



ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 2024

PREPARED BY
JOSEPHINE NAKATO



BOARD OF DIRECTORS REMARK

I want to take this time to express my sincere appreciation for each one of you. Together, we have worked tirelessly to develop and uphold our board policies, ensuring that our organization remains strong and aligned with its mission. Our consistent monthly meetings demonstrated your unwavering commitment and dedication.

I am truly grateful for your hard work, passion and collaboration. It is an honor to serve alongside such committed individuals, and look forward to continuing our impactful work together.

Thank you once again for your invaluable contributions.

Warm regards,

Board president
Areero Jatani

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REMARK



2024 was a special year for FOCAS Canada as we fully recovered from COVID-19 and began preparing to celebrate our 15th anniversary as one of Edmonton's vibrant non-profit organizations. Since our inception, we have significantly expanded our service menu.

While tutoring and mentoring newcomers and immigrant school children remain our signature services, we have added numerous impactful programs. These include providing food hampers to over 5,419 families, sponsoring more than 150 refugees annually, youth violence prevention, antiracism education, senior services, women's English classes, financial literacy and money management, and women's economic empowerment in collaboration with Ayyo Foundation.

Thanks to the Supporting Black Canadian Community Initiative (SBCCI), we have received incredible support from intermediary organizations like BBI, Tropicana Community Services, and the African Centre. BBI, in particular, has heavily invested in FOCAS services, focusing on capacity building through various capital purchases, strategic and policy development, cybersecurity system implementation, website and social media platform enhancements, and board and staff training. As a result, FOCAS now stands as one of the best-equipped organizations with strong staff members and volunteers.

2024 was also a great year for collaboration and partnership. We formed B3 and B4 collaborative teams, securing a grant for youth empowerment through gun and gang prevention with B3 partners FOCAS, Kulan, and Sinkunia. This program helped us connect East African youth with West African youths to share experiences and work together towards a common goal.

We have also collaborated with many consultants and professional organizations whose expertise and skills have immensely contributed to the quality of services we offer. Volunteer services peaked this year, with more than 628 hours contributed by volunteers for the benefit of our clients. We served over 948 walk-in customers, a figure that doesn't include clients we referred to designated professionals.

Encouraged by continuous success, growth, and extreme needs, FOCAS is planning to engage in affordable housing provision to address newcomers' and immigrants' housing needs. Housing demand has skyrocketed, mainly due to the Canadian population surge and other factors, making rents quite expensive for newcomers and immigrants.

Finally, we would like to commend all the stakeholders who have directly or indirectly contributed to this success. Without their support, FOCAS could not have achieved this level of impact and growth.

Thanks

Bedri K. Mohammed

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WHO WE ARE

OUR VISION

FOCAS is a community-driven and sustainable organization welcoming newcomers and the immigrant community. Our vision is to help members trust their new home and help them become resilient and active participants who contribute and grow within their community.

OUR MISSION

To empower, inspire and instill confidence in the newcomer and refugee community members. We bridge the gap and advocate for the rights of community members who experience inequities.

OUR VALUES

We work towards authentic inclusivity. We value and respect differences and create environments where all people can participate.

STRATEGIC POLICIES

- Organizational Sustainability and Healthy growth.
- Education and learning excellence.
- Sponsorship and meaningful Resettlement.
- Community Economic Self- Sufficiency.
- Building Networks and Relationships - Locally, Nationally and Internationally.

TEAM

BOARD MEMBERS

ARERO JATANI

YVONNE SCHERBAN

UMER TALIA

BARBRA NICHOLS

ABDURAHMAN .R.

MOHAMMED .A.

MOHAMMED A. Z

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

BEDRI K.MOHAMMED

TURINA SHAMIL

BEKELE FUFA

REEM AHMED

JOSEPHINE .K. NAKATO

ANDREA DAVEY

DURETTI KABIRA

ASMAH ABDELLA

EMMA DAVY



CLIENT SERVICES



It is very difficult for newcomers to get jobs in their professions and with their work experience, which are of little avail here in Canada. Lack of education, language barriers, lack of information and knowledge of how the system works severely hinder opportunities.

As a result, they are barely able to cover the expense of living even when working two or three jobs.

Our vision is to have a fully inclusive labor force that reflects the diversity, skills, and experience of Canada's population by training immigrants resume writing, job search and referrals.

FOOD HAMPER

As a legacy of the COVID -19 pandemic, the food hamper program became one of our regular activities.

Currently, we are providing food hampers to 250 families on a regular basis.

Unlike other services, the majority of food hamper recipients are not African. They are Middle Eastern, mostly Syrians, Iraqi, Yemenis and Lebanese.

Thanks to the Edmonton Food Bank which provides us with all the food we distribute as well as snacks for our tutoring and mentoring programs on a weekly basis.

In addition, FOCAS would like to gradually reduce the number of customers who heavily rely on the food hamper, through job training and employment.



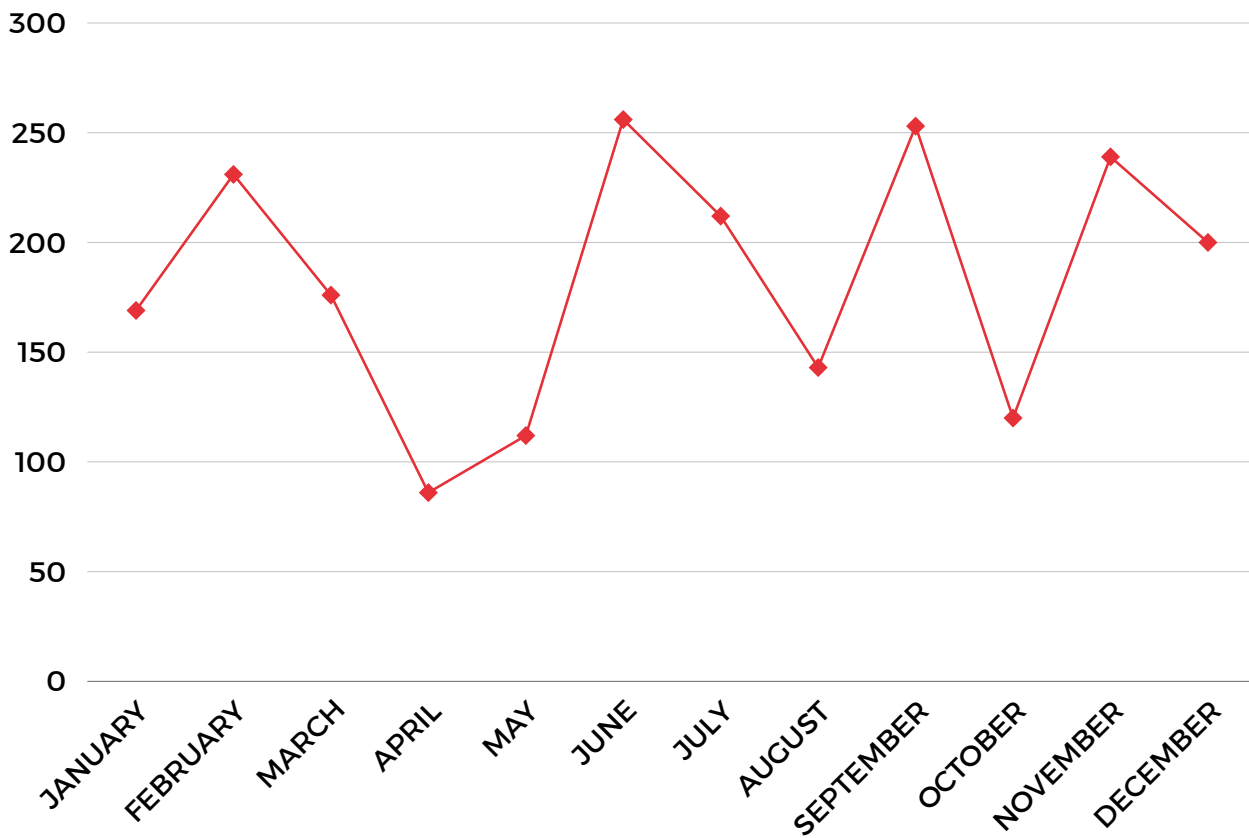


FOOD BANK ANNUAL REPORT

1. General Information

Category	Details
Families	2197
Period	January - December

2. Performance Rate Over Time



WOMEN CLASSES

We initiated 3 programs for the women: English Language, Joy Cafe, and Stitches and Smiles.

The English Language group meets three times a week. This program was led by one of the practicum students. It is a casual setting where the women can learn and practice day to day English language vocabulary.

Joy Cafe is once a month. It is a time to gather, have tea and snacks together while learning about practices to increase resiliency against grief, loss and suffering. We spend time engaging in practices that build joy and peace in our lives, work through trauma healing exercises and share stories. These have been very special times of bonding as a community and include Oromo women, Canadian women and women from other cultures as well. This time is hosted by the program coordinator and volunteers.

Stitches and Smiles is a weekly crochet club for women and daughters. The goal of this time together is to interact with people inside our community and outside our community in an informal way. The hope is to see the women feel more comfortable with the community around them so that more participation in Canadian culture is feasible. There is also the possibility of the women creating crafts to earn income. The Stitches and Smiles crochet club is drop in and the attendance varies each week. So far we have had 4-8 women and children coming.

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The program's main aim is to bring a positive impact to so many women who have to overcome multiple challenges by learning successful communication skills in order to meaningfully resettle in Canada.

Currently, we have more than ten women in our classes which includes activities within and outside class.



SPONSORSHIP AND RESETTLEMENT

As sponsorship Agreement holders, we were able to extend support and advocacy to the most needing refugees by providing a pathway through our private sponsorship and resettlement programs.

“

You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending.

”



PROGRAMS

FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAMS

The Canadian Banking System has an international reputation of being strong and steady. At FOCAS Canada, members had the opportunity to learn the Canadian Banking System and basic financial Literacy and money management during the Year. “Financial literacy provides the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make responsible financial decisions.”

The Government of Canada has a national mandate to increase financial literacy and improve the financial well-being of Canadians so that they can: Manage money and debt wisely; Plan and save for the future; and prevent and protect against fraud and financial abuse. Accordingly, through the financial literacy training, FOCAS members were taught that Banking in Canada is a highly regulated industry, designed to protect customers and banks from risk and fraud.

In collaboration with TD and Scotiabank, the broad topics were covered during many rounds of training: the pillars of banking (financial planning, budgeting, saving, borrowing, investing, and protecting yourself). Whereas equity, diversity inclusion, and core values at TD Ban; Scotiabank is said to be the bank of newcomers, international students, etc. Both are FOCAS Canada’s strong partners.



SUMMER CAMPS & OST



FOCAS Canada has been running summer camps for the last four years. This year, the program was supported by four full-time Canada summer job employees, four Norquest practicum and more than ten volunteers.

The program was directed by Mr. Bekele Fufa who is a youth worker employee at FOCAS. We had 35-40 students in the program. The program was so impactful that local community leaders and the neighborhood residents including children's family members have noted the positive impact that the summer camp made in the lives of children and youth.

The summer camp provided a safe haven where children learned and were engaged in all kinds of activities. Unfortunately, The children living in marginalized neighborhoods do not often have these opportunities due to lack of resources and unsafe neighborhoods which puts them at an increased disadvantage.

The interaction among various age groups from the youngest, eight year old camper to teenagers, adult volunteers and members of the FOCAS staff helped to build new connections and a sense of belonging. Our 2024 summer camp was so successful in blending traditional free play and structured learning activities.

Finally, we want to say that we will boost our effort and commitment to provide quality programming for children and youth over the next summer camps and shall take this opportunity to thank Reach Edmonton funding the 2024 OST program.

YOUTH SUPPORT

TIMELINE: JUNE – DECEMBER 2024

Youth Program begins with youth participating in leadership trainings to build the confidence and self-esteem level of youth at FOCAS Canada.

This was also an opportunity that developed these youth into cultural leaders and role models that other youth can look up to in the community.

In those youth meetings and trainings we conducted they learned about responsibility, respect, accountability, and effective communication skills, among others. They also learned about critical thinking, gang prevention and how to resolve conflicts without violence. Our trainings also helped the youth understand the importance of citizenship and caring for the safety of others.

TUTORING PROGRAM

The tutor program for the children ran Saturday, Sunday and Monday. The weekend program is group based. There are both paid tutors and volunteer tutors who work with the children. The children come for three hours and study English, Math, Arabic (Saturday) and Oromo (Sunday).

With the implementation of a program coordinator, we have been able to do individual learning plans for each of the students based on baseline assessments in reading, writing, math and vocabulary. These plans are then shared with parents so that children, tutors, and parents all know what the students strengths and weaknesses are and what the students will be working on over the winter. We believe this will increase the rigor of our program and create significant results in improved learning with those attending the program regularly.

There are 22 children registered. Typically there are anywhere between 3-13 children on a given weekend. We are working on strategies to have more consistent attendance.

This December, Sarah Harper from the University of Alberta, came as a special guest. This allowed the children to gain knowledge and practice in the art of water color while also expressing things they like both in drawing and text.

The tutoring allows students to receive more individual help.

Note:

*Teaching kids to count is fine,
but teaching them what counts
is best.*



Analysis

Most of our clients came to Canada as refugees after suffering a lot of hardship and trauma. They have been victims of torture and different kinds of repression, abuse, and harassment by their own governments. After they fled their countries, most of them ended up in refugee camps where, because of the overwhelming number of refugees, they received minimum treatment or service for the physical and mental issues they suffer from mental health.



Trauma Recovery Program



Revision

At FOCAS, we know we need to work harder to help more and more people.



Objectives

FOCAS will do whatever it takes to challenge the mental health stigma and help them to come forward to get the right solutions.

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

We would like to appreciate all our funders and partners for believing in us. This inspires us greatly. With your support, we are making a remarkable impact in our community in ways that serve us all as a society.



“ COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING, STAYING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS, AND WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS. ”

SPECIAL THANKS

WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE COMMUNITY OF EDMONTON. THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY HAVE CONTINUOUSLY SHOWN US UNWAVERING SUPPORT, AND WITHOUT IT, FOCAS CANADA WOULDN'T BE WHERE IT IS TODAY. WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE WHO HAS ATTENDED OUR EVENTS, PARTICIPATED IN OUR WORKSHOPS OR WHO HAVE TOLD THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS ABOUT THE WORK THAT WE DO.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUPPORT!



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