



Centre of Learning
& Development

Stronger Communities Together



2024

Annual Report

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Vision

Stronger Communities Together

Mission

Facilitating community connections through innovative learning

Strategic Priorities

2023-2024 was the final year of our previous strategic plan, focusing on:

- Building partnerships that strengthen residents and communities
- Encouraging new leadership with skills to address structural inequalities and promote community engagement
- Promoting community-driven solutions through networking and direct action
- Increasing financial security through social entrepreneurship and skills development



Message from our Executive Director

“Nothing Can Dim the Light that Shines from Within” - **Maya Angelou**

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Reflecting on the year at the Centre for Community Learning & Development (CCL&D), I am deeply inspired by the profound truth in this year's graduation theme: "Nothing Can Dim the Light that Shines from Within." This theme captures the strength, and determination of the individuals we serve. It also underscores our organization's commitment to creating opportunities that empower and uplift.

This year has been a transformative journey for CCL&D. Among our most significant achievements is the approval of our application to establish a **Career College**. By offering accredited diplomas and certificates, the college will provide participants with the skills, knowledge, and credentials they need to thrive in a rapidly evolving job market.

The college's programs will include **certificates** in **Digital Marketing, Project Management, and Entrepreneurship** and **diplomas** in **Data Analytics, Community Development and Health Services Support** courses. We will design each program to equip participants with practical, in-demand skills while fostering confidence, professional growth, and career readiness.

While this milestone is monumental, our ongoing programs provide hope and opportunity. Our **Digital Workforce Readiness** initiative has empowered hundreds of individuals to embrace technology in the workplace, leading to increased job opportunities and career growth. Our **Social Entrepreneurship** training has fostered innovative startups that positively impact our community. Our **Leadership Development for Immigrant Women** has also supported hundreds of women in breaking barriers, amplifying their voices, and creating meaningful change in their lives and communities.

These efforts reflect our unwavering belief that every individual has the potential to grow when given the tools and opportunities to thrive. This belief drives us to continuously innovate and evolve.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to all of you, our staff, volunteers, partners, and donors. Your unwavering support fuels the light within our organization, enabling it to shine even brighter for those we serve.

Warm regards,

Alfred Jean-Baptiste
Executive Director



A Word from our Board Chair

It is my privilege to address you as Chair of the Board of Directors at the Centre for Community Learning & Development. Over the past year, our organization has continued to build on its legacy of fostering innovation, inclusion, and resilience.

Our journey is guided by core values that define who we are:

- **Adaptive:** Embracing change and innovation to meet the evolving needs of our community.
- **Accessible:** Ensuring our programs and services are inclusive and available to all.
- **Collaborative:** Building partnerships and fostering connections that strengthen our collective impact.

This year, as the Board sets a new strategic direction for the future, we have also reimagined our Vision and Mission to better reflect our aspirations.

Our new Vision, **Stronger Communities Together**, emphasizes our dedication to collective growth and resilience.

Meanwhile, our Mission has evolved to **Facilitating Community Connections Through Innovative Learning**.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our Board of Directors for their unwavering dedication and hard work over the last year.

It was a pleasure this year to welcome Karen Villanueva onto to the Board, which allows us to utilize her expertise and knowledge of the organization based on her previous role as Deputy Executive Director for CL&D. I would also like to sincerely thank Dr. Nita Chhinzer for all that she has done over the past 5 years on the Board of CL&D as she steps down. Her expertise, support and enthusiasm has helped steer the direction for CL&D and her contributions will be missed.

This year, we have also moved as a Board to a Generative Governance Model, a model that focuses on creating and nurturing conditions for innovation, creativity, and adaptability within organizations or communities. Unlike traditional governance models, which often emphasize control, compliance, and hierarchical decision-making, generative governance aims to foster participation, collaboration, and the emergence of novel ideas and solutions.

As we look ahead, CL&D remains committed to creating **Stronger Communities Together** through innovative learning and collaboration. Thank you all for your continued support and partnership in this important work.

Bryan Duarte
Chair, Board of Directors

Recognition & Awards

City of Toronto Award : We are the proud recipients of the Constance E. Hamilton Award for Women’s Equality. The award was announced at the City of Toronto’s Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards in December of 2023. It recognizes our work supporting and engaging women-identifying participants through our initiatives.



Program Overview

The underlying goal of all programs is to amplify the voices of those who are facing systemic barriers and oppression through capacity building.

We have three main programming areas:

- **Training***
 - Immigrant Women Integration Program (IWIP)
 - Academic Upskilling (AU)
- **Social Enterprises**
 - Regent Park Sewing Studio, in partnership with OCAD University and DESIGNwith
 - Clear Language and Design (CLAD)
- **Civic Engagement**
 - Community courses in partnership with renowned academic institutions
 - Grassroot supports
 - Seasonal and occasional community events (e.g. Bazaar, Fashion Show)

56

learners supported through Employment Ontario: Literacy & Basic Skills trainings**

**Our two training programs are supported by Employment Ontario*

***This statistic reflects participants during our fiscal year from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.*



Immigrant Women Integration Program

The Immigrant Women Integration Program (IWIP) is a leadership training program for newcomer and immigrant women interested in working within the social service sector. This civic leadership opportunity promotes engagement, expands career and academic pathways, fosters a sense of belonging, facilitates access to programs and services, and contributes to building community. The program provides wrap-around supports such as childcare and transportation subsidies to support participants.

This full-time program welcomes two cohorts each academic year. It features hybrid classroom instruction, field trips, and placements. There are 13 certificate or micro-credential opportunities over the duration of the program. The curriculum boasts an 85% satisfaction rating in its offerings. These include courses such as Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR), case management, grant writing, and anti-oppression & transformative justice.

Thank you to program funders: City of Toronto, United Way Greater Toronto, and Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development





2023-24 IWIP Highlights

The statistics below refer to the academic year from September 2023 to June 2024.

18

program
graduates

1200

hours of placement
completed by trainees

13

collaborative research
project proposals developed

83%

noted an increase in
professional connections
& employment readiness

100%

noted an increase in
communication and
presentation skills

92%

noted an increase in self-
confidence and community
involvement



Virtual Reality

In the past year, we have been piloting the integration of Virtual Reality (VR) into our programs, beginning with IWIP. This exciting new tool increases opportunities for trainees to apply and practise the skills they are developing. For example, they can put on a headset and practise their presentation skills in a simulated auditorium with direct feedback on their performance. With virtual reality, they have unlimited tries to perfect their skills and boost their confidence.



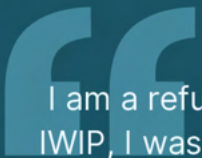
When entering the program, what interested me was that it's for immigrant women. I felt I fit in because I was going to associate with people who knew my situation, who had lived it and was looking forward to getting help.

I have learnt, not just to navigate the Canadian system but also to help others navigate it. I have learnt how to approach and address people from diverse cultural backgrounds with respect and dignity. Thanks to the program, I can now confidently search for a job.

IWIP has taught me that anytime I am outside my house, I am part of the community. I am more hands-on in the community and offer my free time and resources to help.

Recently, I got a job as a Housing and Tenant Support Worker at a community housing organization, and in this position I support previously unhoused individuals and families in securing and maintaining housing.

- Phirdaus, 2024 IWIP Graduate



I am a refugee in Canada. Around the time I applied for IWIP, I was homeless and sleeping on the street. I felt so alone, frightened, and completely hopeless.

The program has enabled me to acquire relevant skills that have greatly helped me do my work seamlessly. The team at CL&D have been great mentors and helped me get my first job in Canada. I am so grateful for all the support I got from IWIP.

I am currently working as a Case Worker at Impakt Foundation, all thanks to the skills I acquired through IWIP. I have been able to confidently apply my lived experience into the work I do, helping immigrants find a community and resources to achieve their goals.

I would 100% recommend this program to everyone.

- Brendah, 2024 IWIP Graduate





Academic Upskilling & Digital Foundations

Academic Upskilling (AU) is a lifelong learning program for adults improving their writing, numeracy, communications, and digital technology skills. Participants choose one of five goal paths: secondary school credit, post-secondary education, apprenticeship, employment, or independence. The program is delivered through a mix of in-person and virtual classroom instruction, group work, independent study, and personalized one-on-one academic mentorship. It spans the entire academic year, with the flexibility for learners to extend their participation based on individual needs.

With the rising need for digital training, we continue to emphasize our **AU Digital Foundations** course. It covers topics such as web browsers, video conferencing, social media, and cybersecurity. 2023-24 was the second academic year that participants have the option to take Digital Foundations as a standalone course or as part of AU.

The statistics below refer to the academic year from September 2023 to June 2024.

9

AU graduates

100%

strongly recommend AU

3

AU volunteers



Digital Technology Access

To guarantee all trainees have access to the tools needed to succeed in our programs, we offer laptop loans and an internet access subsidy to all participants. With our expanding virtual and hybrid programming, we continue to increase access to technology and digital training to provide essential skills needed in this growing digital world.

Thank you to program funder: Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development



I am a Salvadorean immigrant woman who arrived in Canada in 2010 with a background in Public Relations. I decided to join AU because I wanted to improve my reading, computer, math and writing skills. I love how this program is a pathway to post-secondary education and how through personalized assessments the instructors identify your strengths and areas for growth.

After completing the AU program, I boosted my confidence and knowledge that took me to the next level. I have been accepted at George Brown College into the Social Services program. I am beyond grateful for the Toronto Centre of Learning and Development.

Thank you, Joseph, AU instructor, for your unwavering support and guidance. CL&D is a place where success and wellbeing of the learners is a priority.

- Rhina, 2024 AU Graduate



My journey in CL&D was great, I appreciate your excellent work. This is an important part of my whole life.

After I was laid off in August 2022, I could not find a job. I found I couldn't tell my story to someone else because of my English and I didn't know what I was supposed to do.

I thought the Academic Upskilling program would help me improve my situation, and I have learned a new mindset and language of art. The instructor and the volunteer helped me to overcome most issues of English.

I have gained some listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Also Coursera free courses give me a great opportunity to increase my new skills. Writing down and speaking out a story about myself helped me to stand out.

- Mike, 2024 AU Graduate





Youth Engagement

This year we hosted two youth camps which supported **20** youth from **6** different communities throughout Toronto, boasting a **92%** satisfaction rate.

Youth Upcycling Program

In March 2024, we hosted a week-long upcycling program for youth. They learned about sustainable fashion through lectures from industry experts and workshops with the Regent Park Sewing Studio. They also learned about diverse types of textiles and their history through a visit to the Textile Museum of Canada. The youth connected with each other and with the sewing studio instructors, exchanging knowledge, skills, and culture.

This program was funded by our partner, Youth Empowering Parents.

“It was very healing to be able to learn and work in a judgement free environment and develop a new valuable skill. - **Sydney, Youth Upcycling Camp Participant**

Summer Newcomer Youth Camp

We engaged with a group of newcomer youth during the summer, with the overarching goal of integration and empowerment. Over two weeks, participants engaged in activities focused on gaining awareness of resources within the city. They explored civic engagement initiatives, experienced indoor and outdoor spaces, and built community connections, all lead by a local youth as a Camp Lead.



This program was partially supported by Canada Summer Jobs.



Regent Park Sewing Studio

The **Regent Park Sewing Studio (RPSS)** began in 2014 to provide space for newcomer women to connect with each other, expand their skills, and generate income. The group has been growing steadily ever since. It has become a go-to in the neighbourhood for free community classes, the creation of unique pieces, and repair clinics.

We are proud to report that RPSS has taken big strides toward becoming an independent social enterprise. A key in this journey has been our long-time partnership with **DESIGNwith**, an innovation lab with OCAD University. The partnership includes co-design and co-production of unique products made from upcycled materials.

The statistics below refer to the academic year from September 2023 to June 2024.

100

sewing program
graduates

6

corporate clients

100+

pieces repurposed & upcycled
into something new



6

RPSS members hired
at DESIGNwith

2

RPSS members hired at the
Regent Park Community Centre

4

RPSS members hired at
[Handwork Studio](#)

Thank you to program funders: TD Bank, Scotiabank, Ontario Trillium Foundation



Clear Language and Design

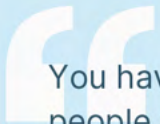
Clear Language and Design is our Centre's editing and training service. We help organizations communicate more clearly with ordinary people.

The International Standards Organization defines plain language this way:

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

- **find what they need**
- **understand what they find, and**
- **use that information.**

Information that is not written clearly is a barrier for people who are learning English or upgrading their reading and writing skills. It is an additional barrier for people who are marginalized by racism, poverty, and other forms of systemic discrimination.



You have put in simple, understandable terms a policy morass that can be challenging for people who have no contact with social assistance recipients ... You have made a very powerful argument for the changes needed with clear stories that bring the points home.

- **Barbara Neuwelt, Canadian Mental Health Association**

This year, Clear Language and Design worked with **12** organizations on more than **20** writing projects. Our clients included:

- Canadian Alliance of Physiotherapy Regulators
- Canadian Centre for Accreditation
- Canadian Human Rights Tribunal
- College of Operational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- Health Canada
- Open Policy Ontario

We also provided training and individual coaching to staff at Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada Refugee Appeals Division, Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, College of Physiotherapists of Ontario, and Métis Nation of Ontario.



Community Connections & Partnerships

Each year, we support our community beyond our core programming through diverse partnerships. **Here are some of the initiatives we have collaborate on:**

Cultural Bazaar 2024

Partners: City of Toronto, Mothers of Peace, The Daniels Corporation, Arthubs, Sam's Food Stores, Toronto Community Housing

The annual outdoor summer market is a platform for local businesses to grow brand awareness, for neighbours to connect, and for local organizations to share their work, all while celebrating the Regent Park community. Each year over 2,500 people attend the Bazaar. In 2023-2024, over 50 vendors participated in the market with 90% reporting they are interested in returning next year.

Regent Park Fashion Show 2024

Partners: Mothers of Peace, Arthubs, Tridel, The Daniels Corporation

This annual community-driven tradition is a collaboration between the Regent Park Sewing Studio and the Regent Park community. Residents play central roles in all components of the show. Months of preparation begin with the creation of custom pieces for models and finish in a fashion show that highlights community talent. The 2024 show welcomed almost 100 attendees. All creations are now available for sale [online](#), with 70% of the proceeds going back directly to the sewists. The remaining 30% goes to the Sewing Studio to maintain the group's equipment and support weekly sewing classes.

“The process of creating the garments was both challenging and fulfilling. I particularly enjoyed experimenting with different fabrics and techniques, which allowed me to push my creative boundaries. This experience taught me a lot about the importance of attention to detail and the value of perseverance in the design process.”

- Sarah, Regent Park Fashion Show Co-Director



K4C Knowledge for Change Tkaronto Hub

Partners: Knowledge Equity Lab University of Toronto Scarborough, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education University of Toronto, Ontario Council for International Cooperation

We are proud to be co-founders of the K4C Tkaronto Hub since 2019. The hub enables transformative change by providing accessible community-based research opportunities for students, educators, academics, and community development practitioners. The initiative is part of a global K4C consortium.

Public Speaking & Presentation Community Course

Partner: George Brown College

Public Speaking & Presentation gives participants the communication skills and confidence needed to express their viewpoints. By the end of this 8-week course, participants feel more comfortable and equipped to voice their concerns and proposals in meeting settings. Ten community members graduated from this course.

Activating Community Leadership

Partner: Urban Studies Program at University of Toronto

This 9-week course supports participants from Regent Park, Moss Park and St. James Town in gaining skills and knowledge to advocate for their communities while connecting with their neighbours. Course instruction includes weekly guest speakers and discussions on issues like affordable housing, community safety, and municipal policy. The course was most recently offered in the fall of 2023 and 2024, supporting over 30 participants.



CL&D are tireless advocates for their neighbourhood and its residents. They work every day to improve the quality of life within Regent Park and surrounding communities and to ensure that current resident voices, needs, and desires are at the centre of community development planning. Through my work with CL&D, I have learned a tremendous amount about Regent Park, community organizing and development, the potential for university-community partnerships, and many other things. I look forward to continuing to find new ways to work with CL&D and deepen our partnership over the years to come.

- David Roberts, Director of the Urban Studies Program, University of Toronto

The Power of Community Engagement at International Women’s Day

Partners: World Urban Pavilion in Regent Park, Urban Economy Forum, The Daniels Corporation, UN Habitat

This year, we had the pleasure of hosting a panel discussion with three powerful women including Rafia of the Regent Park Sewing Studio, Nora, an alumna of the Immigrant Women Integration Program, and Nimo, a local activist with Mothers of Peace. The panel was part of a celebration for International Women’s Day at the World Urban Pavilion.



Mothers of Peace Regent Park

Community Highlight

Mothers of Peace (MoP) is a grassroots group aiming to increase community safety and wellbeing in Regent Park. CL&D has been supporting and collaborating with the group since its creation in 2015. We have worked together on initiatives like the Cultural Bazaar, Healing the Leaders, Annual Walk Against Gun Violence, backpack giveaways, yoga classes, and healing circles.

Currently, the group is dedicated to their **Healing Circles for Mothers Who Lost Their Sons to Gun Violence**. This initiative focuses on supporting mothers through trauma- informed care, therapist support, healing trips, and support networks.

A special thank you to Louis March, a longtime supporter of the group and a tireless advocate for stopping gun violence, who is no longer with us.

22

healing circle participants

20+

hours of group therapy

3

healing trips taken

32

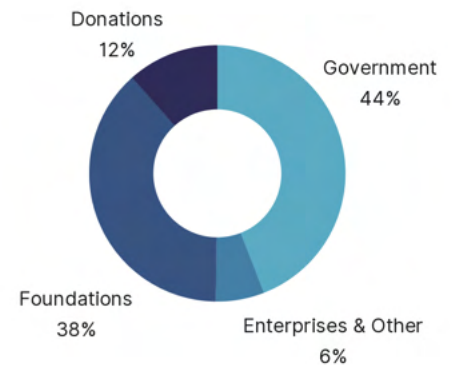
hours of mental health first aid training



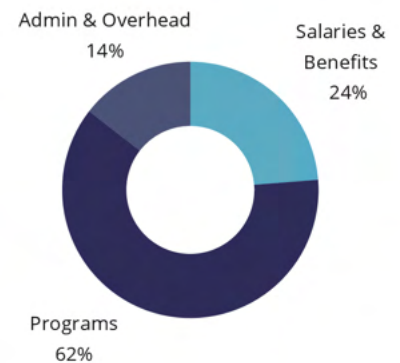
Statement of Operations

Fiscal Year of April 1st to March 31st

Income	2024	2023
Government	\$520,537	\$278,720
Foundations	\$450,980	\$583,771
Donations	\$136,635	\$273,344
Productive Enterprises & Other	\$72,239	\$87,552
TOTAL	\$1,180,391	\$1,223,287



Expenses	2024	2023
Salaries & Benefits	\$281,044	\$309,048
Program Expenses	\$731,153	\$833,762
Admin & Overhead	\$171,425	\$175,883
TOTAL	\$1,183,622	\$1,318,693



Expenditures over Revenue **(\$3,231)** **(\$95,306)**

Board of Directors

- Bryan Duarte, Board Chair
- Nita Chhinzer, Vice Chair
- Ilan Male, Communications Officer
- Fiona Umoh, Treasurer
- Karen Villanueva, Director
- Alfred Jean-Baptiste, Ex-Officio





Planning for the Future at CL&D

Despite the big changes as a result of the pandemic, we are happy to report we have been able to stay on track with our 2019-2024 strategic priorities.

- Each year we established 4 new community partnership across Regent Park and the surrounding neighbourhoods
- More than 30 skilled leaders and community champions have emerged from our programs since 2019
- And the unemployment rate within our service areas has dropped by 2%

We begin 2025 with a new set of strategic priorities for CL&D. Our Board set a new 3-year strategic plan, focusing on leveraging the Centre's capacity in three areas:

Impact Measurement

Partnership Growth

Public Visibility

At CL&D we believe that there are many ways to achieve success. We sit individually with our participants to develop their goal path. In the new strategic plan, we are aiming to measure success based on participants' goals as well as pre-identified factors, such as:

- **Decrease in isolation among newcomers**
- **Percentage of individuals moving from survival jobs to career paths**
- **Increase in individual self-confidence**

We are aiming to **increase employment partnerships** by two new partners per year. We will be seeking partnerships within the tech industry, because **digital technology** is one of our main focuses. These collaborations will enable our participants to enter the job market more easily and to integrate technology into their desired career path.



Get Involved



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

Volunteer

We welcome volunteers to support our programming and community events. You could mentor in the Immigrant Women Integration Program. You could tutor in Academic Upskilling. Or you might volunteer with events like the Cultural Bazaar. Perhaps you are a great candidate for our Board of Directors. There are many ways to help us grow!

Community Builders Monthly Giving Program

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

Targeted Support

In the coming year, we are especially looking for donations of gently used digital equipment to expand our digital training program. Another area where we need targeted help is with sewing machines and materials to support the growing Regent Park Sewing Studio.

To discuss these and many other opportunities, contact us at info@tccltd.org or **647-492-2462**.

To give, please visit www.tccltd.org/donate.



Partners & Friends

Support received in the period of November 1st, 2023 to October 31st, 2024

Sustaining (\$50,000+)

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

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

Fidelity Investments, McConnell Foundation

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

Antonio and Nicolette Di Felice, The Daniels Corporation, Toronto Community Housing, Government of Canada Employment and Social Development

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

Elizabeth Cooke Endowment Fund, Scarball, Janet Campbell, Tridel

Advocate (Under \$1,000)

Tishan and Nicole Mills Foundation of Toronto Foundation, Rob Norquay, David Olds, Andrew Szonyi, Doug and Stephanie Clark, Zara Harris – Varicent, Christine Hepburn of Clear Concept Inc, Richard Sugarman, Patrick Chen, Christine Hughes, PMP Foundation at Toronto Foundation, Cause Fund Toronto by Unite for Change, Clayton Gyotoku Fund, Patricia Fleming, Sandy Iverson, Adriana Silva, Susan Mitchell, Maureen Ballentine, Isabelle Lian, Hydro One Donors, Microsoft Rewards/Give with Bing

Community Builders (Monthly Giving Program)

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

Sustaining Funders



Corporate Partners



Microsoft

Grow with Google

Foundation Partners



Affiliate Partners



Education & Community Partners

