works with newcomers to prepare them to become healthy and well-adjusted Canadian citizens. Part of this work includes preparing them for the Canadian citizenship exam. This year ACCT delivered 82 hours of citizenship education to over 600 newcomers who diligently attended virtual classes twice a week to learn about Canadian history, values, and culture and participate in online quizzes and mock exams.



"I attended ACCT Citizenship classes throughout the winter till I sat for the exam and passed with good grades. The online classes twice a week, quizzes and online tests helped me improve my knowledge and prepare well for the exam."

-ACCT Client



82
Classes

605
Clients Attended



English Conversation & Digital Literacy

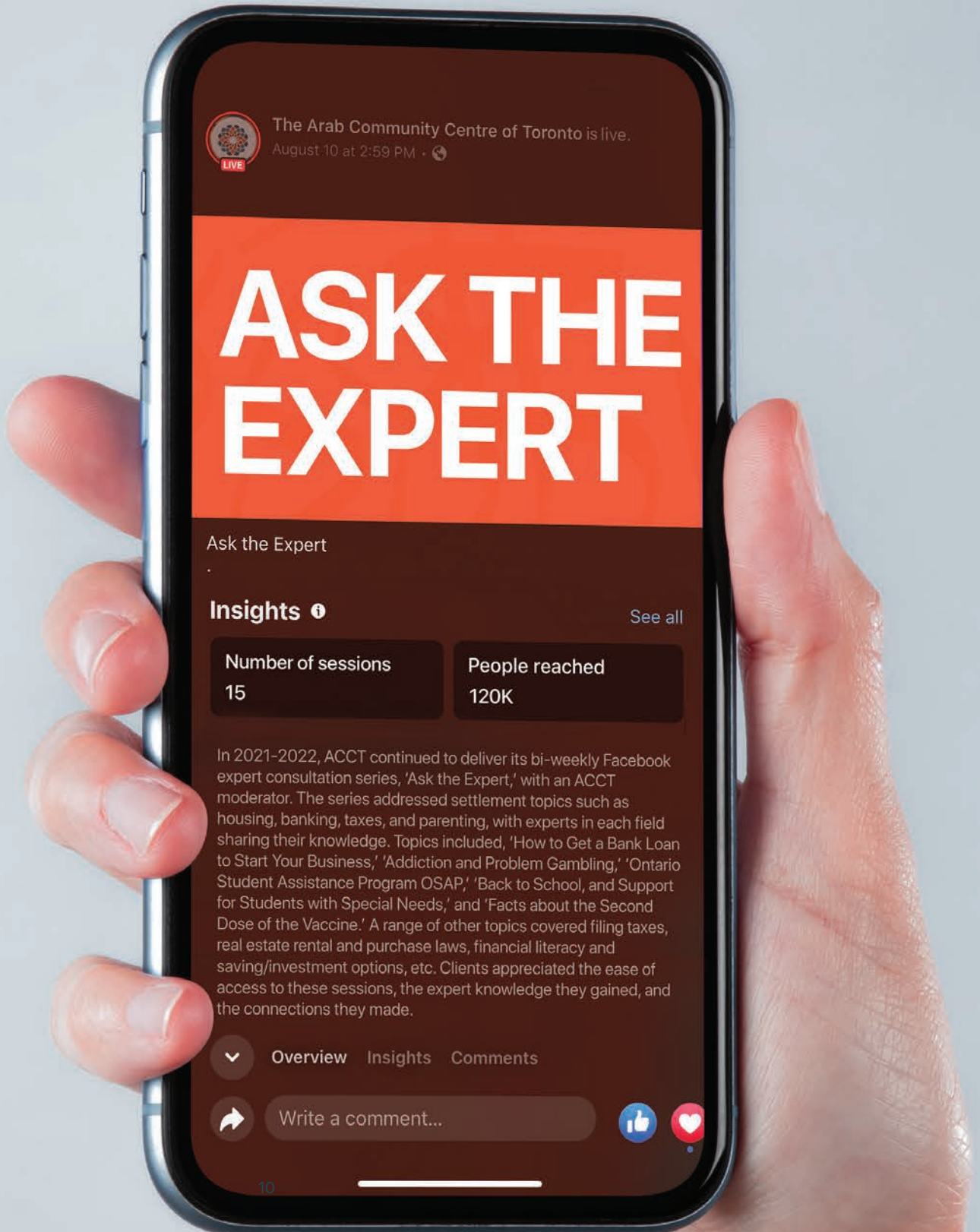
Our English Conversation & Digital Literacy virtual classes saw great success during the pandemic, which is why we continued to offer them every week throughout 2021-2022, with the goal of improving newcomers' day-to-day English conversation skills while also teaching them about the use of computers. We've conducted English conversation sessions virtually and in-person, and incorporated English conversation practices into other activities such as cooking and music workshops. Participants are encouraged to speak English all the time, in addition to receiving structured English language grammar and vocabulary lessons.



 **56**
Sessions

 **434**
Clients Attended

The increase of social, employment, and retail activity that takes place online nowadays, in addition to online applications that require electronic signatures from clients, has encouraged newcomers to improve their digital literacy skills in order to get more comfortable with working on digital documents. More and more, digital literacy is becoming an essential life skill that must be taught, particularly to newcomers, elderly people, women, and youth. It has the potential to open doors, reduce isolation, and provide opportunities to make connections, find employment, access government services, and simply belong. ACCT's digital literacy sessions were a tremendous success and their demand increased exponentially. We are currently working on a research project on digital literacy which involves developing a curriculum with Humber college. To this end, we've delivered staff training with expert providers, and are currently expanding our digital education scope to include more topics and reach more clients.



The Arab Community Centre of Toronto is live.
August 10 at 2:59 PM · 🌐

ASK THE EXPERT

Ask the Expert

Insights ⓘ

See all

Number of sessions
15

People reached
120K

In 2021-2022, ACCT continued to deliver its bi-weekly Facebook expert consultation series, 'Ask the Expert,' with an ACCT moderator. The series addressed settlement topics such as housing, banking, taxes, and parenting, with experts in each field sharing their knowledge. Topics included, 'How to Get a Bank Loan to Start Your Business,' 'Addiction and Problem Gambling,' 'Ontario Student Assistance Program OSAP,' 'Back to School, and Support for Students with Special Needs,' and 'Facts about the Second Dose of the Vaccine.' A range of other topics covered filing taxes, real estate rental and purchase laws, financial literacy and saving/investment options, etc. Clients appreciated the ease of access to these sessions, the expert knowledge they gained, and the connections they made.



Overview Insights Comments



Write a comment...



WES - World Education Services

World Education Services (WES) is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping international students and professionals living in Canada achieve their educational and professional goals. ACCT assists clients with WES services remotely to help international students and newcomers assess and receive their Canadian credentials for their degrees. To do this, ACCT facilitates communication and coordination between clients and WES, and conducts workshops dedicated to explaining the degrees/credentials certification system in Canada. In the past year, ACCT helped a total of 177 clients get their degrees certified in Canada or access information and training on the steps required to get their certificates.



"I was referred to the community by my university to do the WES gateway program, I was assisted to do the application without ACCT, which I tried at first. However, I couldn't do it and I needed help, which is when I resorted to ACCT. Their guidance was clear and I was able to finish the application. I really recommend everyone that needs help to go to ACCT."

-Nataly Delanian



3

Workshops



125

Clients Served



WORLD EDUCATION SERVICES

TawasolChat

TawasolChat is a support group that provides a safe space for newcomer women to get together and talk about issues they face in their daily lives. For the past two years, the group has shifted to a virtual hybrid model. Within this familiar environment, we take advantage of the connections among group members to encourage them to learn about Canada. In 2021-2022, workshops focused on increasing clients' knowledge of Canadian laws, rights, and responsibilities via settlement-related topics like applying for Canadian citizenship, applying for urgent travel documents, navigating the Ontario Electricity Support Program, and accessing Canada Child Benefits and subsidized housing, among other practical topics of interest for ACCT clients.



 **21**
Workshops

 **442**
Clients Served

 TawasolChat

Dardashat - Senior Women's Group

'Chit Chat,' AKA Dardashat is a senior women's support group which addresses the needs of older women, particularly those who face isolation and difficulty integrating into Canadian society. The group provides an exceptionally safe space for attendees to share their experiences, concerns, and challenges. Many senior women have expressed their interest in learning more about topics like how to write a will, as well as wanting to know more about the general services provided to seniors in Canada.

 **44**
Workshops

 **664**
Clients Served

 درداشات
dardashat

Employment- Career Café

ACCT's Employment Services Career Cafe supports the integration of newcomers into the Canadian labour market. Through one-on-one sessions, workshops, and support groups, we help clients to develop a better understanding of labour market needs and demands. The workshops equip clients with the necessary skills to apply for employment in their chosen fields. Due to the pandemic making it difficult to find employment, the program grew in popularity over the past year. Newcomer clients have accessed our services, as have unemployed clients looking for work.

Our workshops have focused on job search techniques, how to improve your LinkedIn profile, improving resumes, networking, and cover letter writing, among other topics.



20
Workshops



208
Clients Served



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 which includes: needs assessments, 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, those with student and work permits, as well as Canadian citizens. In 2021-2022, we continued to deliver NSP services remotely, yet exceeded the number of clients served from previous years. In addition to one-on-one Zoom and phone sessions, we held a number of group workshops which helped newcomers to develop a better understanding of life in Canada. The workshops covered various topics of interest to clients, such as housing, the job search, parenting, and managing personal finances during the pandemic.



1322
Clients Served

YOUTH

Our youth team focused its energies on leadership, arts, and sports programming this year, as well as on a number of special events dotted throughout the months which fell during the City of Toronto's COVID-19 public health measures. Given this, the majority of our programming continued to be delivered virtually.

MADE BY Me

A youth-made, youth-led series

Made by Me is a leadership program for newcomer youth, aged 13–24 years old, which supports youth as they create and facilitate their own virtual sessions. It is for youth who want to practice and build their public speaking and facilitation skills, as well as share their knowledge of a topic they are passionate about. Having begun Made by Me at the end of last year with 5 strong presentations by youth, we continued this virtual program for the entirety of this fiscal year, supporting 22 youth as they presented and facilitated on topics of importance to newcomer youth in Toronto.

Youth presented on a wide range of topics that spoke to other youth. This included sessions such as, “The Way of the Procrastinator,” “If you could rewrite your story, how would you make it?,” “Scholarships & Social Media,” “The Essentials of Photoshop,” “Cultural Stigma & Mental Health,” and “Sexual & Gender Diversity in Youth.” Staff offered support to presenters as they prepared content, rehearsed their presentations, and did outreach for their sessions. Each session wrapped up with a game of Kahoot which quizzed attending youth on what they learned during the session—and indeed we learned a lot!

Virtual Soccer Coaching Pedro Pessoa

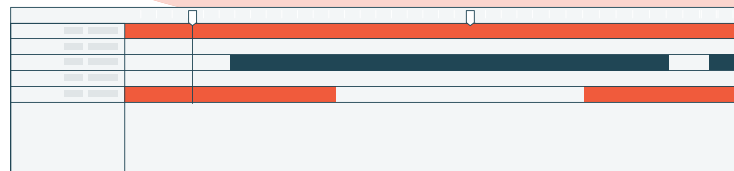
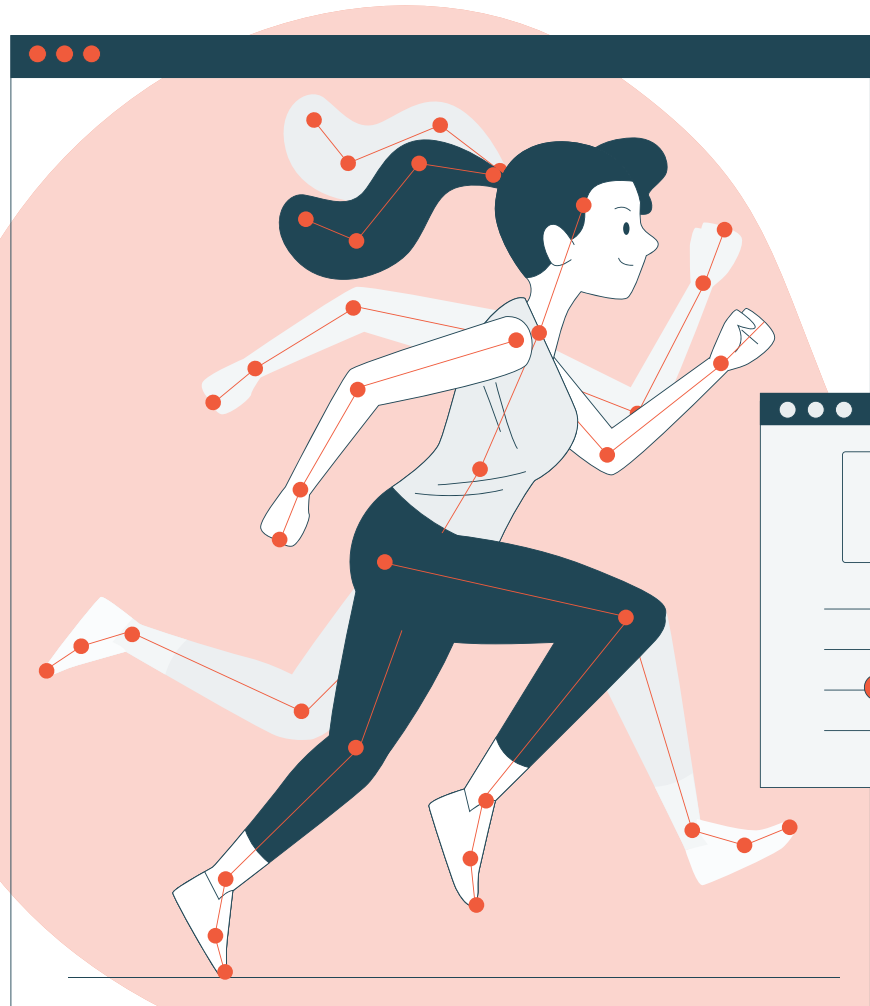
As one of our many firsts during the pandemic, we hosted a series of soccer coaching practices due to youth demand for sports programming during the summer. The series was delivered virtually by Coach Pedro Pessoa, who coaches numerous Toronto youth soccer teams. We purchased soccer balls and delivered them to 15 families who had their children participating in the 5-week program. The youth built soccer specific skills throughout the period as well as relationships with one another. Coach Pedro taught the classes in such an engaging way that participants always had their cameras on throughout the entire practice!





A virtual animation film creation program for newcomer youth to Canada between the ages of 13-24, YOUmation strives to support youth to build skills in animation and to create shorts films on topics of interest to them. The program consists of 12 3-hour classes where youth will learn skills in Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Character Animator, and Premiere Pro/ iMovie, as well as 5 hours of one-on-one mentorship with their artist instructor.

This fiscal year, we absolutely embodied the vigorous outreach portion of this program. We held information sessions, and invited everyone to apply. As a result, we received 124 applications for 5 spots! We then convened a Youth Committee composed of youth from our previous media arts programs to select the students for this program. Selected students received new MacBooks that were purchased with an Ontario Trillium Foundation Resilient Communities grant. Classes will continue until July, with a virtual exhibition of the students' works planned for August 2022. Stay tuned!



Youth Trips

This year we were able to facilitate two impactful excursions in Toronto when City health measures enabled us to do so. The first of these trips was to the Immersive Van Gogh exhibit, which allowed youth to experience the paintings of the artist in a reimagined way. Our second trip was to Sky Zone, which enabled youth to engage in physical activity as well as connect with one another after such a long period of virtual programming.



Holiday Activities

Due to the success of our virtual holiday activities last year, we brought back the same Halloween and Christmas decoration contests this year which we piloted in 2021. For Halloween, we purchased pumpkins and pumpkin carving kits and delivered them to youth. We then held an exciting carving session over Zoom where youth experimented with their designs. For Christmas, we purchased gingerbread house kits and delivered them to youth. We then held a session over Zoom where youth assembled and decorated their gingerbread houses. To conclude each activity, we shared youths' designs on our social media pages for the public to vote on, and gave away prizes to the winning designs.

TYJC

TORONTO YOUTH JOB CORPS

The Toronto Youth Job Corps (TYJC) program assists youth 15-30 years of age who are facing challenges finding meaningful employment. The program enhances youths' employability and life skills through group-based job readiness training, personal development, and work experience. The intensive 5-week program offers interactive and in-demand employability skills topics and training, and much more. Upon successful completion of

the training, participants qualify for a subsidized work placement, with the goal of receiving permanent employment at the end of the placement period.

For the second fiscal year (April 2021 to March 2022), the TYJC program held 7 sessions serving approximately 84 youths with a dropout rate of less than 1%, demonstrating the genuine popularity of the program. There were more than 100 workshops delivered during the reporting period and over 25 guest speakers from different walks of life were invited to speak with the youth.

The program provided youth with multiple avenues of support based on individual and group needs, including but not limited to: a training allowance, a commuting allowance, scholarships, and grocery and clothing support. The total support amount was over \$24,000.



100+
Workshops



84
Youth





40+
Youth Were Hired



“TYJC was my first step towards success in my career at such a young age...I strongly recommend this program to other youth, as this program will change their lives and lead them in the right direction.”

-Zamarin

During the reporting year, the youth also gave back to their community by working with non-profit organizations. One of the most admired community-wide projects was making handcrafted “thank you” cards for frontline workers. Over 1000 unique thank you cards were designed and created by the youth participants as a way of acknowledging the dedication and hard work of frontline workers during Covid.

TYJC also arranged for the job placement of over 49 youth. Consequently, over 40 youth were hired. Thirty youth landed jobs with the private employers whereas over 10 youth started their careers in non-profits.

One of the major areas that the TYJC team worked on during the reporting period was building mutually beneficial connections with community stakeholders. This helped us to promote the program within the city and also generate interest among employers who might consider youth applicants. During this period, TYJC connected with approximately 45 community stakeholders, including employers, community agencies, and other service providers.

Muaz's Success Story

The Toronto Youth Job Corps (TYJC) program



Muaz is a Syrian refugee who immigrated to Canada four years ago. He has graduated from Seneca college with an advance diploma in Chemical Engineering Technology. He is a committed, hardworking and professional youth.

He was working for a pizza making restaurant few months ago and he was struggling to find an office job with an organization.

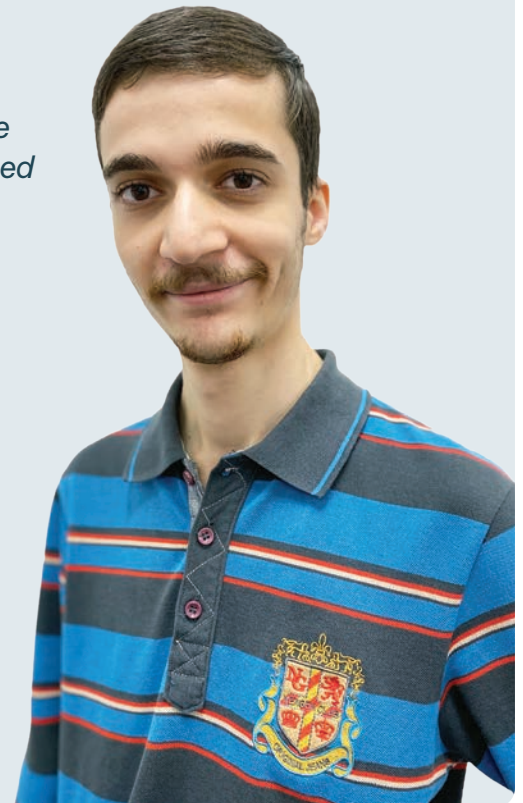
He then found the TYJC program with reference of his friends and joined the program in May 2022. He wanted to improve his skills, gain a new experience and get a job in a non-profit organization.

Muaz told: *"TYJC helped me with building my resume & cover letter and interview, improving my English, networking, and public speaking skills."*

After completion of the life-skill training and community project component of the TYJC program, he applied for a number of jobs, which he got short listed for the administrative assistant position with ACCT.

He said: *"I was very nervous at the interview because there were three people in the interview panel, but I applied all the skills that I had learned from TYJC in interview. It worked well and I got selected for the administrative assistant position."*

Now he is working as administrative assistant position for ACCT. He is happy that he found the TYJC program, as it paved his way for a permanent position. He added: *"I am so glad for taking the TYJC program because it helped me in connecting with people and finding a job. I highly recommend others to take this program because it will help you to learn new skills, make new connections and find a meaningful job."*



Zamarin's Success Story

The Toronto Youth Job Corps (TYJC) program



“TYJC was my first step towards success in my career.”

Zamarin is an Afghan refugee who fled Afghanistan in August 2021 after the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan collapsed.

She arrived in Canada in late August of 2021 and decided to reside in Toronto. In Afghanistan, she worked in the administrative field for the Embassy of Canada. She is a dedicated and dependable administrative worker with several years' experience in government and non-government organizations.

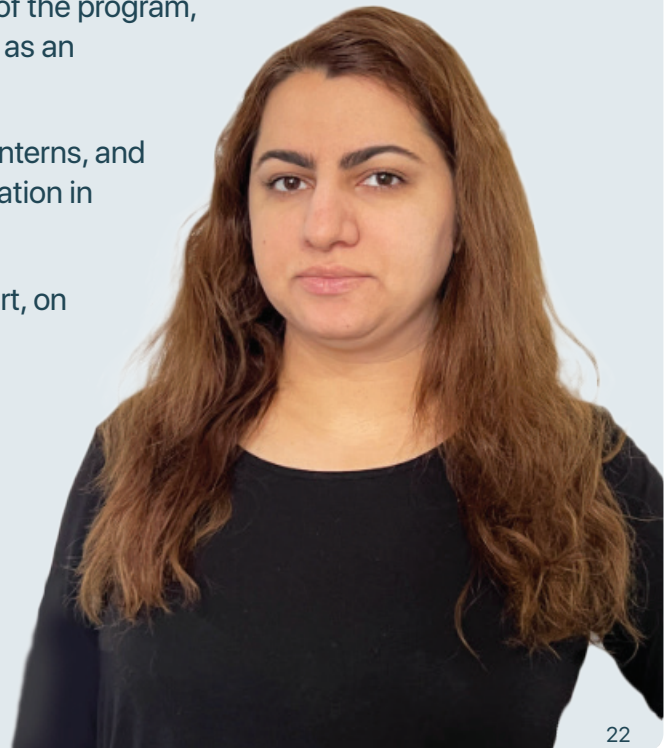
After moving to Canada to pursue her career and support her family, she struggled to obtain a part-time or full-time job in the administrative sector.

She then found the TYJC program at ACCT and joined the program in December 2021. She successfully completed the 5 weeks of life-skill training and worked on a community project to further enhance her skills. She was one of the most active and punctual participants of the program. After successful completion of the first phase of the program, she was placed in Jump Start Refugee Talent's organization as an Operations Coordinator.

She was responsible for training and onboarding new staff, interns, and volunteers for Jump Start. She also supported the administration in various IT, finance, accounting, and other duties.

After 16 successful weeks in her job placement at Jump Start, on May 30, 2022 she joined ACCT as a Loans and Grants Administrative Assistant,.

She is happy to have found the TYJC program, which ultimately helped her to re-start her career in the administrative sector in a whole new environment.



HALFTIME



HalfTime is a youth centered and strength-based project that targets racialized and Black youths, aged 15-24 from the Eastmall/Westmall/Capri areas and the Rexdale/Kingsway neighborhoods in Etobicoke which have seen a surge in youth violence in recent years. It is designed and developed based on evidence from the Youth Advocate Program and the Positive Youth Development model, which helps youth realize positive change in their lives by building resiliency against several risk factors associated with their involvement with violence. The project aims to enhance youth resilience and self-esteem, empower positive choices, increase access to education and employment opportunities, and promote good family support and healthy relationships.



The HalfTime project, funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, was inaugurated in September 2021. The opening ceremony was attended not only by youth living in the community but also by their family members, local community agencies, and by the project funder. From September 2021 to March 2022, the project served 35 youth participants. The majority of the youth identified as Black. HalfTime project ensured them access to safe in-person and virtual space to engage with the program's activities as a countermeasure to involvement with gang or other violence. All activities were co-created and decided on by the HalfTime team and youth participants. These included excursions as well as community engagement activities. During this time, youth visited Screamers, Nathan Phillips Square, and joined the community food truck event. These events were much enjoyed by community members and gave youth an opportunity to engage in constructive community activities while also encouraging the development of valuable relations with their community members.



12+
Sessions



35
Youth



Employment



Life Skills



**Community
Engagement**

One of HalfTime's most noteworthy achievements in 2021-2022 was organizing the panel discussion ***"Familiar Faces: people in our community,"*** where the community was engaged virtually in conversations related to gun violence. Youth, youth-serving service providers, the Toronto Housing Community, the City of Toronto, youth poets, faith leaders, and other community members shared their lived experiences and opened the discussion for youth to learn about community-driven countermeasures to gun-related incidents and other acts of violence. One of the questions that generated immense interest from participants was about the impact of gun violence in our communities. Over 70 community members explored strategies to counter existing gun violence and ways to make community safer for all.

ACCT organizes Community Connections activities to help engage newcomers, women, youth and seniors while responding to their needs, keeping them plugged into their communities, building their confidence, and reducing isolation. In 2021-2022, one important focus of these activities was providing food and clothing to families and individuals in Toronto, Etobicoke, and Scarborough communities experiencing increased poverty and vulnerability due to unemployment and constantly increasing inflation rates. As a consequence of this ever-more challenging economic situation, food security has risen on our clients' overall list of priorities. For many—particularly for seniors, large families, and single-parent households—, stable access to food is of urgent and critical concern.

This year, our Community Connections activities also ventured into the art world to facilitate greater understanding between newcomers, more established Canadians, and Indigenous communities. As the province started to lift various lockdown restrictions, we were finally able to have our clients come out and enjoy some music and theatre performances in person.



653
Clients Served

Community Connections



For the fourth year, ACCT partnered with **St. Philip's Lutheran Church** in Etobicoke for the Neighborhood Table program. The project increased food security and facilitated community connections by organizing engaging, family-centered activities around food preparation. Conducting three cycles over the summer, fall, and winter, families, single woman-headed households, and seniors received fresh food boxes from the St. Philip's farmers market. They were also provided with season-themed recipes to try out and invited to Zoom classes with professional chefs to learn how to cook new and nutritional dishes. During the summer cycle, families received \$100 grocery gift cards from donations made by the church congregation.



Our clients further benefitted from our long-standing partnerships with organizations dedicated to philanthropy, giving, and alleviating poverty and hunger.

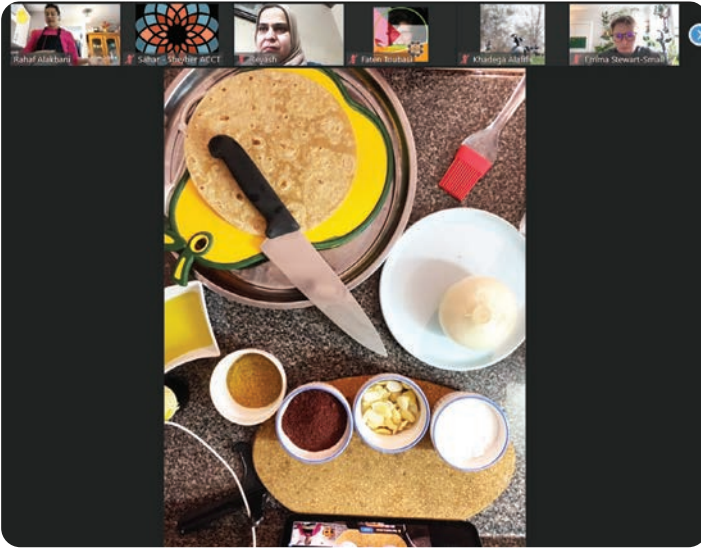
The **Tzu Chi Foundation** is a local non-profit organization that has provided many donations and generous support to our community over the years. This year, Tzu Chi provided Ramadan food bags to 80 ACCT clients and families to help them celebrate the holy month, as well as back-to-school bags with educational material, books, and writing supplies for children and youth. The Tzu Chi Foundation furthermore delivered these donations through distribution points in the parks beside our Scarborough and Etobicoke offices.



The **Al-Huda Institute Canada** provided 50 food baskets and Eid gifts to our clients for Ramadan. These generous donations helped to alleviate food scarcity concerns during the holy month. In December, Al-Huda also provided new winter jackets and accessories to 50 Afghani newcomers. ACCT volunteers and counsellors were able to make the clothing deliveries to the Afghani new arrivals at the quarantine hotels near the Pearson Airport.



The strongest determinant of a person's successful integration into society is a feeling of connectedness, belonging, and of feeling "at home." This year, in collaboration with our longstanding partner **MABELLEarts**, we helped newcomers and refugees to experience more meaningful connections to their communities through several series of art workshops. In 2021, with generous funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), MABELLEarts and ACCT led a workshop series geared at using art to deepen the relationships between beneficiaries and their communities. More established Canadians and Indigenous populations were included as well. The workshops, which covered different themes, used art as a medium to further community engagement and build language skills. The sessions increased the involvement of newcomers in local communities, provided them with a means for universal self-expression, and improved their confidence and sense of belonging.



Over a series of three rounds over the summer, fall and winter, and with MABELLEarts' guidance, female clients attended 'Smell of Home' workshops, participating in drawing and beading art forms focused on memories of their homelands. They also participated in online cooking sessions exploring cooking traditional meals from back home, the culinary arts more generally, and singing. The workshops promoted a sense of community and belonging, linking the women's homelands to Canada, thereby reducing isolation and connecting them with themes and activities they could relate to. Clients' artwork was exhibited in December along with MABELLEarts' art from across the GTA.

Finally, with the gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions, over 150 clients were able to attend concerts by the **Canadian Arab Orchestra**. With the generous free tickets provided to ACCT, clients were able to attend the concerts and listen to music from their homeland—from traditional Arabic music to more contemporary singing. Clients also enjoyed watching **the Nutcracker through the Share the Magic program** over the Christmas holidays in December 2021, thanks to a generous donation from the **National Ballet of Canada**.





The Amal Project, launched in October 2021 and funded by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), was designed to enable and empower newcomer women to integrate effectively into Canadian society and form friendships across cultures. With this in mind, the project was structured to include 2-hour-long weekly virtual sessions with professional guest speakers. Topics covered included Canadian banking, medical, and transportation systems; employment and entrepreneurship; positive parenting in a new environment; mental health and wellbeing; English proficiency, digital literacy and cybersecurity, and much more.

The newcomer women also attended a virtual “Food Photography and Styling” workshop, where they learned new skills and contributed entries to the Taste of Hope Cookbook. Entries included a recipe from their homelands, a professional photo of the meal which they captured using the photo skills also acquired during the workshop, and a story about their immigration journey, their hopes and dreams. The Cookbook is scheduled to be published periodically throughout the project's duration.






2
Cohorts



22
Workshops



8
Volunteers



40
Newcomer
Women



In order to allow the women to meet, connect and experience firsthand Canadian values and hospitality, a community project was planned in collaboration with St. Philip's Lutheran Church, in Etobicoke. The women put together a menu for the day and met up at the church's community kitchen to cook the meals and enjoy them together. They spent a day getting to know each other, learning more about various cultures and cuisines, and forming long-lasting connections.

Each cohort of the Amal Project included 4 volunteers who provided support and guidance to the participating women through weekly check-ins and support during sessions, including interpretation services and responding to all participants' requests.

From October 2021 through March 2022, the Amal Project held 22 informational sessions facilitated by professional guest speakers who are either self-employed or representatives of organizations such as RBC, CIBC, City of Toronto, Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services, Syrian Canadian Foundation, ACCES Employment, and others. The Amal Project served as a support program, providing a safe environment where newcomer women could learn, have fun, and network, thus easing their integration process and helping them feel empowered, supported, and valued. Having this support network enabled them to achieve better life outcomes and improved mental health and wellbeing.



"Everything about the program was great and very informative. I personally benefited a lot from the Driving test information and secured my driving license shortly after!"

-Amina



"Project Amal was amazing; the sessions and workshops were fun and informative. I thank the Amal team for their support, attention to detail and for inviting highly experienced guest speakers. Many thanks to you all!"

-Nidal



Rasha's Success Story

Project Amal



Born to parents of Lebanese and Iraqi heritage, I grew up in Vancouver, B.C. I decided to move to the Middle East when I was in my early twenties, where I worked as a teacher at an American school and started my family.

As my kids grew older and my son was diagnosed with Autism, I could not find the support and educational system catering to his needs. I realized how truly nurturing and empowering the educational system in Canada is and thus decided that the best thing for me and my kids was to move back to Canada to give them the proper educational foundation and help them prepare for their future. In addition, I wanted to ensure my autistic son received the best support possible to help him develop his skills and grow into his best potential.

I returned to Canada amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and decided to settle with my family in Toronto, Ontario. Despite the hardships faced due to COVID, the lockdowns and being separated from my family, I never gave up and stayed positive for the sake of my children.

I enrolled in Sheridan college for the Social worker program and did a student placement at the Arab Community Centre of Toronto (ACCT). During my student placement, I gained insight into all the programs and projects ACCT offers for new-comers including refugees and particularly women. I also volunteered with ACCT's Amal project to help enable and empower newcomer women and ease their worries when they first arrive in Canada, by supporting their settlement journey and helping create events to expand their social networks. I noticed that this project provided the women with hope, information, support and connections needed for a great outlook on the future ahead.

With my credentials and experience in Education and Social Work, I decided to continue with Disability Studies, where I was fortunate to get accepted to the Disability Studies Program at Toronto Metropolitan University (Ryerson). I believe the best way to help my son would be to gain the needed education to understand his social location and who he is as an individual before thinking of who he is as a boy with Autism Spectrum Disorder. As such, I am currently on the path of earning a better understanding of what it means to have a disability.

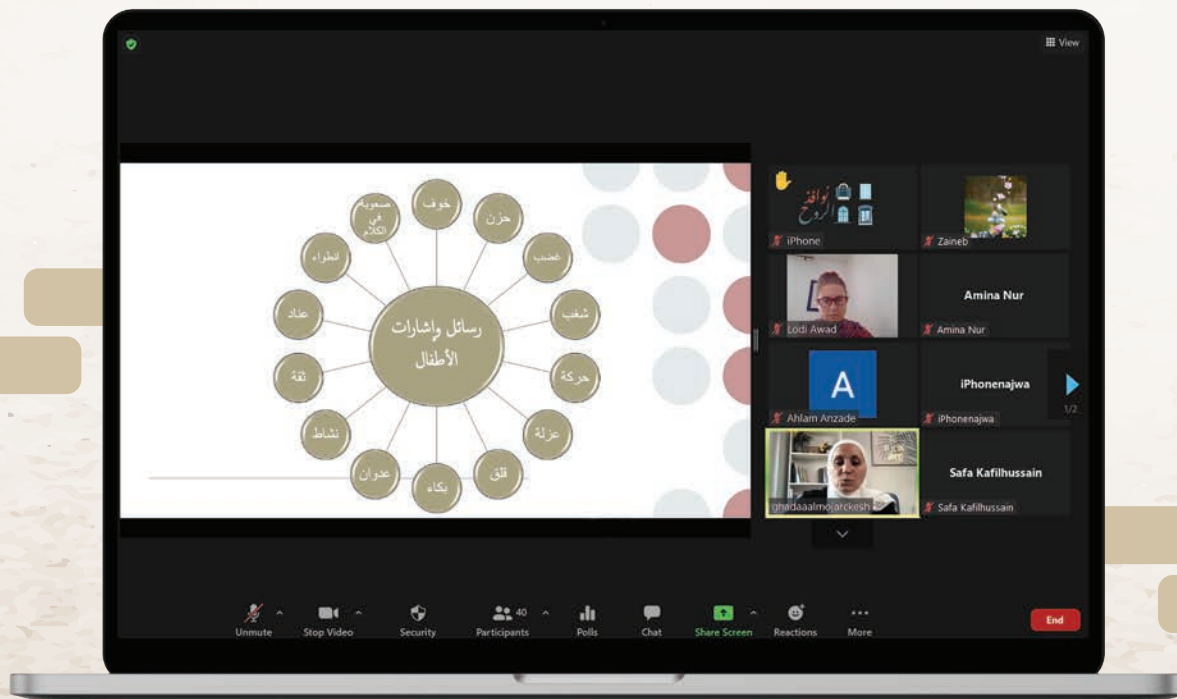
With all the challenges faced, I am very fortunate to be where I am today, a mom to 4 children, a social worker, a disability studies student and an advocate for my autistic son. Above all, I am grateful every day to call Canada my home where there is no limit to what I can achieve in this great country.

Nawafeth El-Rouh Windows to the Soul



Funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation, Nawafeth El-Rouh has been a safe haven and source of empowerment and solidarity for over 680 women since April 2021. Due to client demand, Nawafeth El-Rouh went from holding individual sessions on individual topics to delivering a series of connected sessions forming a full course on self-empowerment, relationship-management, and resources for women victims of gender-based violence (GBV). Attendance and participation increased from an average of 15 participants per session to 31, and reached 85 and 90 participants in some sessions. The new series also included two staff training sessions on engaging with victims of GBV and the best approach to communicating with and supporting them in a safe, trauma-informed manner. This was done in coordination with three professional family therapists/social workers. Topics included strengthening self-confidence, self-care, enhancing family communication, relationship management, resources and where to ask for help, problem-solving and decision-making, dealing with conflict and abuse, healthy and unhealthy patterns within the family, building resilience, attachment patterns, trauma and common mental health issues, balanced parenting, etc.

The self-empowerment curriculum is being produced into a virtual booklet. In addition, a series of infographic posters were produced by a women and gender specialist on the topic of how to address violence against women.



Welcoming Afghani Newcomers

When the Canadian government opened its borders to Afghani Refugees in the summer of 2021, ACCT recruited an Afghani-speaking counselor to assist with Afghani newcomer settlement services. Not only do Afghani new arrivals face the trauma of having fled their country under Taliban rule, but most also departed under very difficult personal circumstances, leaving their families and belongings behind at a moment's notice. Unsurprisingly, they face trauma and many other challenges as newcomers to Canada.

The demand for a range of services increased as many Afghani newcomers were quarantined at Toronto's airport hotels. One major request was the need for winter clothing. ACCT collaborated with Al Huda Institute to provide 50 families with new winter clothes and boots, which were distributed to clients directly at the quarantine hotels.

In order to assist with other settlement needs and demands such as housing, banking, and employment, we collaborated with Polycultural Immigrant and Community Services to provide weekly workshops to clients at the quarantine hotels. ACCT's virtual workshops saw massive attendance, with over 50 clients signing in to Zoom to participate in the sessions, which were conducted in Pashtu and Dari.

Furthermore, to reduce women's isolation in Canada and connect them with other Afghani newcomers, ACCT developed weekly information and orientation workshops for Afghan women entitled 'Tea with Sisters.' Women started by meeting virtually on a weekly basis, and when the weather improved, they began meeting at the park or at Tim Hortons, where they were introduced to information about life in Canada. Topics covered included parenting, child-minding, riding the TTC, finding the neighbourhood grocery store, etc.





With funding from the City of Toronto, ACCT led the development and implementation of a climate action project on behalf of the South Etobicoke Cluster network of community partners. The project, "Save food, Save Lives" harnesses traditional food-handling knowledge to share ways of reducing food waste, and hence contributing to the reduction of harmful carbon emissions. In 2021-2022 we held five awareness workshops for over 123 people on topics such as reducing waste, reusing and recycling, and green eating habits. We have also held 6 cooking workshops with 60 people in attendance thus far, where recipes and cooking tips are shared. Participants learned strategies to preserve food and cook with leftovers in order to reduce food waste.



11
Sessions



183
Clients Attended

Red Cross At Home COVID-19 Program

ACCT received funding from the Red Cross to administer "AT HOME: Stop the Spread and Stay Safe at Home"—a COVID-19 screening program. The program provided staff and clients—both individuals and families—with tools to help manage their risks and health decisions during the pandemic, in addition to helping them get vaccinated and following other public health measures. So far, ACCT has received and distributed 1,620 free C (3 batches) as well as countless masks to personnel and the people we serve. The project is ongoing.



1620
COVID-19 Rapid
Antigen Tests

Mindful Community Engagement

In 2021-2022, the term collaboration took on a deeper meaning for us as we joined a strong cluster of agencies from Central and South Etobicoke dedicated to working beyond their individual missions to address community priorities and challenges during the pandemic. Together, we engaged in reflective dialogue and creative initiatives to address issues laid bare by the pandemic, including anti-black racism, digital literacy, and homelessness with the ultimate aim of enhancing community resilience and supporting those that are most vulnerable.

As vaccine roll-out began we increased vaccine uptake and information-sharing through a network of community ambassadors led and managed by our partner LAMP Community Health Centre with generous funding from the City of Toronto. Ambassadors prepared high-quality advocacy and information material, assisted at vaccination clinics, conducted over-the-phone outreach in multiple languages, and went door-to-door throughout the Central and South Etobicoke community to help people get vaccinated.

Furthermore, ACCT and South Etobicoke partners formed discussion groups and a community of practice that engaged in deep, reflective, and action-oriented dialogue on important topics including Anti-Black Racism and Indigenous rights and reconciliation. These discussions contributed immensely to increasing understanding of white privilege and tools to support racialized/indigenous populations. We are grateful for Sandi Trillo from the United Way of Greater Toronto and Wayne Robinson from the City of Toronto for leading and facilitating the work of the SE Cluster and helping us navigate difficult conversations during challenging times.

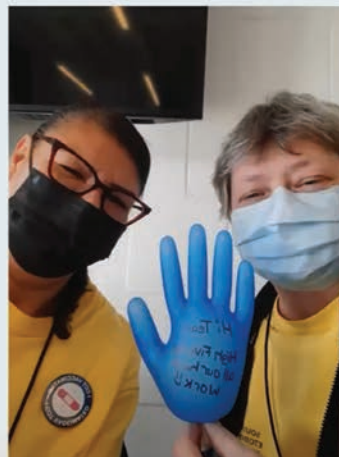
Programs & Services

Some of the ways we are reaching people;

- Dedicated Phone line
- Direct outreach
 - Information Tables
 - Door to Door
 - Community event support
- Virtual information sessions
- Pop-up Clinics

Some of the ways we are supporting our team;

- Weekly team check-ins
- Regularly training opportunities
- Debriefing
- Leadership opportunities
- Team chat on Whatsapp





COVID-19 has added another layer of challenges to those already faced by newcomers and refugee women as they try to access virtual settlement services. The pandemic has increased inequities, and made access to remote services more difficult for those lacking technological skill. If not addressed, these inequities threaten to leave newcomers and refugee women behind, resulting in further social exclusion and isolation.

As part of ACCT's vision, mission, and values in ensuring equitable access to services, in December 2021, we initiated the JOSOOR Project to provide more expansive, effective, and accessible (including remote) services to newcomers and refugee women. This is an innovative approach that aims to overcome some of the challenges posed by the pandemic.

"JOSOOR" (which means "bridges" in English) is a Service Delivery Improvement (SDI) project, funded by IRRC and delivered in partnership with the Canadian Arab Institute (CAI), York University's Centre for Refugee Studies, Humber College, and TechServe TO. JOSOOR is a research-based project that aims to leverage technology to support remote services. It explores the barriers associated with remote service delivery to inform the development of a new approach that is centered on newcomers and refugee women's needs, experiences, and preferences. JOSOOR also seeks to build partners' capacity to be more responsive and coordinated.



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 and Hooyo iHub.

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



Financial Statement - Revenues

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (Settlement Program, Josoor Program)

48.95 % - \$ 1,754,794

City of Toronto (TYJC, CSP, IIN, Climate Action Fund)

30.75 % - \$ 1,102,512

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (YVP, NSP)

9.57 % - \$ 342,944

Ontario Trillium Foundation

5.46 % - \$ 195,652

Other Grants, receipts and donations

1.89 % - \$ 67,805

Employment and Social Development Canada (Canada Summer Jobs, New Horizons for Seniors)

1.18 % - \$ 42,455

Canadian Women's Foundation (CWF)

1.03 % - \$ 36,943

Ministry of the Solicitor General (ARAH)

0.53 % - \$ 19,130

Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (Pay Equity)

0.43 % - \$ 15,369

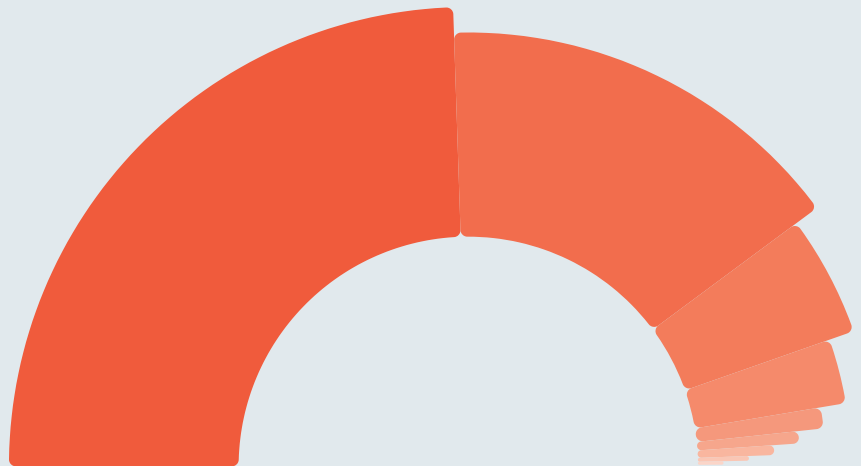
United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT)

0.21 % - \$ 7,623



\$ 3,555,171

Total Revenues



Financial Statement - Expenses

Salaries and wages

73.15 % - \$ 2,571,644

Contractual services

6.43 % - \$ 225,977

Workshops and conferences

6.30 % - \$ 221,601

Rent

4.21 % - \$ 148,136

Professional fees

2.77 % - \$ 97,287

Telephone

0.49 % - \$ 17,193

Amortization

1.48 % - \$ 52,149

Office supplies & Expenses

1.27 % - \$ 44,628

HST expense

0.70 % - \$ 24,664

IT support expenses

2.00 % - \$ 70,337

Client transportation

0.43 % - \$ 14,961

Advertising and promotion

0.31 % - \$ 10,853

Repairs and maintenance

0.20 % - \$ 6,915

Insurance

0.14 % - \$ 4,821

Bank charges and interest

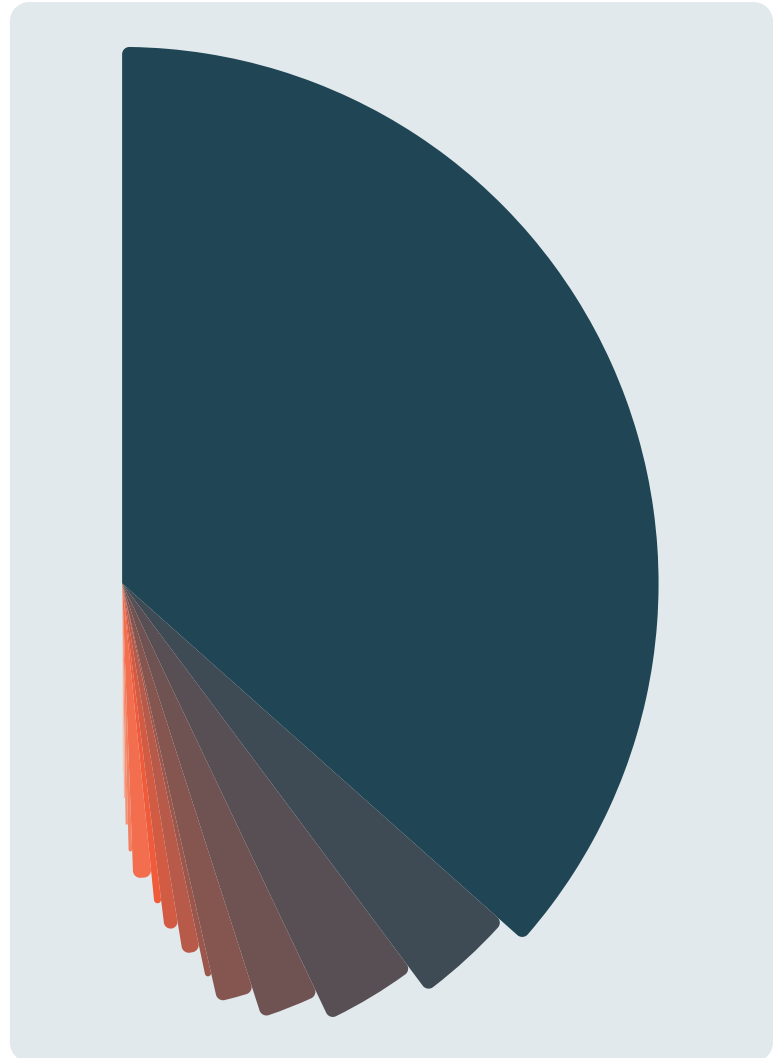
0.06 % - \$ 1,986

Other expenses

0.05 % - \$ 1,826

Travel and parking

0.02 % - \$ 734



\$ 3,515,712

Total Expenses

Excess of revenues over expenses \$ 69,515
Based on audited financial statements for fiscal year 2021-2022

Partnerships & Collaborations

SE Coordination Cluster

SE ABR Non-Black Affinity Group



Toronto West Local Immigration Partnership
Community Collaboration at Work



Our Funders



Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Financé par Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

Funded by the Government of Canada

Financé par le Gouvernement du Canada



Employment and Social Development Canada

Emploi et Développement social Canada



Our Volunteers

There are no real words to express our appreciation for the work our volunteers do each year in support of our mission, and 2021-2022 was no exception. Despite a very challenging year, we were fortunate to work with a diverse group of newcomer volunteers who assisted us with our various activities, were always there to help interpret and translate for our newcomer clients, and when needed accompanied them to doctors' appointments. We want to take this opportunity to extend our deepest gratitude to these incredible individuals whose dedicated efforts and generous commitment of their time played a key role in our success and that of our clients.



82

Volunteers



1455

Hours

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 acctyouth

