



Centre of Learning
& Development
Strong Communities Together



2023 Annual Report



What's Inside?

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Vision

Strong Communities Together



Mission

Building community, one person at a time



Strategic Priorities

- Support income generation through skills development
- Build strong and healthy communities through social networks/support
- Build geographic partnerships and share resources with the GTA
- Address structural inequalities with emphasis on community engagement and development, equity, diversity and human rights



Message from our Executive Director

Rising Beyond Limits: Embracing New Horizons

Dear Community and Friends,

As we look ahead, we see a different, intriguing, and uniquely challenging future. One that we have the power to shape together. Even as we stand tall in the face of challenge, we are constantly reminded that transforming this future landscape is within our reach and is our shared responsibility. Every step we take forward is a stride towards providing real solutions—inclusion in the ever-evolving digital world, access to continuous learning, and closing gaps around us. The future we envision is one of exciting potential.

Shaping the Future of Learning

We believe in everyone's right to digital skills and are here to help bridge the gap! As we take this transformative ride together in the coming year, we reaffirm our strong commitment towards the heart of our endeavour to guarantee inclusiveness in digital fluency. As the world digitalizes, we want to help ensure that no one is left behind due to a lack of access or ability. That's our pledge. A pledge we've been nurturing day after day.

Drive for Community Empowerment

Our programs have a real impact, and numbers speak louder than words. Did you know that workers with advanced digital skills, like the ones we teach at CL&D, earn, on average, 30% more than those without these skills?

We contribute to community development and individual growth - by boosting our participants' earning prospects and job satisfaction. When one of us rises, we all rise. That is the power of community and transformative change.

Support That Goes Beyond Classrooms

A range of ambitions marks our roadmap for the future. It may be a challenging trail, but it guides us toward delivering digital literacy to everyone, not as a privilege but as a basic necessity. We're also enhancing the support we provide. Picture this: personalized career guidance, ongoing mentorship, networking opportunities – these aren't just buzzwords but actual services integrated into our programs.

Join Us in Shaping Our Community's Future

And here's the thing - we can't do this work alone. Far from it! We hope you'll stand with us, side by side, as part of this vital community mission. Together, we can inspire change and cultivate a thriving community, one digital course at a time. So, are you ready to embark on this journey with us towards these exciting new horizons? Here's to rising above perceived limits and constructing bridges to our digital future!

Yours in service,
Alfred Jean-Baptiste
Executive Director,
Toronto Centre of Learning & Development



A Word from our Board Chair

I am pleased to report that the Board of the Centre of Learning & Development (CL&D), has functioned well in its strategic governance role.

In 2022-2023, the size of the Board decreased from Eight (8): Kathleen Jinkerson, Anil Mathur, Selwyn Pieters, Liz Trotter, Nita Chhinzer, Zaheed Alli, Bryan Duarte, and Isabelle Lian to four (4) – Selwyn Pieters, Nita Chhinzer, Bryan Duarte and Isabelle Lian. The members of the Board have been very devoted to the task of governance and have served you well. I want to express my thanks to the Board members for volunteering their time and efforts and ensuring we had continuing quorum.

CL&D has continued to play a vital role in the community as an incubator for community learning.

In the 2022/2023 fiscal year, the Board worked to increase financial oversight through its Finance Committee chaired by Bryan Duarte. With the support of the Governance Committee and the Executive Director, the Board has updated its bylaws to comply with the Ontario's Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA). The Governance Committee has been hard at work to ensure that new Board Members are recruited and onboarded.

As your Chairman I was proud of the role that CL&D played in facilitating Healing the Leaders, the summer Bazaars on Friday, the Regent Park Mothers of Peace, the meal service during Ramadan, and advocacy on behalf of our young people. These initiatives were led by Sureya Ibrahim our Supervisor of Community Connections who is considered a trusted community advisor and the mayor of Regent Park. Whether it is the Spanish Language program on Saturdays or the university-level program sessions of Activating Community Leadership or the Community Based Research Institute at UTSC, CL&D has continued to play a vital role in the neighbourhood as an incubator for community learning. Our Board members have been out and about and have attended the Food Processing Essential Skills and Entrepreneurship Event at the Centre, Celebrating Success at Zuzu (honouring our volunteers) and Networking Event at Daniels Spectrum with TD volunteers.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Alfred Jean-Baptiste, Executive Director, Karen Villanueva, Deputy Executive Director and Anna Jasinska, Fund & Community Relationship Specialist for the excellent work they have done in supporting their Board of Directors and the hardworking staff and volunteers at CL&D.

**Selwyn A. Pieters, BA, LLB, LEC
Lawyer & Notary Public – Ontario
Board Chair**

Immigrant Women Integration Program

The Immigrant Women Integration Program (IWIP) is a leadership development program for newcomer and immigrant women interested in working within the community sector. The program aims to reduce the number of newcomer women who experience isolation and increase the capacity of trainees to feel more connected and engaged with themselves and their communities. We design IWIP considering obstacles explicitly faced by the intersectionality of being a new immigrant and a woman.

From September 2022 to June 2023, the program included hybrid classroom instruction, certifications, micro credentials, placement opportunities, mentorship and Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) over 6 to 8 months. Program courses included Case Management, Mental Health First Aid, 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous Study, Grant Writing, Anti-Oppression Transformative Justice and more.

For the first time, the 22-23 academic year included two cohorts of IWIP participants to provide larger access to the program.





Highlights of our 2022 - 23 IWIP Cohort

14

trainees
graduated from
the program

**900
HOURS**

of placements
completed by
participants

8

mentors
connected with
IWIP trainees

CBPAR projects engaged

379

community members in
research through
surveys and phone calls

87%

of surveyed participants
from 2022-23 noted an
increase in professional
and personal networks

100%

of surveyed 2022-23
participants noted an increase
in self-confidence and
community involvement and

75%

noted an increase in
communication skills
and employment
readiness

Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR)

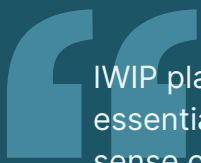
Community Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) is a research model in which universities, organizations and neighbours partner to conduct equitable research deeply rooted in community. In IWIP, participants learn the foundations of this model and apply it to their own topics of interests and present their findings and suggestions. In 22-23, projects covered topics such as the impact of caring for children with special needs on newcomer families, challenges of Middle East and North African newcomers in accessing networks during the settlement process and how to help single mothers residing in shelters who are dealing with depression or anxiety.



I am a Peruvian immigrant woman who arrived in Canada in 2019 with a background in Business Administration. I decided to join IWIP because I needed Canadian experience as a newcomer, and I appreciated the program's versatility. The program provided hybrid sessions, providing me with all the instruments and tools I needed to participate. After a few weeks, I was very interested in the courses, the sequence of topics, the teachers, and the overall dynamic. Through the program, I learned a lot, including things I need to improve myself and contribute to my place of work and community.

One of the program's highlights was the Community Mentorship and Conflict Resolution, Mindfulness and CBPAR courses. It taught me the value of mindfulness in our community leadership roles and how to integrate it into our community engagement. I also gained skills in community research and conflict resolution that I can apply in all aspects of my life, personal and professional. I reflect on this knowledge in a trilogy that encompasses building capacity, strengthening relationships, and informing decisions.

- Romy, 2023 IWIP Graduate



IWIP played a transformative role in my life. The program not only equipped me with essential tools and resources to navigate the Canadian job market but also fostered a sense of belonging and community. Through networking events and interaction with fellow participants, I developed a valuable support system of like-minded individuals facing similar challenges. The program's impact on me was profound. It boosted my self-esteem, broadened my horizons, and expanded my understanding of Canadian society. I gained a deeper appreciation for diversity and inclusion, as well as a stronger sense of cultural competence. IWIP helped me recognize my potential and empowered me to pursue my professional aspirations with confidence and determination. Overall, my journey in IWIP with the Toronto Centre for Learning and Development was a transformative experience that not only equipped me with the necessary skills for successful integration but also shaped my identity and outlook on life. It provided me with the tools to thrive in a new country while fostering a strong sense of community and empowerment.

- Sheila, 2023 IWIP Graduate



Academic Upgrading & Digital Foundations

Academic Upgrading (AU) is a lifelong learning program designed to provide adults with support in improving their writing, numeracy communications and digital technology skills on their journeys through one of five goal paths: secondary school credit, post-secondary, apprenticeship, employment or independence.

The program is a mix of hybrid classroom instruction, group work, independent study and one-on-one academic mentorship. Duration of the program includes the full academic year. However, learners can choose to extend the length of their participation in the program based on their personal needs. Program graduates receive a certificate after completing their Culminating Task (CT).

With the rising need for digital literacy, **the 22-23 year introduced the ability for community members to take the Digital Foundations component of AU as a standalone course to increase their digital skills.** Topics covered include web browsers, video conferencing, social media, cybersecurity and more.

54

learners served

3

AU volunteers

3

AU graduates



Equitable Access to Technology

To guarantee all program trainees have access to the tools needed to succeed in our programs, we are proud to offer two digital access initiatives. Our Laptop Loan Library offers free laptop rentals while our Internet Access Program ensures participants have connection to high-speed internet. With the future of hybrid programming becoming increasingly clear, we aim to expand both programs to answer the growing needs and number of participants.



My quest for learning and to improve myself led me to AU program. I simply loved the program as I gained tremendous knowledge and experience about different computer applications. The instructors were phenomenal and helped me complete the certification. Not only am I applying the skills which I have learnt in the program in my current position, but I am applying them in my personal life as well. I am good at budgeting my finances now. CL&D is a great place to not only connect with community members, but to make friends and to learn, grow and shine.

- Saira, 2023 Digital Foundations Graduate

Food Processing Essential Skills Program

Our **Food Processing Essential Skills Program (FPE)** came to an end in summer of 2023. The program provided self-paced training in two streams which included Workplace & Manufacturing Safety, for those interested in working within the food processing and hospitality sector and Entrepreneurship 101, for those interested in starting their own food business. In its last year, the program increased wrap around supports for participants and offered a networking event for program grads, FPE Connect, in which participants connected with mentors, community and other grads.



100 FPE graduates

160 received Food Handlers certificate

2 FPE graduates received scholarships for their businesses



Youth Summer Camp

This year's annual **Youth Summer Camp**, in partnership with the Promise Youth Fund, aimed to uplift youth to create meaningful change within their communities.

The 2-week camp designed for youth by youth served residents of Regent Park, Moss Park and St. Jamestown between the ages of 15 and 18. Throughout the weeks, participants gained skills around community engagement and leadership to begin designing a community event. Youth received micro-grants of up to \$250 to execute their initiatives. Some events run by the youth included basketball tournaments, community cleanups, STEM workshops, paint nights and more!



13 youth completed the camp

185 residents attended a youth-hosted community event

5 youth coordinated and ran the camp

Working for the Toronto Centre of Learning and Development has been one of the best opportunities that has come my way. The work environment at the TCCLD was always very friendly and the staff there welcomed me with open arms. This was an amazing employment opportunity that kept me occupied and productive throughout the summer. It broadened my skill sets and really helped me get a better understanding of my future career path. Throughout my time working at the TCCLD I met amazing people and made a lot of new relationships. Those people helped me and gave me advice on all aspects of life. I would recommend anyone to work for this amazing company, and I could honestly say that I enjoyed working for the TCCLD and it brought me joy.

- Raeed, Youth Camp Lead

Regent Park Sewing Studio

The **Regent Park Sewing Studio (RPSS)** is a collective of community members who design and create pieces, attend community markets, complete custom orders and instruct sewing workshops. Over 22-23, RPSS has:

- Hosted free Beginning and Intermediate **Sewing Classes** for almost 200 community members
- Providing mending and alteration services to their neighbours through the **Repair Clinic**
- Began a new partnership with the **Textile Museum of Canada**
- Worked with the **George Brown College Fashion Exchange Hidden Talent** project in which 3 RPSS women were hired as instructors
- Attended **Cultural Bazaar 2023** in Regent Park to connect with community and showcase their pieces
- Took part in the annual **Regent Park Fashion Show** by creating clothing pieces which walked the runway at the Daniels Spectrum
- Connected with **local designers** for an embroidery focused project
- Attended **capacity building workshops** to increase the team's digital skills around photography of products and social media
- Worked with local clients, such as Infinity Guard, Sparkplug Coffee, The Daniels Corporation, PSAC Atlantic and OCIC, to **offer specialized sewing services**



Regent Park Sewing Studio x DESIGNwith

Amongst all of these amazing partnerships and initiatives, RPSS has also continued to grow and form a tight-knit collaboration with DESIGNwith, a hub within Toronto's Eaton Centre focused on rediverting and upcycling waste to create sustainable, unique and forward-thinking pieces. The DESIGNwith team has deep roots with Regent Park and the Sewing Studio and we are excited to continue supporting each other. Currently, four RPSS members have secured sustainable employment opportunities through the partnership. These members play a central role in DESIGNwith's design and production processes, as well as assisting in instructing community workshops.



Clear Language and Design

Clear Language and Design (CLAD) is our Centre's editing and training service for people who need to communicate more clearly. Plain language is now a standard of the International Standards Organization (ISO). It defines plain language this way:

A communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended readers can easily:

find what they need

understand what they find, and

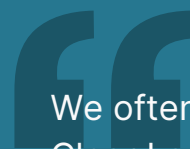
use that information

Information that is not written clearly is hard for people who are learning English or upgrading their reading and writing skills. Difficult, distant, bureaucratic language is hard on all of us, but it is a particular barrier for people who are marginalized by racism, poverty, and other forms of systemic discrimination.

This year, Clear Language and Design worked with 11 clients on about 15 different writing projects. In January 2023, we completed a clear language guide for correspondence writers at Service Canada.

We also provided training and individual coaching to more than 200 staff at:

- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Refugee Appeals Division
- Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority
- Keewatin-Patricia District School Board
- Service Canada
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario



We often remind each other of Clear Language and Design! Your work has made a difference!

- Keewatin-Patricia District School Board



Community Connections & Partnerships

CL&D is dedicated to supporting our neighbours by hosting community initiatives and supporting other groups and organizations in their programs and events. Here are some of our **Community Connections & Partnership** from throughout the year:

Food Baskets for Seniors

Food Baskets was made possible by generous donors to our annual campaign. The program provided baskets to over 50 seniors in Regent Park during the beginning of 2023. Special thank you to our volunteers who helped put the baskets together and the community members who made sure they were delivered safely!

Learn Spanish & Reload Your Energy

Our Spanish classes hosted multiple cohorts of community members this year who learned the language through the unique teaching approach of instructor Maria. The classes teach Spanish through music and dance. Beyond language learning, the class aims to create a sense of belonging and community.

Cultural Bazaar 2023

The annual outdoor market was back for the summer this year! This Regent Park event provides opportunities for local entrepreneurs to build brand awareness, local groups to share their work, youth to complete volunteer hours, community members to build leadership skills and neighbours to connect. Over 2000 visitors stopped by the Bazaar this summer!

Thank you to The City of Toronto, Mothers of Peace and Sam's Food Stores for supporting the Bazaar!

Regent Park Fashion Show

The annual show was back this past August. Residents and Regent Park Sewing Studio members worked together on creating unique pieces to walk the runway at Daniels Spectrum. The community came together to host, entertain, document and cater during the event which was attended by 160 neighbours. [For more, please watch this video created for the show.](#)

Thank you to The City of Toronto, Mothers of Peace and Sam's Food Stores for supporting the Bazaar!

Public Speaking & Presentation Course

In partnership with George Brown College, we hosted one cohort of this community course in the summer and have begun another cohort this fall. Public Speaking & Presentation equips participants with confidence and communication skills needed to advocate for themselves and their community. So far, 10 participants have finished the course.

Activating Community Leadership in Regent Park

This free community course was delivered in partnership with the University of Toronto Urban Studies Program. Through the classes, new weekly guest speakers shared their knowledge on important issues like affordable housing, community safety, municipal policy and more. 16 participants graduated from the course.

Regent Park Entrepreneurship Learning Series

The Economic and Employment Development Table of the Regent Park Social Development Plan has partnered with CL&D to deliver the series aimed at building capacity of interested Regent Park women entrepreneurs. The program includes a series of workshops led by industry professionals and has reached 20 neighbourhood women so far.

Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR) Summer Institute

The CBPAR Summer Institute at the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC) explored and shared CBPAR principles over two days with two CL&D staff joining as facilitators. This annual event brings together members of the K4C Tkaronto Hub which includes the Centre for Critical Development Studies at UTSC, CL&D and the Ontario Council for International Cooperation (OCIC).



Professional Development

Over the year, our staff continued to increase their capacities to support participants and organizational growth. Staff attended 13 trainings on topics such as case management, decolonial frameworks, online teaching, Skills for Success and more. Staff also took part in 8 conferences as attendees, panelists and keynote speakers. We are excited to continue learning as a team in the upcoming year!

Mothers of Peace Regent Park

Mothers of Peace Regent Park (MoP) is a grassroots group aiming to increase community safety and wellbeing. The group has been around since 2015 and we have been supporting them in their many neighbourhood initiatives such as the Healing Circles, Cultural Bazaar, Healing the Black Leaders, Walk Against Gun Violence, Backpack Giveaways, Yoga Classes and more.



This year, our Healing Circles for Mothers Who Lost Their Sons to Gun Violence became especially needed. Mothers from all over the city have been referred to come to the program to begin their healing journeys and have been provided transportation by their referral agencies. The Healing Circles for Moms are a unique space for participants to connect with a therapist who understands their culture and with other moms who understand each other's experiences. Participants have also created a WhatsApp group if they need to share or support each other between sessions without feeling judged.

On top of this, we also ran a new offering of Healing the Black Leaders with groups of 20 youth and 20 adults. It is an opportunity for participants to expand their networks and connect with different Black therapists. Some participants continue their healing journeys past the program with the connections they made.

For all programs, we also go on Healing Trips which give participants and their families the opportunity to come out of the city and heal with nature. This year we visited Centre Island, Niagara Falls and an Ontario cottage provided in-kind by a community member.

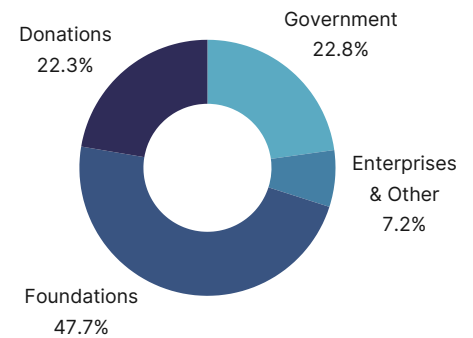
MoP was also invited for the announcement of the new National Day Against Gun Violence with the Prime Minister and the Toronto Raptors. We continue to advocate for gun violence awareness and prevention with our annual march in September in honour of the National Day in Remembrance for Victims of Homicide.

- **Sureya, Mothers of Peace Founder**

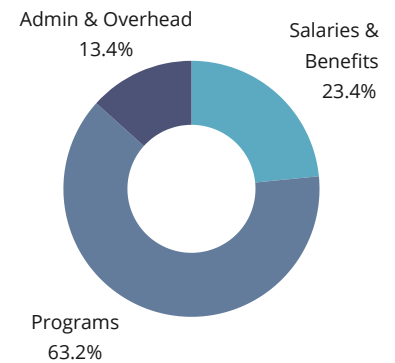
Statement of Operations

Fiscal Year of April 1st to March 31st

Income	2023	2022
Government	\$278,720	\$369,108
Foundations	\$583,771	\$569,493
Donations	\$273,344	\$128,372
Productive Enterprises & Other	\$87,552	\$327,907
TOTAL	\$1,223,387	\$1,394,880



Expenses	2023	2022
Salaries & Benefits	\$309,048	\$346,135
Program Expenses	\$833,762	\$710,895
Admin & Overhead	\$175,883	\$140,755
TOTAL	\$1,318,693	\$1,197,785



Expenditures over Revenue **(\$95,306)** **\$197,095**

Board of Directors

- Selwyn Pieters – Board Chair
- Nita Chhinzer, Vice Chair
- Isabelle Lian, Communications Officer
- Bryan Duarte, Treasurer
- Alfred Jean-Baptiste, Ex-Officio





Future at CL&D

At CL&D we are committed to always adapting our offerings, curriculum and delivery modes to ensure we position our participants for success during and post-program completion. **Some new and upcoming ways in which we are ensuring consistent growth includes:**



Virtual Reality

We are currently piloting meaningful ways to integrate VR technologies into our programs to support participants in applying and assessing their learnings and developing their nine Skills for Success. VR provides an opportunity for trainees to react to simulations of real-life situations such as presentations and meetings to test essential skills and gain knowledge of emerging technologies.



Career College

We are currently waiting for a decision on our application to develop the Toronto Centre College for Community & Career Innovation (TCCC&CI). This new step will allow us to provide recognized certification and a wider array of further education opportunities for CL&D program participants and community members. Recognized certificates are important to boosting graduates' employability and creating clear pathways for participants to achieve their goals.



Google Grow Partnership

Our newest partnership with Google will allow us to offer scholarships for online self-paced certificate course for in-demand technology fields. Courses cover topics such as marketing and e-commerce, UX design, cybersecurity, data analytics, IT support and project management.



Get Involved



Do you want to support CL&D as we continue to grow?
Here are some way you can get involved:

Volunteer

We are always happy to host volunteers to support in our programming and community events! Volunteering opportunities can include being a mentor for our Immigrant Women Integration Program, becoming a tutor with Academic Upgrading, supporting community events like the Cultural Bazaar, joining our Board of Directors and more.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact info@tcclld.org or call 647-493-2462

Community Builders Monthly Giving Program

Community Builders is a group of generous donors who have made a monthly pledge to the work that we do. This support is vital to ensuring our Centre continues to have the capacity to continue serving our communities.

If you are interested in joining, please visit www.tcclld.org/donate

General Support

As we continue to adapt our programs to hybrid delivery and emerging technologies and teaching methods, we invite you to support us in a way you can. The contributions of our funders and donors help us fulfill our mission of strong communities together.

To discuss further support opportunities, please contact info@tcclld.org or call 647-493-2462



Partners & Friends

Support received in the period of November 1st, 2022 to October 31st, 2023

Sustaining (\$50,000+)

Ontario Trillium Foundation, TD Bank, Employment Ontario, City of Toronto, United Way Greater Toronto, Ontario Ministry of Labour Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Catalyst (\$10,000 - \$49,999)

Ontario Trillium Foundation, TD Bank, Employment Ontario, City of Toronto, United Way Greater Toronto, Ontario Ministry of Labour Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Changemakers (\$5,000 - \$9,999)

Artscape, Tridel, Toronto Community Housing, Government of Canada Employment and Social Development

Connector (\$1,000 - \$4,999)

Mitchell Cohen, Elizabeth Cooke Endowment Fund, The Daniels Corporation, Scarball

Advocate (Under \$1,000)

Susan Ellis, James Rollo, Stephanie Merrin, Louise and Evan Kligman, James Swafford, Jaqueline Hoffman, Darlene Dale, Samantha Sarafinchan, Doug and Stephanie Clark, Geetha Menon, David Olds, John Alves, Shauna Brail, Harry Beatty, Rick and Helen McMillan, Mary Campbell, David Whitehouse, Richard Sugarman, Christine Hughes, Moira Bacon, CauseFund Toronto by Unite for Change, CauseFund The COVID-19 Charity Adaptation and Innovation Fund by Unite for Change, Robert Kirkland, Varicent Zara Harris, Simon Grant, Tianhui Huang, Clayton Gytoku Fund, Vital Toronto Flowthrough Fund, Helen Wilkinson, Tishan and Nicole Mills Foundation

Community Builders (Monthly Giving Program)

Erika Steffer, Siobhan Harrop-Scott, Karen Diver, Michael Dewson, Ken Corts & Ms Anne Marie Castrodale

Sustaining Funders



Corporate Partners



Foundation Partners



Affiliate Partners



Education & Community Partners

