

# TOGETHER PROJECT

## 2023 IMPACT REPORT

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# 2023 AT A GLANCE

## Letter From Our Co-Directors



This was a year of significant learning for Together Project.

We've continued working with our partners across Canada to connect refugee newcomers with volunteers, which has been instructive for how our Welcome Group Program can map onto new and different communities, like Ukrainians fleeing conflict in their home country. We've also had the opportunity to share what we've learned with diverse audiences, and likewise heard feedback from stakeholders across Canada.

Behind the scenes, the Together Project team has been hard at work improving the initiative from within. Staff and Steering Committee members collaborated to deepen our knowledge of the volunteer experience, leading to the development of new tools and roles for the initiative, and built strategies for impactful growth in the coming years.

We want to give our deepest thanks to the newcomers and volunteers in the Together Project community, and to our funders and partners who make our work possible. Onward to 2024!

- Andrew Luszyk & Anna Hill

### EXPANDING OUR COMMUNITY

The Welcome Group Program was able to include Ukrainian arrivals as participants in 2023. Working closely with ACCES Employment and COSTI, Together Project matched nearly a dozen Ukrainian households with Welcome Groups across Ontario and prepared a guide for volunteers supporting them.

### NEW TEAM MEMBER

Welcome Group volunteer Nasima Sayar joined us in 2023 as a Match Coordinator, supporting matches with Afghan families.



### NEW STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER

Our Steering Committee welcomed Farah Kurji, Senior Manager, Social Impact, Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship at TD Bank.



# WELCOME GROUP PROGRAM SNAPSHOT



**320** Newcomers   **253** Volunteers   **85** Matches

Housing has continued to rise as a priority for the newcomer participants joining the Program this year; this was true across Ontario, and for our partner DIVERSEcity in Surrey, British Columbia as well. We prepared a housing support guide in order to empower our volunteers to better support households facing difficulties finding affordable housing.

Internally, our Programs team and Steering Committee led a program analysis working group through the spring of 2023 to meet and co-create with a range of volunteer participants in the Program. This work has led to the development of a new role in the Match Coordinator, leveraging the cultural and linguistic capacity of our volunteer community to better support matches. We also redesigned some of the tools and processes to allow for more scalable delivery of the Program, as we look ahead to new partnerships and opportunities in the coming years.

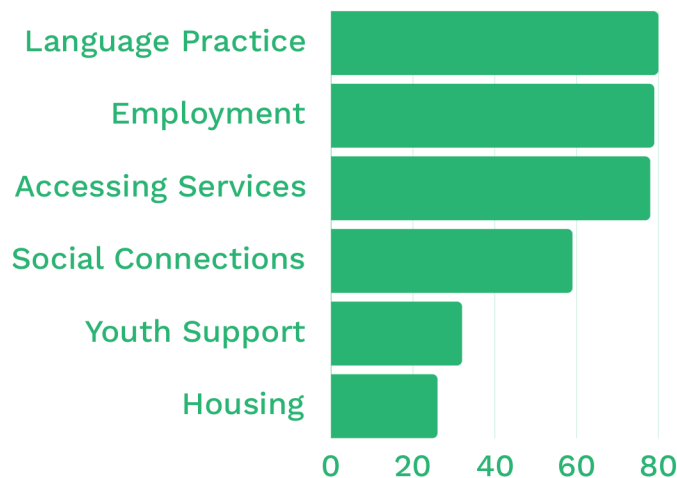
Our multi-stakeholder evaluation project entered its third and final year in 2023, and our evaluation partners at Western University have been able to share some promising preliminary results about the Program and its impact, some of which are shared below. We're looking forward to the final report in the spring of 2024!

# NEWCOMER PARTICIPANTS

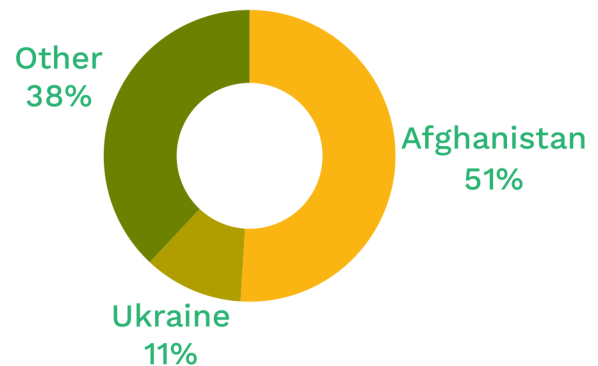


“They helped me a lot, with translating, and telling me that everything was going to be okay. And when I was feeling sick, I felt better with their support, because they would say, ‘You’ll feel better soon!’ It made me happy.”  
- Manuela, Newcomer Program Participant

## Match Priorities



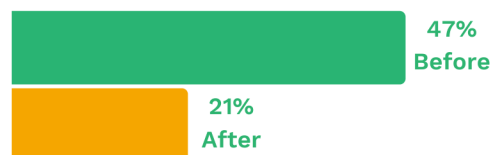
## Countries of Origin



## Tracking Outcomes

We track how newcomers report feeling before, during, and after their participation in the Program. Here are some findings from our most recent evaluation.

“I feel socially isolated.”



“I feel that I’m making integration progress.”



“I feel that I have made social connections in my community.”







# OUR VOLUNTEERS

Of the **253** volunteers who participated in our program in 2023:

- **82%** spoke a language other than English or French - 33 languages in all
- **38%** have first or secondhand experience as a newcomer
- **21%** are 25 years old or younger

Here are some of the things our volunteers shared about their experience with us this year:

“While we didn’t all know each other at first, now we have a real sense of camaraderie together. I feel like we will just be friends with them forever.”  
- Marilou



“I had to restart life here, and that, by itself, can feel like a monumental task. But I wanted to encourage others to have fun with it, see it as an opportunity to create who you are, because this is the opportunity that’s given to us here. Together, we can make it.” - Nader

“I’m grateful for Together Project for giving me this opportunity to share my skills, to share my emotions, to be able to get in touch with my inner self, and the empathetic side of me that really always wants to help someone, being an immigrant myself. It’s one of the best things to ever happen to me.” - Marwa



# COMMUNITY



“In the end, I accomplished both of my aims: serving the community and, at the same time, getting a job in my field out of it!”

- Semhar Musael, Welcome Group Volunteer and Peer Navigator at Women’s College Hospital’s Crossroads Clinic

## EVENTS

- In-person gatherings took place at the Evergreen Brick Works, High Park Nature Centre, and Colonel Samuel Smith Park with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Thanks to all who joined us!



At the Evergreen Brick Works with Welcome Group volunteers and newcomers

## RESEARCH

- We were privileged to share preliminary findings from our multi-year evaluation project at the 2023 Pathways to Prosperity Annual National Conference in Montreal, alongside Dr. Alina Sutter from Western University.
- We’re looking forward to being able to share the final report in 2024, and hopefully embark on new research projects soon after!



Ahmed presenting about impact measurement at the WES Youth in Design program

## HIGHLIGHTS

- With World Education Services and other refugee-serving organizations, we participated in “Youth in Design,” a 3-month co-design program with refugee youth.
- We launched #RefugeeCityBuilders, a social media campaign to highlight refugees who have made a significant contribution to their new communities.
- We were invited to present on the importance of volunteer social support to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health as part of their Immigration and Refugee Mental Health Project.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Together Project, a MakeWay Charitable Society initiative, would like to thank our funders, partners, and program participants for helping us build more inclusive and welcoming communities.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Leith Bishop, Chair  
Mohammed Ahmed  
Hani Bashir  
Kate Bate  
Farah Kurji  
Hanen Nanaa  
Shadi Shami

## ADVISORS

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## PROGRAM PARTNERS



## FUNDING PARTNERS



 @Together.Hello  @Together\_Hello  @TogetherProject  @together\_project  @Together\_Hello