



Unisphere Canada

Annual Report 2018





INTRODUCTION

Unisphere Canada(UC)isanot-for-profitorganization. Our primary goal is to facilitate economic opportunities and promote income generation through entrepreneurship and innovation. Our efforts will be focused on vulnerable groups of Ontario residents who are in proportionately excluded from the mainstream economy. UC strongly believes in action and seeks to transform communities across Ontario and Canada, making them more self-sufficient through sustainable entrepreneurship and innovative programs.

UC is determined to empower the community members to bring about change by providing support to their future entrepreneurs enabling them to make an impact on the oppressive cycle of poverty in which they currently reside. UC find practical and innovative ways to empower these low-income people to lift themselves out of the cycle of poverty, then the payback to themselves, their communities and society as a whole will be significant.

We know that if we continue to strive to support the base of people who are struggling to earn enough money and often have to decide between keeping the lights on or feeding their kids, that with all of the resources we have at our disposal we will be able to make the change we see as so critical to our communities- again, with all of this benefiting the individual, their community and society. UC works with partner organizations.

We believe that together we can bring a positive impact and contribute to creating a world closer to breaking the cycle of poverty and economic inequality. Our work will help create a more fair world that truly respects the basic rights of all human beings, not just those considered to be higher economic status.





MISSION, VISSION & VALUES

MISSION

Unisphere Canada reduces poverty and promotes well-being through innovative economic development programs by providing support to entrepreneurs in low-income communities.

VISION

Creating economically vibrant, empowered and prosperous communities where everyone can thrive.

VALUES

- **Respect:** We value every individual.
- **Integrity:** We always act Ethically, and commit to conducting our activities with honesty, transparency and accountability.
- **Professionalism:** We care for and support each other and act professionally.
- **Diversity:** We believe everyone deserves a chance to prosper.
- **Equality:** We believe everyone should equality opportunity for economic independence.
- **Team work:** We believe in cooperation, coordination and collaborative partnerships.
- **Community Development:** the strongest voice in Unisphere Canada is the voice of the low-income people we work with.





MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The poverty rates in Canada continue to be high. According to the City of Toronto's 2016 statistics, the percentage of the city's low-income households stands at 20.2% after-tax. This number doubles in our target geographical areas: Thorncliffe Park - 39%; St James Town - 40%; Flemingdon Park - 34%; and Crescent Park - 35%. This can be found in numerous locations across the city but most predominantly in multi-cultural neighbourhoods that are densely populated with newcomers and refugees. According to the statistics, 21% of single mothers live in poverty and racialized women earn 32% less than others. Economically vulnerable women need sustainable and equitable employment.

Many of our clients have large families (23% with 3+ children), but there's a lack of viable childcare. Self-employment brings flexibility and income that can assist in alleviating these challenges. In addition, poverty in the GTA disproportionately affects women, immigrants and racialized individuals. Systemic discrimination creates barriers to success for these individuals, limiting their opportunities and ability to reach their potential. Unisphere Canada provides entrepreneurship support and opportunity to newcomers, women, immigrants and racialized individuals in the low-income communities to reach their potential through sustainable employment and self-employment. By providing access to micro-loans, entrepreneurship skills, coaching and business development support, we help people achieve their dream of owning a business or finding success in a rewarding career.





Our core programs are Community Development, Entrepreneurship Services and Skills and Leadership Training for small business owners. Through our community and economic development initiatives, we support, train and link them to our partners and events in the community that can promote the development of their business. Under entrepreneurship services we are promoting collaboration and leveraging the synergy of groups of businesses. We support newcomers to gain social capital and networks to help their businesses and communities thrive. This model will be the engine of economic growth and in turn re-investing in the growth of future newcomer entrepreneurs and income generation. Through the skills and leadership training, we provide the basic business start-up skills and knowledge- training o community members through workshops.

In 2018, over 100 Clients were provided with business advice, micro-lending, and technical support through basic training and food handling certifications to help women and newcomers upgrade their skills and start small businesses. We are also working with our local partner organization to facilitate small loans with no interest and providing technical and skills knowledge based training to start a new business, with the purpose of integrating community economic development initiatives closer to low-income communities. We invite you to learn more about our 2018 accomplishments and successes in this report, as well as stories from our clients and volunteers. Thank you for your continued support of Unisphere Canada.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Hayatullah Ahmadzai



Program Statistics

Our programs have supported newcomer entrepreneurs on sales, marketing, communication, leadership, budgeting, financial literacy and computer literacy training.

46+

WOMEN

have been trained in food handling certification to start catering business in their communities

56+

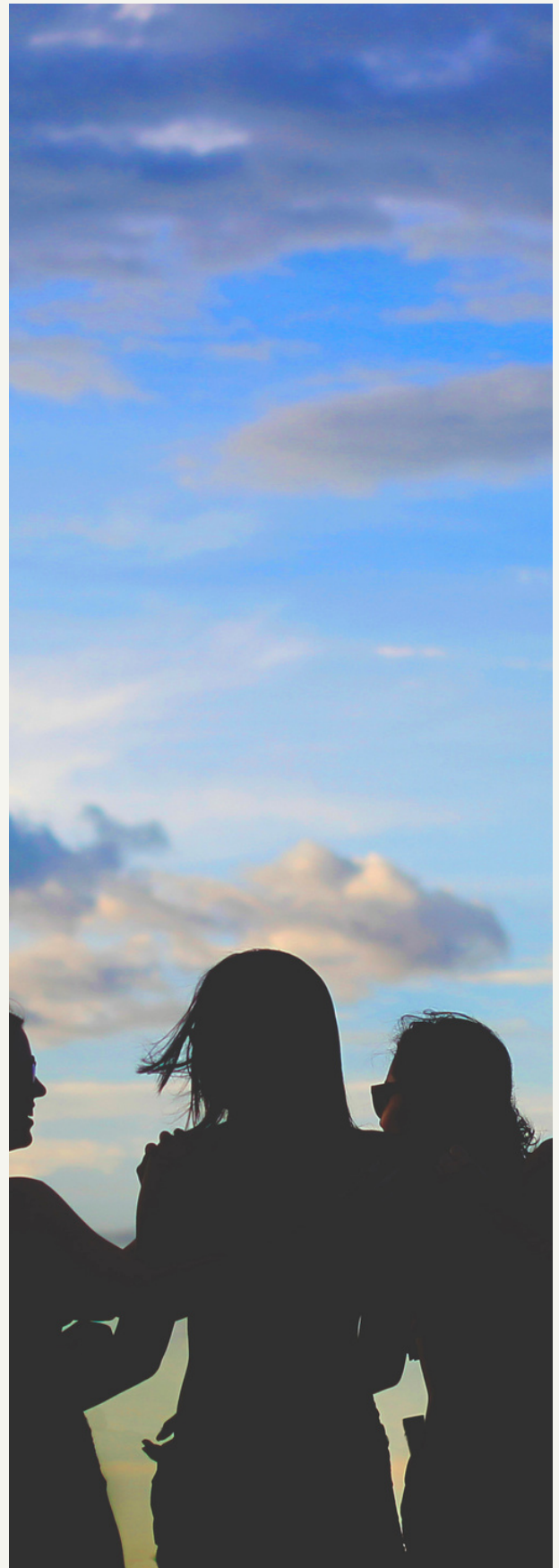
WOMEN

have been supported in business planning and development

50+

WOMEN

have been introduced to microlending programs of different partner organization



40+

NEWCOMER WOMEN

have been facilitated in micro lending, and financial statements

30+

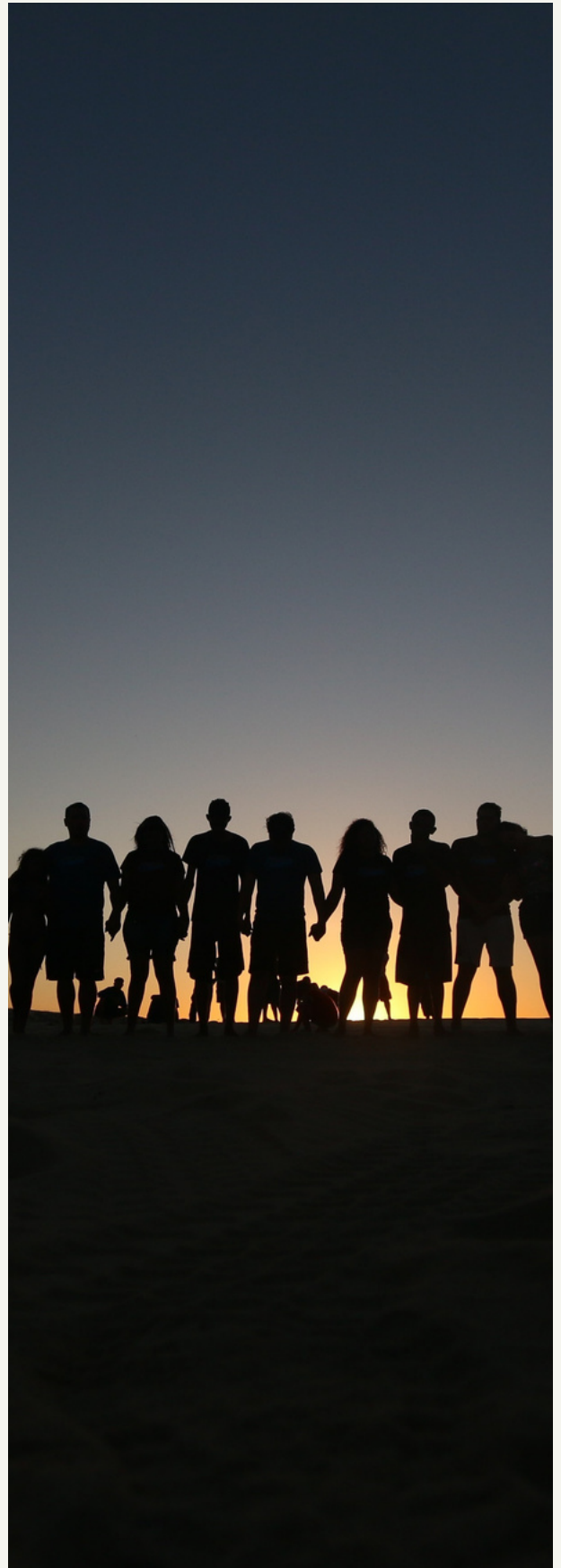
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

have been supported in social, digital marketing, sales, communication, leadership, budgeting, financial literacy and computer literacy training

100+

CLIENTS

have been referred to youth, settlement, employment and housing services provided by partner organizations



PROGRAMS

An impact report is a way for organizations to communicate the issues they are trying to improve. Our aim is to enhance the economic well-being of communities, through increased income generation opportunities and the creation of employment and to also increase capacity development opportunities, for individuals and entrepreneurs to support them to develop businesses in low-income communities. We are currently working with individuals and groups who are seeking advice and technical support to start or develop a small business. We are also working with partner organizations to connect these entrepreneurs with small/low-interest business loans, as well as basic training and food handling certifications., as well as help them strategize on how they facilitate change.

Our main strategic focus areas:



**Organizational
Development**

**Community
Development**

**Saving Box
Community-Led
Development**

**Skills &
Leadership
Development for
Entrepreneurs**

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We will continue to develop our own organization in terms of infrastructure development and governance. Institutional strengthening includes a set of measures that improve the capability and performance of our organization, in order to attain our mission and strategic goals. We aim to engage with and coordinate with stakeholders involved in community development, establish synergies and advocate for the well-being of low-income communities so that community development is more efficiently and cohesively delivered.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

We facilitate financing for entrepreneurs, which is made possible through our collaboration with Access Community Capital Fund.

Mini Micro Loans are available from \$100 - \$1000 (no interest)
Micro Loans are available from \$1000 - \$10,000

These loans enable individuals, entrepreneurs and newcomers with no credit history to gain access to knowledge, skills, support, outreach activities and grants. These loans will also help create income generation and increase the number of local businesses in the most vulnerable communities.



Photo: Training Session

SAVING BOX COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT

Our community-led development Saving Box model is geared towards both individuals and groups in low-income communities and provides them with resources and enhances their skills to successfully start-up their businesses. It consists of three streams of program delivery tailored to the size of the small start-up business, along with the specific needs of the entrepreneurs. Participants of the UC Saving Box programs receive comprehensive around services such as mentorship and coaching tailored to their unique objectives to ensure they reach their goals. The Saving Box Model enable individuals and newcomers with no credit history to gain access to knowledge, skills, supports and grants. It will also work to promote relationship between emerging local businesses and support that is available in the community to develop their businesses and markets. It leverages the synergy of participating groups by networking and promoting collaboration. They are then able to share this knowledge and skills with other members of the community, by gaining training and resources developed by UC.



Photo: Practical Session

SKILLS & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR ENTREPRENEURS

We offer a range of free training programs in the areas of leadership, business management business planning, entrepreneurial skills, and micro-lending.

Additional programming and support includes:

- Business Start-up information
- One-on-One business consulting
- Business plan development
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Social Media and Marketing
- Micro-Lending and Financial Statements
- Financial Literacy and Budgeting
- Leadership and Communication Skills
- Life Skills and Decision Making
- Food Handling Certificate

We have already supported over 56 entrepreneurs in the areas of business planning, micro-lending, and food handling.



2018

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

"I was a Communications and Research Coordinator at Unisphere Canada (UC), and one of the events I attended was a food handling certification program organized by UC in partnership with Toronto Public Health. During the training I was able to speak with a number of participants and carry out a qualitative (focus group discussion) and quantitative (set of questionnaires) research to obtain their feedback on program implementation and how the program would help them to achieve their long-term goals.

In summary, the participants believed that a food handling certification, knowledge and skills would enable them to start their home-based business.

In my volunteer role with Unisphere Canada, I was able to learn and network with community organizations as well as women entrepreneurs from low-income communities. Before UC, I worked in the insurance industry in communications so I felt that my position with UC would support my learning and add to my experience. My current role is in litigation with TD Bank. My experience with UC helped me to be more productive and to contribute my time to a worthwhile cause. Overall, it was a positive experience and I was able to give back to the community and support marginalized women. I felt good helping low-income families. It was great to meet other women in the community and network with other organizations. "

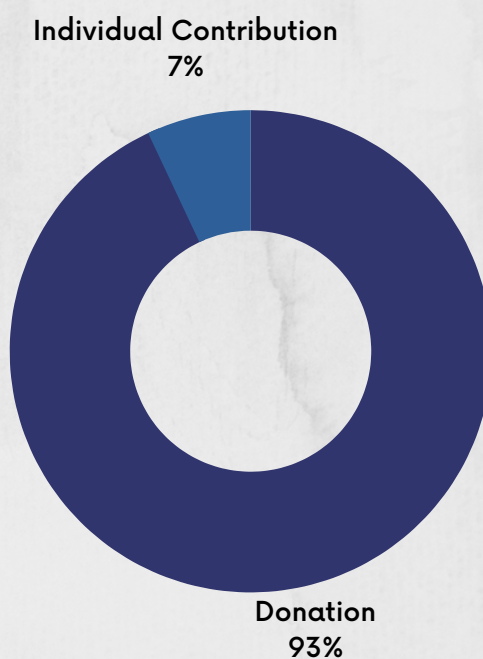


Laurie Di Brina

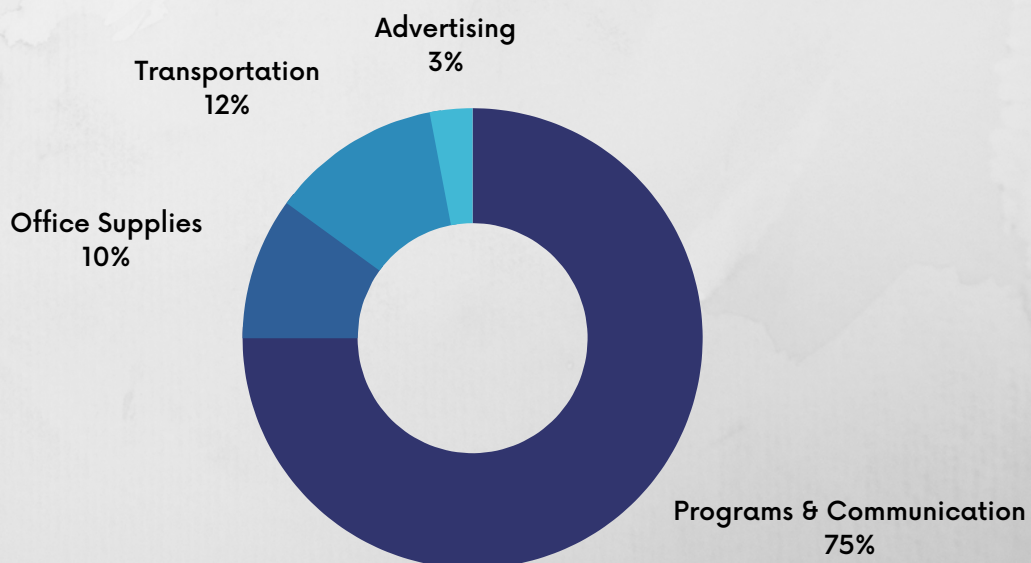
"Volunteering with Unisphere Canada was a very positive and rewarding experience."

FINANCES

Revenue



Expenses



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Unisphere Canada is grateful to all of our volunteers who give their time and share their skills and help us to achieve our mission through our programs and services.

Laurie Di Brina
Tricia Ramnath
Rangoli Singh

THANKING OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Acting Executive Director:
Hayatullah Haleemi

Board Members:
Ali Aheed
Brendon Wrana
Fawad Nasir
Fazal Rahel
Laheeb Akbarzad
Tariq Ismati



We thank you for your
continued support in
our programs.

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