



BUILDING RESPONSIVE, SUPPORTIVE AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES

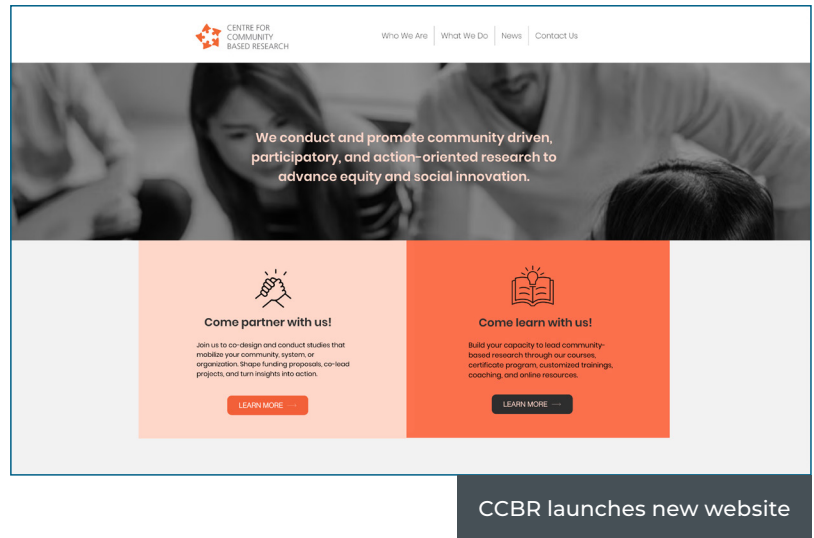
COMMUNITYBASEDRESEARCH.CA



CENTRE FOR
COMMUNITY
BASED RESEARCH

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2024-2025**

The Centre for Community Based Research is a non-profit social enterprise established in 1982.



OUR MISSION:

The Centre for Community Based Research is committed to *social justice* and to collaboratively building communities that are *responsive and supportive*, especially for people with limited access to power and opportunity.

We conduct and promote research that is *community-driven, participatory, and action-oriented* and that combines *research with education and community involvement*.

Our work builds on community strengths to create *awareness, policies, and practices* that advance equitable *participation and inclusion* of all community members.

Land Acknowledgment

CCBR is based on the University of Waterloo campus. With gratitude, we recognize that the land on which we work is the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples, who continue to live here among other Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who call Waterloo home.

We aspire to respect the original treaties of this land, namely the Two Row and Dish with One Spoon wampums. These treaties signify the responsibility non-Indigenous people have to act with peace, respect, and friendship, equitably sharing resources with Indigenous communities. We are continuously learning and unlearning individually, collectively, and with our research partners on the path towards reconciliation and decolonization. We work alongside and invite collaborations from Indigenous peoples and nations, supporting their priorities and initiatives.

A RETROSPECTIVE ON OUR MISSION

Letter from the Executive Director & Board President

In 2024-2025 the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) was once again active in pursuing our mission of **collaboratively building responsive, supportive, and equitable communities**.

On our newly revamped website, you can see that we fulfil this mission by partnering with others to conduct community-based research and by offering learning opportunities that promote community-based research. This is collaborative work, where we and our partners dream up new ways of creating community change together. You can read about the breadth and depth of this work throughout this annual report. But here are some highlights.

Come Partner with Us: This year, we *conducted* 23 research and evaluation projects with our many partners locally, provincially, and nationally. These projects sought to address a variety of pressing social issues in our communities. One growing trend was the formation of joint project teams, where CCBR staff collaborate closely with our funding partner staff. This approach helps to lower their costs and build their internal research capacity.

Come Learn with Us: We continued to expand how we *promote* community-based research with seven learning projects this year. We offered customized training and individualized coaching. We provided student mentorships. We developed hands-on resources for how to make research community-driven, participatory, and action-oriented. A highlight was launching our new [Certificate Program in Community-Based Research](#) in partnership with Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo. The program offers a series of courses that equip people to conduct research for equitable social change.

Come Dream with Us: This year, we and our partners continued to dream up new ways of building communities that work for those structurally marginalized. For example, we partnered with REACH Nexus—a national collaborative leadership network of 125+ partners—on a Positive Actions project that supports innovative interventions that break HIV stigma. We also partnered with the Evaluation Capacity Network at the University of Alberta to dream up an EvalHub for Canada's newcomer settlement sector that promotes a community-based approach to evaluation.

At CCBR, we are a mission-driven non-profit that is collaboratively entrepreneurial. We thank all partners, funders, Board, and staff who contributed to this shared mission this past year. We believe that by working together, we can build communities that are more responsive, supportive, and equitable.

Sincerely,



Hsiao d'Ailly

Hsiao d'Ailly, President



Rich Janzen

Rich Janzen, Executive Director

Our Approach to Research

CCBR is a pioneer and leader in community-based research in Canada. But what does community-based research mean?

At CCBR, we take this question seriously. We regularly discuss this with our partners. We consider literature from diverse global research traditions. And over four decades, we've honed an approach to research that we conduct and promote across Canada and internationally.

Four Phases of Community-Based Research



Learn more about community-based research at communitybasedresearch.ca/our-approach.

Three Hallmarks of Community-Based Research

► Community-Driven:

The research is practically relevant to those most affected by the issue under study and leads to their self-determination.

► Participatory:

Community members and researchers equitably share control of the research process through active and reciprocal involvement in the research design, implementation, and dissemination.

► Action-Oriented:

The process and results are useful to community members in collaboratively building more responsive, supportive, and equitable communities, especially for those with limited access to power and opportunity.

Three Goals of Community-Based Research

► Learn Together:

Gaining new insights through systematic and rigorous research

► Share Results:

Communicating what has been learned in ways that helps people to use the research results

► Engage People:

Building trusting and reciprocal relationships so that people are able to work together to address pressing societal issues

Understanding the Experiences of African Asylum Seekers in Peel, York, and Toronto

In 2023, municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area saw a rise in refugee asylum seekers from African countries. An already stretched social services system and a crisis in shelter bed availability led many newly arrived refugees to sleep outdoors. Several tragic deaths drew public attention. In response, many Black-led and faith-based groups sounded the alarm and stepped up to help. While all levels of government struggled to meet urgent housing and social needs, these informal groups linked with service organizations to form a network of support. Asylum seekers navigated a patchwork of informal and formal services across community agencies, government bodies, and health and education systems.

United Way Greater Toronto partnered with the City of Toronto, Region of Peel, and the Regional Municipality of York to initiate a seven-month research study. Working with CCBR and guided by a passionate advisory committee, the project set out to understand how African asylum seekers were interacting with and experiencing this system of support.

CCBR approached this project by centring the voices of asylum seekers, and frontline service workers. The project explored what was working

well during their settlement journey, as well as barriers in accessing and navigating services. This research took place during a time of shifting federal policies, including reduced immigration targets and changes to settlement funding—factors impacting refugee newcomers and their support systems.



The project centred an anti-Black racism lens throughout, highlighting its unique impact on African asylum seekers and the urgent need for action and system-wide change. We learned

that many African asylum seekers faced challenges in securing stable housing and finding employment—often due to discrimination based on immigration status and anti-Black racism. The research also identified opportunities for local system-wide improvement, such as building support networks for African asylum seekers—particularly by connecting them with mentors, peers, and employment opportunities in the Greater Toronto Area and across Canada.

To put findings into action, CCBR co-organized a community forum where African asylum seekers, community organizations, and regional staff shared a meal and discussed the findings. It was a space for connection, dialogue, and advocacy for more culturally-relevant resources.

Learning to Drive Change: The Certificate Program in Community-Based Research

At CCBR, we have always believed that research is more than a method—it's a way of building relationships, sparking change, and making communities more responsive, supportive, and equitable. [The Certificate Program in Community-Based Research](#) is one of our latest initiatives bringing this aspiration to life.

Developed from over 40 years of hands-on experience with more than 500 community research projects and offered in partnership with Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo, the certificate program invites participants into a dynamic learning environment grounded in real-world practice.

Many participants arrive with a drive to make a difference—but leave with something more: a new lens through which to view research and social change rooted in social justice. The courses, offered mostly online, are designed for flexibility. Learners can take a single course or combine several toward a Basic or Advanced Certificate. This format allows participants to go at their own pace while building toward something meaningful.

Participants are guided by seasoned instructors—practitioners and scholars whose

teaching draws directly from their lived and professional experience. Courses are anchored in ethical engagement and co-design, informed by our three hallmarks: participatory, community-driven, and action oriented, as well as frameworks such as the Tri-Council Policy on Ethical Conduct

for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2). As one participant reflected: “Now, I feel a lot better equipped to advocate for evaluation methods that are co-developed with participants and to prioritize local knowledge and what may already exist before redoing consultation work.”

Finally, the courses are designed so that participants learn from one another. Whether participants complete one course or a full certificate, the program consistently leaves a lasting impression. It builds not only skills but a sense of solidarity among people using research

to advance justice, equity, and community well-being. A participant in the Community-Based Evaluation course reflected, “I really appreciated working in a small group each week. Group 1 gave me the chance to talk through real challenges in this same project I am part of. We supported each other in the activities and shared ideas that helped me apply what I was learning in real time.”

Over the past five weeks, I have had the privilege to deepen my knowledge and understanding of community-based evaluation. Throughout this course, I became acutely aware of how evaluation frameworks must be culturally sensitive, linguistically appropriate, and mindful of resource constraints—insights that have deepened my appreciation for authentic community-based evaluation approaches.

– Martha Nduwayo, Quebec Black Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub Coordinator at Concordia University



CENTRE FOR
COMMUNITY
BASED RESEARCH



WE'RE LAUNCHING:

A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM IN COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

Equip Yourself for Impact

The Certificate Program in Community-Based Research is a leading resource for learning how to use research to collaboratively drive change and build more responsive, supportive, and equitable communities. Our Certificate Program offers a range of practical skill-building mini-courses. Take one course or combine courses for Certificates of Completion (Basic & Advanced levels) in Community-Based Research and Evaluation. Some courses may be eligible for partial course credit from participating university programs—speak to your academic advisor for details.

With Leaders in the Field

The Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) is a forerunner of community-based research in Canada and has played a national leadership role in conducting and promoting this approach to research. CCBR was one of the founding members of the national network called Community-Based Research Canada, serving as its secretariat from 2017-2022. Our courses build on our collective experience of 500+ projects over 40+ years. CCBR is a non-profit organization affiliated with Conrad Grebel University College on the University of Waterloo campus.

Initial Course Offerings

- ◆ Essentials of community-based research
- ◆ Community-based evaluation
- ◆ A menu of community-based research methods
- ◆ Principles and strategies for community engagement
- ◆ Research ethics in community settings
- ◆ Arts-based methods for collective action

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER

[Click here to find more course details and register](#)

[Click here to learn more about CCBR](#)

Certificate Program offered in partnership with



Conrad Grebel
University College



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO

In The Field: 2024-2025 Projects

Since our start in 1982, we've completed over 500 projects. On average, we work on 15 to 20 projects at a time. Below are the 30 projects we worked on during the 2024-2025 fiscal year (with funders in brackets).

Conducting Community-Based Research	Promoting Community-Based Research
Continuing Projects from Previous Years	Continuing Projects from Previous Year
Food Banks Canada's After the Bell Program: Evaluation Enhancement (Food Banks Canada)	Certificate in Program Evaluation as Organizational Development Wilfrid Laurier University (Wilfrid Laurier University Continuing Education)
Pedagogies of Community Engagement (Spencer Foundation via The Governing Council of the University of Toronto)	
Adapting Participatory Visual Methods to Online and Hybrid Settings with Diverse Communities (Canadian Institute for Health Research via Trillium Health Partners)	Evaluation Capacity Network: Collaborating for Community-Driven and Culturally Relevant Early Childhood Practices, Programs, and Policies (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada via University of Alberta)
Researching Barriers to Gender-Based Violence Services for Canadian Muslims Through Community-Driven Knowledge Mobilization (Women and Gender Equality Canada via Muslim Advisory Council of Canada)	
Evaluation of the Inner City Family Health Team Substance Use Hub in Toronto (Substance Use and Addictions Program, Health Canada via Inner City Family Health Team)	Coaching and Consultation for Positive Actions: Breaking HIV Stigma (REACH Nexus via Public Health Agency of Canada)
Using Community-Based Research to Inform Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition Priorities (Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition)	
Evaluation Enhancement for Food Banks Canada's Tax Clinic Program (Food Banks Canada)	
Community Plan and Evaluation Framework Development (Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council)	
Rural and Remote Mental Health Needs Assessment (Canadian Mental Health Association National)	
New Projects	New Projects
Community-Based Theory of Change Study (Food Banks Canada)	Photovoice as a Community-Based Research Technique: Training Series for a Group of Research Assistants at University of Toronto Mississauga (University of Toronto Mississauga)
Family and Children Services of the Waterloo Region Community-Led Needs and Resources Assessment (Family and Children Services of the Waterloo Region)	
Toronto Newcomer Strategy Evaluation (Toronto Newcomer Office, City of Toronto)	Supports for Youth Substance Use Prevention Program: Building Capacity for Community-Based Research and Evaluation (Public Health Agency of Canada via the Knowledge Development and Exchange Hub)
Understanding the Experiences of African Asylum Seekers in Toronto, Peel, and York (United Way of Greater Toronto)	
Food Banks Canada Retail Food Program Evaluation (Food Banks Canada)	
Literature Review: Best Practices on Family Caregiving and Delivering Outreach Services to Vulnerable Adults (PLEA Community Services)	
Co-Designing with the CHAMPP4KIDS Study: Creating Community-Tailored Resources to Promote Positive Parenting and Health Equity for Communities (Public Health Agency of Canada via McMaster University)	
The Canadian Arab Women's Association Project on Arab Women's Employment in Waterloo Region and Guelph (Women and Gender Equality Canada)	Impact Evaluation & Needs Assessment Toolkit (Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health (Previously CARIZON Family and Community Services))
Dialogue for Shared Futures Pilot (Conrad Grebel University College)	
The Art of Wellness: Engaging Youth in Youth-Led STBBI Prevention (The Canadian Institute for Health Research via Dalhousie University)	
Evaluation of New Brunswick's Rural Settlement Network (New Brunswick Multicultural Council)	The Certificate Program in Community-Based Research (Course Registrants)
Evaluation of Post-Exit Client Experience in the Rohingya Community (Reception House Waterloo Region)	
Community Alliance for Accessible Treatment Rainbow Resilience Evaluation (Women and Gender Equality via Community Alliance for Accessible Treatment)	
Evaluation of Pre-Arrival Settlement Services (JVS Toronto)	

Summary of 2024-2025 Projects

Total Projects

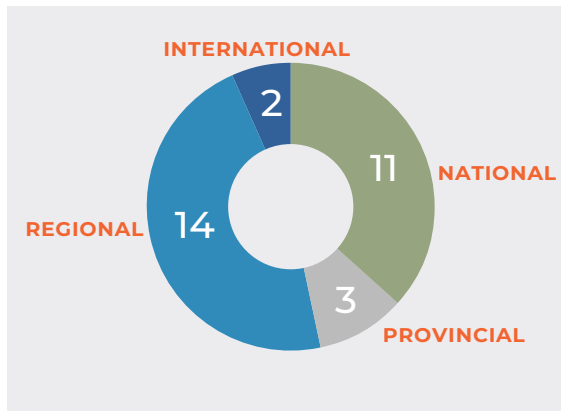
NEW PROJECTS
THIS YEAR

16

CONTINUING
PROJECTS FROM
PREVIOUS YEARS

14

Geographic Scope

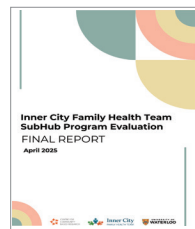


Service Areas



Featured Reports and Coaching Resources

Final Report: SubHub Program Evaluation
(Inner City Family Health Team)



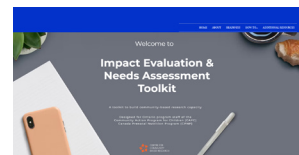
Rural Settlement Network Evaluation



Understanding the Experiences of African Asylum
Seekers in Peel, York, and Toronto



Impact Evaluation & Needs Assessment Toolkit



Co-Authored Academic Articles

Martin, J., Switzer, S., Janzen, R., Schincariol McMurtry, L., Sadati, S.M.H. (in press). Assessing for Equity: Internal Evaluations of Community-Based Research Programs. *Engaged Scholar Journal*.

Fuentes, K., Mahajan, S., Switzer, S., Saroya, G., Giannarakos, A., & Mansfield, E. (2025). Adapting Participatory Visual Methods to Online and Hybrid Settings: A Scoping Review and Thematic Analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 24. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/16094069251328147>

Our Finances

CCBR continues to show strong financial health. Our accumulated reserves are significant.

For complete audited financial statements, please visit:

<https://www.communitybasedresearch.ca/our-finances>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A heartfelt thank you to our Board Members, Staff, Students, and Funding Partners for your invaluable support. Your dedication has been essential to our achievements. We are truly grateful for your contributions.

BOARD MEMBERS

Hsiao d'Ailly - President
Daniela Seskar-Hencic - Vice-President/ Secretary
Robert G. Rosehart - Treasurer
Kokila Khanna - Board Member
John Neufeld - Board Member
Jessica Deming - Board Member
Anita Taylor - Board Member

STAFF MEMBERS

Rich Janzen - Executive Director
Sarah Switzer - Senior Researcher
Hani Sadati - Senior Researcher
Lisa Schincariol McMurtry - Senior Researcher
Janna Martin - Centre Researcher
Dayan De Souza - Centre Researcher
Rashmi Narkhede - Centre Researcher
Katie MacEntee - Senior Researcher
Areej Al Shammiry - Researcher
Sohaila Isaqzai - Researcher
Jean de Dieu Basabose - Researcher
Rawhia Jandali - Administrative Coordinator

STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS, AND COMMUNITY RESEARCHERS

Ashley Marin
Liz Weber
Kendyll Cassels
Sophia Rosli
Hayley Clin
Amanda Brotman
Leiann Van Lange

OUR FUNDING PARTNERS

Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health
Food Banks Canada
Spencer Foundation via the University of Toronto
Canadian Institute for Health Research via Trillium Health Partners
Women and Gender Equality Canada via Muslim Advisory Council of Canada
Substance Use and Addictions Program, Health Canada via Inner City Family Health Team
Halton Suicide Prevention Coalition
Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council
Canadian Mental Health Association, National
Family and Children Services of the Waterloo Region
Toronto Newcomer Office, City of Toronto
United Way of Greater Toronto
PLEA Community Services
Public Health Agency of Canada via McMaster University
Women and Gender Equality Canada
Conrad Grebel University College
Canadian Institute for Health Research via Dalhousie University
New Brunswick Multicultural Council
Reception House Waterloo Region
JVS Toronto
Wilfrid Laurier University Continuing Education
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada via University of Alberta
REACH Nexus via Public Health Agency of Canada
University of Toronto Mississauga
Public Health Agency of Canada via the Knowledge Development and Exchange Hub



Staff, students, and board members at CCBR gather for a day of reflection, brainstorming, and visioning.

Vision for Tomorrow

CCBR will continue to collaborate with our partners in **Building Responsive, Supportive, and Equitable Communities**. We remain guided by our current strategic plan that emerged from our Staff and Board retreat in 2023. It has five priority areas:

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE CCBR

We will prioritize staff wellness and retention, financial soundness, and the development of new CCBR-wide initiatives that extend beyond individual projects.

EVALUATING OUR OWN ORGANIZATION

We will conduct our own internal evaluation that is framed by our organizational theory of change and that will help fuel our organizational learning.

ADVANCING EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI)

We will critically reflect on our current practices and resources through an EDI lens in order to improve our efforts in promoting and practising EDI.

PROMOTING GREATER VISIBILITY OF CCBR

We will better communicate the value of who we are and what we do, both through our website and through other promotional materials.

MOBILIZING OUR LEARNINGS

We will improve how we share what we are learning through our work, via newly developed learning initiatives (e.g., training events) and services (e.g., coaching).

**THE CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY BASED
RESEARCH OFFICES ARE LOCATED
AT CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY (IN
THE KINDRED CENTRE FOR PEACE
ADVANCEMENT) ON THE UNIVERSITY
OF WATERLOO CAMPUS. OUR STAFF
LIVE IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS
SOUTHERN ONTARIO.**



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**COME PARTNER WITH US.
COME LEARN WITH US.
COME DREAM WITH US.**