



IMPACT REPORT

2023-2024

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President's & Executive Director's Message

It is a privilege to present this report to you highlighting the accomplishments of WMRCC of Durham for the past year, 2023.

Imagine a Utopian world, such a world would function without Gender-based violence, hate crime, poverty, homelessness, equal pay for work of equal value, systemic and structural issues, human trafficking, child abuse and exploitation. Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) through the data collected and collated from serving this population, compelling several municipalities, and Regions to declare IPV as an epidemic in 2023.

2023 marked WMRCC's 30th Anniversary. We celebrated this with members of our community, friends, families and well-wishers in a grand way, highlighting the violence prevention work the organization has done for the past 30 years. Indeed, over the years, and in 2023, a lot was accomplished but more work is yet to be done.

WMRCC thrived in delivering services and programs to many vulnerable members of our communities. The case files ranged from trauma-informed care counselling to women's financial and economic advancement challenges, including skills development programs, seniors' programs, youth programs and children's programs. The organization witnessed a sudden influx of asylum seekers settling in

the Region in June 2023. These clienteles were supported with numerous programs and services to facilitate their social integration and healing from the violence they experienced. WMRCC provided a few sessions of psychotherapy group sessions, workshops, CPR/First Aid, Mentorship, and more.

These services would not have been possible without the generosity of our esteemed funders, donors and sponsors who believe in the work that WMRCC does in empowering members of our community in dare strait. Our heartfelt appreciation go to them. We would like to also extend our appreciation to the WMRCC team members for their devotion in meeting service users at the point of their needs. To the board of directors for their passion and leadership. The volunteers who selflessly offer their time and talent to support the work, and the students for their determination to learn and support the work. To our families for their patience in supporting us even when the work commitments take us away from home, erratically.

We appreciate the diverse service users who turn to us for support. You are very courageous, and your courage continues to inspire us to do this work. You are the source and inspiration for our being.

Yours in Service,



Aryan Esgandarian
President



Esther Enyolu
Executive Director



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.

Board of Directors

Aryan Esgandanian	President
Kisho Umar	Vice President
Adele Ngamala	Secretary
Maggie Perotin	Treasurer
Kadia Baugh-William	Director
Omar Almajdalawis	Director
Madiha Ahmad	Director
Frida Basalirwa	Director
Greg Whitwham	Director
Claire Ssentamu	Director

WMRCC Staff

Esther Enyolu	Executive Director
Eran Asombang	Accountant
Carlene Wallace	Youth In Transition Worker (YITW)
Cristina Gomez	SSIP Project Coordinator
Angelique Benois	EYOW/ Clinical Counsellor
Karrienne Edwards	EYOW/ Clinical Counsellor
Irene Brimpong	Youth Outreach Worker/ Mentorship Coordinator
Dave Perry	Youth Outreach Worker/ Mentorship Coordinator
Andrea Wilkinson	Trauma-Informed Care Counsellor
Kiana Reddock*	Mental Health Project Coordinator
Nirupa Nagalingam	Trauma-Informed Care Counsellor/ Mental Health & Well-Being
Tahereh Kalhori	Trauma-Informed Care Counsellor
Oluwaseun Adu*	Workers Co-operative Project Coordinator
Aysha Javed	Workers Co-operative Project Coordinator
Nyarai Chidemo	Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence Project Coordinator
Nivetha Jeevanantham	Seniors Age Well at Home Project Coordinator
Omar Pavel*	Project Coordinator, Shop for Good
Rubaba Pasha	Supervisor , Youth Worker, Youth Empowerment & Skills Development
Leticia Akparah*	Youth Worker, Youth Empowerment & Skills Development Coordinator
Felicia Seucharan	Youth Worker, Youth Empowerment & Skills Development Coordinator

* Staff that left the WMRCC within the course of the year

Collaborators

Students Practicum

Vanessa Nabugyibi Mafabi, Social Worker Student, Trent University

Pro-Bono Students Canada (PBSC) Lincoln Alexander School of Law, Toronto Metropolitan University

Anish Jammu

Navreet Kooner

Alisa Khan-Parikh- *Supervisor*

Consultants & Evaluators

CB Consulting

BlackTECH Hub

VIK HR Consulting

Imagn Brands

Dr. Caroline Hossein

Margaret Alexander

Expertedge Consulting

Skills 2 Action

Invictus Equality

Chipo Nwkwabei

DoGood Fundraising

IT Companies

Nuvollo

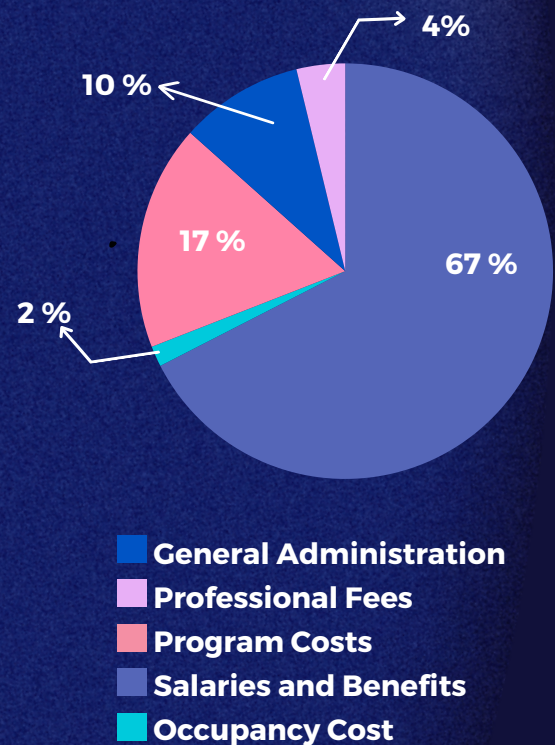
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SUMAC

WMRCC Fiscal Year April 2023- March 2024

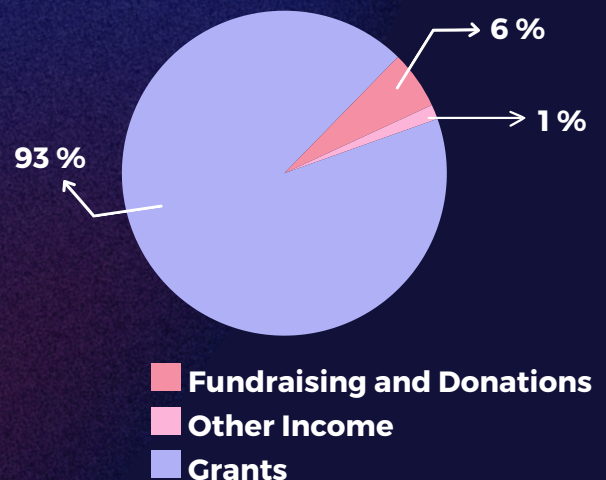
EXPENSES	
Wages and Benefits	788,921.00
Program expenses	187,540.00
Rent	19,622.00
Insurance	19,019.00
Professional and consulting	31,018.00
Telephone	11,106.00
Vehicle	17,419.00
Office & general	39,727.00
Supplies	14,357.00
Computer support	2,506.00
Event Costs	3,651.00
Amortization	3,087.00
Professional development	6,222.00
Honorarium expense	8,100.00
ADP	1,523.00
Evaluation costs	17,288.00
Advertising and promotion	1,316.00
Interest and bank charges	437.00
Bad debts	
Meals and Entertainment	15,772.00
Consultation fees	15,308.00
Travel	12,100.00
Training	8,905.00
TOTAL	1,224,944.00

EXPENSES



REVENUE	
Grants	1,218,572.00
Fundraising and Donations	76,197.00
Other Income	19,108.00
TOTAL	\$1,313,877.00

REVENUE



Investing in Women's Futures

This report highlights the organization's significant accomplishments in providing critical services to women in need, particularly those facing Gender-Based Violence or Intimate Partner Violence, inter-generational trauma, and mental health challenges in Durham Region.

Program 1: Trauma Informed Care Counselling Program

WMRCC successfully met its ambitious targets for the year, extending its reach and providing vital community services to a growing number of women identifying individuals, newcomers, immigrants, racialized and gender diverse individuals from diverse backgrounds. Key accomplishments include:

- Increased service user reach: The organization successfully registered new asylum-seeking women residing in hotels in different areas in Durham Region, significantly expanding its pool of service users.
- Tailored services: WMRCC provided a comprehensive range of services tailored to the specific needs of its service users, including trauma-informed counselling, mental health support, and skills training.
- Reduced wait times: The organization's ability to provide services without any waiting time attracted numerous referrals from other organizations. Women appreciated having access to trauma informed care counsellors in a short period of time.
- Language accessibility: The presence of counsellors who speak different languages made WMRCC's services more accessible to a broader demographic. In addition, WMRCC also accessed cultural interpreters through the Multi-Cultural Interpreting Services (MCIS) in any language.
- Increased referrals: WMRCC received referrals from various organizations throughout the Durham Region, and outside the Region.

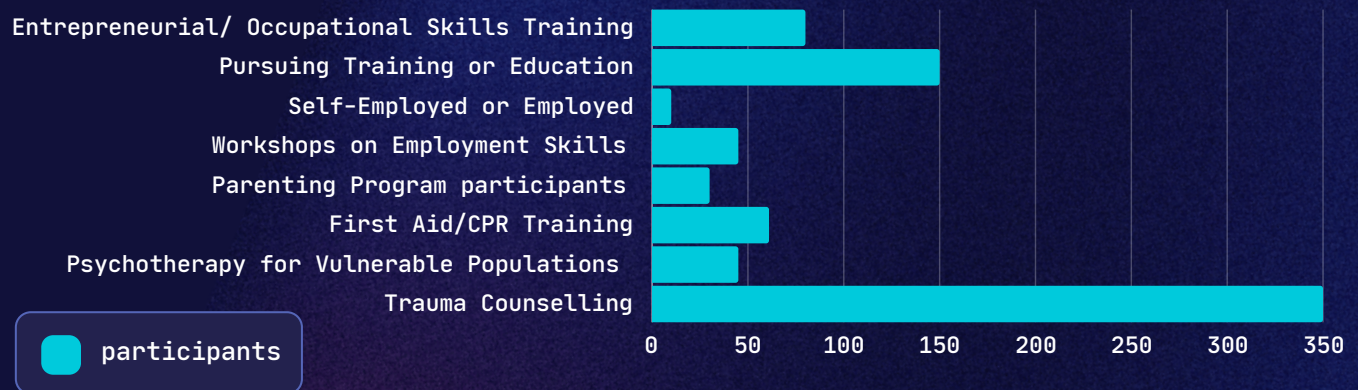
An integrated approach used in sessions; and some of the modalities utilized are:

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

Program Highlights

- Provided trauma-informed care counselling services to 353 women identifying individuals.
- Supported 300 service users in coping and healing from violence and abuse.
- Increased awareness of the cycle of violence, safety, and available support for 300 service users.
- Utilized wraparound support to access Investing in Women's Future program services for 300 service users.
- Provided systems navigation support/referrals to 350 service users.
- Offered life skills and self-esteem counselling and programs to 350 service users.
- Increased knowledge of resources and how to navigate the service system to 270 service users.

Program 2: Skills Training and Employment Support



Presenting Issues

Issues women presented and assisted with include: Anxiety, Trauma, PTSD, Depression, Intimate partner violence, Food insecurity, Housing, Homelessness, Isolation, Life Skills, Substance Use, Social Relationships, Immigration, Cultural Shock, Effective Parenting and Creative Discipline, Language Barriers, Women being in conflict with the law of the land, Experience of systemic issues, Employment, Sexual harassment, and Sexual abuse, Female Trafficking, Inter-generational Trauma, Female Genital Mutilation, Grief, Bereavement Support, Self-Harm, Stress, Health and Well-being, Family Relationship, Suicidal Ideation, and Mediation.

Service Delivery and Referrals

WMRCC received referrals from a variety of sources, including:

- Shelters in Durham Region
- Durham Region Social Services (DRSS, Income Support)
- WMRCC Staff members
- Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR)
- WMRCC website
- Previous Service Users
- Doctor's Offices
- Durham Mental Health Services
- Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC)
- Community Development Council Durham (CDCD)
- Ajax Welcome Centre
- Word of Mouth
- Current Service Users
- DDSB/DCDSB
- Durham Catholic Family Services
- Durham Children Aids Society (DCAS)
- Safety Network Durham Region
- Lakeridge Health Centre

- Legal and Immigration Services
- Faith communities and Ethno-cultural Groups
- Neighbours and Friends

The organization's ability to provide services without any waiting time, combined with its language accessibility and tailored services, made it a preferred choice for many organizations seeking to refer their service users.

Ethnicity and Background

In WMRCC we provide services to people from diverse backgrounds such as African, Afro-Caribbean, Middle Eastern, South Asian, Southeast Asian, European and Indigenous. Service recipients come from countries such as Nigeria, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sudan, Congo, Ghana, Trinidad, Jamaica, Egypt, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, China, Philippine, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Netherland.



Future Goals

WMRCC remains committed to its' mission, vision and values of providing high-quality "client-centred" service and program delivery to vulnerable women, youth and children from diverse backgrounds in need.



Andrea Wilkinson, Tahereh Kalhori and Nirupa Nagalingam, Trauma-Informed Care Counsellors

Strengthening Community Capacity to Support Mental Health and Well-Being Project

AA total of 105 women benefited from the Mental Health Project, which provided trauma-informed care counseling and workshops. A Mental Health Toolkit was also developed to support these services. Due to the high demand for mental health support in the community, WMRCC has continued offering trauma-informed counseling beyond the project's original end date.

All service users who benefited from this program identified as heterosexual women. Most were referred to the trauma-informed care counsellor by WMRCC's Executive Director, through Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR). A few contacted WMRCC directly or were the service users of the previous WMRCC trauma informed care counsellors. Additionally, some were on-going service users from different WMRCC programs.

Out of 105 clientele, 8 were children and youth under 16 years old, while the rest were between 24 and 70 years old. Most of the service users live within the Durham Region, with a few referrals from Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Approximately 50% of the service users were from Black communities (Jamaican, Ugandan, and Somalian). Twenty percent were Sri Lankan, 10% Indian, 10% Arab, 5% White Canadian, and 5% Middle Eastern.

Main Causes and Issues: Most women experienced intimate partner violence and gender-based violence, which included physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse. Some faced issues related to separation and threats from ex-partners. Due to intimate partner violence, several male partners have been charged or warned by the police. Homelessness was also a concern for some of these women. One woman lives in a shelter, another with her daughter, and another with her mother.

One woman shared that she had experienced intimate partner violence during her pregnancy. After her baby was born, she moved to another province to escape and break the cycle of violence.

A few service users were referred to legal services, while others were referred internally for settlement and integration services. Some of them were also referred to WMRCC's for volunteer opportunities. Additionally, four families with children were referred to Kinark. The Trauma-Informed Care Counsellor supported a girl who had been sexually abused by her father, and she had to contact the Children's Aid Society twice. An elderly woman experiencing family conflict also sought mental health support.

Mental Health Awareness Program Workshop: This workshop was held in Ajax for the Durham Region community. Four professionals guest speakers presented at the event. The mental health awareness and prevention workshop was delivered excellently and presented as planned, including meditation as a wellness practice that supports mental health.

The Mental Health Toolkit: This toolkit was created by the trauma-informed care counsellor to support both service users and mental health professionals. It provides detailed information on trauma from various perspectives and offers culturally appropriate tools to help service users manage trauma. The toolkit is also useful for everyday counselling

Nirupa Nagalingam , Mental Health Counsellor

Worker Cooperative Development Program



This report covers Year 1 of a four-year project aimed at developing cooperative groups among immigrant and racialized women.

- Years 1 and 2: The initial two years are dedicated to building and strengthening cooperative groups. In Year 1, participants received valuable training sessions, informational workshops, and resources, laying a solid foundation for cooperative development.
- Years 3 and 4: The focus will shift toward equipping women with the tools and support needed to successfully launch and operate their cooperative businesses. This phase includes mentorship from Cohort 1, established in 2019, to provide guidance and insights from experienced cooperative members.

This phased approach ensures thorough preparation and sustainable growth for each cooperative. A six-month cycle repeated 4 times over two years, (this report covers phase 1). We have completed year 1 cycle of training, and are completing the development of coops in year 2)

Participant Breakdown

76

Program participants



Racialized Immigrants



Educated (High School +)



Business Experience



Income (below 20k)

Project Timeline and Key Learning Activities (2023-2024)

The AGM 2024, held in October, marked a networking and project progress-sharing event. Following this, a series of virtual trainings guided participants through essential business concepts, cooperative models, and skills in financial and operational management. The "Stepping into Business" session in January covered core business planning, while February's sessions introduced co-operative business development, focusing on the history and principles of the worker co-op model, especially for Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities. Participants also explored financials, operational strategies, and the feasibility of cooperative businesses. Additional sessions addressed marketing, sales, and the use of the Business Model Canvas, with an emphasis on co-operative values, to foster business readiness and purpose-driven success.

In March, sessions continued with branding, logo creation, and digital presence workshops, where participants learned techniques for crafting a compelling brand and social media strategy on a budget. Other sessions, such as “Capital Mapping,” taught participants how to leverage various types of capital within their communities. Networking was another key focus, with attendees participating in 14 sessions with the Chamber of Commerce, CDCD, BACD, and the Social Innovation Forum Durham, as well as 11 sessions with organizations like Denise House and Durham College. Additionally, a project promotion event at Denise House in February connected participants with local stakeholders, further integrating cooperative values within the community.

Assessments of Learning

The Worker Cooperative Development Project successfully met its objectives, with participants actively engaging in practical activities and discussions that built their understanding of essential business elements, cooperative models, and strategies for financial and operational management. Hands-on exercises, including the Co-operative Self-Assessment and Feasibility Questionnaire, allowed for immediate knowledge application, while regular feedback sessions with mentors ensured continuous growth.

The project equipped participants with critical skills in branding, capital mapping, digital presence, networking, negotiation, and website management. These sessions empowered women from equity-seeking communities, fostering economic resilience and promoting social equality by providing them with tools for sustainable cooperative development.

Co-ops Formed

Two cooperatives—one focused on sewing and the other on personal support work (PSW)—are nearing completion, with both preparing for an official launch. These groups have successfully advanced through the initial phases, now ready for establishment and operational start-up.

Meanwhile, four additional cooperatives are in the learning phase, acquiring foundational skills in business structure, financial management, and cooperative principles. This ongoing education supports the project’s commitment to sustainable, community-driven economic development, particularly for immigrant and racialized women.

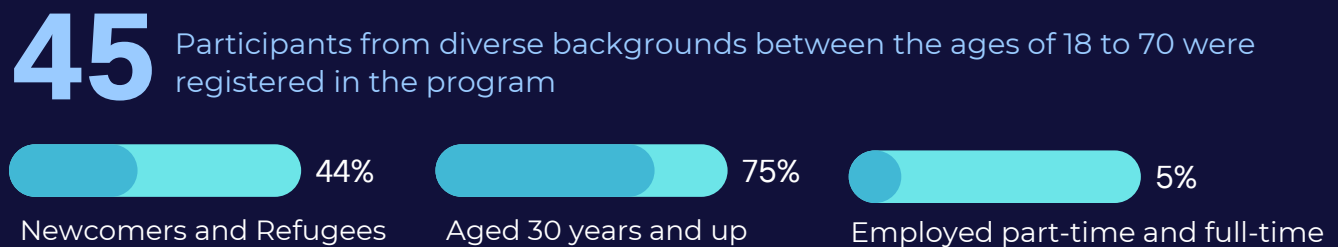
Aysha Javed, Project Coordinator

Bridging The Gaps: Recovering & Rebuilding After Covid 19

This project invests in the well-being and 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 populations, we serve through in-person and virtual service delivery models.

A community-based approach included enhanced digital literacy training of 45 women from diverse backgrounds, enabling access to online social services and empowering economic advancement, and focus group consultations focused on exploring ways to improve, adapt, promote, and intervene in the delivery of programs and services.

Participant Breakdown



Hybrid Service Delivery Model

WMRCC pivoted to Hybrid Service Delivery Model, hence, providing vulnerable women, youth, children, and gender diverse individuals with service and program access options. Over 350 individuals benefited from one-on-one trauma informed care counselling through both in-person and virtual counselling sessions, including workshops, and skills development training.

Digital Literacy Training: 6 Weeks Basic Computer Skills Training

A six-week Basic Computer Skills training was held for 45 women aged 18-70 from diverse backgrounds, addressing the digital divide with new laptops and essential digital skills. Flexible, in-person sessions enabled participants to access online social services and explore economic opportunities, boosting their confidence in independent technology use. The program culminated in a graduation ceremony, awarding certificates and ASUS laptops to celebrate their accomplishments and equip them for ongoing digital engagement.

The training sessions held twice weekly for 2.5 hours, were divided into three cohorts of 15 women to accommodate varying schedules. Classes took place at WMRCC offices with timings at 9 am, 12 pm, and 5 pm. Women in Tech (WinTech) led the instruction, while snacks and refreshments were provided for each class.

On Friday, December 22, 2023, WMRCC held a graduation ceremony from 5 pm to 7:30 pm at their offices. During the event, 45 participants who completed the training program received a certificate of completion along with a brand-new ASUS laptop. This gesture not only recognized their dedication but also equipped them with a practical tool to continue applying the skills they acquired in the program.

Project Phase 2-Focus Group

On January 10, 2024, a focus group with 12 women was conducted to gather feedback from training graduates. This session aimed to evaluate the training's success and explore the ongoing need for accessing online social services post-COVID-19. Results showed that 95% of participants had improved their computer skills, enabling them to seek employment, start small businesses, and assist their children with homework. Participants were given \$10 gift cards as an incentive for participation.

Community and Economic Post-Pandemic Impact

The project's impact extended beyond skills acquisition. A 70% increase in engagement with women from diverse backgrounds, and 90% of increased user satisfaction with the hybrid service model for our programs and services, demonstrates the effectiveness of our commitment to fostering a stronger, more innovative, and resilient future for our users.



"I can attain a better life and become a productive citizen now that I have the necessary computer skills for which I am happy as I no longer need my daughter to use the computer for me."

-Ruth, Program Participant

"Thank you for this opportunity and I feel empowered to grow through the training I received."

-Janelle, Program Participant

Key Metrics

- Increased Access: 85% of service users reported improved access to services through the hybrid model.
- Enhanced Resilience: 90% of participants indicated a better ability to cope with disruptions.
- Program Reach: Services were expanded to reach 30% more individuals compared to pre-pandemic levels.
- User Satisfaction: 88% of users expressed high satisfaction with the virtual and physical service options.

Nyarai Chidemo, Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence Project Coordinator

Capacity Building: Creating Collaborative Efforts to Address Women's Issues in Canada

The project aims to collect insights on the effectiveness of Canadian institutions and organizations in supporting women, trans, and non-binary individuals affected by gender-based violence in intimate relationships. This will help assess how well these systems address survivors' needs.

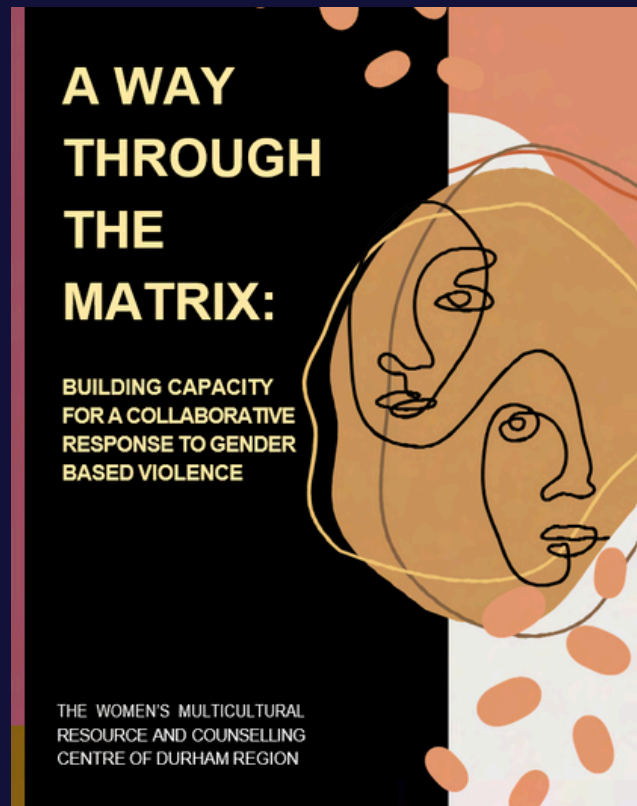
Methodology

Two consultants were hired for the project, one specializing in human resources and organizational sustainability for developing a Succession Plan and Revenue Diversification Plan, and another with a strong background in community training, focused on facilitating anti-oppression and anti-violence work for the GBV (gender-based violence) toolkit.

The IPV (intimate partner violence) research component in the GBV toolkit included interviews with 15 women from diverse backgrounds who have experienced IPV, socio-cultural violence, and institutional violence. Findings revealed that 93% of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) survivors faced systemic racism and discrimination when interacting with institutions and systems.

Additionally, nine community service providers and institutions serving IPV survivors were interviewed, including Herizon House, Safe Hope Home, Women At The Centre, Safety Network Durham, Denise House, the Region of Durham, Catholic Family Services of Durham, and Durham Rape Crisis Centre.

The GBV Advisory Committee comprises eight community service providers from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), including Community Development Council Durham (CDCD), Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, Herizon House, Safe Hope Home, Safety Network Durham, Women at the Centre, Victim Services of Durham Region, and Uzima Women International.



Project Impact

Strengthened Collaborative Efforts: WMRCC has established strong partnerships with local and regional GBV networks through its GBV Advisory Committee, creating a structured, collaborative framework for addressing gender-based violence. These partnerships, defined by clear roles and shared activities, allow for resource pooling, coordinated actions, and advocacy for policy reform. This collective effort increases WMRCC's impact, enabling a unified sector response to GBV.

Enhanced Organizational Resilience: The

development of a comprehensive Succession Plan ensures WMRCC's resilience in leadership transitions. This plan preserves institutional knowledge and guarantees continuity of essential functions, even during unforeseen events, such as the temporary absence of the Executive Director.

Knowledge Dissemination and Capacity Building: The GBV Toolkit reflects WMRCC's commitment to sharing knowledge and building capacity. It offers best practices and strategies for overcoming barriers faced by diverse women in Canada, equipping stakeholders with practical tools to improve GBV responses, promote

awareness, and drive meaningful change.

Financial Stability and Sustainability: WMRCC's Revenue Diversification Plan strengthens financial stability by exploring diverse funding sources and private sector partnerships. This reduces reliance on single funding sources and ensures ongoing project support, reinforcing efforts to combat GBV effectively.

Insights from IPV Survivors: Through survivor stories collected for the GBV toolkit, WMRCC identified essential needs and challenges faced by IPV survivors, informing further support and resource development.



Nyarai Chidemo, Gender Equality and Gender Based Violence Project Coordinator

Seniors' Social Inclusion Project - SSIP

The SSIP project was a resounding success, achieving 100% of its final objectives. Meeting such a wide range of goals—like minimizing isolation, enhancing aging-friendly self-care skills, reducing stigmatization, expanding support networks, and encouraging interactions with younger generations—underscores its effectiveness. The project's activities provided seniors with meaningful engagement, fostering a strong sense of belonging and connection within the community. This kind of comprehensive success has made a real difference in the lives of the senior participants, promoting their well-being and social integration.



Through 47 activity sessions, 664 seniors benefited from an inclusive program supported by 32 senior and 35 youth volunteers, in partnership with local organizations. The project enhanced participating seniors social connections, mental health, and overall well-being.

Special Thanks to our Partners

Ajax Library, Durham community Action Group, The Cultural Empowerment Project, The Lighthouse[P1] Retreat Inc., Litmus Chinese Dance Association, Durham Police, Alzheimer Society of Durham, Abilities Centre, Whitby, Regional Municipality of Durham, Mennonite New Life Centre, Community Durham Care, Keller Williams, Royal Canadian Legion, Ajax.

Cristina Gomez, SSIP Project Coordinator

Age Well at Home “Initiative”

WMRCC of Durham is delivering volunteer-based eligible practical support services to help low-income and otherwise vulnerable seniors from diverse backgrounds age well at home. WMRCC is expanding delivery services, primarily in the seniors’ homes, and in the local communities of Durham Region. These areas include but are not limited to different neighborhoods, 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 initiative continues to increase their access to eligible services provided by different organizations.

The project’s specific objectives are to:

- Expand delivery of volunteer-based eligible service 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 active in the local area.

Project Update

The project has 100 female seniors from diverse backgrounds and different areas in Durham Region who are currently receiving volunteer support. The volunteers help the seniors with Light housekeeping, Meal delivery and preparation, Transportation assistance, Volunteer drop off and Friendly visiting in their homes, reading, and watching movies. In addition, the project supports the seniors with snow shoveling, grass cutting and home maintenance. Specifically, the number of seniors participating doubled within the few months the initiative started and it has continued growing through new partnerships development.

The seniors are from low-income status, vulnerable population groups and some are living with disabilities or have some health challenges. One of the expected results of the project is to increase practical support available to seniors to minimize barriers. Most of the seniors are not driving or do not have

access to a vehicle. The transportation aspect of the project such as giving seniors rides to appointments and errands has minimized the barriers of seniors feeling stuck in their homes all day. By having access to volunteers who support them with enrichment services, including taking them to places, the seniors feel more connected to the community. The volunteers take them to grocery shopping, shopping malls, and running errands seniors might have trouble getting to on the bus. Seniors reported enhanced social inclusion, a sense of belonging, connection, inclusion in their community, and increased use of services following their participation in the project.

Additionally, "The Age Well at Home" Initiative has been conducting a one-hour workshop across senior homes in Durham Region. These areas include but are not limited to different neighbourhoods, towns, cities, and municipalities across Durham. The workshops started in

January 2024, with the project coordinator and the volunteers visiting those seniors' homes. The workshop will continue throughout the duration of the project. The workshop has been popular as multiple senior homes across Durham, such as Sunrise Seniors Place, Harmony Hill Retirement Community and Baycliffe Long Term Care Residence have requested workshops. This aspect of the project is critical because seniors can ask any questions or concerns directly to the coordinator and volunteers.

Project Partnership

WMRCC has five key partners: Sunrise Seniors Place, Durham Community Action Group (DCAG), Taunton Village Seniors Residence, Cooperative Cleaners of Ontario (CCOO), and Community Care Durham. As always, this partnership continues to grow throughout the project with other senior homes involvement. WMRCC also belongs to a senior coalition group that meets at the Taunton Village Seniors Residence once a month. Currently, WMRCC is in the process of connecting and collaborating with Amica Pickering Retirement Home and Frontline Community Centre to promote the project to the seniors in these organizations.

Project Impact

The "Age Well at Home" Initiative is making a positive impact in the lives of both seniors and volunteers. Specifically, seniors are at increased risk of experiencing loneliness and social isolation. The "Age Well at Home" Initiative allows regular visits from volunteers, minimizing feelings of isolation and boost the overall well-being of seniors. The seniors participating in the project have demonstrated positive impact of the project on their mental health, physical health and well-being since the project started. Specifically, the in-home friendly visits have been popular as all the seniors regarded this service as their top priority.

Project Data:

Overall, 100 senior women from diverse backgrounds were served during this period by 80 female volunteers from diverse backgrounds. Those female volunteers completed a total of 1440 volunteer hours. Below, are the number of services provided by the volunteers for senior women from diverse backgrounds.

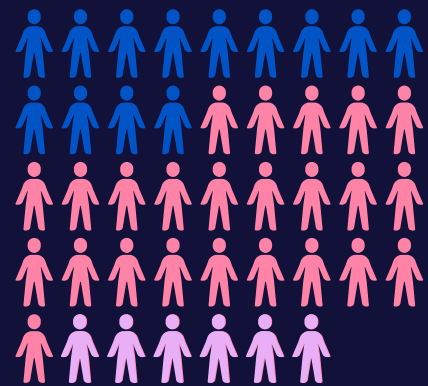
1. 100 seniors requested for Lighthouse keeping (laundry, cleaning)
2. 20 seniors requested for meal delivery and preparation
3. 10 Home maintenance (repairs, yard work)
4. 25 Transportation (to appointments, errands)
5. 20 Snow removal
6. 10 Volunteer drop offs (groceries, medications, pet supplies)
7. 50 Friendly visiting

Nivetha Jeevanantham , Seniors Age Well at Home Project Coordinator

The Enhanced Youth Outreach Worker Program

This program focuses in offering trauma-informed and culturally sensitive clinical counselling to youth aged 12-24 years who identify as being Black. This service offers a range of therapeutic approaches consisting both of traditional and complimentary models.

The themes for the referral were diverse ranging from concerns such as Trauma, sexual identity, depression, anxiety, abandonment, difficulties with emotion regulation, systemic racism, family breakdown, legal navigation support, substance use, an physical health concerns which required various referrals and on-going housing challenges which required referrals to other community support.



13 Males

24 Females

6 Transgender

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

The opening of schools and other community establishments have provided the option for in person sessions. Thus, many sessions within the school took place, in addition to on-going 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 in the Black community remains very real. Indicating that the work of the EYOW is much needed and needs to continue.

43 Service Users

35 New Referrals

Angelique Benois and Karrienne Edwards, EYOW Clinical Counsellors

Youth Outreach Worker/ Youth Mentorship (Together We Can)

The “Together We Can – Mentorship” program, which began in April 2018, has continued to support Black youth aged 12-25 in Durham Region. Now in its sixth year, the program has grown and continues to meet the needs identified by the youth in the community.

The mentorship matches has been successful in addressing the needs of youth, providing stability and guidance through challenging times and situations. Referrals by guidance counsellors, social workers, community partners, parents/guardians, and the youth themselves have connected them to various services, including employment, housing, and other social services. The Mentorship Coordinators continue to work one-on-one with youth, offering a variety of services to help them achieve their goals. In February, the BYAP Team offered virtual bus tours of Italy and Brazil, exploring each country's culture and Black history. Youth participants enjoyed local delicacies and connected with mentors who shared insights on traveling as Black individuals, providing tips and experiences. Additionally, the team returned to support the DCDSB STEM Summer Camp, where they delivered leadership training to 10 Black students. Community and school referrals have increased, reflecting the program's growing reach. However, recruiting new mentors proved challenging this year, as many candidates preferred paid roles or had scheduling conflicts. Consequently, the team reactivated previous mentors to connect with new mentees and maintain the program's continuity.

Activities

We organized a variety of activities for the youth, including movie outings, trips to Playdium, and social outings. To support their development, we also provided resume assistance and job search guidance. Additionally, the program included

sports activities, chess lessons and games, and group lunches to encourage bonding and skill-building.



Community Involvement

- 905 Raptors Game
- Kennedy House TWC Workshops
- Black History Month Celebration Event
- Black History Virtual Bus Tours
- Community Outreach and programming in at-risk neighborhoods in the Oshawa and Whitby Areas
- In-school Outreach



153

Service Users

35

New Referrals

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

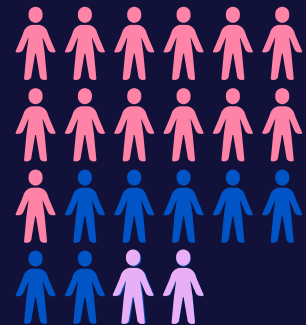
Youth In Transition Worker Program

Through strengths-based, anti racism, anti-oppressive, and client-centred frameworks, the YITW Program provides and delivers direct support to current and former Durham Region youth in CAS care, aged 16-24 years in their successful launch to independence. Youth are supported to access critical services, navigate systems, achieve their goals, experience and sustain improved outcomes.

From April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, the WMRCC Youth In Transition Worker Program (YITW), provided services and supported 22 youths, aged 18 to 24, from diverse backgrounds.

Housing remained the most common need among new and existing Youth In Transition Worker (YITW) service users, with 14 youth seeking assistance in securing safe, affordable housing. Many also requested support for connecting to programs that provide rental arrears funding to prevent eviction and help maintain their current housing. In response, the YITW program offered housing listings, assistance with contacting landlords, and accompaniment to housing viewings when needed. Youth were connected to various housing support services, including housing stability programs, rental arrears assistance, and resources for shared housing issues. Those at risk of homelessness were referred to shelter services or Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) programs for additional support.

Youth in the WMRCC YITW Program received individualized support to help them achieve personal goals in areas including housing, education, employment, health, and social connections.



7 Males
13 Females
2 Transgender

The following is a specific breakdown of the numbers and services/ support sought/ received by WMRCC YITW Program service users from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024:

- Housing: **14**
- Employment/ Employment Readiness: **7**
- Inquiries or Information: **7**
- Medical and Mental Health Support: **9**
- Legal Issues: **1**
- Secondary or Tertiary Education/ Financial Aid/ Scholarship Application: **7**
- Food Insecurity: **22**

Support regarding food security and mental health challenges were also among the most frequently and pervasively sought throughout the year. YITW service users were assisted with food insecurity through the provision of grocery vouchers, connection with foodbank services, delivery of food from a local food pantry organization, and connections with the community and WMRCC's Holiday Hamper programs. Youth reporting and seeking support for mental and other health challenges received ongoing support throughout the year. They were connected with or provided with resources to medical and mental health and addictions practitioners, services, programs, and after-hours community-based emergency medical and mental health, addictions crisis lines and services.

The YITW was pleased to engage with youth, and represent our organization throughout the year by attending, hosting, and participating in community events such as Durham Youth Pride, Black Mental Health Week, Black History Month, and Human Trafficking Awareness Workshops. The YITW was also proud to represent WMRCC, and Durham community talking about our YITW program with the youth at the Youth Transitions International Symposium in Vancouver BC as a guest of the Durham Children's Aid Society.

Carlene Wallace, Youth In Transition Worker

Youth Empowerment and Skills Development Program

The program supported youth aged 15 to 30, including those from underrepresented groups, by creating, promoting, and facilitating access to meaningful volunteer service placements. The goal was to foster lasting civic engagement and equip youth with essential life and work skills. These placements provided valuable experience and encouraged community organizations and institutions to actively involve youth in volunteer roles. This initiative aimed to build a stronger community network, support youth development, and open pathways for ongoing participation in community service.

Program Goals

Over 11-months, WMRCC of Durham supported 58 youths in engaging directly with volunteer service placements. This initiative aimed to help young participants develop essential skills to enhance their future employability while promoting civic engagement and social inclusion.

Launched in May 2023 and concluding in April 2024, the program also benefited from the volunteer support of a career development guidance counselor. Each participant took part in exclusive one-on-one mentorship sessions held weekly. In these sessions, the mentor helped youth explore current and future career goals, build on their strengths, and constructively address areas for improvement. Youth were also guided on building networking resources and navigating their professional journeys effectively.

Peer Mentorship

Another mentoring program was created for the participants to mentor fellow participants who came to Canada as newcomers and refugees to enhance and improve their English communication and comprehension skills.

Volunteering Placements

The team members for the YESD Program reached out to over 100 community partners to secure volunteering opportunities for the youth involved in the initiative. The team collaborated with 33 community partners. Most of the youth were actively involved in volunteer placements with the following community partners:

Durham Outlook, Durham Alzheimer's Society, Durham Children's Aid Society, Thrift Stores in Durham, Cultural Empowerment Project, Rose of Durham, Windreach Farm, Project Ramadan, Muslim Welfare Society, CDCD, Nankind, Adrinka Project, Computer Literacy Program, Brain Waves Café, Minds in Motion, Carion Fenn Foundation, Canadian Cancer Society, Oshawa Library,

Whitby Library, Youth Hub, Durham Youth Services, Von Durham Hospice Services, WMRCC's Age Well at Home Senior's Project and other projects, Pickering Delta Bingo, Food Banks, Youth Initiatives, Oshawa Senior's Group, Ajax Community Center, Feed the Need, Artwalk, Victory Neighbourhood Services.



Participants Portfolio

The team created personalized career binders for each participant, presented at the end of the 11-month program. These binders captured the participants' journey, including records of events, trainings, workshops, mentorship sessions, and resources on professional and personal development. Serving as a comprehensive handbook, the binders were designed to support and guide each participant as they advance in their professional lives, providing them with a lasting resource to build on the skills and experiences gained during the program.

Program Challenges

The program targeted youth aged 15 to 30 from underserved communities, a group that frequently balances multiple commitments such as academics, extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, and family responsibilities. Although these young people are enthusiastic about community involvement, their busy schedules often make it challenging to complete 120 hours of volunteer work within the allotted time. The program thus recognized the need for flexible, impactful volunteer opportunities that fit within their limited availability, allowing them to engage meaningfully without added stress.

Project Data/Outcomes

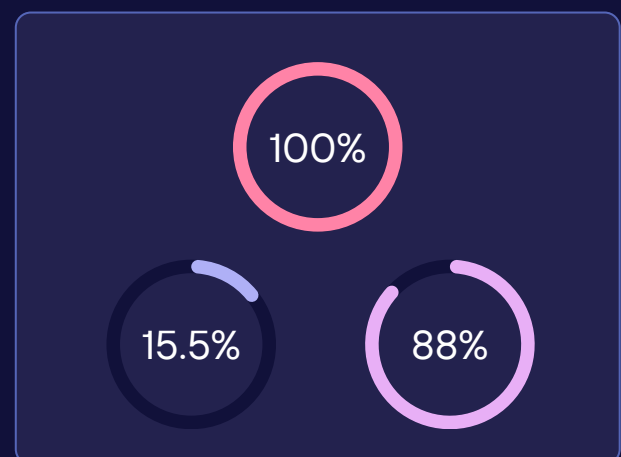
- 58 youth were supported to engage in civic engagement through volunteer positions
- 88% of youth participants belonged to a diverse population, including newcomers, persons with disabilities, visible minorities/racialized, and 2SLGBTQQAI+
- 58 participants were engaged in volunteer placement and/ or skills development workshops and activities
- 9 youths found paid employment after engaging in the program

Participant Support

To support participants in completing the program, the following assistance was provided:

1. Bus Passes: Youth received bus passes to facilitate transportation for in-person volunteer placements.
2. Vulnerable Sector Record Check Reimbursements: Participants were reimbursed for the cost of Vulnerable Sector Record checks, enabling them to meet necessary requirements for volunteering.
3. Tablets: Each participant was provided with a tablet to access trainings and workshops, ensuring they could fully engage in program activities.

These resources helped reduce barriers to participation, allowing youth to focus on their development and contributions.



Rubaba Pasha , Project Supervisor, Felicia Seucharan , and Leticia Akpara , Youth Workers

Volunteer Program

WMRCC of Durham recruited 120 volunteers who provided consistent assistance and support to our Community Engagement Events, Senior's program, Computer literacy workshops and for various other events.

Our volunteers worked as a Career development coach for our Youth Empowerment and Skills Development Program. There was 1:1 session that were held for the youth, refugee claimants and newcomers. Our volunteers as Career Coach guided them regarding their professional goals and personal development.

Other volunteers were helping the newcomers and refugee claimants with English language skills. There was once a week session for the youth and refugee claimants to improve their communications and interpersonal skills.

There was a dedicated team to provide support for community events like Intergenerational Event, Seniors Event, Toy Drive and WMRCC's holiday event.

As a part of Youth Empowerment Program and Skills Development Program, the team of volunteers also developed a Career Guidance Binder regarding all the information about the program and resources as a guideline for the newcomers, refugee claimants and Youth to build professional networks and connections.

The team of volunteers were actively involved with helping and providing information for IPV WALK (Intimate Partner Violence). We have many volunteers who are actively volunteering with the Senior's Program providing weekly assistance to our senior clients.

We provided training and necessary professional and life's skills to our volunteers, who are mostly newcomers to enhance their communication skills, build their confidence and help them amalgamate smoothly into the community.

Rubaba Pasha, Volunteer Coordinator



Social Innovation Forum at Durham College, in October 2023



Sustainability Finance Forum in Ottawa from Nov. 1 to 2nd, 2023

There is significant potential for growth and social benefit in this initiative, and with further support, Shop for Good can thrive as a powerful resource for WMRCC

Shop for Good (shopforgood.ca) is a social enterprise launched in 2021 by the Women's Multicultural Resource & Counselling Centre of Durham (WMRCC). This online marketplace is designed to drive social impact, foster innovation, and spread kindness by serving as a platform for both charities and individuals. One of Shop for Good's upcoming offerings includes digital printing services, allowing customers to create custom designs, which WMRCC will print and ship. The platform also serves as a way for WMRCC to sell various goods and services at affordable prices.

Building this platform has been both rewarding and challenging. We are continuously improving its functionality and user experience, thanks to the support of consultants, industry experts, and a marketing specialist. However, the journey has been difficult due to a lack of consistent team members dedicated to this project. While we have received short-term grants, the temporary nature of this funding has led to ongoing financial gaps.

This year, we worked with consultants and a web designer to revamp the platform, making it more secure and user-friendly. We successfully updated both the frontend and backend integrations, enhancing the marketplace's functionality. Now, WMRCC is seeking a grant to complete the remaining work on this impactful platform.

Omar Pavel, Project Coordinator

BBI-Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI)

BBI has been supporting WMRCC for different initiatives since 2021. The projects under the BBI for last year include:

Wrap Around Project

The wrap around project started in February and ended in September 2023. This initiative enabled WMRCC to engage a tech company (Black TECH) to assist us with completing "Search Engine Optimization" (SEO) of our website. Also, the grant supported WMRCC in hiring an HR Consultant VIK HR Solutions. The consulting firm assisted WMRCC with the development of the Board Charter and the Staff Handbook.

Cybersecurity Initiative

The Expertedge Consulting Group assisted WMRCC to develop IT Incident Response Plan. The purpose of this IT incident response plan is to provide a structured and well-defined approach for effectively handling and managing security incidents that may occur within our organization's information technology (IT) infrastructure. Security incidents can encompass a wide range of events, such as cyber-attacks, data breaches, malware infections, unauthorized access, and other IT-related emergencies.

The key objectives of this incident response plan include:

- Minimizing Impact
- Timely Detection and Response
- Coordination and Communication
- Containment and Eradication
- Evidence Preservation
- Learning and Improvement

By having a comprehensive incident response plan in place, WMRCC can respond more effectively to security incidents, mitigating the impact, and enhance our overall security posture. The Expertedge Consulting Group provided cybersecurity training to all the WMRCC's team in September 2023. The topics covered are: Phishing attacks, password security, mobile device security reporting incidents, and NIST cybersecurity framework.

Capital Assistance Project

In March 2024, WMRCC received a grant from BBI for the "Hope Capacity Building Project" (HCBP). This grant enabled WMRCC to equip new community spaces for programming for vulnerable members of our communities who use our services and programs. This initiative also assisted WMRCC with purchasing office furniture and equipment for the effective provision of services to the members of the Black community in Durham East and West. This initiative is ending in March 2025.

Esther Enyolu, Executive Director

WMRCC and the Community

WMRCC@30th Gala of HOPE- May 2023

WMRCC celebrated its' 30th anniversary very well attended by members of our community in May 2024. This event also attracted individuals and supporters from across Ontario, Canada and overseas. WMRCC was happy about the success of this event.

Launching of the Investment in Women's Futures Project- May 2023:

The Launching of this initiative took place in May 2023 in Pickering with the Hon. Minister Williams, Hon. Minister Bethlenfalvy, MPP Coe, MPP Barnes and His Worship, Mayor of Pickering.

Youth Pride Durham Event- June 2023

WMRCC's Black Youth Action Plan (BYAP) participated representing the organization, this event was well attended by community organizations and groups.

Emancipation Day Event- August 2023

WMRCC collaborated with the Region of Durham and other community organizations to organize this event on August 1st, 2023. It was a great success with over 50 flags from different countries in African were raised

Psychotherapy graduation- September 2023

With an influx of asylum seekers settling in Durham Region with lived experiences of violence and intergenerational trauma, WMRCC through the Investing in Women's Futures program engaged a psychotherapist for a group therapy with these women.

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation- September 2023

Every year since the declaration of September 30th as the NDTR, WMRCC has marked the day for professional development. It is an opportunity to expand the Team's knowledge on rich Indigenous culture, intergenerational trauma, the impact of residential school system, and missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Women's History Month- October 2023

WMRCC organized a community event "Empowering Her Through Her Lens" with women from diverse backgrounds, including those living with disabilities and gender diverse and non-binary.

Intergenerational Mentorship Event- October 2023

WMRCC through its New Horizons for Seniors Project organized intergenerational mentoring event with seniors, youth and children in partnership with different groups and organizations.

Women Abuse Awareness Month Event- November 2023

WMRCC was engaged in numerous Women Abuse Awareness Month Events in partnership with the Women's Committee of Durham Region (WCDR), VPCC, including organizing Mental Health Awareness Conference and a series of workshops on Elder Abuse Prevention Month events.

United Way Bridging the Gaps Project Graduation- November 2023

WMRCC was engaged in numerous Women Abuse Awareness Month Events in partnership with the Women's Committee of Durham Region (WCDR), VPCC, including organizing Mental Health Awareness Conference and a series of workshops on Elder Abuse Prevention Month events.

United Way Bridging the Gaps Project Graduation-November 2023

This was a grand celebration for women who participated in computer training course at WMRCC. Certificates were presented to them and women were so proud of their accomplishments.

Worker Cooperative Development Project Conference- December 2023

WMRCC had its first WCDP Conference in December 2023 with guest speakers from the Ontario Cooperative Association (OCA). Both current WCDP cohort and previous cohort participated talking about their respective cooperatives.

Across the Nations Holidays Dinner- December 2023

This event was in collaboration with the Region of Durham and many partners celebrating newcomers and asylum seekers in Durham Region.

Responding to Ableism as a Form of Violence- December 2023

This workshop was a virtual event facilitated by Fran Odette with women living with disabilities across GTA. It was a great occasion.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Training, Lakeridge Health- December 2023

This training was provided to the Lakeridge Health Centre frontline professionals, doctors, nurses and social workers.

Holiday Party and Intergenerational Mentoring- December 2023

WMRCC held its' annual holidays party for women of all ages, youth and children to celebrate the holiday seasons and receive items donated by WMRCC generous donors and supporters.

Black History Month in collaboration with DCHC- February 2024

WMRCC collaborated with the Durham Community Health Centre to present this event highlighting the documentary of Dr. Jean Augustine. The event was well attended.

International Women's Day- March 2024

Exploring the Intersections of Gender-Based Violence and Mental Health in collaboration with Women's Committee of Durham Region (WCDR). WMRCC also collaborated with the Region of Durham and other organizations for another IWD event.

Community Partnerships

Addressing the Lack of Access to Culturally Responsive Support, Project Agape Project in Partnership with WMRCC of Durham

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

The OTF Youth Opportunities Fund funds this project

WMRCC is a Mentoring organization for Project Agape.

Esther Fagbola, Project Lead

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 representation and inclusion of diverse groups within their workplaces and institutions while highlighting the benefits of giving all Canadians the opportunity to seat at different decision making tables.

Anti-Black Racism and Mental Health in Higher Education: Perspectives of Current and Prospective Post-Secondary Students in a Canadian Context

Anti-Black racism in institutional and community settings is linked to serious mental health and educational challenges for Black youth and young adults in higher education, including heightened risks of depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, reduced academic self-confidence, and increased dropout rates. In collaboration with the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), WMRCC is currently interviewing Black youth who are enrolled in university or plan to attend. This project aims to examine participants' experiences and perceptions of racial discrimination in university settings, the impact of these experiences on their mental health, and their views on existing mental health supports for coping with racism. The findings will contribute to creating more culturally responsive mental health resources, provide support to Black students throughout their academic journeys, and help foster a more inclusive university environment.

WMRCC appreciates the financial support from its' esteemed Donors and Sponsors

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- CHUM Christmas Wish Foundation
- Manulife and the staff of Manulife
- DoorDash
- The State & Main
- Ontario Power Generation (OPG)
- United Way of Durham
- The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
- The Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), Durham Chapter
- CNE
- Community Care Durham
- Tim Hortons, and staff
- Durham Action Community Group
- Scotia Bank
- Scotchies Caribbean Jerk Cuisine
- Co-Operators
- Elexicon Energy
- Durham Region
- Durham Regional Police
- Black Tech Hub
- Redd Knights Group
- Town of Ajax
- Janssen
- Farsight Homes
- Toronto Event Hub
- WMRCC Seniors Program Participants
- Mississauga of Scugog Island
- Stairway 2 Leadership
- Vivian Curl & Family
- Kathleen Corey
- Amanda King-Clark
- Christopher Nwakoby
- Sandman Hotel
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- Power Corporation of Canada
- Lynn Murrel
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- Gifts for Every Reason
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- Metroland
- Health 180 with Carion Fenn
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