



30
YEARS

**Celebrating
Decades of
Serving our
Community**

2022
2023

IMPACT REPORT

ONE COMMUNITY, MANY CULTURES



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OUR VISION

A society where no one suffers from violence, oppression, and social injustice.

OUR MISSION

The Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham Region is a Registered Charitable Organization, dedicated to providing trauma-informed care counselling, services, and programs to women of all ages and their families, from diverse backgrounds, to eradicate violence, to rebuild their lives, and enable them to become contributing members of society.

The organization was founded in 1993 to provide services and to increase public awareness of the rising incidence of women assault in our community. All women, regardless of race, culture, social identity, ability, religion, sexual orientation, class, age, income, or immigration status have equitable access to our programs and services. Our services are free, culturally sensitive, and confidential.

No one is turned away.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES WMRCC OF DURHAM:

- ▶ Values the diversity of its community
- ▶ Promotes programs and services without prejudice, violence, discrimination, bullying and harassment.
- ▶ Adheres to the principles of accountability, confidentiality, equity, and social justice.
- ▶ Strives for equity, equality and mutual respect.
- ▶ Promotes self-knowledge, self-determination, self-empowerment, and resiliency.
- ▶ Aims for an ideal world that will be free from all forms of violence and oppression.

PRESIDENT'S & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



**“There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle
because we do not live single-issue lives.”
-Audre Lorde**

It is with great enthusiasm that we present to you this WMRCC's 2022-2023 Annual Report.

Celebrating WMRCC's 30th year of supporting vulnerable members of our community this year, has been a burning desire. It was almost like yesterday when a group of newcomer and immigrant women gathered to participate in focus group sessions to talk about their lived experiences of violence and abuse. This need assessment study led to the establishment of our organization (WMRCC) to continue to fulfill the dream of delivering women's empowerment services and programs.

For the past three decades, our holistic vision, mission, and value have remained the same. We have been thriving in supporting women of all ages, youth, and children from diverse backgrounds dealing with many challenging issues. Those issues include but are not limited to gender-based violence, housing, legal issues, immigration issues, unemployment and under-employment, language barriers, and systemic issues. Trauma-informed care counselling supported women, youth, and children to heal from lived experiences of trauma, skills development programs, micro-skills, and worker cooperative development programs enabled women and youth to build on the skills they need for future career and financial advancement.

We have seen the escalation of Gender-Based Violence as well as an increase in

mental health. The community is still dealing with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. We should not underestimate the crisis created by unaffordable housing, and homelessness issues across the Durham Region and Greater Toronto Area. In particular, inadequate social housing remains real and insidious for the most vulnerable populations.

WMRCC has witnessed some growth in the past few years in terms of programs and services being delivered in the community. All those programs and services could not have been possible without the generosity and support of our various funders, who funded numerous projects, donors, supporters, community partners, stakeholders, families, well-wishers, board, staff, volunteers, and students. Thank you all for being part of our success. 30 years is not 30 days, and we could not have been here without a collaborative effort from everyone.

We want to thank and appreciate our services and program users over the years for the trust bestowed on us to support them in all their service needs. It is always a great pleasure learning so much from you all as we walk through this lane of supporting various pathways on your healing journey.

With a heartfelt gratitude to everyone.

In sisterhood,

Aryan Esgandarian

Aryan Esgandarian
President

Esther Enyolu

Esther Enyolu
Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Aryan
Esgandanian**
President



Kisho Umar
Vice President



**Maggie
Perotin**
Secretary



Phoebe Grayson
Treasurer

DIRECTORS



**Kadia
Baugh-William**



**Adele
Ngamala**



**Omar
Almajdalawis**



**Madiha
Ahmad**



**Frida
Basalirwa**

WMRCC STAFF

Esther Enyolu	Executive Director
Eran Asombang	Accountant
Carlene Wallace	Youth In Transition Worker (YITW)
Cristina Gomez	Seniors Program
Angelique Benois	EYOW/Clinical Counsellor
Irene Brimpong	Youth Outreach Worker/Mentorship Coordinator
Dave Perry	Youth Outreach Worker/ Mentorship Coordinator
Andrea Wilkinson	Trauma-Informed Counsellor
Kiana Reddock	Mental Health Project Coordinator
Nirupa Nagalingam	Trauma-Informed Counsellor/ Mental Health & Well-Being
Tahereh Kalhori	Trauma-Informed Counsellor
Oluwaseun Adu	Workers Co-operative Project Coordinator
Aysha Javed	Workers Co-operative Project Coordinator
Nivetha Jeevanantham	Community Engagement Coordinator
Omar Pavel	Project Coordinator Consultant, Shop for Good
Rubaba Pasha	Supervisor, Youth Worker, Youth Empowerment & Skills Development
Leticia Akparah	Youth Worker, Youth Empowerment & Skills Development
Felicia Seucharan	Coordinator
Yvonne Codrington	Sewing Instructor
Gladys Osungade	Sewing Instructor



COLLABORATORS

STUDENTS PRACTICUM

Uwem Akpan
Jasmine Johnson
Felicia Seucharan
Grace Armstrong
Najma Sultani
Sana Nayab
Rene Lepage
Jeevitha Puvirajasingham

VOLUNTEER LAW STUDENTS, LINCOLN ALEXANDER SCHOOL OF LAW, TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Avani Joshi
Hania Jahangi
Martina Arcuri
Kate Mitchell - Supervisor

CONSULTANTS AND EVALUATORS

DoGood Fundraising
Vectors Group
Lynda Rees
Dr. Caroline Hossein
Freedom Dreams Co-op Education
VIK HR Solutions Consultant
Grant Thornton Accounting Firm
Innovate Inc.
Invictus Equality

IT, TECH COMPANIES

Nuvollo
ADP
SUMAC
BlackTECH Academy

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BY NUMBERS

275

Number of clients referred

1126

Crisis calls, email and referrals

42

WMRCC Volunteers

50

Women and youth who participated in Tech and micro-skills training

670

Clients supported with food vouchers & Walmart Gift Cards

250

Families, women and youth, were supported through Durham Community Action Group Foodbank

54

TWC Workshops in the community

35

New youth referrals to EYOW Program

60

Clients supported through food delivery, Community Care Durham

126

Backpacks and schools supplies were provided to youth and children

40

Women were impacted by Life Skills workshop

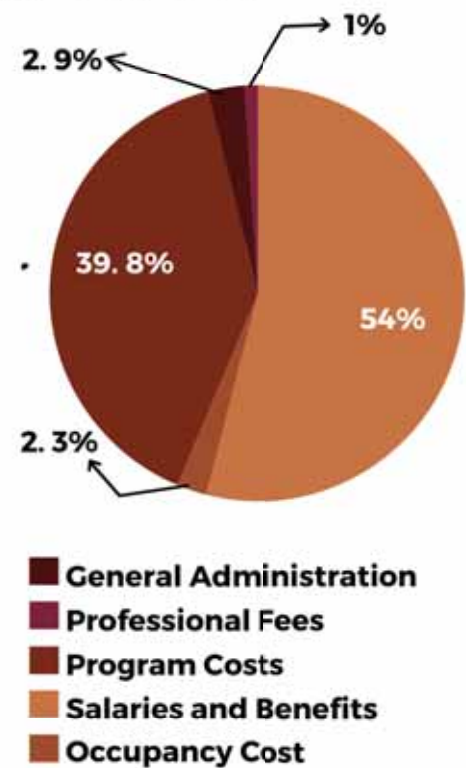


AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT

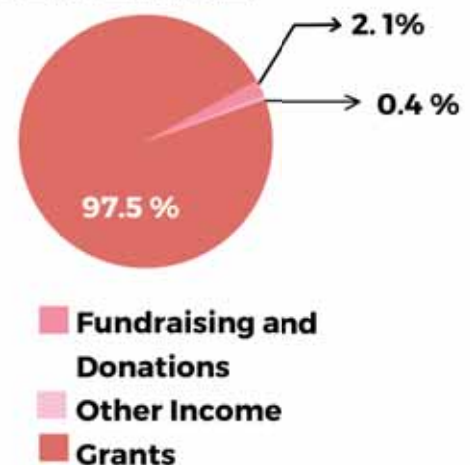
EXPENSES	
Wages and Benefits	445,349.00
Program expenses	336,082.00
Rent	19,845. 00
Insurance	13,941. 00
Professional & Consulting Fees	8,894. 00
Telephone	7,483. 00
Vehicle	7,449. 00
Office & General	4,930. 00
Supplies	4,252. 00
Computer Support	2,042. 00
Event Costs	1,940. 00
Amortization	1,677. 00
Professional Development	1,199. 00
Honorarium Expense	1,100. 00
ADP	1,059. 00
Evaluation Costs	909. 00
Advertising & Promotion	156. 00
Interest and Bank Charges	93.00
Bad Debts	3 530. 00
\$ 855,370.00	

REVENUE	
Grants	816,922.001
Fundraising and Donations	17,966.00
Other Income	3,334.00
\$ 838, 222. 00	

EXPENSES



REVENUE



TRAUMA INFORMED COUNSELLING FOR WOMEN, YOUTH & CHILDREN

WMRCC has seen an increase in referrals from the sources listed below. There has been an exponential increase in housing and immigration issues (undocumented women).

Housing

Although there is a long waitlist, the trauma-informed care counsellor always tries to provide resources and personal help to support these women in securing housing, this sometimes goes beyond the regular business hours of operation.

Immigration

The increase is in several folds; some women have been in severely abusive relationships, and husbands/partners use immigration circumstances as a form of control. That is, they tend to withhold submitting applications for permanent residency. For example, one woman was on a student visa, became

pregnant, and lost her status, counsellor has been supporting her through all these ordeals. The woman has submitted her immigration application, and housing is imminent. A woman in distress, who has sought asylum for a myriad of reasons in order to get a better life in Canada.

We provide short-term and long-term individual counselling; sometimes individuals need only short term to get through a specific challenge. Some others might need long-term counselling, in any case, they are given the assurance that space is reserved for them whenever such support is needed.

Our referrals are primarily from the following:

- ▶ Shelters in Durham region
- ▶ Victims Services
- ▶ WMRCC websites
- ▶ Previous service users
- ▶ Doctor's Offices
- ▶ Durham Mental Health Services
- ▶ Word of Mouth

SERVICE USERS BY NUMBERS



Presenting Issues include but are not limited to:

Anxiety, Trauma, PTSD, Housing; homelessness, Isolation; seeking validation, Life Skills, Case Management, Cognitive, Distortion, Substance Use, Assimilation, Immigration, Grief and Bereavement Support, Self-Harm, Stress, Identity Issues, Dissociation/Depersonalization, Family Relationship, Suicidal Ideation

An integrated approach is used in sessions; some of the modalities utilized are:

- Life Skills
- Crisis intervention
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT)
- Psychoeducation
- Mindfulness
- Narrative Therapy
- Talk Therapy
- Feminist Therapy
- Play Therapy

Andrea Wilkinson,
Trauma-Informed Counsellor



INVESTING IN WOMEN'S FUTURES PROGRAM

NEW INITIATIVE

WMRCC has received funding for Investing in Women's Futures Program from the Office of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, Ontario Government. We continue to provide trauma-informed care counselling, life skills, skills development and micro-skills, and entrepreneurship programs to

vulnerable women. The project also supports the most recent arrival asylum seekers. These women experienced significant trauma. WMRCC provides one on one trauma-informed care counselling support to these women including ongoing psychotherapy group sessions.



As we move forward, we will continue to advocate for these women, youth and children, most importantly, we will continue to commit to our mission statement of inclusivity, to eradicate Gender-Based Violence, to rebuild their lives, and to support them in regaining their autonomy through economic advancement and self-sufficiency.

Andrea Wilkinson, Trauma-Informed Counsellor
Tahereh Kalhoi, Trauma-Informed Counsellor



The Enhanced Youth Outreach Worker Program (EYOW) focuses on offering trauma-informed and culturally sensitive clinical counselling to youth aged 12-24 years age who identify as being Black. This service offers a range of therapeutic approaches consisting of traditional and complimentary models.

This year demonstrated the ongoing needed shift within the EYOW program at WMRCC as a number of youth continue to request text, virtual, and phone support. Youth referrals arrived via word of mouth from other youth, Social Workers from various school boards across the region, parents, and Student Success Professionals.

In this fiscal year, we received 35 new youth referrals. Resulting in 43 total youth who have received clinical support to better manage their presenting mental health concerns. 13 identified as male youth and 6 as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

The EYOW supported youth directly and indirectly by offering support that would serve the youth, family population, and community, such as supporting youth experiencing housing issues, food insecurity, and court issues.

The opening of schools and other community establishments has opened the option for in-person sessions. Thus, many sessions within the school took place, in addition to ongoing requests for virtual and phone support. The accumulation of global stressors such as racial traumas, the housing crisis, and the rise of mental health concerns, especially within the Black community remains very real. Indicating that the work of the EYOW is highly needed and needs to continue.

Angelique Benois, EYOW, Clinical Counsellor

“TOGETHER WE CAN” YOUTH OUTREACH WORKER/ YOUTH MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The “Together We Can” – Mentorship” program began in April 2018 and has continued to support youth who identify as Black between the ages of 12- 25 in the Durham Region. During the fifth year, the program has continued to grow and support the needs identified by the youth in the community.

Our presence in schools enabled us to engage and meet with more youth. Being there to mentor students within the schools, delivering program activities, and encouraging those who were at risk of dropping out of school to make the necessary changes to see success in their lives. We had the chance to provide leadership training to a group of Black students in the DCDSB during the summer. Those students were hired by the board to support a STEM Camp during the month of July. Social workers from the DCDSB continued to refer students to our program on a regular basis. We received an invitation from the organization at the beginning of the summer to visit J. Clarke Richardson again in the autumn to meet with youngsters we had gotten to know the year before, as well as to meet with new youth who required assistance over the year. We were also able to communicate with students at Pickering High in the spring.

We have continued to attend and support the youth at Kennedy House. We have provided workshops and services to help support the youth there and have had guests provide additional insights related to mental health, money management, and Black history in Canada. Some barriers that we have faced while delivering the program at Kennedy House were a lack of staff to watch over youth while with us and to help escort us to the program rooms and also having youth at times not showing up for their own personal reasons, as well as youth leaving Kennedy House entirely. This at times made it difficult to maintain a linear program and to make sure that because there are only two youth blocks, to ensure that no one is seeing repeating material.

This year, *Together We Can*, impacted many more youth by providing information and connecting youth to social services and community partners. We presented a variety of

training and learning opportunities for youngsters. We offered a secure space for youth to voice their concerns and seek guidance on what steps they can take to improve their circumstances. Our in-person 1-on-1 meetings with youth have enabled us to provide consistent support to those who have reached out to us and the program has had a great impact on the youth.

Mentorship provided an outlet for adolescents who needed to connect with others like them. They have supported youth who have struggled with issues concerning bullying, academics, family, self-esteem, identity, mental stress, employment, conflict resolution, time management, healthy habits, and relationships.

PROGRAM IMPACTS

The total number of youth supported is 90
The number of new one-on-one support service users is 24
The number of New Mentees is 14
The number of new Mentors is 5
New Mentorship Matches are 30
Total mentors are 17
EYOW referrals are 2
Other referrals (employment, housing) are 35



“ —

I first found out about the TWC program from my school guidance counselor. I think the need for this program for young black ladies is something that is needed everywhere. It is helpful for young teens who don't have the resources or support they need in tough times or situations. This program has helped me in many ways identify ways; using coping skills, conflict resolution, and establishing healthy relationships when I become highly stress or have anxiety.

-SB

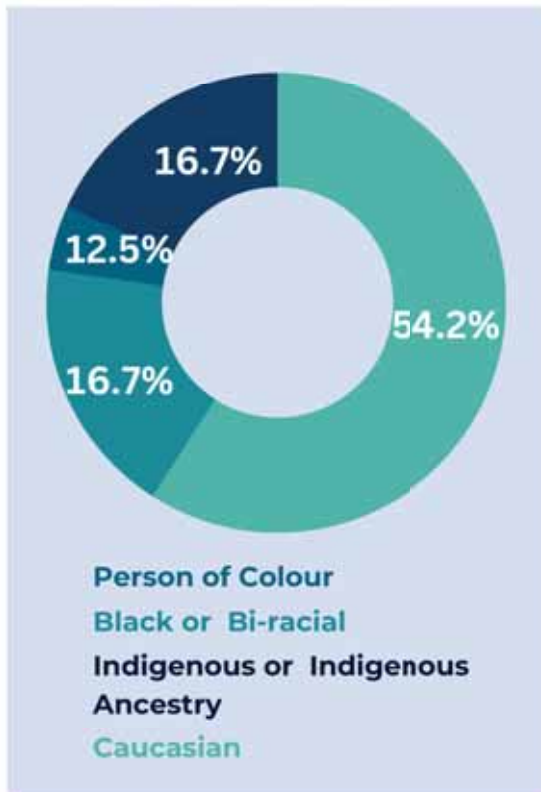


Irene Brimpong Female, YOW/ YMC
Dave Perry, Male YOW/ YMC

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

- TWC Lunchtime Series
- 905 Raptors Game
- Kennedy House Detention TWC Workshops
- Black History Month Celebration Event
- In-school Outreach
- Community Outreach and programming in at-risk identified neighborhoods in Oshawa and Whitby Area School

YOUTH IN TRANSITION WORKER PROGRAM



During the period this report covered, housing continued to be a challenging and pervasive issue among YITW service users with more than half of the YITW program youth seeking YITW support to acquire and/or retain safe and affordable housing. Among those, some sought support to address a pending eviction, acquire housing stability funding to assist with rental arrears and/ or rental subsidies, advocacy, or assistance to prevent impending homelessness, or support with navigating or resolving shared housing issues. The YITW program provided direct hands-on support and provided youth with the current vacancy postings, referrals to housing support workers for individualized housing support, assistance with contacting and scheduling viewing appointments, referrals, and resources

(including housing worker referrals) to services providing information and advocacy for landlord /tenant, legal advice/services, and Housing Stability Program Funding. Youth facing imminent homelessness were connected with and/ or referred to youth homelessness prevention programs and received ongoing supports and services through the Housing First for Youth Program (HF4Y) and youth shelter services.

For youth seeking employment support, the YITW program sourced and facilitated referrals and registrations to participate in paid youth job training and readiness programs at various community employment service agencies in the Durham Region. The youth were taught and assisted with gaining job readiness skills such as resume writing and/ or editing, earning workplace certifications such as Emergency First Aid, Working from Heights, Smart Serve, Safe Food Handling, and others. Youth requiring more direct employment support were referred to individual employment support services, job listing websites, and employment agency and/ or employment support

SERVICES/ SUPPORTS SOUGHT/ RECEIVED BY SERVICE USERS



HOUSING: 16

**LEGAL ISSUES: 2
(INCLUDING LANDLORD -
TENANT ISSUES)**



**FOOD INSECURITY: 25
(GROCERY VOUCHER OR
FOODBANK REFERRAL/
REGISTRATION)**

**EMPLOYMENT/EMPLOYMENT
READINESS: 13**



**SECONDARY OR TERTIARY
EDUCATION/ FINANCIAL AID/
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION: 7**

**MEDICAL AND MENTAL
HEALTH SUPPORTS: 7**



**INQUIRIES OR
INFORMATION: 7**

services job bank/ posting boards. Youth seeking medical and mental health supports were provided with referrals, resources, and/ or information for medical, mental health/ addictions services and/ or programs, including after-hours community-based emergency and mental health crisis services specific to the individual's need and identity (e.g., LGBTQ2S+ and Indigenous services).

YITW program service users continue to be supported and assisted with food insecurity through connection with foodbank services, community, and agency holiday hamper programs, the provision of grocery vouchers, ride share/transportation service vouchers, and direct assistance with the creation of personalized budgets and household management skills. The YITW program at WMRCC remained committed and continued to provide responsive, creative, caring, and culturally sensitive/responsive individualized support and services to our Youth In Transition Worker Program service users.

Carlene Wallace, YITW Project Coordinator



8 Males

16 Females

1 Transgender



From January 2023 to March 2023, the Mental Health Project, as funded by the Canadian Red Cross has contributed to various outcomes in trauma-informed care counselling support and mental health initiatives.

Between January 2023- March 2023, a total of 19 clients have been served. Of these 19 clients, 18 were adult women, and one female youth. Trauma-informed care counseling was utilized to provide women and youth with emotional support and client-centered care. The concerns and objectives of our clientele varied. Many of our clients expressed struggling with domestic abuse, coming to terms with past trauma, managing stress and anxiety, reducing anger and resentment, navigating family conflict, constructing a crisis plan, reaching independence, and improving on low self-esteem. As a counsellor, clients were emotionally supported by utilizing active listening skills, motivational interviewing, validating their lived experiences, and creating a safe place for self-expression. Furthermore, with the guidance of the counsellor, clients were offered alternative coping mechanisms and psycho-education skills to mitigate stress. Lastly, referrals and resources were provided upon request from the client. Some examples of the referrals and resources given include Legal Aide Ontario, Legal Shield, Durham Catholic School Board English Classes, Kids Help Phone, Durham

Client Testimonies:

"I so very much appreciate all of your efforts and support; you help me to smile through some of my toughest moments and days." -KL

"...it's very special to write to you and speak even in this way, thank you for giving me this opportunity." - GM

"Thanks for everything, I am really grateful to you." -TSP

Mental Health Services, Muslim Welfare Centre, Central Intake Number Toronto, John Howards Society, Agilec, Durham Region Unemployment Help Centre, Region of Durham-Counselling, Counselling for Men, Bounce back Program, A. Princewill Law Firm, Durham Community Legal Clinic and Community Development Council Durham.

Aside from counselling, the Mental Health project has engaged in various mental health promotional, education, and outreach activities between January 2023- March 2023. Thus far, there have been a total of five social media posts on Instagram and Facebook that have aimed to educate followers on mental health through statistics, inspirational posts, self-help techniques, and knowledge about mental illness. Furthermore, a mental health banner has been created for outreach and promotion at community functions. The project was promoted at the Town of Ajax Volunteer Fair where interested attendees could volunteer to support future WMRCC mental health programs.

Additionally, the WMRCC Mental Health Project Coordinators conducted a presentation at the Carion Fenn Mental Health Forum. An educational presentation was given to bring awareness to violence against women and children, and bullying. Afterward, attendees were free to network and engage in activities designed to encourage a collective discussion about mental health.

Lastly, a mental health tool kit has been created to distribute at community events. Specifically, the mental health tool kit is an interactive booklet that discusses aspects of emotional intelligence and offers practice exercises that readers can do at home to build their emotional intelligence. Furthermore, it brings awareness to how emotional expression can vary between cultures so that individuals are mindful in their interactions and build deeper connections with diverse individuals.

Kiana Reddock, Project Coordinator

SENIORS' SOCIAL INCLUSION- SSIP

WMRCC of Durham Senior Project promotes mental health, socialization, and physical activities among the senior community. It's important to prioritize these aspects of well-being, and their efforts are commendable. Engaging in activities that focus on mental health, socializing with others, and staying physically active can greatly contribute to overall well-being.



Art Class and Crafts

Providing opportunities for seniors to engage in creative activities like macramé, painting, working with artificial flowers, and canvas art is a fantastic way to promote their creativity and self-expression. It's especially great that one of the group members is taught these activities, as it creates a sense of community and peer support within the group. Providing all the materials needed for these projects allows participants to fully explore and enjoy their artistic endeavors. By offering these creative outlets, the Seniors have a chance to have fun and express themselves. It also supports their cognitive abilities and emotional well-being.



Outside Activities - Spring and Summer

We engaged in physical activities in the park, walks, yoga, and light exercises to keep them active.



Holiday Hampers and Grocery Support

Various forms of support and assistance were provided to seniors in the community. Distributing turkeys, PC grocery cards, and gifts for their grandchildren was a wonderful gesture to ensure they had a special occasion to celebrate. Additionally, providing groceries every three months through PC gift cards helped to alleviate the high costs faced by Seniors. The support from Durham Community Action Group in providing groceries every Thursday has been commendable. An invaluable home delivery service was provided through CCD, Community Care Durham, which enabled Seniors with disabilities to receive groceries delivered to their homes. Thanks to these initiatives, many seniors are received the help they needed.



Maintaining Connections

Socialization is key. Activities like friendly calls, peer support, and Bingo not only provide a chance for the Seniors to connect and interact with others but also create a sense of community and belonging. These activities greatly contribute to mental well-being and create opportunities for forming new friendships.

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Active Movement

- ▶ Park,
- ▶ Yoga,
- ▶ Walking
- ▶ Zumba

Arts and Crafts Projects

- ▶ Painting
- ▶ Sewing
- ▶ Knitting

Socialization

- ▶ Birthday Celebrations
- ▶ Friendly calls,
- ▶ Peer support
- ▶ Workshops

Thanks to the active and constant participation of the seniors; we have been able to create a dynamic group that has shown how their participation in all the planned activities has benefited them from a better lifestyle.

Thanks to our executive director for always supporting my initiatives and to those agencies that support our work.

Cristina Gomez, Project Coordinator



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Our volunteers were involved in community engagement, life skills workshops, outreach programs, and the planning of the 2023 WMRCC@ 30th Gala of Hope.

The team was engaged in building community connections with other partners to connect with new immigrants, and women in shelters in GTA, Durham, and Toronto regions. Our skills development workshops helped them integrate into the community.:

Outreaching Strategy:

The team reached out to shelters in Durham and GTA. We connected to newcomers and women in shelters who were new in Canada as well as with new immigrants and refugees.

The team reached out to young girls and provided them with knowledge on life skills and skills development through the community workshops.

Preparation for Gala of Hope – 2023

The Community Engagement team was involved in the preparation of the WMRCC@30th Gala of Hope 2023. The team reached out to sponsors and donors for support. The team was involved in coordinating vendors, decorators, performers, ticketing procedures, flyers, social media advertising, and marketing for the Gala.

Volunteer's Community Project is an ongoing Community building project that requires capacity and mentoring for female newcomers,

Life Skills and Resource Workshops offered:

- ▶ **How to Build Self-Esteem and Confidence**
- ▶ **Mental Health in Women**
- ▶ **How to Build Resilience**
- ▶ **Newcomer's Life Skills Workshop**
- ▶ **How to Manage Anxiety**
- ▶ **Skills for Personal Development**
- ▶ **Financial Literacy for Women**
- ▶ **Canadian Culture in Workplace**

new immigrants, and refugees to help them with resources so that they can find an easier path to assimilate into the community.

Rubaba Pasha, Volunteer Coordinator

MICRO-CREDENTIAL SKILLS PROGRAM FOR IMMIGRANT AND NEWCOMER WOMEN

Elevate Talent provided support for under-represented individuals in the tech sector, and WMRCC provided services to the same community, and a partnership was formed. We promoted and recruited roughly 50 female and 25 male participants for Customer Care, Data Analytics with Python, and Digital Marketing courses. Even though Elevate Talent discontinued this program in July 2022, WMRCC was able to continue with the program due to the need in the community. We were able to find a new partner, Tech University to continue with the micro-credential courses. With the support of the Ontario Tech University, through the funding from the TD Ready Commitment, this program was continued. The program offers over 1,000 free micro-credentials courses across 24 topics of interest to those in our community who are mid-career, under-employed or likely to face changes in the workplace. 25 female participants enrolled in courses such as digital marketing, introduction to Microsoft, and data analysis.



In February 2023, we also received a new grant from the Ontario Government, Investing in Women's Future Project. This grant has enabled WMRCC to continue to deliver this much-needed program in the community. The program aims to support women from vulnerable communities to gain micro skills to enable entering and re-entering into the labour market for economic advancement.

Nivetha Jeevanantham, Project Coordinator

EM-POWER-HER PROJECT

The project is split into three phases:

PHASE 1

Focuses specifically on social media promotion, networking and development and design of project's flyers, posters, and newsletters

PHASE 2

Hosting monthly information sessions and raising community awareness on Gender Equality issues

PHASE 3

Involves hosting workshops and conducting interviews with organizations on gender equality issues in their workplaces. Specifically, every month, WMRCC hosts an Information Session promoting the Gender Equality Project.

The information sessions are open to the public to raise awareness and form partnerships. In one of the information sessions, WMRCC collaborates with the Government of Canada and the Women's Economic Council. Our main guest speakers were Nivetha Jeevanantham, the Em-POWER-Her Project Coordinator; Oluwaseun Adu, the Women's Worker Cooperative Development Project Coordinator from WMRCC; Nujhat Bashir, a Policy Analyst with Procurement Assistance Canada; and Romina R. Landaure, the Francophone Relations Manager at WEC. Nujhat specializes in assisting women entrepreneurs and businesses led by women. As part of this role, ANujhat helps support businesses in the Ontario Region by engaging with them and sharing information about how to access procurement opportunities with the Federal Government. Romina R. Landaure, the Francophone Relations Manager at WEC, is a national and registered charitable organization that aims to advance every woman's participation in building resilient and inclusive economies, especially those women who experience multiple systemic barriers. They achieve their mission through consultation, networking, research, and advocacy to understand and address women's challenges in creating sustainable livelihoods. WEC collaborates with WMRCC of Durham on their 50-30 Challenge Initiative.

Nivetha Jeevanantham, Project Coordinator

WORKER COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre of Durham (WMRCC) developed 7 cooperative programs in 2019. And currently received another grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation for four years to assist in developing workers' cooperatives in six service areas: artists, childcare workers, cleaners/organizers, personal support worker, sewing/ designing, and hairdressing. We have been conducting workshops on eight principles of cooperatives as well as ten steps of developing a worker cooperative. We will a

The workers will continue to have service-specific discussion groups to understand the issues in their service area better. There will be one-on-one and group guidance on how to develop a specific worker cooperative. Mentorship will be available from professional consultants. The year will end with an annual cooperative conference. The program will run on six-monthly cycles which will be repeated four times in two years. There will be constant support for workers through the project coordinator over the duration of the project.



Oluwaseun Adu, Project Coordinators
Aysha Javed, Project Coordinators

SHOP FOR GOOD

Shop for Good (shopforgood.ca) is a social enterprise operated by the Women's Multicultural Resource & Counselling Centre of Durham. Funded through the Investment Readiness Program by the Durham Community Foundation, Toronto Foundation, and Community Foundation Canada. The platform was initially developed in 2021. It is an online marketplace for charities and individuals, a digital platform for social impact and kindness. Shop for Good has been recently redesigned to offer digital printing services to WMRCC's esteemed customers. Create your custom design products and we will print and ship them to you at a competitive low price.

Currently, we are relentlessly working with our community partners to revamp the



A Marketplace for Kindness

Find all you need for good. We support multiculturalism and underrepresented communities. All products are handmade and produced by members of the community.

[Shopforgood.ca](https://shopforgood.ca)

marketplace and make it more secure and user-friendly for the end users. We have successfully updated the website frontend and backend integrations. We are currently at the last sprint of the project and working to ensure proper and secure integration backend.

Omar Pavel, Project Coordinator

NEW PROGRAMS AT WMRCC

AGE WELL AT HOME (AWAH) IN-HOME SUPPORT PROJECT FOR SENIORS

Through this initiative, WMRCC of Durham will deliver volunteer-based eligible practical support services to help low-income and otherwise vulnerable seniors age well at home. WMRCC will expand the delivery of services, primarily in the senior's homes, in the local communities of Durham Region. These areas include but are not limited to different neighbourhoods, towns, cities, and municipalities such as Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Oshawa, Brock, and Clarington. The project reaches out to seniors who are vulnerable and lonely, assisting them to navigate social support systems that create challenges and barriers. Seniors are one of the populations disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The activities of this initiative will increase their access to eligible services provided by other local organizations.

WMRCC will work in partnership with other organizations to deliver services in the community.

The project's specific objectives are to:

- ▶ Expand delivery of volunteer-based eligible services to low-income and otherwise vulnerable seniors to help them age well at home.
- ▶ Increase the quality of life of low-income and otherwise vulnerable seniors by providing navigation services to help seniors gain access to eligible services provided by other organizations in the local area.

Ongoing activities

Monitor the delivery of volunteer-based eligible services which include;

- ▶ Light housekeeping (for example laundry, cleaning)
- ▶ Meal delivery and/or preparation
- ▶ Home maintenance (for example repairs, yard work, lawn mowing), Snow removal
- ▶ Transportation (for example to appointments and errands)
- ▶ Volunteer drop-offs (for example groceries, medication, and pet supplies)
- ▶ Friendly visiting in the home, reading, watching movies, and socializing with seniors

This project is funded by the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (YESD)

This project promotes "Youth Employment and Skills Development (YESD)" for youth from under-served communities. The project focuses on working with youth and encouraging their participation in the labour market by providing workplace experience for skills acquisition. WMRCC will continue to liaise with different businesses, community organizations, towns, cities, and municipalities to network around providing workplace experiences for the youth in the program.

Over the 12 months, we will support 50 youth who will engage directly in volunteer service placements in order to develop skills that are relevant to participate in labour market and promote greater civic engagement and inclusion.

The project's specific objectives are to:

- Support skills development of youth from the vulnerable and under-served communities.
- Support participants of newcomers, immigrant, and youth from equity-deserving communities (males and females, aged 17-30) in participating in an initiative that creates opportunities for positive change around social issues that impact their socio-economic, health, and well-being.
- Youth will develop new skills for social participants in the labour market.
- Increase national awareness of social issues impacting youth from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life.
- WMRCC will evaluate the project using qualitative and quantitative methods backed with evidence-based data to produce a final report of the project activities that demonstrate participants' need to maintain their involvement in social issue(s) that impact their lives and employability potentials.
- Create a sustainability plan to allow partnered not-for-profit organizations to continue the activity that provides job experience, retention, and leadership experiences for youth beyond the project end date.



This project is funded by the Canada Service Corps, ESDC

BRIDGING THE GAPS: RECOVERING AND REBUILDING AFTER COVID-19

This project is funded through the United Way of Durham Region's: Community Services Recovery Fund. The initiative invests in the well-being and the ability of WMRCC to thrive in delivering services and programs to meet the growing needs of vulnerable communities through the lens of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Meeting the population that we serve where they are with a hybrid service of in-person and virtual platforms.

Project deliverables include but are not limited to:

1. Working with Technology (IT) to provide training to the population we serve on using technology such as laptops and tablets for virtual meetings.
2. Community consultation and focus group with service users/clientele.
3. Engagement of an Evaluator who will be responsible for the evaluation of the project activities.

Tahereh Kalhori, Project Coordinator

CAPACITY BUILDING: CREATING COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO ADDRESS WOMEN'S ISSUES

WMRCC has been working on issues of gender-based violence and its' intersectionality to other forms of oppression since its' inception in 1993. This initiative will further enhance WMRCC's capacity to collaborate with diverse community partners to address issues impacting women, including the issue of gender-based violence.

This project is funded by WAGE to develop a partnership network through building a coalition of women's leaders in Durham and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). A network of leaders in the anti-violence movement to build capacity to strengthen our sector in addressing issues that impact women's lives. Especially those from the equity-seeking groups, including the official language minority communities (OLMCs) for social change.

In addition, this initiative will enable WMRCC to work with a consultant in human resources (HR) and policy development who will assist the organization with funding diversification with private sectors and a succession plan as WMRCC celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. The measurable outcome is that implementation of this activity will increase organizational capacity to develop tools, protocols, and policies for sustainability.



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WMRCC'S COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS WITH PARTNERS

RISE UP: EXPERIENCE OF VICTIMS/ SURVIVORS OF SEX TRAFFICKING ACCESSING HEALTH CARE SERVICES

This research project is the initiative of the Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR), solely funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE). It is a three-year project in partnership with Lakeridge Health, and other community partners, such as the Human Trafficking Coalition of Durham Region, Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre (WMRCC), and the AIDS Committee of Durham.

Lakeridge is the sole provider of hospital health care in Durham with 5 acute care hospitals across the Region. The focus of this research project is on amplifying diverse survivors' voices in order to lead the direction of the research. A survivor advisory panel (SAP) was established at the beginning of the project, which included survivors from Indigenous and Black communities. The SAP was essential in shaping the interview process, participant recruitment, and research methodology. Durham Region continues to experience high rates of human trafficking cases given the 401-highway corridor, the Pickering Casino, and the geographical proximity between Toronto, Kingston, and Ottawa.

ADDRESSING LACK OF ACCESS TO CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SUPPORT

Project Agape is a 3-year project designed to deliver services and programs to address the lack of access to culturally responsive supports, healing, community, and resources for Black women and gender diverse survivors of sexual and gender-based violence 29 and under in Ottawa by offering online and in-person workshops, a podcast series, a weekend-long survivor wellness retreat, and food bank.

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC- COUNCIL 50-30 CHALLENGE: YOUR DIVERSITY ADVANTAGE

This initiative is in partnership with the Women's Economic Council (WEC). WEC received over one million dollars to implement the 50-30 Challenge initiative in partnership with organizations and groups working on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The 50-30 Challenge is an initiative between the Government of Canada, Canadian businesses, and organizations focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The program's goal is to challenge Canadian organizations to increase the representation and inclusion of diverse groups within their workplaces while highlighting the benefits of giving all Canadians an opportunity to seat at the table.

WMRCC has been involved in this initiative and has been promoting the project at various community events and through its' projects such as the Em-POWER-Her Project and Gender Based Violence (GBV) Project. We have recruited roughly 20 organizations from Durham and GTA to join the 50-30 challenge and adopt practices to improve access and equity. We are hoping that more organizations can join the 50-30 Challenge.

ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND MENTAL HEALTH IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES OF CURRENT AND PROSPECTIVE POST-SECONDARY STUDENTS IN A CANADIAN CONTEXT: A PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Exposure to anti-Black racism in institutional and community contexts is associated with negative mental health and educational outcomes (e.g., depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, poor academic self-concept, premature dropout) for youth and young adults seeking higher education.

In a collaboration between the WMRCC and the University of Toronto (OISE), the purpose of this project is to complete interviews with Black young people who are either enrolled in a university or planning to enroll in the future, with an aim to:

- 1) explore their perceptions and/or experiences of racial discrimination within university contexts;
- 2) identify ways in which these experiences impact their mental health, and explore their perceptions and/or experiences of mental health supports for coping with racism. This will help identify more culturally responsive university mental health supports and will advance knowledge on effective ways to prepare and support Black students in the community who are aspiring to attend university.

WMRCC'S OUR HEARTFELT APPRECIATION GOES TO OUR HOLIDAYS SPONSORS AND DONORS 2022

- Keller Williams Energy Real Estate Brokerage and partners for your ongoing support with the turkeys and food hampers for families
- Toronto Fire Fighters Toy Drive for the toys and gifts for the children and youth
- Carea Community Health Centre for the donated Rapid Test kits, PPE, and Hygiene Kits
- Toronto Star Santa Claus Fund, Barb Mrozek, and Meghan Halverson for your ongoing support with the gifts delivered to children under the age of 12 in Ajax and Pickering.
- CHUM Christmas Wish Foundation, Julie McLean, and Donna Dolan for your continued donations
- Manulife -Sonia Flash, and the staff of Manulife for your generosity and continued support with "Adopting Families at Holidays"
- OPG, Carrie-Anne Atkins, Cindy Clarke, Crystal Neault, Angela Pierini, and all the staff at OPG for your generosity and ongoing support to WMRCC
- United Way of Durham and Jessica Hanson for your ongoing support with backpacks for children and youth
- ETFO, Kathy Pigeon, and the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario. we appreciate your continued support through the "Women in Crisis" program. ETFO, Mary Fowler and the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, Durham Chapter (DECE Local). we sincerely appreciate your ongoing donations
- Community Care Durham for your continued support to a few of our families with grocery delivery
- Tim Hortons, and staff, we sincerely appreciate the treats provided to our families twice this year
- Gloria Small and DACG for the food pantry which many of our families are benefiting from
- Melanie Walls and Elexicon Energy for your support towards the holiday
- Anita Chung for the household items donated to one of our families
- Olivia Kovacs for the tickets the CNE donated to WMRCC in the summer

HEARTFELT APPRECIATION TO OUR ESTEEMED FUNDERS AND DONORS





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