

AGM REPORT 2022 - 2023

RIWC is committed to supporting Asian and South Asian women and their families in taking greater control of their lives. RIWC provides culturally appropriate and linguistically specific settlement support and counselling services with the use of community determined strategies, developed and delivered by immigrant women.



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Executive Message

We always like to begin any conversation about our important work with a reminder of how the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre (RIWC) was founded with a mission to empower immigrant and refugee women and their families. Although we support all marginalized communities within the GTA, women from diverse backgrounds continue to remain the focus of our services and programs.

As we navigate a post-pandemic reality, key issues have emerged. The community more than ever needs services that allow them to process the events of the last few years in particular so that they can heal. Wellness is becoming a priority for participants across generations. Both staff and clients favour increased flexibility to balance their work and personal obligations, including a hybrid environment with options for in-person and virtual programming. Our members are embracing any opportunity for engagement through discussions, activities, and peer interaction, especially those recovering from the after effects of prolonged social isolation. To that end, we have endeavoured to respond to the needs of our community with new and relevant programming.

This year, we received funding for a 2SLGBTQ+ BIPOC wellness group as a result of demand identified during a pilot initiative in the previous year. We introduced an alternative food service and hospitality training program geared towards marginalized women who face numerous barriers to employment and require flexibility and additional supports for access. We expanded our Seniors' Digital Literacy Support program to include a technology mentorship component for one-to-one and group support through a hybrid service delivery model. RIWC also launched a free Islamophobia Support Line to provide referral and counselling support for victims of religious, racial and culture-based violence in an effort to support communities confronting racism and discrimination.

In 2022/23, we served over 444 clients who spoke 39 languages and originated from over 45 countries! The success of our programs and services as represented by the number and diversity of our clients is a direct result of our staff, placement students, and volunteers, whose commitment to the organization remained steadfast during the post-pandemic uncertainty. We understand and appreciate how fortunate we are to have them as part of our team!

Our Programs

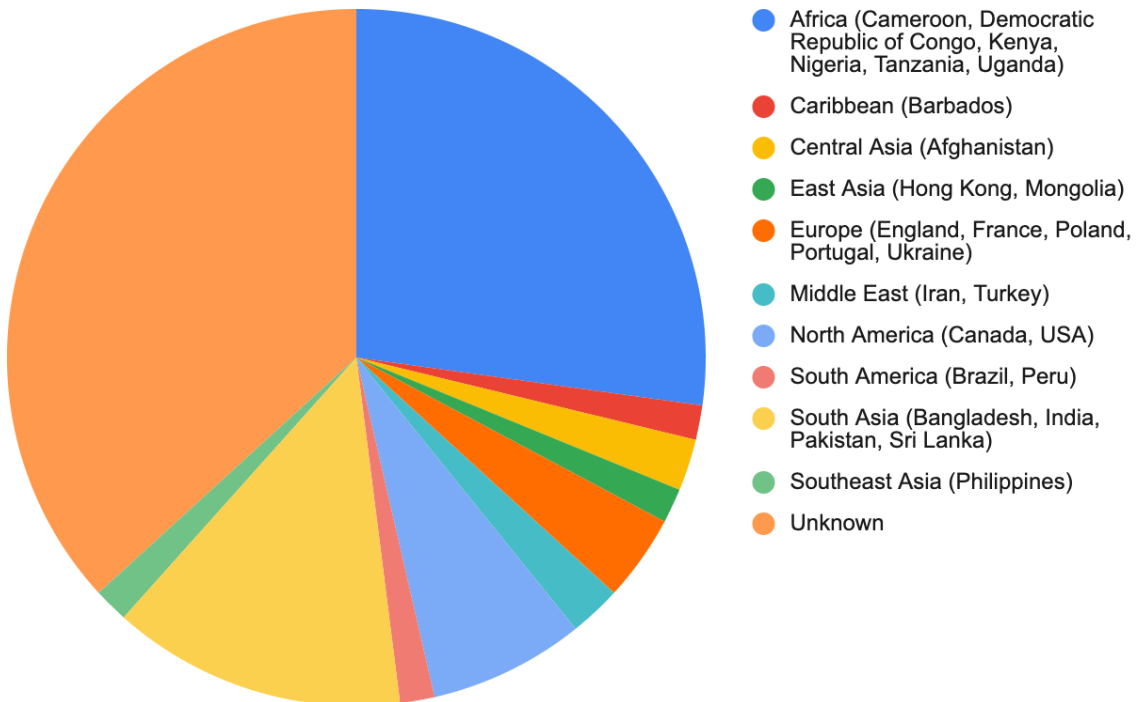
Violence Against Women

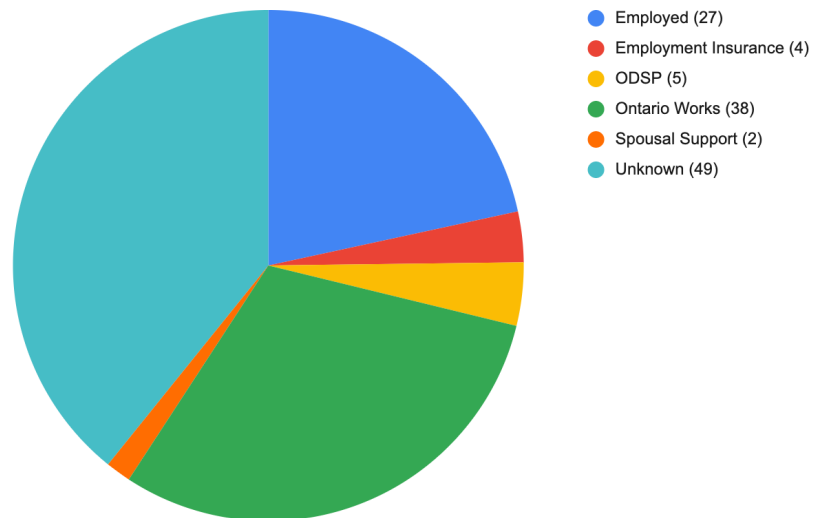
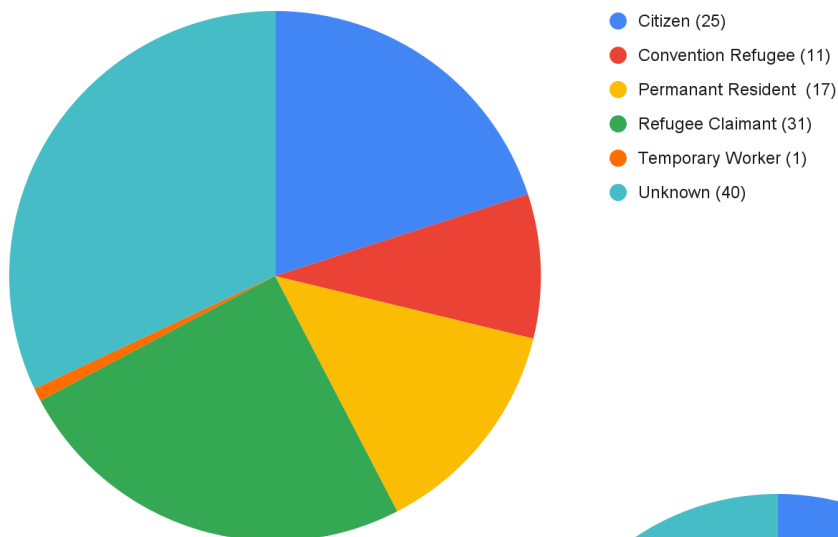
The Violence Against Women (VAW) program provides community-based counselling, support and referral services for women and their dependents who have experienced abuse and/or sexual assault, so that they may live free of violence.

Statistics:

60	44	65	38	41
Intakes	New Clients	Returning Clients	Referrals (service at capacity)	Referrals (to appropriate services)

- 60 intakes were conducted.
- Total of 125 clients (includes intakes and returning clients).
- **59% of women were new clients** (who continued with counselling sessions following intake).
- Clients spoke **21 different languages** (other than English).
- **Over 55% of clients identified their country of origin as outside of Canada.**
- **Over 30% of clients were Refugee Claimants or Convention Refugees.**
- **Over 35% of clients were on social assistance** (i.e., Employment Insurance, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program).





Key Successes:

- Despite hiring challenges during COVID, we were able to secure a team of dedicated counsellors.
- To manage the waitlist following intake sessions, clients were referred to other VAW service providers from our database with a shorter wait time to ensure their immediate needs were met.

Client Stories:

Jane (name has been changed to protect her confidentiality) commenced counselling at RIWC in December 2021 due to trauma related to violence and a threat to her life in her home country. Jane identifies as bisexual. She immigrated to Canada leaving her 4 children, including her toddler, in the care of her aunt. Counselling supports were focused on a trauma informed approach. With mindfulness and grounding techniques, she was able to feel safe and manage the after effects of the trauma, especially hypervigilance and flashbacks. The client was motivated to identify her inner resources and how to make use of them effectively. Jane made great progress and remained strong during her hearing process. Her application was accepted and she is now working on her goals to build a future for her and her children who will be joining her in Canada.

Mariam (name has been changed to protect her confidentiality) commenced counseling at RIWC in October 2021 prompted by an experience of gender-based violence. Counselling supports, founded on anti-oppressive and trauma-informed approaches, have focused on processing trauma; psychoeducation; safety planning;

developing effective coping and self-care strategies; and navigating interpersonal relationships. Referrals to other services were made to facilitate holistic support. Mariam continues to regularly attend counseling sessions and reports that counseling is supportive of her overall health and well-being. She is presently in the process of obtaining safe housing and exploring options for education and employment.

Anna (name has been changed to protect her confidentiality) commenced counselling at RIWC in March 2021 due to trauma related to gender-based violence and a threat to her life in her home country. Alone and without support, she immigrated to Canada with her young son as a single parent in 2019. Counselling supports were focused on processing trauma, psychoeducation, and promoting the development of healthy coping strategies. With these strategies, she was able to feel safe and manage the after effects of the trauma and showed improvement on her overall health and wellbeing. The client was motivated to identify her inner resources, including her strengths and how to make use of them effectively. Anna made great progress and remained strong during this period of waiting for her refugee hearing. She has also established great healthy relationships with her son, and aimed to break cycles of intergenerational trauma.



Essential Pathways to Employment

The Essential Pathways to Employment (EPE) program is an eight-week pre-employment program for adults 18+ who are on Ontario Works.

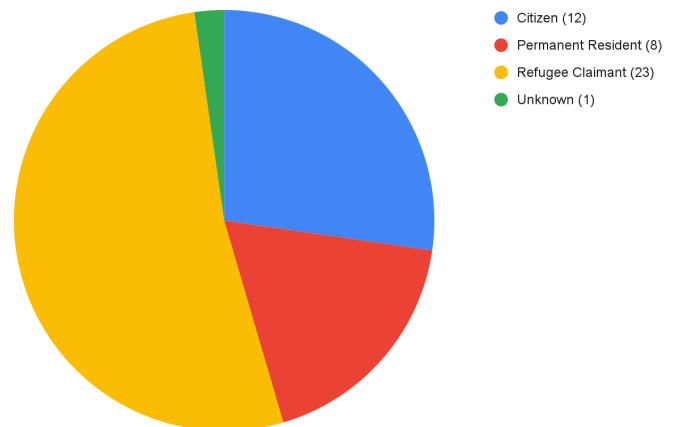
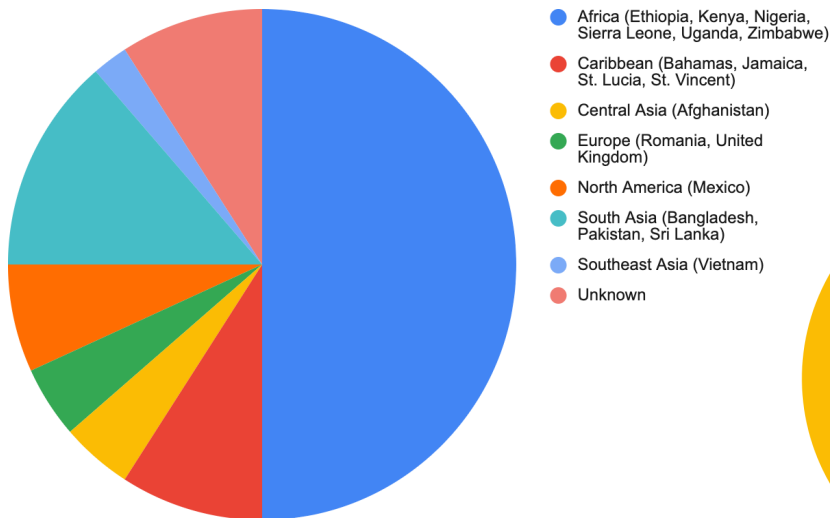
Participants set their own goals and work towards achieving them by completing the following activities:

- **Career plan;**
- Daily **computer classes;**
- Employment-readiness and life-skills **workshops;**
- **Resume writing;**
- **Customer service course** (replacement for in-person placement during COVID-19).

Participants continue to receive support for job search and retention as well as referrals to resources and job opportunities during a **six-month post-program support** period.

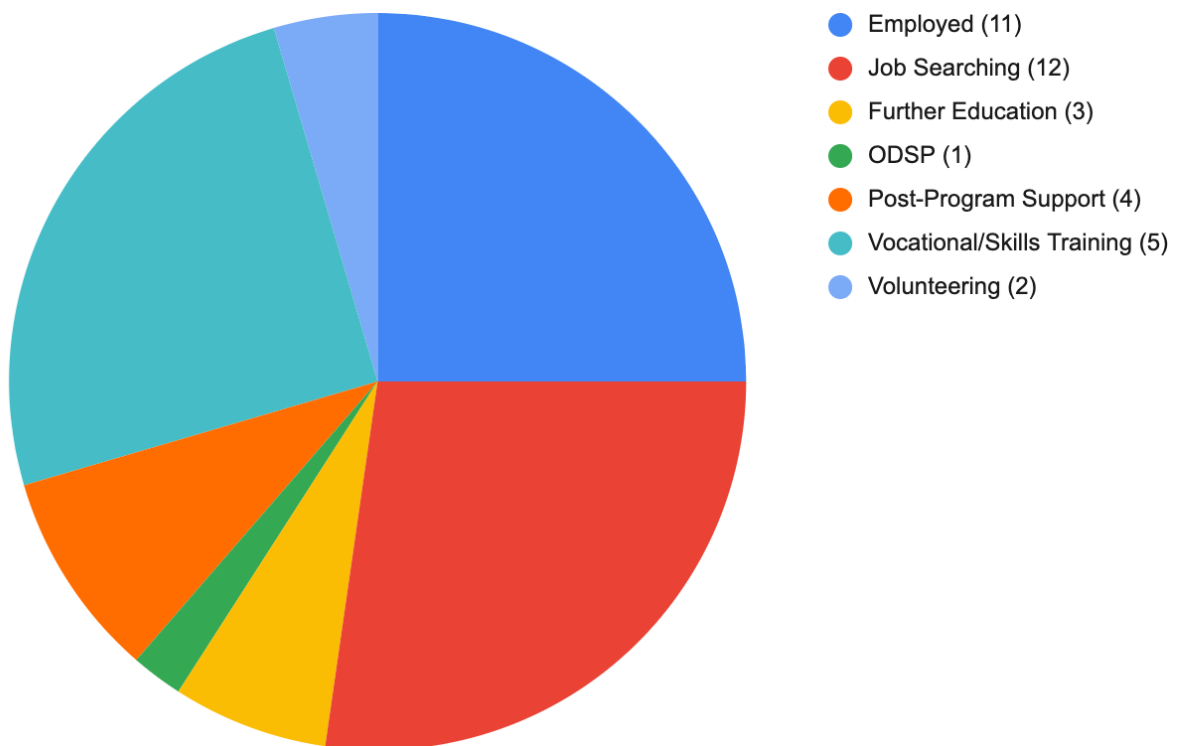
Statistics:

- **44 participants** enrolled in the program in 2022/23.
- **Over 85% of participants identified as women.**
- Participants spoke over **17 different languages** (other than English).
- 50% of participants indicated African countries of origin.
- **Over 50% of participants were Refugee Claimants.**



Key Successes:

- In June, the program transitioned away from structured cohorts to **enrollment on a rolling basis** to increase enrollment. The computer classes and the afternoon workshops were structured around this change to ensure all participants completed program requirements over the course of 8 weeks.
- As a result of challenges in securing external facilitators, RIWC staff researched free and virtual course materials through Indeed and LinkedIn, thereby creating workshops on employment topics that they were able to facilitate internally.
- All participants enrolled in the core program in December had not been in Canada for more than 6 months. As winter approached, RIWC staff provided relevant workshops on resources available for new immigrants – including information about food banks, clothing banks, mental health support, and legal assistance.
- **70% of participants** who completed the post-program support period **achieved a positive outcome.**



Client Stories:

Genevieve (name has been changed to protect her confidentiality) had a short-term goal of obtaining remote employment and a long-term goal of connecting to a career counsellor. During the post-program support period, she was faced with health concerns that impacted her ability to job search. Following a discussion with RIWC Staff, she enrolled in mindfulness yoga at the YMCA and made self-care a priority in her daily routine. While Genevieve has been focusing on her mental and physical health, she has re-gained motivation to continue her seek employment. She is also working closely with a career counsellor at ACHEV to whom she was referred by staff.

Kavita (name has been changed to protect her confidentiality) wanted to complete a Home Support Worker program so that she could find employment. During the post program support period, Riverdale Staff provided her with information about ParaMed's free Home Support Worker training program with in-class training and a

job placement. Kavita had a successful program interview and has since completed the program, which has lead to an offer of employment as a home support worker. She is very excited that she has achieved both her short-term and long-term employment goals within 6 months.

Partners:

In 2022/23, we continued with our established partners to deliver workshops on topics of interest to participants. We also introduced a workshop by a new partner, Credit Canada, that was specifically geared towards newcomers. Participants learned about credit scores, budgeting, ways to save, and the benefits of working with a financial mentor.



Food Service and Hospitality Training

The Food Service and Hospitality Training (FSHT) program is a unique 10-week employment program for adults 18+ who are on Ontario Works and wish to enter the food service and hospitality sector.

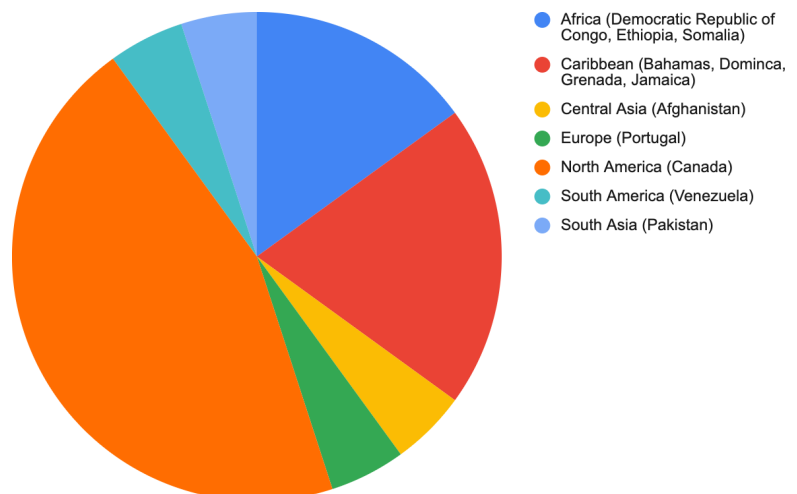
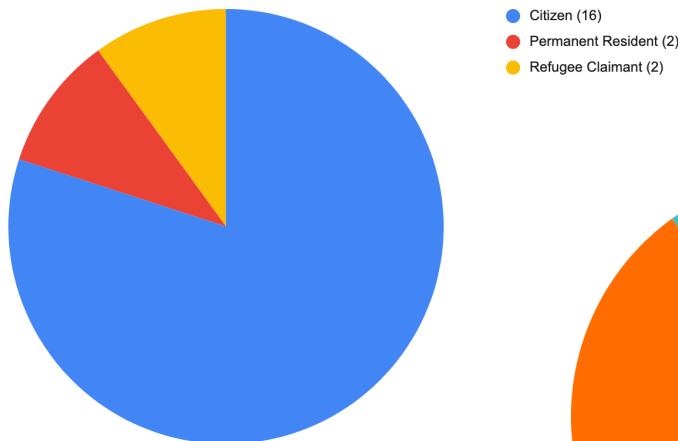
Participants set their own goals and work towards achieving them by completing the following activities:

- **Career plan;**
- Daily **computer classes;**
- Employment-readiness & life-skills **workshops;**
- **Specialized workshops on the food & hospitality sector** (i.e., food services, catering, administration, events management, and social entrepreneurship);
- **Resume development;**
- **WHMIS certification;**
- **Food Handler certification;**
- **Customer service course;**
- **In-house placement** (two weeks) or written assignment (due to COVID-19 concerns).

Participants continue to receive support for job search and retention as well as referrals to resources and job opportunities during a **six-month post-program support** period.

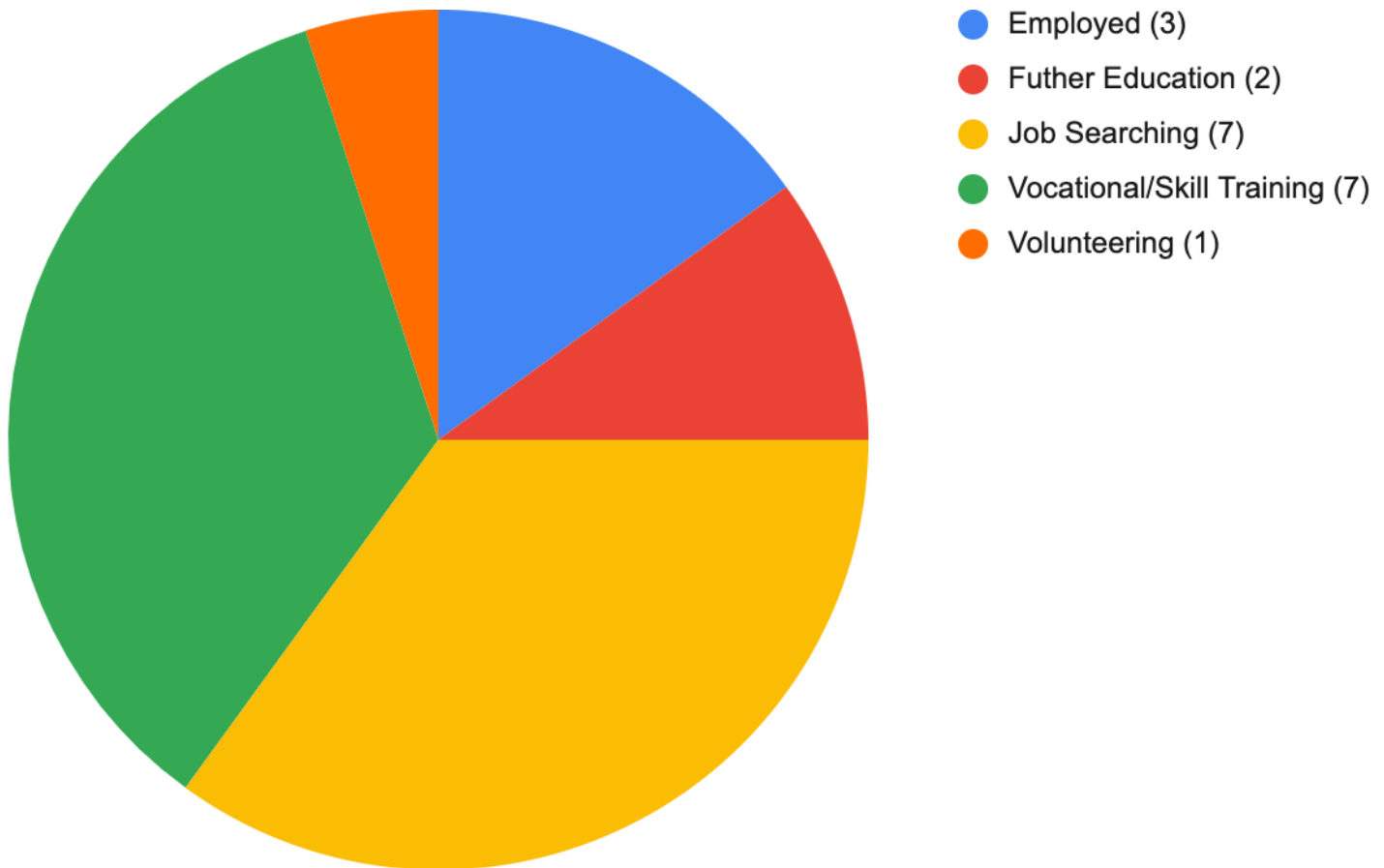
Statistics:

- In 2022, **20 participants** completing the core program.
- **80% of participants identified as women.**
- 80% of participants were Citizens.
- Participants spoke **11 different languages** (other than English).
- Participants indicated **9 different countries of origin.**
- Almost half of participants indicated Canada as their country of origin.



Key Successes:

- In 2022, we **reached our target of 20 participants** who successfully completed the core program and continued with post-program support. Consequently, we were assigned an additional four seats in 2023 based on our success.
- 60% of participants found employment or enrolled in further education or training programs as an outcome.



Client Stories:

Sonali (name has been changed to protect her confidentiality) was a participant with huge potential, but with limited training and work experience in the Canadian job market. While enrolled in the program, she learned how to prepare a resume, obtained her Food Handler & WHIMS certifications, and regained her confidence to commence her job search. During the post-program support period, she was sent multiple job notifications and provided with guidance on how to tailor her resume to those positions of interest to her. She was also referred to multiple YWCA job fairs, which she attended and received close to 6 interviews as a result. With the opening of schools, she was able to make arrangements for childcare and is now an empowered job seeker.

Faith (name has been changed to protect her confidentiality) joined the program in February 2023 as she expressed interest in the Food Service and Hospitality Industry. Faith's intake was completed fairly quickly as she was very motivated. She was upbeat, social, and supportive of others in the program. She often led discussions in group sessions and encouraged others to participate as well. When staff reached out to her to

commend her on completing her Individual Program Plan so quickly, Faith shared that her social assistance had been terminated due to an oversight. The staff stepped in to support and advocate for Faith and were successful in getting her benefits reinstated, including back payments for her rent. As a stop gap, staff provided Faith with resources so that she could avail of food banks and obtain hot meals to support her and her children. During this period, Faith still attended all classes and showed a positive demeanor. This truly was an inspiration to others. After completing the post program support period, she reported that she had secured full-time employment at a long-term care home along with benefits, thereby achieving her goal for entering the employment training program.

Partners:

In 2022, we continued with our established partners to deliver workshops on food service & hospitality as well as employment readiness. Participants were also directed to our partners upon completion of the core program, including the Women’s Economic Council for one-on-one mentorship as well as Dress for Success, iSisters, and Flash Security Services.



Wrap Around Support

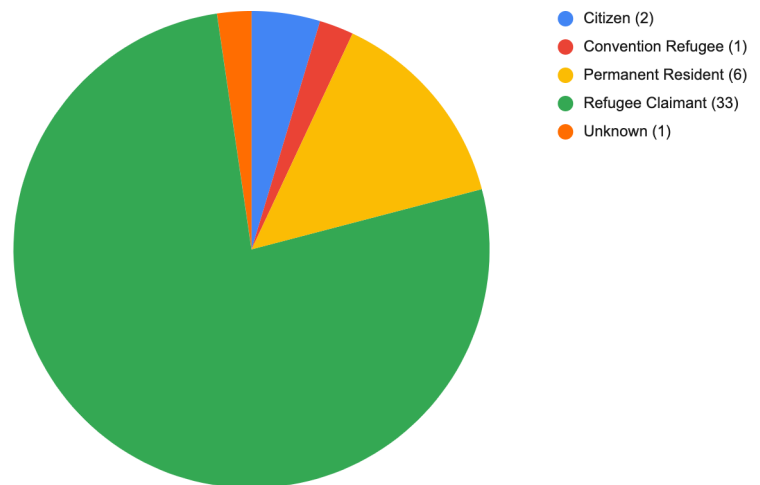
The Wrap Around Support program was initiated in July 2020 to assist Ontario Works recipients in dealing with the impact of the pandemic. The program continues to provide eight weeks of online life-stabilization and housing support to participants through the following services:

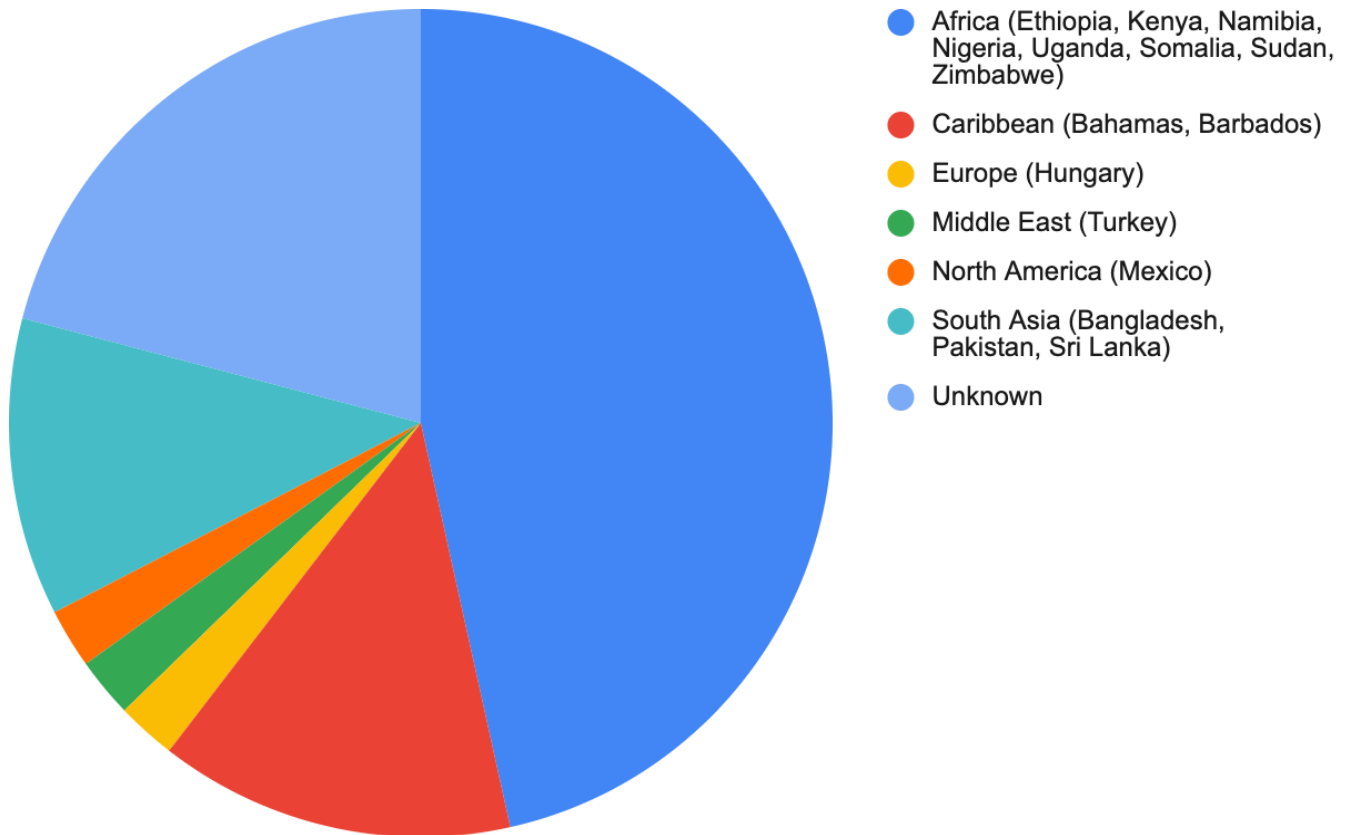
- **Goal Setting** to prioritize participant needs;
- **Group Information Sessions** on various topics (e.g., renters' rights, food security, financial literacy, library cards, nutrition, assertiveness training, job readiness, virtual interviews); and
- **Weekly Check-ins** with coaching, referrals and other supports provided based on participants' needs (e.g., clothing banks, finding a family physician who speaks their language); and
- **Access to Resources** (e.g., affordable rental housing listings, online resource library).

Participants continue to receive resources and information during a **two-month post-program support** period.

Statistics:

- In 2022, **43 participants** completed the program.
- 23 clients requested housing support.
- Over 88% of participants identified as women.
- Almost **80% of participants were Refugee Claimants or Convention Refugees.**
- Participants spoke **21 different languages** (other than English).
- Participants indicated **16 different countries of origin.**
- Over 60% of participants indicated African and Caribbean countries of origin.





Key Successes:

- We were able to accommodate **43 participants, exceeding the original funder requirement of 24 participants.**
- To address concerns about the rising cost of food, participants were referred to food banks, meal programs and community fridges as important resources.

Client Stories:

A WRAP client was given one month notice to vacate her room rental as her Landlord, with whom she shared a common space, was selling the home. With the support of the WRAP coordinator the client was able to connect with individuals in her cultural community and find another rental unit within her budget close to supports.

A WRAP client identified needing housing for herself and her four children as they were residing in a small one-bedroom unit. WRAP staff were able to support the client by providing information on housing search tips, tenant rights, the application process for rentals and lease signing. She was also referred to her Ontario Works caseworker to secure funds for first and last month's rent. Consequently, the client was able to find a two-bedroom apartment in a family area and near a friend. She is now well-positioned to look for employment opportunities.

Women in the Garden (2017-2022)

Women in the Garden (WIG) is a **culturally-relevant wellness program** designed to improve the physical and emotional health of immigrant and refugee women in Toronto.

Interactive online modules included nutritional counseling, gardening lessons, mindfulness and meditation techniques, and age-appropriate yoga exercises. Supplemental Zoom sessions and discussions, conducted in real time, created opportunities for connectivity and interaction among participants to alleviate social isolation.

iPad loans and technical support were made available to participants as part of the **digital literacy training** component. Consequently, participants were guaranteed access to resources to keep informed about COVID-19 as well as other health issues.

Statistics:

The majority of participants were South Asian women.

11	26	19	5
Participants	Yoga Sessions	Nutrition Webinars	Gardening Webinars

Key Successes:

- **Gardening workshops** were introduced in April. In addition to presentations, the gardener provided virtual 'trips' to the rooftop garden, tool shed, and kitchen where produce was washed to further engage participants.
- A budget-friendly grocery shopping workshop was presented in partnership with the Society of Sharing, a non-profit organization that promotes food security amongst seniors with the assistance of volunteers who provide grocery shopping services.
- **Important health related topics** such as diabetes, its causes, complications, and preventive measures led to the exchange of cultural information amongst participants on foods that are known to help control blood sugar levels.
- The grant wrapped up in June 2022 with the final sessions devoted to discussions for participants to share ideas, recipes, and general information.

Client Stories:

It was found that many of the women were not completing their annual health check-ups or reported discomfort when seeing their family physician. After extensive discussion around this topic, participants came to understand that they should not feel ashamed to share information with their physician as a way to ensure optimal health.

Bursitis
Fatty Liver
Nutrition Labels
Mulches
Fasting Guidelines
Indoor Growing Lighting
Covid-19
Yoga
Essential Oils
Seed Starting
Allergies
Uric Acid
Soil Fertilizers
Meditation
Blood Pressure
Diabetes
Fasting Q&A
Sunscreen & Sunburns



United Way
Greater Toronto

Our Projects

2SLGBTQ+ Wellness Group 2022 - 2023

The 2SLGBTQ+ BIPOC Wellness Group is a weekly virtual space to enhance the mental and social health of adults marginalized by race, gender and sexuality. It does this through an education and skills-building curriculum that is grounded in recognition of the mental health impacts of oppression, and by creating a forum for the development of community, friendships, and peer support. A key feature of the program is the provision of mental health-related adult education through facilitator-led discussions.

Facilitator-led session topics followed by individual activity or exercise:

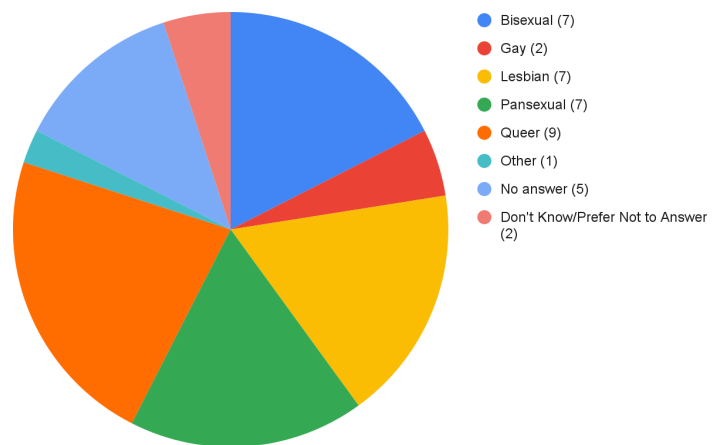
- Interrogating mainstream mental health discourse
- Why marginalization = strength
- Engaging with our identity labels
- Relationships and boundaries
- Resisting productivity culture - why you deserve to rest
- Rewriting our self-‘stories’
- The joy of living in the margins
- The relationship between race, gender and sexuality
- Do I need to be ‘happy’?
- Recognizing, honouring and responding to our emotions

Facilitated discussion circle on session topics:

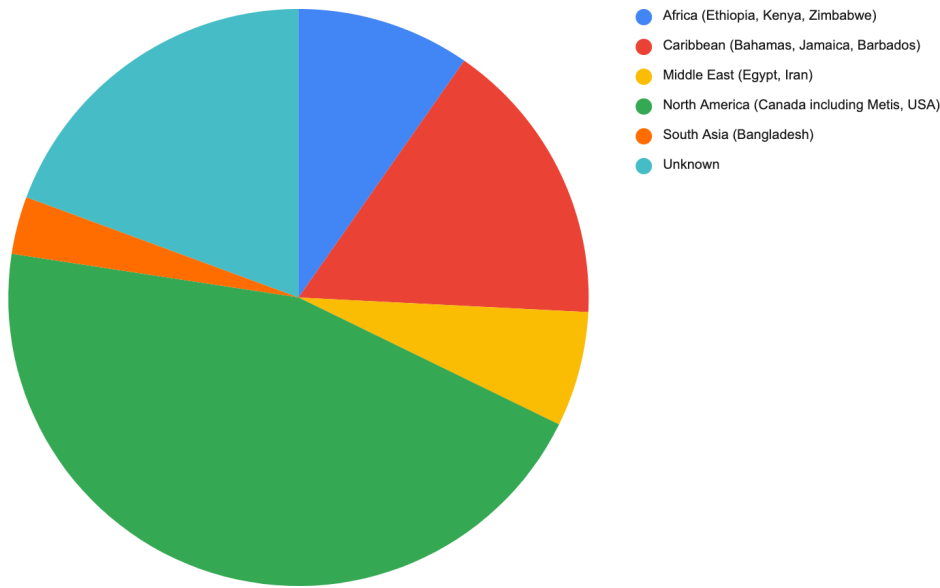
- Gender & sexual identity & ‘coming out’
- Dating, love and rejection
- Religion, spirituality and religious community
- Friendship & belonging
- Substance use and addiction
- Loving, hating and accepting our bodies
- Precarity & poverty under capitalism
- Navigating family, given and chosen

Statistics:

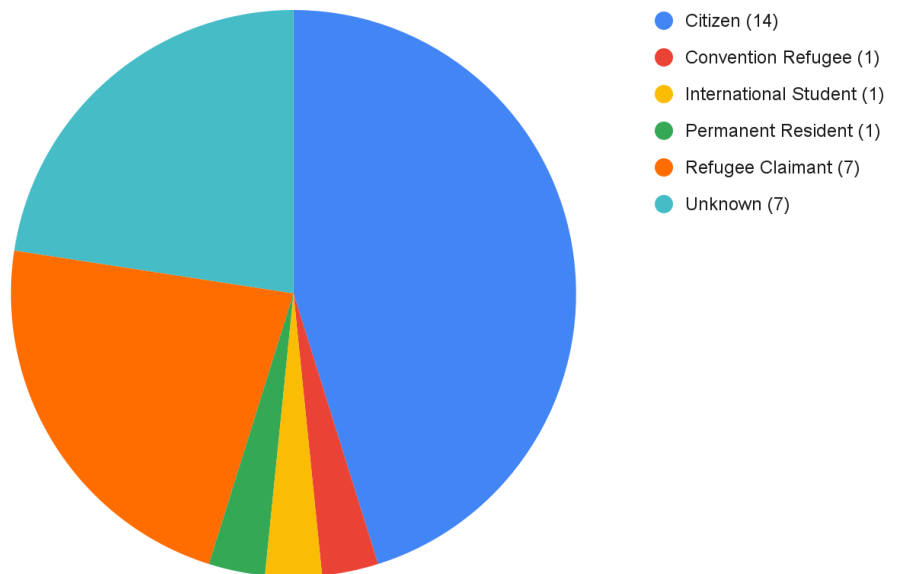
- The first and second cohorts consisted of 11 and 21 participants respectively for a **total of 33 participants**. The third and final cohort will take place in the 2023/24 fiscal year.
- 56.7% of participants identified as a woman; 23.3% of participants identified as non-binary; 3.3% of participants identified as a man; and 3.3% of participants identified as transgender.
- 80% of participants identified as bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, or queer.



➤ 35.5% of participants identified their country of origin as outside of Canada.



➤ **Over 25% were either Refugee Claimants or Convention Refugees.**



Key Successes:

- We administered two out of three consecutive cohorts. A switch to **registration on a rolling basis** and expanding the total number of sessions led to increased enrollment in the second cohort.
- In addition to virtual weekly sessions, the group facilitators offered **additional supports** to participants upon request, namely: one-on-one counselling sessions; systems navigation support and referrals to a variety of other services; refugee claim support letters; critical mental health content to supplement the learnings from the program sessions; and community development to nurture relationships beyond and outside of the program sessions.

- Staff and students took part in **diversity training sessions** to support our efforts in creating and maintaining equitable spaces, thereby building our capacity to better respond to the needs of marginalized groups in the future. Through the funding, we retained the services of 'Inclusive Plus' to facilitate valuable workshops on 'Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression', 'Supporting Trans and Gender Non-Conforming People Accessing Our Services', 'Creating Equitable Work Spaces', and 'Policy Leadership & Organizational Change'.

Client Testimonials:

"I have been doing groups for over 20 years and this was by far the best one I attended. Please notify me when there is more."

"Thank you for this opportunity, it is incredible to be able to learn with and from other QBIPOC folks."

"The group was perfect. I just wish there was more time."

"In these meetings I felt safe with everyone and everyone was so nice and supportive. It was an overall great experience "

"My favourite thing is everyone sees you for who you are. Nobody acts as if they are better than the other individual...made me feel like family"

"What you offered us in this program helped me create internal foundations that I'll be building upon and referring back to for the rest of my life...the gems you've imparted to me and how you imparted them are unmatched."

"It was an amazing and insightful experience. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and vision with us, and for creating such a safe and welcoming space."

"It was a phenomenal experience sharing the space with you and everyone else... I learned a lot more about myself ... and I am eternally grateful for that."

"Honestly I've gained confidence in myself, being with total strangers that turned into family."



Food Service and Hospitality Training (United Way) (2022 - 2025)

The Food Service and Hospitality Training program, funded by the United Way, is a flexible 10-week skills training program for unemployed immigrant and refugee women from Indigenous, Black or other racialized communities in the GTA. Participants set their own goals and work towards achieving them by completing the following activities:

- **Career plan;**
- **Career exploration** through workshops (e.g., personality dimensions, resume writing & cover letters, interview preparation, LinkedIn profiles, customer service);
- **Customized learning activities** through workshops (e.g., SMART goals, service navigation, basic rental rights);
- **Specialized workshops on the food & hospitality sector;**
- **WHMIS certification;**
- **Food Handler certification;**
- **Weekly one-on-one check-in sessions;**
- **In-house placement** (e.g., cafe, catering, rooftop garden).

Participants continue to receive support for job search and retention as well as referrals to resources and job opportunities during a six-month post-program support period.

Statistics:

21	16	10	6
Enquiries	Intake Sessions	Eligible Applicants	Enrolled Participants

Women were referred to RIWC's other training programs when appropriate, including those geared towards people who receive social assistance, following enquiries or intake sessions.

OUTCOMES	GOAL	ACHIEVEMENT
Program Completion	80%	83% *
Employment/Self-Employment/ Placement	50%	50%
Referral to Training/Certification for Employment	40%	17%
Referral to Other Employment Support Services	10%	0%

*One participant found employment during the program and so had to withdraw.



- All participants identified as **immigrant and refugee women**.
- Participants spoke **5 different languages** (other than English).
- Participants indicated **5 different countries of origin**.

Key Successes:

- Women who have gone through intake sessions have been referred to our digital literacy and Violence Against Women counselling programs as well as clothing banks, food banks, and support groups as needed.
- We **revised our eligibility criteria to address barriers to participation**, including the introduction of a travel/completion allowance.
- We received funder approval to encourage participants outside of Toronto (within the GTA) to apply to the program, thereby expanding our reach.
- We **modified the english language requirement** from proficiency to a basic working knowledge to address eligibility concerns.
- **Two participants were hired by the Riverdale Hub as prep cooks** upon completion of the core program.

Client Stories:

Our program has a diverse group of participants. All of them have individual stories and have seen this program as an opportunity to change their situation.

- A mother of three children, returning to the workforce after taking a break for 21 years, was hired by the Riverdale Hub as a prep cook upon completion of her placement.
- A mother, with a child on the autistic spectrum, found the courage to venture out of the house to explore her interests. She was referred to another training program at RIWC that was more suited to her needs.
- A participant, who ran a successful cake decoration business in Sri Lanka, had challenges finding her footing in Canada. Upon completing the course, she was emboldened to seek out entrepreneurial training programs to help her start her own business.
- A refugee claimant with food service experience in her country of origin, found obtaining food handlers certification through the program was a good place to start for gaining employment in the food services sector in Canada.

Althea (name has been changed to protect her confidentiality) was a stay-at-home mom for the past eight years after having her last baby. She wanted to return to work but felt the job market had changed a lot. She was passionate about baking and reached out to enroll in the program. Over the course of the program, she learned kitchen management and food preparation skills, including cooking and presentation. Her family was supportive of her and her older son even accompanied her on her commute to RIWC until she was familiar with TTC routes. She has grown more confident, is equipped with skills, and is aware of labor laws. With her training (and positive disposition), she was able to secure a job in the food service sector upon completion of the program.



Empowering Women in the Food Service & Restaurant Industry (2018 - 2023)

We worked with a consortium of private sector partners to identify and address intersectional barriers that prevent women from achieving economic security within the food service and restaurant industry. Based on a GBA+ review of sector-specific barriers, a **Coordinated Action Plan** was developed to address **3 key action areas**. The Action Plan was implemented with **125 racialized and newcomer women** participating in the development of new resource materials and sector-specific programming to improve the economic security of women in the sector.

The following **key activities** were undertaken to implement the project between 2019 and 2023:

- **62 women** participated in **3 roundtable discussions** (discussion questions based on GBA+ analysis).
- Outcomes from the roundtable discussions informed the development of **three pilot initiatives** for implementation.
- Resource materials were developed to implement the pilot initiatives, including a **90-minute workshop presentation, a resource directory, and 8 conversation guides**.
- Our resource materials were piloted through **4 Inclusive Workplace Training workshops**. The directory and conversation guides were also distributed to our partners to complement the information presented at our workshops.

Online pre- and post-workshop questionnaires were administered to measure the impact of the resources. We were invited to present our outcomes and resources at our booth at the Restaurants Canada Show in Toronto in April 2023, which was attended by 20,000+ industry professionals from the food and hospitality sector. We also presented our outcomes to the Honorable Charmaine Williams, Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity at this event. Resources, including [Resource Guide](#), were posted on the [Projects](#) and [Resources](#) pages of the RIWC website.



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Technology Mentors for Senior Women (2022 - 2023)

We focused on expanding our seniors' digital literacy support programs to include a Technology Mentorship program this year. A Technology Engagement Coordinator was recruited to train a team of **14 multilingual social work placement students/volunteers** to provide one-to-one and group mentorship support for **over 120 older adult and senior women** over an 8-month project period.

The project aimed to close the intergenerational digital divide in accessing and utilizing online community services and resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our program was delivered through a hybrid service delivery model, including virtual one-to-one mentorship support and in-person workshops that were co-facilitated with The 519 and Hispanic Development Council in Toronto, Ontario.

The following is a summary of the activities/key outcomes achieved through the project:

- We signed agreements with York University, George Brown College, Seneca College, and Toronto Metropolitan University to recruit social work students for the 2022-2023 academic year.
- 44 Social Work students were interviewed, and a total of **10 Social Work placement students and 4 volunteers** were recruited from York University (3), Toronto Metropolitan University (8), George Brown College (2) and Seneca College (1). They were onboarded and trained to deliver the project activities between September and October 2022.
- Our placement students received **four days of training and orientation** that included crisis counselling, inclusivity & equity training, review of the program curriculum and materials and general program onboarding.
- **28 older adults and seniors were engaged in developing our curriculum through two focus group sessions.** One session was co-hosted by The 519 (LGBTQ2S+ seniors), and the second was co-hosted by the Hispanic Development Council (newcomer seniors).
- **20 older adults** have been **matched with our mentors** to provide 8 to 12 weeks of one-to-one mentorship support.
- **128 older adults and seniors participated in 11 digital skills training workshops** hosted by RIWC between September 7th, 2022 and March 8th, 2023. The [webinar decks](#) have been posted on the RIWC website.

Next year, we plan to build on this project to develop an Older 2SLGBTQI+ Adult Digital Literacy Drop-in Program to address the higher levels of social isolation and greater need for LGBTQ older adults to access technology.



Islamophobia Support Line (2022 - 2023)

RIWC launched a new Anti-Islamophobia Support Line in the fall of 2022 to provide referral and counselling support for victims of religious, racial and culture-based violence. Our Support Line is a **FREE, confidential and independent supportive counselling service for women and youth who self-identify as Muslim and have experienced hate crime incidences and need someone to talk to.**

The support line is part of a larger multi-year feasibility study initiated by RIWC to support communities in confronting racism and discrimination, promoting intercultural and interfaith understanding, and fostering equitable opportunities to participate fully in Canadian society.

An intersection task force has been set up to engage in discussions on multiculturalism, diversity, racism and religious discrimination at the domestic or international levels. Our project task force includes representation from the University of Toronto's School of Islamic Studies, the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, Noor Cultural Centre, Salaam Canada, and the Toronto Police Hate Crime Unit. Since the Task Force was set up, a comprehensive environmental scan of Muslim resources in the community has been developed, a feasibility study outline has been approved, and a training curriculum was created to support volunteers who will manage the support line.

The [project](#) is expected to wrap up at the end of 2023 with a final series of focus group discussions with women from our target communities.



Thank You to Our Volunteers

In 2022-23, RIWC relied upon the support of **14 placement students, 7 volunteers, and 5 board and committee members for a total of 5265 volunteer hours.**

Placement students from **George Brown College and Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University)** were provided a valuable opportunity to apply theory to practice. Volunteers from various backgrounds found a space where they could share their skills and enthusiasm as part of their efforts to give back to the community. We would like to thank all the placement students and volunteers for the contributions they have made to RIWC programs.

Our board members are a great asset to our organization and it would be impossible for RIWC to provide the services that we do without their dedication and support for which we are extremely grateful.

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