

CULTURELINK.CA



PATHS TO SUCCESS


CultureLink
Your new Canadian life starts here.

2021 / 2022

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



Jemima Sabapathy
Chief Executive Officer



Helen Latimer
Board Chair

Letter from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

While it's no surprise that this past year was filled with challenges, it was also filled with great successes — giving us many reasons to celebrate.

In 2021-2022, we're happy to say we secured funding for a wide range of innovative new projects to enhance and expand our reach.

- With funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage's Anti-Racism Action Plan, we created our Women of Courage program. This initiative aims to promote Canada's cultural diversity by empowering racialized women to share their stories.
- The Resilient Communities Fund allowed us to better respond to unexpected pandemic-related changes, improve and enhance our technology, and provide additional staff training.
- The Service Delivery Improvement initiative helped us to conduct testing and research, as well as develop technology to deliver innovative arts programming to ensure our digital services are the best they can be.

As a leader in the settlement sector, we have always worked to be adaptable and innovative in supporting newcomers on their path to success in Canada. By continuing to strengthen our programming, our partnerships, and the expertise of our staff, we are building our organizational capacity, which ultimately creates greater successes for those who rely on our services.

We started this fiscal year by quickly securing funding for two new programs. **The Afghan Resettlement Fund** helped strengthen our Newcomer Mental Health initiatives by supporting the Afghan community as they learn to build on their strengths. Focusing on mental health and wellness, with the devastating war in Ukraine displacing thousands of people — many of whom are arriving in Canada — we were nimble in **securing funding to hire Ukrainian-speaking staff**. This allowed us to support them in meeting their unique needs, and coping with the circumstances that brought them to Canada, as well as provide them with supportive mental health counselling, all in a safe and warm environment.

As we continue to closely monitor the pandemic-related impact on our services and community, we are excited to share that we have taken the necessary steps to phase-in in-person services for our clients.

But crucially, these last few years have meant we are now far more prepared to be responsive to any changes the future may hold. As such, we are focusing our energy on creating our new strategic plan to drive us forward with a keen awareness of our very fluid environment. Our goals are in ensuring our progressive growth continues, our innovative community programs flourish and expand and those who come to us continue to embrace this vibrant city and everything that Canada stands for. We will collectively achieve this vision by providing the initial guidance newcomers need while continuing to find ways to go even further to support all aspects of settlement they need on their path to success.

Thank you to our staff members for dedicating yourselves to those who seek our services; to our volunteers for passionately devoting your time and energy; to our Board for working tirelessly to guide us with unwavering leadership; and to every newcomer to Canada who puts their trust in us.

Finally, thank you to our funders and donors. Your vital support makes our invaluable work possible and energizes us to do even more. Our mission is a shared one as we help newcomers thrive on a path which leads them to their success.

Jemima Sabapathy
Chief Executive Officer

Helen Latimer
Board Chair





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MAKING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Finding Community Becomes Second Nature

Getting outdoors and exploring the scenery Canada has to offer is a great way to help newcomers feel at one with their new home. As part of our settlement services programs, we organized several day trips last year, which harnessed the positive power of nature and brought people together in relaxed and inspiring settings.

These group hikes, to places such as Mono Cliffs Provincial Park, Earl Rowe Provincial Park and Earl Bale Park in Toronto, were the first step on the path to community for many of our newcomers, who benefitted immensely from making new local connections.

"We had amazing conversations and shared traditional foods—all the while celebrating diversity," said one trip volunteer after the Mono Cliffs park trip. **"We laughed, we ate, we sang. We were able to provide newcomer families with very special memories of their first months in Canada that will be cherished for a long time."**

With the expert help of some wonderful guides, who shared their knowledge, generosity and favourite trails, they also learned about their new local environment and its conservation.

"Thank you for this wonderful trip because I feel more like a person welcomed in Canada. All of the staff were very kind and knowledgeable. I could also develop my English vocabulary as well as respect for values like Indigenous culture and the beauty of nature," said one of the participants after the trip to Earl Rowe.

Added another: **"The good vibes and the amazing energy of the staff made this experience something unbeatable. Thank you; you all put your hearts into this and I felt it."**

We know just how much these opportunities contribute to our newcomers' wellbeing, so we hope to organize more outdoor programs this coming year.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Starting a New Chapter with Know-How

Hamada is a Syrian who moved to Canada in June 2019 with his wife and son, from Dubai, UAE. An assistant professor of literature and academic writing, Hamada was keen to make sure he and his family integrated effectively into their new community in Mississauga.

One of our jobs at CultureLink is to ensure that new Canadians have everything they need to transition smoothly into their new home. The experience can be incredibly overwhelming, so the time we give makes a real difference. We maintain our presence in schools, libraries and other community spaces so that people like Hamada can get the support and resources they need to take the path from just-landed to settled.

Hamada met one of CultureLink's settlement workers for guidance. He learned the skills he needed to adapt and cope in his new country, gained access to local services and received updates with relevant news and information for newcomers in his area.

With the help of our settlement worker, Hamada was able to quickly focus on finding employment and successfully navigate the local job market. He is now a high school English and social science

teacher who contributes to the community in building and shaping new generations of students in Ontario. His family were also thrilled to be blessed with another son here in Canada.

"It has been an amazing new chapter in our lives so far. Nothing takes the pleasure of seeing our children grow and embrace the happy, enriching school life as well as the abundance of greenery and kindness Canada generously offers," says Hamada.

"I was fortunate and grateful to find [CultureLink] upon arriving in Canada. They have assisted me since the moment I landed here. They have helped me and my family settle down quickly and do everything a newcomer should do. They have always been there whenever I needed information and guidance."

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EMPLOYMENT

Sharing the Tools to Get the Job

Finding a job can prove to be the most difficult part of the settlement process but for many it's an essential step on the path to feeling fully integrated. At CultureLink we give newcomers the guidance they need to understand Canada's employment market.

Nimita is a Btech graduate from India with extensive IT experience. When she came to Canada in 2021 she faced the difficulty of being a newcomer during the global pandemic, meaning it was hard to make the connections needed to begin her new life. She began applying for jobs in her field but responses were few and far between.

Thankfully Nimita came across a LinkedIn advert for our Cybersecurity Training Program and decided to enroll. She learned how to build a well-structured and professional resume, as well as how to highlight her skills in line with Canadian expectations. She also broadened her knowledge and identified new career interests. Today, Nimita has a job at a renowned financial institute.

"The training program gave me a sense of hope and optimism. It gave me direction to bring about positive change to achieve my goals," she says. 'It was also a great opportunity to talk to people of similar

interests, attend group discussions and enjoy networking."

Kushal was in a similar position when he moved to Canada from India with an international MBA. After a few months of unsuccessful job searches, Kushal was pleased to find CultureLink's Interview Squad program. He gained insights on how to optimize his resume for an Applicant Tracking System (ATS) and ace interviews in Canada. In less than two months, he'd joined Assent Compliance as a senior consultant.

"The mentors' dedication in helping me bring out the best of my experience is beyond compare. With so many participants you are at one place where you can meet so many people with similar purposes and experiences," Kushal explains.

"I also spent a while volunteering as a result of the CultureLink sessions. These opportunities help you meet similar minds, contribute to society and enhance your local experience."

CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Taking our Values Full Circle

We truly are a multicultural organization, speaking more than 30 languages, and we love how our organization often takes individuals on a path from newcomer to supporter: many of us once benefitted from CultureLink's service before becoming part of it. Here are a few of our stories.

Settlement Worker Claudia came to Canada from Colombia with her young family. With no knowledge of the language, she faced many awkward interactions but chose to view them as opportunities. Today her positive attitude helps others cope with the challenges of immigration.

"I love my job. It's inspiring to see people overcome their difficulties. CultureLink is my second home and the staff are an extended family. It's amazing how proud everyone is of their own culture."

Youth Worker Esmaeel and his wife left Syria for Canada, longing for safety and security. During their time staying in temporary accommodation he wrote songs of gratitude and taught them to the children of the families living there. After joining our Bike Host Program, Esmaeel began working with us on activities for newcomer children.

"I feel really happy knowing the work I'm doing provides a safe space for children to express themselves freely and positively. And I like to reassure the parents that you can feel like a member of the world here in Canada. We are grateful to be here every day."

Program Worker Eman came to Canada from Egypt looking for a better life for her kids. As she sought out information herself, she quickly realized she could use her skills to help others.

"At every step of my journey as a newcomer I found someone who was keen to help and I now try to pay it forward. Our clients are not just a number on a report—they are people and we do our best to support them."

Program Worker Warda, who is originally from Somalia, came to Canada when she was only 14 years old.

"Nowadays you can keep your identity and be a Canadian, but back then it was different. There were not a lot of services for immigrants," she says. "CultureLink is an organization with a heart. People genuinely come to work and advocate for our clients, because we have first-hand experience of being an immigrant. We compassionately feel for the struggle of being new and having obstacles in the way of feeling at home."

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VOLUNTEERISM

Getting by With a Little Help from a Friend

John, a Canadian writer, signed up to be part of CultureLink's mentor program in 2009. He was paired with Bob, a communications technology professional and newcomer from the Philippines. Both Bob's and John's families benefitted hugely from the arrangement and they remain firm friends to this day.

"The mentors provide inspiration at times when things can be so overwhelming, frightening and lonely for newcomers like me and my family. All of us will be forever grateful for this experience," says Bob.

John agrees: "I have felt privileged to meet Bob and [his wife] Helen and their wonderful sons and watch them build their new lives in Canada. As best we can, we have helped each other face the inevitable challenges of life and we have celebrated the victories."

Our Canada Connects program, offered in partnership with Harbourfront Centre, matches new immigrants with experienced Canadian volunteer mentors. They put newcomers on the path to feeling settled by helping them navigate their new culture, practise English and build their social network.

Another such volunteer mentor is Janet, who first signed up in 2020 and supports newcomers by helping them with many aspects of their daily life, from opening bank accounts and making appointments, to teaching them about the culture and geography of their new country.

"It was extremely surprising to discover how difficult it is to integrate into a new society for people who come from totally different lifestyles, culture and backgrounds. It's made me realize just how important and essential [mentor] programs are," she says.

"Newcomers appreciate the connections they have made as it provides so much information but at the same time gives them a point of contact for the many issues they have to deal with. Being able to continue the program virtually during these unusual times has been a great help to all involved."

INNOVATION

Creating New Partnerships for Fairer Outcomes

Somas, who had lived and worked in more than four countries before relocating to Canada, has an MBA from the reputed IE Business School in Madrid, Spain, as well as a wealth of global experience.

When he arrived as a permanent resident in Toronto, however, he found that he was overqualified for entry-level jobs but needed Canadian experience for mid-level roles. He began networking and learned about programs for newcomers, specifically those which mentor individuals and help them find the right kind of job.

Somas reached out to CultureLink's Community Connections Mentorship Program, which connects newcomers to services and people who can assist them in their journey to settle in Canada. He was then able to access mentorship sessions, visit hiring events and arrange interviews with industry experts. He attended an event with our strategic alliance partner, Mercer, and, thanks to his networking abilities, secured an interview for the newly-created Mercer-CultureLink Newcomer Internship Program. This program is an amazing opportunity for newcomers to

explore the professional services landscape and gain valuable work experience in Canada.

Upon completing the internship, he began working full-time at Mercer, assisting the Toronto leadership team with various internal initiatives and client projects.

"Relocating to Canada was a bit overwhelming at the start but everything changed after my fateful meeting with CultureLink. They were instrumental in helping me keep up my momentum when it came to finding my ideal job here," he says.

"The staff have a proactive style, deep expertise in their domain, a very human-centric approach and give you regular updates about your industry. This all helped me immensely in landing the internship role at Mercer."

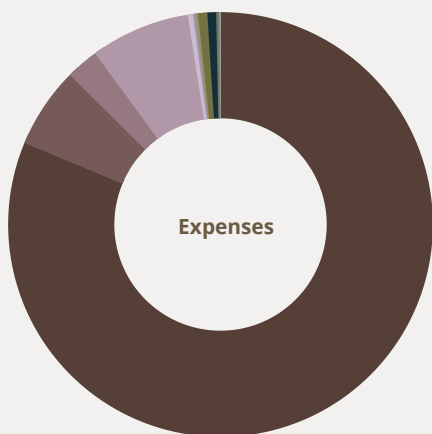
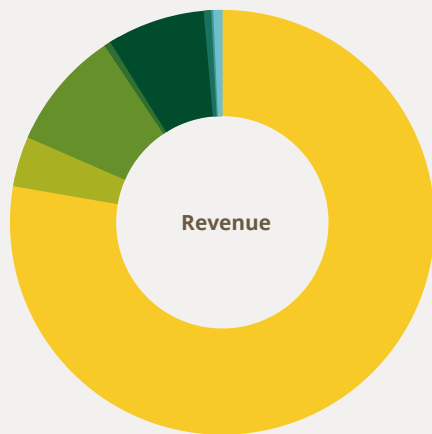
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Financial Report



The Federal Government is the largest funder of Culturelink and provides 77.7% of the agency's revenues. The Federal Government funds are mainly received from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

These funds are used for the Settlement of Newcomers to Canada.

Other Sources of funding include the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto, United Way Greater Toronto and The Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Statement of Operations

2022

2021

Revenue

Federal Grants	3,796,980	3,568,059
Provincial Grants	186,482	184,265
Municipal Grants	444,338	462,897
Donations	24,729	27,726
Foundations	363,558	578,266
Fundraising Income	-	2,825
Productive Enterprises	27,692	193,157
Miscellaneous Income	8,064	27,258
Amortization of Deferred Contributions	33,191	25,839
Total Revenues	4,885,034	5,070,292

Expenses

Salaries and Benefits	3,879,149	4,102,415
Administrative Overhead	294,472	267,609
Sponsorship	118,651	117,102
Rent	362,543	355,163
Promotion and Publicity	19,060	7,664
Staff Development	9,898	2,256
Repairs and Maintenance	8,618	7,287
Amortization	33,191	25,839
Program Expenses	31,865	48,316
Insurance	12,382	11,845
Interest	636	1,366
Security	2,038	1,242
Police Check	494	667
Total Expenses	4,772,997	4,948,771
Surplus (+)/ Deficit (-)	112,037	121,521

Break-up of Admin Overhead

Office Equipment	75,002	73,974
Office Supplies	87,774	77,804
Telephone	39,053	38,382
Professional Fees	37,380	18,268
HST	45,007	41,528
Travel	1,362	6,505
Membership Fees	3,700	5,130
Bank Charges	2,764	2,544
Postage	2,430	3,474
	294,472	267,609



Program Metrics

For more than 30 years, CultureLink has been developing and delivering services to meet the needs of diverse communities.

Passionate about providing innovative services, we adapt to change and create new programs that best respond to, and address, our clients' specific needs.

Program	# Clients	# Events
Anti-Racism Action Program	22	1
Innovative Arts Programming (IAP)	41	1
Active and Connected Seniors program	768	634
Community Connections Mentorship Program (CCMP)	605	582
Mental Health Program (MHP)	554	28
Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)	8061	434
Summer Settlement Program (SSP)	734	35
Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW)	175	24
Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP)	1439	16
Library Settlement Program (LSP)	2193	105
Labour Market Assistance Program (LMAP)	288	9
Settlement Workers in Community Spaces (SWCS)	374	34
IT Security Bridge Training Program	143	24
Children and Youth Settlement Services	462	497+
Sankofa	95	59
Skills for Youth Success	354	166
Wintegration After-School Program	34	96
E3 Youth (Educate, Empower, Elevate)	62	136
Community Bicycle Hub	2000+	360
Cycling Mentorship	882	31

HIGHLIGHTS

The Year in Review

Thanks to the continued support of our amazing funders, staff, volunteers and partners, it's been a great year at CultureLink. We've made important strides towards our goals with new innovations, collaborations and projects. And, we've continued to deliver our essential and invaluable services for newcomers, despite the challenges thrown at us by COVID-19. Here are just some of our highlights, the benefits of which will continue for years to come.

We created three partnerships with Toronto Community Housing: **job placements for four youth residents** of the Grandravine community with employment experts JVS Toronto; the **refurbishment of 80 abandoned bicycles** in the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood; and the new **Bike to the Future program which trained 13 residents for employment** in the bicycle industry in 2021-2022.

Earth Rangers, a national children's conservation organization, engaged CultureLink to promote their **climate change program among newcomer children and youth**. This initiative involved our Artegration program, Mississauga Cycles, the Bike Hub and CultureLink's Communications Coordinator.

We **successfully recruited ambassadors who speak Tibetan, Tagalog and Spanish**, among other languages, thanks to support from local community partners in South Parkdale. They helped clients and seniors who speak very little English, or who don't have access to IT equipment, to register for online vaccination appointments.

The Metcalf Foundation committed to supporting two years of research and planning into establishing a **bicycle industry employment program for Black, Latinx and newcomer youth**.

Our Client Liaison and Connections Program (CL&C), renamed Seniors' Connection Program, held **workshops for the United Way Project, Community Response to the Urgent Needs of Vulnerable Seniors during COVID-19**.

We've **refreshed our ITS curriculum** by introducing new modules, including two-week access to ITCA online labs and free ISACA student membership.

We had a third successful year of our four-year **Community Cycling Program**, funded by Region of Peel Transportation Services, delivered in partnership with Peel Multicultural Council.

We began a three-year agreement with Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia to participate in a **National Newcomer Cycling Program modelled on CultureLink's Bike Host Program**. This is funded by Public Health Agency of Canada.

We're **one of 16 organizations serving on a Local Advisory Committee (LAC)** to begin the second phase of the Parkdale Community Hub.

We renewed our partnership agreement with the Toronto District School Board for three years. This allows us to deliver **cycling education programming to students** during the school day.

We envision a healthy, equitable, inclusive and welcoming society that works together to engage and integrate newcomers and other community members into Canadian life.

FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Government of Ontario

City of Toronto

United Way

Employment and Social Development Canada (Canada Summer Jobs)

Metcalf Foundation

Public Health Agency of Canada

Region of Peel

Toronto Community Housing

PARTNERS/NETWORK

Toronto Catholic District School Board

Toronto District School Board

Accenture

Access Alliance

Access Community Capital Fund

Achev

BMO (Bank of Montreal)

BusyQA

Catholic Crosscultural Services

Center for Spanish Speaking People

Centre for Immigrant and Community Services

CIBC

Downtown West Vaccine Engagement Team

Downtown West, Neighbourhood Cluster – Community Coordination Plan

Fairview Interagency Network

Google Canada

Harbourfront Centre

Humber Community Employment Center

Indus Community Services

Job-Start

Kimberly-Clark

Learning Enrichment Foundation

McKinsey

Mercer

North York Community House

OMERS

Parkdale Community Economic Development Network

Parkdale Hub – Local Advisory Committee

Parkdale Seniors Service Providers Network

Parkdale Settlement Service Providers Network

Parkdale-High Park Rotary Club

Peel Multicultural Council

Service Canada - Employment and Social Development Canada

TD Canada

Teleperformance Canada

Thales Canada

The Stop Community Food Centre

TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization

Toronto Public Library

Toronto South Local Immigration Partnership

Women's Habitat

WoodGreen

YMCA youth assisting youth program

PLACEMENT STUDENTS

Craig Nedu Ejeckam

Nedu Ejeckam

Shaela-Jane Campbell

Maida Mohamed

Ruka Watanabe

VOLUNTEERS

Abir Faroussi

Faisal Al Safadi

Latoya Aldridge

Rui Fang

Adrienne Serro

Fatima Syed

Liju Thomas

Rupesh Gunapati

Amanda Yang

Fernanda Ibarra

Liliana Nakamura

Ruzaan Karwa

Andrea Shaikin

Fon Arunpairojana

Luis Sarabia

Saba Endari

Andrew Lockhart

Fredy Alexis

Maharshi Jani

Samar

Angie

Bolaños Montoya

Mahdi Zangeneh

Abdourahman

Christodoulou

Giovanna Bendezu
Medina

Mahima Mehta

Sandra Cadavid

Antonin Makula

Gloria Maribel
Tamayo Lopera

Margaret Jones

Sasha Cragg-Gore

Anwar Alsarhi

Gloria Maribel
Tamayo Lopera

Marline Jones

Sergio Gutierrez

Arun Balakrishnan

Hanan Zou Alghina

Mary Pigott

Shailja Pranjal

Ashish Koirala

Ilaneet Goren

Melanie Huang

Sharmin Zaman

Cass Simons

Jackie Tavares

Michael Wills

Shelby Auburn

Charran Hetram
(Dudley)

Jennifer A. Bouley

Murray Lightman

Sherry Feng

Christelle Davis

Jennifer Johnson

Nadin Alexander
Ramirez Arias

Shweta Saxena

Claudia Oliveira

Jennifer Morris

Nancy Davis

Sonya Lockhart

Connie K

Jigna Fadia

Neil Gangal

Stella Gordon

Cristina Ion

Jiyin T

Nicolle Weeks

Sumita Matta

Daisy Heung

Joy Nseller

Omnia El-Sakran

Tho Vuong

Dana Al Rijjal

Jozef Simonic

Pamela Wood

Varun
Chandrasekar

Debbie Ali

Julia Warrender

Rahaf Ghandour

Vicki McCudden

Dora Astrid Gaviria

Julianna Drexler

Rana Oudih

Waffa Qurbani

Eduardo Barron

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Zapata

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Selvadas

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Rebecca Chua

Wilma Aranha

Esteban Perez
Montoya

Kawaldeep Singh

Reni Walker

Xi Ping Chen

Khadije Houri

Ritva Nosov

Zeyad Sabbah



We at CultureLink acknowledge the land we are on is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.



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LOCATIONS

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRE

3535 Dundas St. West
Toronto ON M6S 2S7

PARKDALE COMMUNITY INFORMATION CENTRE

1303 Queen St. West
Toronto ON M6K 1L6

WINTEGRATION AFTER- SCHOOL PROGRAM

49 Mabelle Avenue
Toronto ON M9A 5B1

COMMUNITY BICYCLE HUB

15 Tobermory Drive
North York ON M3N 2R5