



# **NEWCOMERS EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (N.E.E.D.S.) INC.**

## **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**APRIL 1, 2022 - MARCH 31, 2023**

# Acknowledgements by CEO Margaret von Lau

On behalf of the agency, I would like to thank:

- All the staff for their ongoing dedication, hard work, and profound impact on our clients;
- Executive and Management teams for sharing their expertise and providing exceptional support;
- Volunteers for their impact and commitment to our agency;
- Board Members for their guiding vision and invaluable contribution; and,
- Funders for supporting our mandate and making this year such a success.

With the hard work, guidance, and support of our entire team, we successfully provided essential and quality settlement services to 4,671 newcomer children, youth, and their families in the 2022-23 fiscal year. We responded to unprecedented numbers of newcomers amidst the very early post-pandemic period following the COVID-19 global pandemic. We are incredibly proud to have had the opportunity to support our young clients and see their individual and collective growth, success, and contribution toward building a more diverse Canada.

Special thanks to Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Province of Manitoba, Service Canada, and The Winnipeg Foundation for their ongoing financial support.



*N.E.E.D.S. Inc.  
CEO Margaret von Lau*

Sincerely,  
Margaret von Lau  
Chief Executive Officer

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# Overview

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, we provided services to **4,671** immigrant and refugee children, youth, and their families, which is **82%** higher than the previous year.

The unanticipated influx of newcomers from Ukraine significantly impacted the demand for our programs and services.

A total of 109 FTE staff, representing more than 20 countries of origin, were employed to facilitate programming for newcomer children and youth.

Our Management and Executive teams developed and coordinated programs and services at our agency and supported front-line staff in meeting the needs of our clients. This included ensuring that staff had the appropriate technological resources to provide services to clients for in-person and remote delivery, as well as overseeing reporting and evaluation processes in all programs.

Our volunteer program engaged 133 volunteers and practicum students, who supported clients accessing the SWIS program and Employment Services, logging a total of 8,233 volunteer hours.

N.E.E.D.S. Inc. has successfully participated in the Government of Canada's initiative to resettle displaced Ukrainians under the Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) initiative.

Our agency has introduced the Continuous Learning and Improvement Program (CLIP) to nurture a learning environment for staff, and to support their professional growth and enhance program improvements.



# Agency Statistics

4,671

Total number of clients served

2,704

Total children and youth clients

1,967

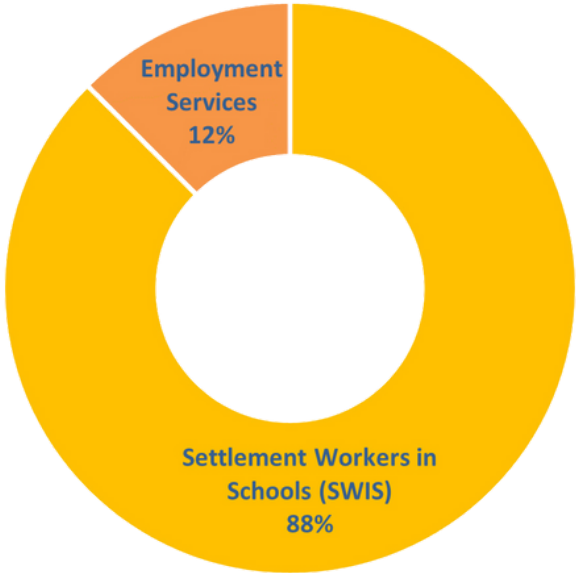
Total family member clients

1,758

Total volunteer contacts

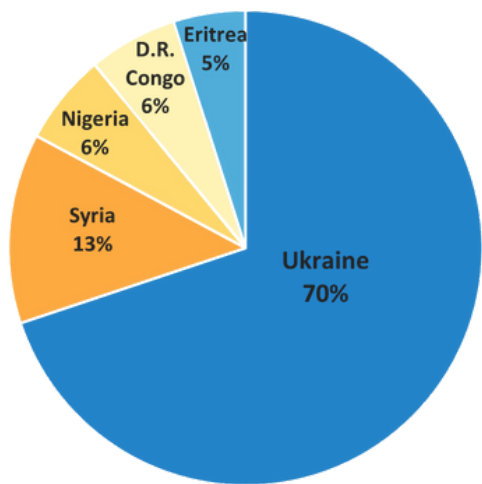
8,233

Total number of volunteer hours



- Approximately 90% of clients accessed Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) services in 2022-2023, with a total of 4671 clients served.
- An additional 618 clients accessed Employment Services, representing just over 10% of the Agency’s clients in the fiscal year.

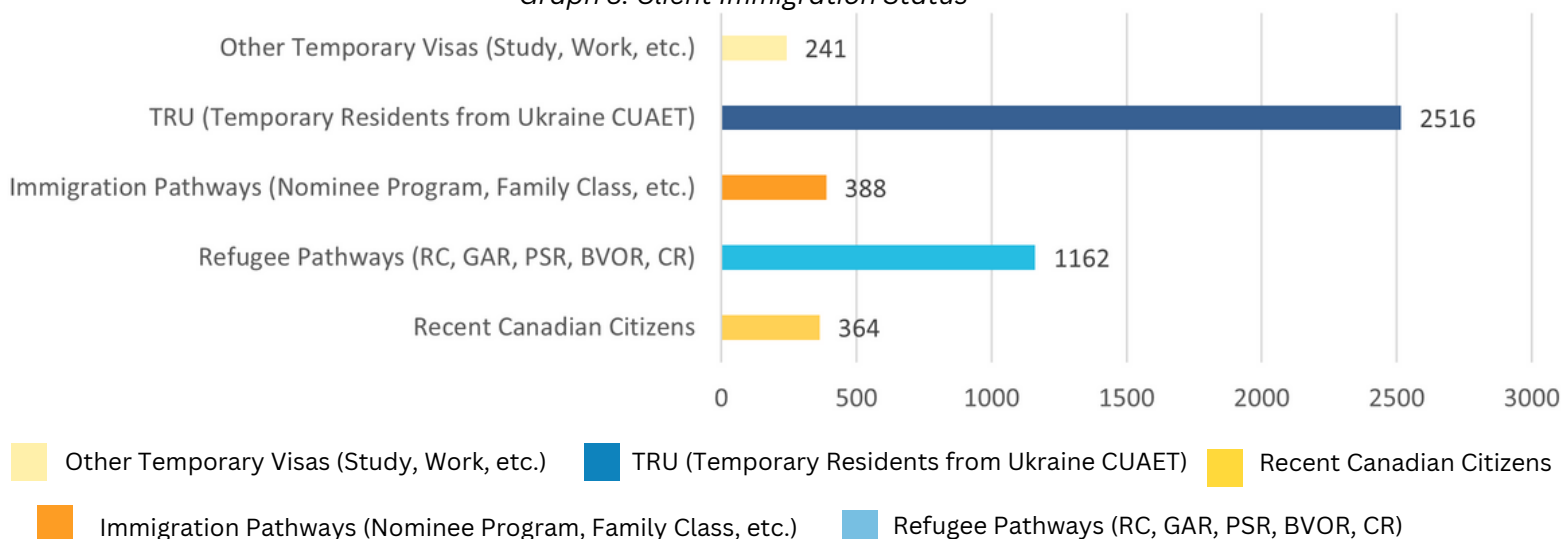
Graph 1: Percentage of clients by program



The demographic composition of our clients significantly changed from the previous year to this fiscal year. While Syria had been the top source-country of our clients since 2015, Ukraine has now become the country of origin of 70% of our clients. Other countries of origin reflected among our clients include Syria, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Eritrea.

Graph 2: Top 5 countries of client origin

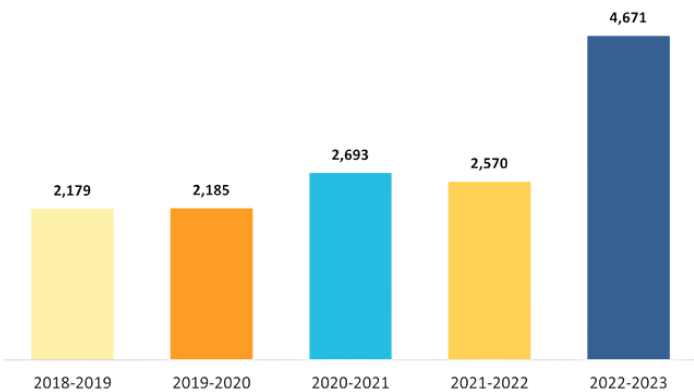
Graph 3: Client Immigration Status



Non-refugees (IMM, CND, Visa holders) constituted the largest number of clients (approximately 60%) this year. Interestingly, although refugees (GAR, PSR, BVOR, CR) had been a dominant group in recent years, they constituted only one quarter (25%) of the clients we served in 2022-23.

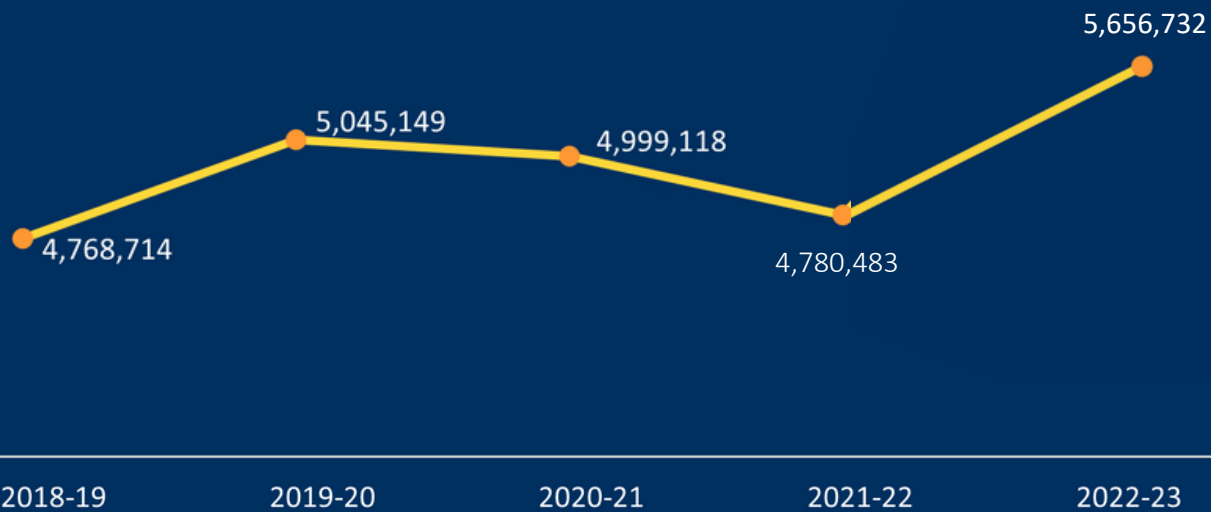
Notably, 20% of the Manitoba-eligible clients that we served this year were new Canadians. Funding received from the Province of Manitoba’s Department of Advanced Education, Skills & Immigration supported N.E.E.D.S. Inc. to deliver educational and employment services and support to these clients. Other non-Permanent Residents, such as international students and refugee claimants, were also able to access settlement services as a result of this funding.

While there has been steady increase in the number of clients accessing our services since 2018-2019, the number drastically increased in 2022-23, primarily due to the newcomer influx from Ukraine. The number of clients we served this fiscal year was 82% higher than that of the previous year.



Graph 4: Total clients over previous five years

Along with the number of clients served, funding to the agency also increased significantly this year, with a 17% increase over the previous fiscal year. Major funding sources included IRCC Settlement Services and Service Delivery Improvement (SDI) initiatives. Additionally, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) funded the Enhanced Wellness project. We also had several additional funding sources as noted below.



Graph 5: Funding revenue over previous five years

## Additional funding sources

- **Winnipeg Foundation One Time Grant**
  - support the CLIP initiative
- **Blue Cross Healthy Community Challenge**
  - support the mental wellness of recently arrived refugees to Winnipeg.
- **City of Winnipeg Community Safety and Crime Prevention Fund**
  - support our Hot and Healthy Meal program.
- **Government of Manitoba**
  - Newcomer Community Integration Support (NCIS) Program and Youth Employment for Newcomers (YEN) Program.
- **Telus Friendly Future Foundation**
  - support the Stand up to Racism Program
- **Social Research Development Council (SRDC) Partnership**
  - assess the effectiveness of the Youth Employment for Newcomers (YEN) Program
- **Winnipeg Foundation**
  - Proactive Nourish Potential Grant to support the Hot and Healthy Meal Program.
- **Spence Neighbourhood Association**
  - Community Incentive Grant to support the Hot and Healthy Meal Program
- **Assiniboine Credit Union**
  - Community Grant to support technology-assisted service delivery.

# Volunteers Statistics

133

Volunteers  
and  
Practicum  
students

8,233

Volunteer  
Hours



" The Organization is fantastic and truly supports the clients and their families in such an impactful way. Seeing the client's progress even from as little as a week, is so heartwarming and rewarding. I often reflect back to the times I felt helpless as a new immigrant in the country, not being able to speak English and facing so many challenges young kids shouldn't have to face at that age. I feel very proud to have worked with a team that helps to educate, empower, and support clients."

A total of 133 volunteers and practicum students provided supports in a variety of programs. These included Remote Homework, SWIS In-House (Introduction to Canadian Education - INTRO), SWIS Off-Site, and Employment Services to clients in the 2022-23 fiscal year. This year, volunteers and practicum students completed a total of 8,233 hours. New technologies have allowed volunteers to support clients in new ways, and to extend our service across a broader area of the city.



# Service Reports

## SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS (SWIS) SERVICES

Through the delivery of six core activities, the SWIS program provided essential settlement, education, and school integration supports to 4331 newcomer and refugee children, youth, and their family members.



2,364

newcomer and refugee children and youth served

1,967

family member clients served

130

schools across five school divisions in Winnipeg

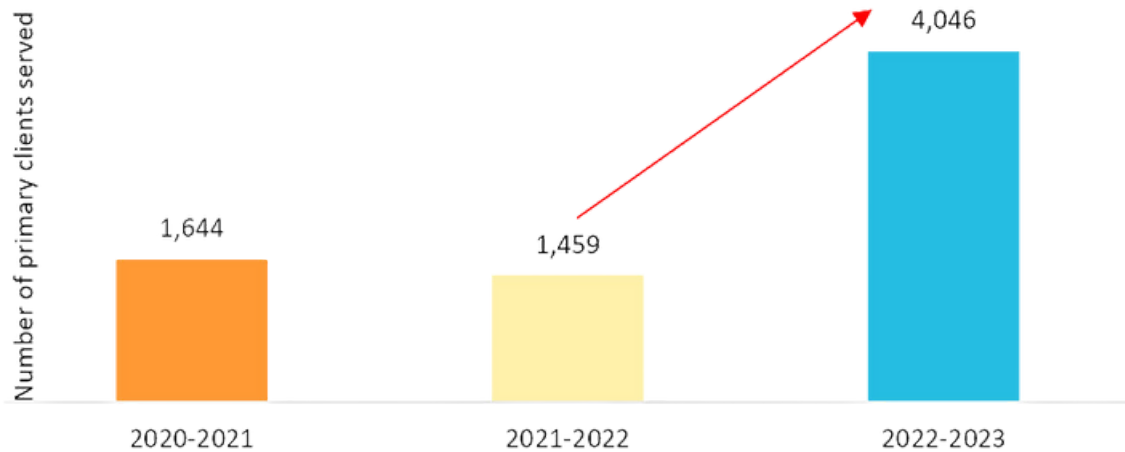
In addition, the SWIS Program assisted family members of our children and youth clients (their parents/guardians, siblings, other extended family members) through referrals, and the delivery of events that covered topics related to community, seasonal safety, multiculturalism, diversity, human and civil rights in Canada, and settlement preparedness. These services were delivered for 1,967 clients.

To facilitate SWIS Program delivery and promote clients' access to services, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. partnered with over 130 schools across five school divisions in Winnipeg during this fiscal year. This is the highest number of schools the agency has ever partnered with to support newcomer students.

SWIS activities and services also supported school staff (administration, teachers, support workers) through the following activities and services:

- Interpretation supports
- Cross-cultural awareness information
- Settlement and cross-cultural events at school
- Conflict resolution support
- Trauma and mental health capacity building
- Supported parent-teacher conferences and events at school
- Provided follow-up assistance for students who stopped attending school and/or were experiencing other school-related challenges

Graph 9: Total SWIS clients over previous three years



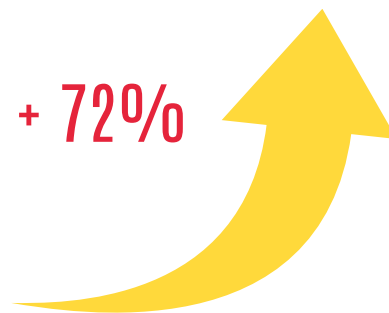
As seen in Graph 9, there was a notable rise in the number of clients accessing SWIS Program services during the 2022-23 fiscal year. This increase is significant, as the total number of clients accessing SWIS Program was nearly three times higher than in the previous fiscal year. It is worth mentioning that this substantial growth occurred in all areas of SWIS Program services, including the INTRO Program and in school-based SWIS Program activities.

With the ongoing influx of refugees, particularly from Ukraine, the INTRO program has gained even more recognition for its value in supporting children who have experienced challenging conditions prior to their arrival in Winnipeg.



**Enhanced 1-on-1 PSE**

The unanticipated influx of newcomers from Ukraine and other regions has led to a continuous rise in demand for Information & Orientation sessions. Clients accessing this program demonstrated consistent need for language support, interpretation assistance, and psychosocial support.



**Assessment and Orientation Workshops for Newcomers**

Needs and Assets Assessment and Referral Services (NAARS), Psycho-Social Education (PSE) supports, and the homework program (delivered through the Remote After-School Mentorship Program - RAMP), all exceeded anticipated service delivery targets.

# Other activities and services offered through the SWIS Program



## Post-Secondary Bridge Program (PSBP)

This program helps prepare newcomer and refugee youth in grades 10 to 12, for their transition into post-secondary education and training.

## “We Thrive” group PSE sessions

These workshops help participants understand trauma triggers and the brain, coping strategies, emotional literacy, and techniques for dealing with strong emotions.

## Circle of Security parenting groups

These workshops are offered to newcomer parents/guardians to help increase their parenting skills and improve attachment with their children.

## Making Sense of Trauma Training

These sessions provide training to staff and other agencies to better address trauma-related issues and offer a safer educational environment for newcomer and refugee children and youth.

## English and French Language Club

These sessions provide an opportunity for clients to enhance their language skills in either English or French.

## Stand Up to Racism

This series of workshops encourage youth to develop strong messages to combat racism and produce a poster campaign using digital applications.

# Employment Services



Through the delivery of five core activities, our Employment Services program continued to provide essential employment supports to newcomer youth (ages 16 - 29). Clients received in-depth employability skills training through sector-specific workshops, internships, and individual employment coaching.

74

Workshops and presentations

156

Clients obtained employment

240

Participated in work placement program

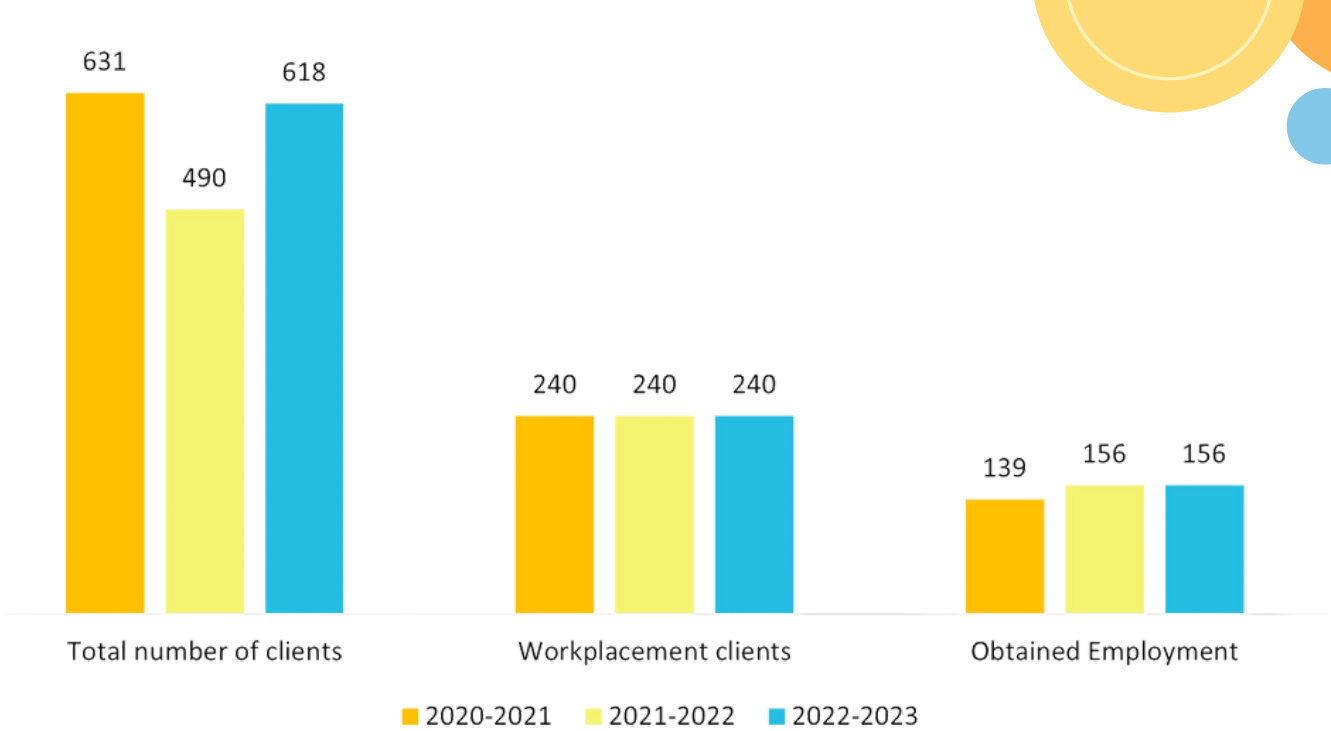
54

YEN Program clients

The Employment Services program delivered 74 workshops and presentations, covering topics such as Moving to Canada, Self-Discovery, Goal Setting, Career Exploration, Resume Writing, Cover Letters, Job Searching, Preparing for Work, mock interviews, and several more.

Workshops in the Youth Employment for Newcomers: Career-Driven Internship (YEN) Program incorporated the Nine Essential Skills model and reflected the Social Research and Development Corporation's (SRDC) Skills for Success model, which includes social and emotional skills as central components for labour market preparation.

In the 2022-2023 fiscal year, 240 clients participated in work placement program/training, and 156 clients obtained employment through unpaid work placements or direct hiring.



Graph 12: Employment Services clients - previous three years



To facilitate work placements, our agency relies on the partnerships we have established with several organizations and businesses in Winnipeg. These include the City of Winnipeg and the Newcomer Employment Hub at the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.



Through mass hiring events, mentorship opportunities, and/or accepting client referrals, employer partners created unique employment opportunities for our clients, and allowed them to showcase their skills and talent.

This year, the Employment Services program experienced a rise in demand for the services we offer. We attribute a portion of this increase to the role that the Government of Manitoba’s funding has played, allowing us to extend services and support clients who were previously ineligible.



A trend observed this year was that many employers wanted to skip unpaid work placements and opted to directly hire our clients, while allowing us to provide workplace monitoring supports to increase job retention. Many of our partners have expressed that they are experiencing constant labour shortages, and access to a trained and qualified pool of employment-ready participants has been a huge relief as they struggle to recover from the impact of the pandemic.

# PARTNERSHIPS

N.E.E.D.S. Inc. has consistently upheld its dedication to grounding its services in community partnerships. In pursuit of this commitment, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. actively engages in strategic collaborations with an array of service providers, educational institutions, employers, community groups, and other networks. Our robust partnerships have played an indispensable role in the fulfillment of our organizational mission.

Given the high influx of newcomers this year, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. took proactive measures to reinforce existing partnerships and forge new ones. Noteworthy among these new partnerships was a collaboration to effectively respond to the influx of newcomers from Ukraine. This partnership, name UWIN, involved the Ukraine Canadian Congress, Archeparchy, Seven Oaks School Division, and N.E.E.D.S. Inc. This initiative was particularly significant as it addressed a range of settlement-related challenges faced by this specific Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) audience.

N.E.E.D.S. Inc. maintains partnerships with employers who provide a range of opportunities for our clients. These partnerships ensure that we can provide on-the-job training, job fairs, networking, mentoring, and work placements.

The employer partnerships established for the fiscal year of 2022-2023 encompassed diverse sectors of employment, such as community organizations, food and hospitality, personal care work, retail, and sports and recreation.



# SUCCESSES & PROMISING PRACTICES

The post-pandemic recovery period and an unexpectedly high influx of immigrants and refugees presented many challenges this year. N.E.E.D.S. Inc. met these challenges and experienced many successes in 2022-2023.

Highlights of these successes included:

Enhanced needs assessment procedures

Diversity and inclusion curricula

Effective settlement-sector partnerships

Increased acceptance of the need for psychosocial programming and training

In-person and remote service delivery options

Collaborations for professional learning

Additional funding sources

Positive impact of programs and services

Established a Culture of Continuous Learning and Improvement

## Enhanced needs assessment procedures

N.E.E.D.S. Inc. developed an enhanced system of determining clients' needs and the types of services required.

## Diversity and inclusion curricula

The INTRO Program saw the need to include more lessons on diversity and inclusion in Canada. To address this need, our staff developed lessons focusing on rights and freedoms in Canada, notably around race, religion, language, and LGBTQ2S+ rights.





## Effective settlement-sector partnerships

Over the past year, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. observed an increase in its positive reputation among local employer partners, resulting in employers hiring more N.E.E.D.S. Inc. clients. Employers acknowledge that having access to a pool of highly trained and invested clients has been a relief, as they operate in an uncertain labour market which is in the very early stages of pandemic recovery.

NEEDS has also witnessed strengthened partnerships with school divisions through our SWIS program, as we provided support and services in over 130 schools across four school divisions in Winnipeg, which marked the highest number of schools the Agency has ever supported.

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## Increased acceptance of the need for psychosocial programming and training

Schools have been very receptive to having our staff run Psychosocial Education group sessions at school sites. Additionally, more partner agencies are requesting the “Making Sense of Trauma” training for all staff members so that they can add trauma-informed care to their practices.

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## In-person and remote service delivery options

During the pandemic, we learned that online program delivery has many benefits, such as making programs more accessible and allowing us to extend delivery to a wider audience. Many parents now prefer remote programming as it reaches their children in the safety and comfort of their homes. As a result, we have employed a hybrid delivery model incorporating both online and in-person sessions. The switch to offering online support allowed us to reach a larger number of clients, since clients from all over Winnipeg can now access our services from home.

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## Collaborations for professional learning

On February 24, 2023, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. hosted a roundtable sharing session on responding to the recent influx of refugee students. This session involved 17 participants representing seven school divisions, as well as NEC, MANSO, and Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning. The report generated from this event was presented at the 25th National Metropolis Canada Conference, held in Ottawa. In addition, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. presented the evaluation of two innovative projects directed at supporting the mental health of newcomer youth – Enhanced Wellness and Stand up to Racism – at the Metropolis Identities Summit held in Winnipeg.



## Additional funding sources

In addition to our core IRCC funding, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. was able to secure additional funding from various grants, foundations and corporate sponsors. The monetary support received from these sources enabled us to extend services and provide further supports to clients.

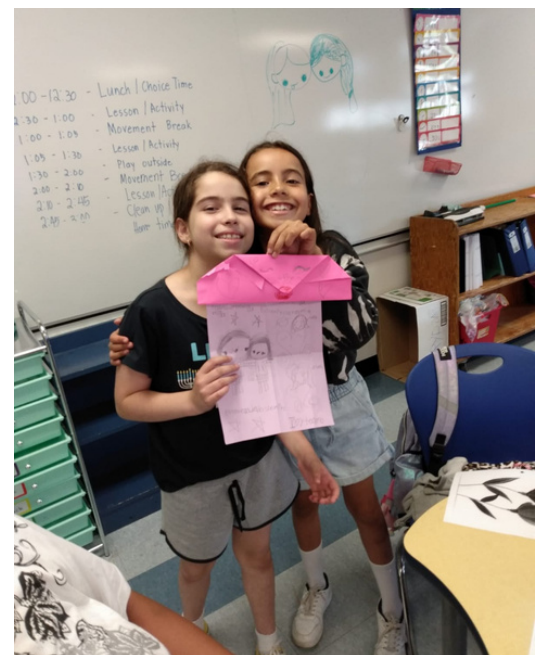


## Positive impact of programs and services

Our ongoing research and evaluation of programs indicates that our programs are effective and truly assist clients. We have seen measurable success in all programs, including the Post Secondary Bridge Program, the Remote After School Program (RAMP), and the INTRO Program.

## Established a Culture of Continuous Learning and Improvement

Our agency has introduced the Continuous Learning and Improvement Program (CLIP) to nurture a learning environment for staff, and to support their professional growth and enhance program improvements. All staff have been brought into a process of program improvement, whereby staff feedback and observations continue to advise the process of program improvement.



# CHALLENGES THIS YEAR

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## HIGH INFLUX AND GROWING WAITLISTS

Due to the high influx of newcomer families, the INTRO Program had to establish a waitlist for the first time in its history. To address the waitlist, a restriction was imposed on the number of weeks clients could attend the program. The influx also resulted in increased SWIS caseloads. And increased demand for SWIS programs and services.

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## STAFF FATIGUE AND VOLUNTEER RETENTION

Staff retention has been a challenge in the settlement sector since the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. In our agency, this impacted the SWIS program, resulting in a reduced capacity to provide services and support for school integration. Additionally, there were ongoing challenges in finding and retaining qualified and motivated volunteers. The agency also experienced challenges related to staff sickness and fatigue.

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## CHALLENGES FACED BY UKRAINIAN FAMILIES

Ukrainian families under the CUEAT program faced many challenges. Our staff were heavily involved in helping Ukrainian clients navigate these issues, offering programs, interpretation, and referrals to resources.

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## INCREASED DEMAND FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL PROGRAMMING

School partners have observed that there was a high number of clients with psychosocial and emotional regulation challenges. There was also a higher-than-usual demand for psychosocial support among clients in our Employment Services program.

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## LABOUR MARKET DEMANDS VERSUS CLIENT SKILLS AND EXPECTATIONS

There has been an increased demand among newcomer youth for our employment services. This increase was coupled with a high demand by employers for work-ready employees.

# CONCLUSION

This has been a year of growth and success in the face of unforeseen challenges.

We experienced an abrupt growth in the number of clients and an increase in the demand for the key services. We faced these challenges with a high level of commitment and devotion. We served the highest-ever number of clients in the agency's history. We established the highest number of new partnerships with schools and employers to enhance our capacity. As a result, the 2022-23 fiscal year has been marked by expansion.

We have demonstrated our ability to positively and effectively respond to uncertain situations, and showed flexibility in adapting strategies to face new challenges. We have been a dependable partner for the Government of Canada, as well as for other newcomer-serving agencies in Manitoba. We embrace the view that continuous learning and improvement is essential for our agency in order to continue to respond to community emergencies and meet the needs of our clients.

