

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

A review of activities from the 2018-2019 fiscal year



Management Report

Highlights for 2018-2019

The 2018-19 year saw Working Skills Centre achieve significant milestones and set new standards of excellence in WSC's unique program delivery to our diverse and frequently disadvantaged clients. This was only possible with a core team of selflessly committed staff, dedicated volunteers, and the support of our capable Board of Directors. The continued success of both WSC as an organization and our many clients is a testament to your efforts and I sincerely thank all of you on their behalf.

In 2018, Working Skills Centre celebrated its 40th Anniversary. The entire year was an opportunity to reflect on the history and legacy of the organization and to acknowledge how grateful we are to stand on the shoulders of those who came before us and to carry their vision and mission forward. The climax was a special celebratory event in conjunction with the 2017-18 AGM, held at the Toronto Botanical Garden and attended by 100 staff, volunteers, members, elected representatives and guests. Sincere congratulatory messages were received from the leaders of all levels of government.



At the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) Annual Meeting, Working Skills Centre received an OCASI Social Justice Awards award, in recognition for our exceptional service to disadvantaged populations.

WSC's core business activities during the 2018-19 year demonstrated our ongoing commitment to serving the community and helping people in need. WSC's focus on enabling disadvantaged Canadians and newcomers to achieve financial self-sufficiency through meaningful employment formed the bulk of our development programs.

The new pilot program "Career Launch In Canada Knowledge & Skills" (CLICKS) wrapped up in March 2019. The program, aimed at refugees and vulnerable newcomers, was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. The innovative format of this program was designed and developed by Working Skills Centre based on our extensive experience in experiential learning and skills training leading to long-term employment. The program was unique in Canada. The number of inquiries as well as successful employment outcomes surpassed expectations. In spite of this success, there was no provincial or federal funding available to continue the CLICKS Program into 2019-20.

In addition, the City of Toronto funded programs for Purchase of Employment Services (POES) produced exceptional results, with additional program seats being awarded based on our track record of success.

Details of the success rates for all of WSC's Training and Employment Programs are provided in the body of this Annual Report. WSC management continues to actively solicit feedback and input from both employers and past graduates to improve our programs and ensure that graduates have the skills that are needed in today's competitive job market.

The Seniors Empowering Seniors for Community Engagement program, funded by the federal New Horizons for Seniors Program (Service Canada), was renewed for another year and focuses on enabling seniors to volunteer and share their depth of knowledge and skills with organizations that are in need of assistance.

Once again I would like to thank all WSC volunteers & members, our Board of Directors and the extremely dedicated team of staff professionals at WSC. We remain fully committed to and focused on building on the success and legacy of those who came before us and to a stronger more resilient organization when we pass the torch to others.

*Marina Nikova, Executive Director
November, 2019*

Treasurer's Report

Financial information has been extracted from the Audited Financial Statement as @ March 31, 2019 (David Burkes, CA)

Assets & Liabilities

CURRENT ASSET

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>
Cash	68,732	54,701
Accounts Receivable	23,302	94,731
Grant Contributions Receivable	8,953	12,672
HST Recoverable	12,002	6,854
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	53,102	10,570
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	166,091	179,528
Equipment/ Capital Assets	79,836	106,536
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	\$ 245,927	\$ 286,064

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Bank Advances	0	0
A/P & Accrued Liabilities	28,552	21,484
Differed Revenue	1,200	400
Differed Operating Grants	28,802	111,782
Differed Contributions related to Capital Assets	74,775	96,422
Unrestricted Net Assets	112,598	55,976
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	\$ 245,927	\$ 286,064

Financial Position

Statement of Operations

REVENUE

Government/ Foundation Contributions	412,794	250,039
TESS Skills Training & Employment Services	282,666	305,098
TESS Skills Training Diploma & Certificate Programs	77,749	86,024
Fundraising, Donations and other Income	17,676	24,024
Donation-in-Kind	8,177	12,572
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	\$ 799,062	\$ 677,757

EXPENSES

Salaries	474,741	361,766
Employee Benefits	32,614	28,590
Occupancy Costs	113,064	108,975
Outreach/ Marketing	1,731	81
Bank Charges & Internet	4,084	6,479
Computer Software, Supplies & Technical Services	13,804	6,473
Equipment Leasing & Maintenance	11,939	18,329
Insurance	12,082	17,479
Office Supplies	18,569	4,985
Professional Fees	10,779	7,349
Program Resource Materials	19,941	18,370
Telephone	3,497	4,577
Travel & Participant Expenses	6,124	1,356
Fundraising Expenses	6,241	0
Donation-in-Kind	8,177	12,572
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	\$ 737,387	\$ 597,381

Revenue over Expenses Operations

61,675	80,376
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Amortization

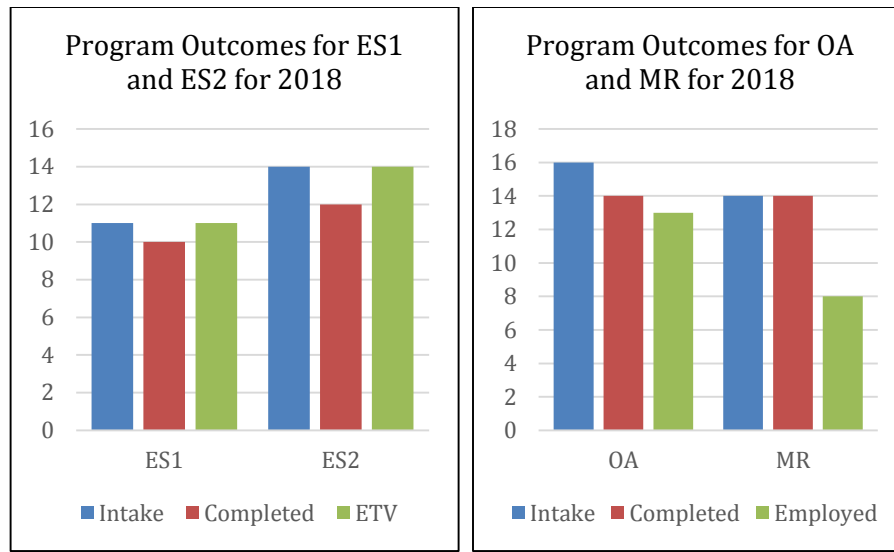
(5,053)	(7,599)
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Net Expenses over Revenue

\$ 56,662	\$ 72,777
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Employment Services

Program Outcomes for ES-1, ES-2, OA and MR for 2018;



*ETV – Employed, Training, Volunteering.

ES – Essential Skills

OA – Office Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing

MR – Medical Receptionist

2018	ES1	ES2	OA1	MR
Intake	11	14	16	14
Completed	10	12	14	14
Success %	90%	100%	93%	57%
End of Post-Program	Sept 2018	May 2019	Mar 2019	Feb 2020

Starting 2019, the primary goal of our Employment Services department was to continue increasing the number of jobs obtained by graduates from the Academy of Computer and Employment Skills and keep attrition under control to ensure a good graduation rate.

Programs starting in 2019

Office Administration and Medical Reception Programs have just completed the CORE program piece and are in the process of completing their placements.

- *OA 1 – Ended their program in September and are currently in post program
- *MR – Ended their program in October and are currently in post program
- *ES 2 – started on October 7, 2019 with 18 students and is currently in progress.
- *OA 2 – starts in November 19, 2019.
- *ES 3 – starts in December 2, 2019.

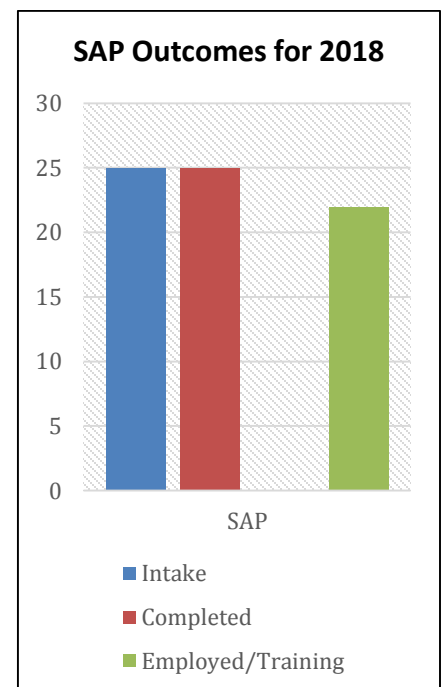
The Core Program for the first group of Essential Skills Program finished in March. In addition we started the second cohort of Essential Skills Program in October. We are currently the process of intakes for Essential Skills, for

additional seats awarded by the City of Toronto for both Office Administration and Essential Skills.

For Essential Skills for Office Professionals, the success is measured not only by employment, but also by volunteering and enrollment in additional training, The Employment Services department was able to reach an overall **success rate of 100%** for the first cohort of 2019, and the post program for the second cohort will be completed in May 2020.

SAP Program

SAP continues to be an extremely successful program. The Success rate for 2018 was over 90%. As a result the number of seats allocated to WSC was almost doubled for 2019. It is now under the care of the Employment Services department and they have already started to work with the 2019 cohorts.



Challenges

- Lack of subsidized daycare places, transportation costs, and housing continued to be barriers for participants throughout the program. WSC saw a significant increase in letters of support written on behalf of participants.
- Keeping participants motivated to continue coming after placement. Increased number of clients with multiple barriers to employment, such as mental health issues and emotional distress

Strategies

Investigate alternative job search modules and methodology

- Researched additional partnerships with Employment Ontario Agencies to increase graduates' employment opportunities and explore the use of available incentives. We are hoping to create new partnerships between the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020 that will increase employment possibilities for our clients.
- Created a new partnership with Volunteer Canada to organize events for graduates, such as a mock interview event on August 7th where UBS Financial employers came for the entire day and practice mock interview strategies with our clients. The results were very promising and Volunteer Canada decided to add WSC to their database for future annual opportunities.

New staffing/HR strategies to promote increased success rates:

- Working towards growing the Employment Services department to provide timely and cost efficient services to both students and alumni
- Work on updating and maintaining the existing employer database to streamline partnership and processes. One of the best solutions would be to have a Job Developer on staff to concentrate only on liaising with employers and partnership agencies and follow up on employment outcomes

New strategies to promote job maintenance/job retention:

- To enhance support during the placement phase we created a Friday placement sharing circle class at WSC, where the graduates can come and discuss their placement and start job applications before the ending of their placement.
- More employer visits are being conducted to ensure that the workplace is in line with the students' studies and meets the participants' learning goals and workplace safety guidelines.
- We have designed and are implementing a new pre-placement learning contract that will outline clear on-the-job learning goals and expectations for both graduate and employer.

Career Launch in Canada Knowledge and Skills (CLICKS) Program

The Career Launch in Canada knowledge and Skills (CLICKS) Program was funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for the period January 2018 to March 2019. The goal of this funding stream was to explore innovative strategies to promote the economic integration of refugees and vulnerable newcomers.

Through this project, 60 vulnerable refugee and newcomer clients were able to gain access to a skills training program that was a unique blend of classroom learning and experiential learning in a simulated workplace environment. The model delivered results that exceeded our expectations and those of our funder.

Recruitment and Intake

Knowledge of the program spread through word of mouth and we continued to receive a large number of applicants throughout the program delivery period. This attested to the high demand for a program of this nature.

Vocational Assessment and Service Planning

Participants went through a comprehensive assessment process on the basis of which it was possible to develop a realistic service planning. The assessment process included an intake interview, skills assessment and Common Assessment Process interview. According to many participants the guidance provided in the service planning stage made a crucial difference in helping them along the shortest and most meaningful route to employment.

12-week Program

Five cohorts of 12-15 participants were each taken through a 12-week training program. Each participant's program was customized to leverage his or her knowledge base and focus on areas of skill that would be strategic for the labour market in Canada.

The skills training was divided into four streams with overlapping modules in Word, Excel, Business Communication and Reception and sector specific modules in SAP, Bookkeeping, Quickbooks, Medical Terminology and Medical Office Procedures.

Experiential learning was an important part of the program with workplace simulations in some modules that provided the equivalent of Canadian work experience for vulnerable newcomers:

- All participants researched, designed and delivered a presentation on a topic related to occupational health and safety
- Participants attending the SAP module completed a project in simulated work environment where they assumed roles based on their strengths, participated in team meetings and had to meet regular deadlines.
- Participants attending the reception and community project modules completed practical work in a real work environment at WSC.

Feedback from clients was that the experiential learning content and workplace simulations were especially important in their journey to employment. They could reflect the experience on their resumes, and present themselves with confidence in the job search phase. Many participants said that upon being hired, the experience gained during the program enabled them to hit the ground running and succeed on the job.

Employment support was provided for a period of 8 months after completion of the 12-week program.

Key Project Achievements and Deliverables

- ★ The popularity of the program surpassed our expectations. The main challenge has been the large number of applications. The interest in the CLICKS program exceeded the number of clients we could serve as per our funding agreement.
- ★ An employment success rate of 74% was achieved. This was an impressive achievement given that the majority of clients were newcomers and refugees facing multiple barriers to employment.
- ★ Our target for employment commensurate with the career goal was 15. However, our achievement was more than double with 34 clients finding employment commensurate with their career goal.
- ★ The strong employment outcomes listed above attest to the success of the CLICKS program model. It provides evidence that the combination of a customized study plan and experiential learning can

provide an expedited route to employment for vulnerable refugees and newcomers. The format of the program addresses the key challenges faced by newcomers: 1. Skills upgrading; 2. Canadian work experience and references; 3. Understanding of HR policies; and 4. Civic engagement vs. isolation.



Clicks Graduation

A special graduation ceremony was held on March 20, 2019, attended by 36 graduates. They shared their success stories and described how the CLICKS program had helped them achieve their employment goals and integrate into the community in Ontario.



I joined the Clicks program where I learned a lot of things like Office Procedures, Excel, Word, Bookkeeping, Quickbooks etc. These courses actually helped me. I remember in one of my interviews I was told to make a flyer. I wonder what would have happened if I hadn't studied here...in fact I was offered a job as their program coordinator.

Vincent Mmeke, CLICKS Graduate



I am taking this opportunity of thanking all of you in my journey to achieve my career goal. I have been hired as an office assistant! You were all very supportive in every aspect.

Gunjan Upadhyay, CLICKS Graduate

Settlement Services 2018-2019

Newcomer Settlement Program

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, (formerly the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration) through the Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) funded the following settlement activities:

- One-on-one settlement assistance to newcomers including: needs assessment, goal setting and service planning; assistance with applying for government services; and information and referral to other community and government services.
- Weekly information sessions on WSC's services and community resources
- Settlement-related group sessions on topics such as financial literacy, communication in the workplace, coping with stress, tenants' rights, employee rights immigration law, continuous learning resources, life skills and caring for the environment.

Services were delivered by a team of three part-time settlement counsellors. Eligible clients included permanent residents, convention refugees, refugee claimants, naturalized Canadian citizens and work permit holders.

We achieved our NSP targets for 2018-2019:

- Served 481 unique clients
- Conducted 1215 one-on-one services to clients
- Held 90 settlement related workshops and group sessions with a combined attendance of 790 clients

Client feedback from interviews and surveys, indicate that WSC staff have been providing effective guidance to newcomers in relation to career and educational pathways. According to clients this guidance has been very useful in the settlement journey.

The profile of NSP clients accessing settlement services is provided below. There has been an increase in the proportion of clients with refugee status. This is a continuation of a trend that began in 2017-2018 due to an increase refugee claimants being housed in the City of Toronto. There has also been an increase in the proportion of clients accessing settlement services within the first three years of arrival in Canada. This is a positive development as it is more beneficial for clients to

access services in the early years of settlement in Canada.

NSP Client Profile

Gender – NSP Clients

Gender	% of Clients 2017-2018	% of Clients 2018-2019
Male	24%	27%
Female	74%	73%

Top Ten Countries of Origin – NSP Clients

Ranking	Country of Origin 2017-2018	Country of Origin 2018-2019
1	Nigeria	Nigeria
2	Phillipines	India
3	India	Ethiopia
4	Jamaica	Eritrea
5	Bangladesh	Uganda
6	Ethiopia	Pakistan
7	Somalia	Bangladesh
8	Pakistan	Phillippines
9	Iraq	Jamaica
10	Iran	Iran

Immigrant Status

Immigrant Status	% of Clients 2017-2018	% of Clients 2018-2019
Permanent	25%	24%
Convention	9%	7%
Refugee	19%	38%
Canadian Citizens	46%	30%
Other	1%	1%

Length of time in Canada

Age Category	% of clients 2017-2018	% of clients 2018-2019
Less than 1 year	16%	15%
1 to 3 years	18%	39%
4 to 5 years	7%	6%
Over 5 years	59%	40%

WSC Seniors Program

The project, Seniors Empowering Seniors for Community Engagement was offered from January 22, 2018 to January 28, 2019. The project was funded by the federal New Horizons for Seniors Program (Service Canada).

The goals of the project were:

- to promote volunteerism among seniors and other generations
- engage seniors in the community through the mentoring of others
- promote the social participation of seniors through organizing social café type events for seniors

The project achieved its targets for 2018-2019:

- a) 13 senior volunteers were actively engaged in planning and delivery of the project.
- b) 11 non-senior volunteers assisted in the delivery of the project.
- c) 59 seniors attended activities or received assistance from volunteers.
- d) 46 non-seniors attended activities or were mentored by project volunteers.

Activities were coordinated by a core team of senior volunteers. Several had only recently retired from work and played an important role in the mentoring of newcomers and job seekers. A total of 43 events and activities were organized.

The core team of senior project volunteers was assisted by a team of non-senior volunteers who provided administrative support. These individuals benefitted greatly from the guidance of senior volunteers and were able to enhance their portfolio of skills and experience.

Project volunteers organized events targeted at seniors including Qi Gong; workshops on memoir writing, art lessons, managing stress; and a nature hike. Seniors looking for work also attended job search presentations and benefitted from computer skills coaching.

Non-senior newcomers and job seekers benefitted from job search support group sessions, motivational

presentations by employers and successful newcomers, as well as mock interview sessions. Project volunteers also conducted communication skills coaching sessions for newcomers.

In the review of the program at the end of the funding period, project volunteers said that they themselves had benefitted from the project. They had grown their social network through their interaction with other volunteers and had found the activity of mentoring others to be very rewarding. We were pleased to receive funding for a second year beginning March 2019.



Senior volunteers discussing interview skills with job seekers.



WSC Executive Director, Marina Nikova with Minister Philomeni Tassi, Minister of Seniors and Minister Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, at a televised town hall on seniors that took place in April 2019.

List of Staff 2018-2019

Marina Nikova
Executive Director

Matilda Thevasagayam
Financial Manager

Claudia Bargellini
Employment Service Manager

Mark Trumble
Microsoft-Lead Instructor

Silva Mardirossian
Office Procedures/Reception Instructor

Ansuya Chetty
Settlement Counsellor/Coordinator

Tracy Lopes
Program Coordinator

Zumrud Guluzade
Program Coordinator

Sofia Hall
Microsoft Instructor

Tunzala Mammadova
Program Coordinator

Sonita Furmolly
Intake Coordinator

Isabel Laparra
Coordinator of Student & Alumni Support

Nawal Chowdhury
Medical Office Procedures Instructor

Mobaswar Hossain
Medical Terminology/Transcript Instructor

Shodan Nadkarni
SAP End User Project Manager

Carol Weiss
Fundraiser & Event Coordinator

Volunteers

WSC recognizes the many volunteers who so generously and willingly give of their time. You are an important part of this organization - we couldn't do it without you. On behalf of the staff of Working Skills Centre, thank you. Your contribution is greatly appreciated and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors!

Roy Malaga
Sophie Kohn Kaminsky
Rafath Ali-Khan
Dan Caffery
Victoria Gril
Rozina Khoja
Julie Gray
Lynn Wolverton
Shirin Dorafshar
Vida Arshad
Shahnaz Tabassian
Alice Bonavia

Jennifer Skalenda
Victoria Arshad
Elena Ovseannicova
Olga Chenykh
Pari Momeni
Alice Tsang
Gunjan Upadhyay
Sendil Janarthanan

Placement Students (Post-Secondary Institutions)

Chagla Tok
Mark Mesic

History and Mandate

Working Skills Centre (WSC) was established in 1978, incorporated on May 1, 1980, and received charitable status in March 2003. Originally mandated to serve immigrant women from Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities, the organization quickly expanded to serve immigrant women from any country of origin. The Letters Patent were revised in 2005 to expand the mandate to serve individuals, primarily immigrants, who are unemployed or underemployed, and to assist them to obtain skills needed to become self-sufficient. While mandated to serve a broader clientele throughout the Greater Toronto Area, the Mission Statement reflects the emphasis on programs for immigrant women:

Working Skills Centre (WSC) is an innovative, community-based, non-profit, charitable organization that empowers immigrants, primarily women. Our purpose is to prepare our clients to fully participate in Canadian society by providing education, work experience, and settlement services that ultimately lead to employment.

Location and Contact Information.

Location	2018 -2019 Directors & Officers			
Address: 55 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite # 703 Toronto, ON M4P 1G8 Phone: (416) 703-7770 Fax: (416) 703-1610 Website: www.workingskillscentre.com	Jo Anne Rabanillo Charles Dune Taiwo Omigade Tom Hatcher Mobina Rahman Shideh Dianetnejad	President Vice-President Secretary Treasurer Member at Large Member at Large	Alice Bonavia Sumera Hameed Marilyn Buentipo Dany Shehab	Member at Large Member at Large Member at Large Member at Large

Acknowledgements Working Skills Centre would like to acknowledge our 2018-2019 funders and partners.

Grants and Contributions were received from:

- City of Toronto
 - Toronto Employment and Social Services
 - Investing in Neighbourhoods
- Service Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
 - Newcomer Settlement Program
 - Economic Integration for Refugees and Vulnerable Newcomers
- Shum Vourkoutiotis Fund

And the many employers who provided work experience for our graduates, especially those who hired a graduate.

The umbrella groups who provide valuable information and lobby for systemic change on behalf of our clients:

- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Social Enterprise Toronto
- Toronto North & South LIPs

Service Delivery Partners

- Anne Johnston Health Station
- Credit Canada Debt Solutions
- Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Organization
- Institute of Leadership for Women in Ontario
- Hospice Toronto
- The Career Foundation
- Toronto Community Employment Services
- Toronto Public Library, North Toronto Branch
- Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic
- Woodgreen Community Services
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Opening Doors Project)
- West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre
- St. Stephen's Community House
- Habitat for Humanity
- Canada Human Rights International Organization
- Canadian Cancer Society
- Comprehensive Health Care Network
- Elspeth Heyworth Centre for Women
- Lumacare
- Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
- Skills for Change
- JVS
- YMCA
- MCIS Language Solutions
- UNICEF