



**Altered
Minds
Inc.**

learning, changing, growing

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



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fAMILY Events



Rouwaeda and Hatem's Wedding



Walid and Nour's Gender Reveal Party



Executive Summary

In 2022-2023, Altered Minds Inc. received \$537,403 in funding from 9 sources, and served approximately 565 clients. For most of the year we had 4 full-time and 4 part-time staff (who worked only 1-2 days per week), but in the summer we benefitted from 19 temporary youth employees.

DONOR / FUNDER	PROGRAM / PROJECT	AMOUNT	OUTCOMES
Innovation Science & Economic Development (ISED)	Digital Literacy Exchange Program (DLEP): “Computers for Life” (C4L)	\$20,000 (Feb & Mar)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved digital literacy skills for 33 clients Kept refurbished computers out of landfills Hired adequate staff to effectively run C4L
Winnipeg Foundation	“Computers for Life” (C4L)	20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved digital literacy skills for 92 ‘disadvantaged’ clients
New Horizons	“Computers for Life” (C4L) - classes for seniors	17,334	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved digital literacy skills, reduced isolation, and enhanced independence for 68 seniors
Thomas Sill Foundation	“Computers for Life” (C4L)	20,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved digital literacy skills, increased confidence, and expanded awareness of online fraud for 57 ‘disadvantaged’ clients
Assiniboine Credit Union	Community Grant - 4 laptops	5,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided new laptops for staff and lab
Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)	Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA)	311,986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 328 pre-arrival clients were better prepared for landing in Manitoba
Canadian Heritage	Community Support, Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Initiatives (CSMARI) – “Safe Spaces”	110,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developed 8 curriculum modules on Indigenous themes Raised awareness of Indigenous experience among 9 immigrant youth
Department of Municipal Relations	Green Team	25,083	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19 youth were employed and gained skills related to agriculture
Winnipeg Foundation	Organizational Development Grant	\$8,000	Board and staff held a strategic planning session over 5 days, and developed a 1-year organizational plan
	TOTAL	\$537,402.96	

Searching for Funding and Doing More with Less

With the loss of core funding from the federal government in 2020, followed by 2 years of reeling from the pandemic and its impact on immigration and in-person services, it has become a matter of survival for our staff to develop skills in proposal writing and for doing more with less.

Proposals Submitted

This past year, we submitted 14 proposals requesting nearly \$2 million in funding. We were pleased to receive first time funding from Winnipeg Foundation, CIBC and the Thomas Sill Foundation. Funds from 8 successful proposals were enough to cover most project-related costs, but they did not cover program administration. For most of the year, therefore, the Executive Director, Financial Administrator, Office Manager, and IT Support worked only 1-2 days/week, relying on gradually diminishing savings accumulated during the 17-year history of the agency to cover their wages.

Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA)

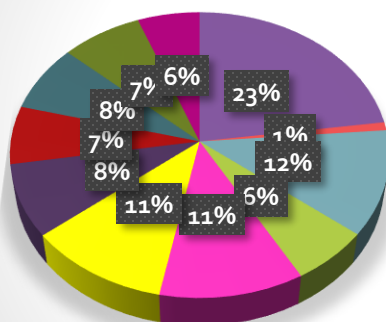


SOPA is a national program administered by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) with partners across Canada except in Quebec. Designated agencies in each service region provide pre-arrival employment services for Permanent Residents destined to their provinces. Our SOPA Manitoba team consists of one Intake Counsellor, a Soft Skills Facilitator, a Job Search Strategies Facilitator, and an Employment Specialist. At the end of the fiscal year, Yulia Savchuk left SOPA for an expanded role with Computers for Life, and Nef Villagonzalo replaced Yulia beginning April 1, 2023.



This fiscal year was much busier than last year. Mila completed 328 Intake Sessions, as compared with last year's 96 Intakes. After completing the Intake Session, most clients went on to enroll in one or more of the facilitated or self-guided courses in the table below, although not all were able to complete the courses before coming to Canada.

Intake Referrals to SOPA Courses & Services



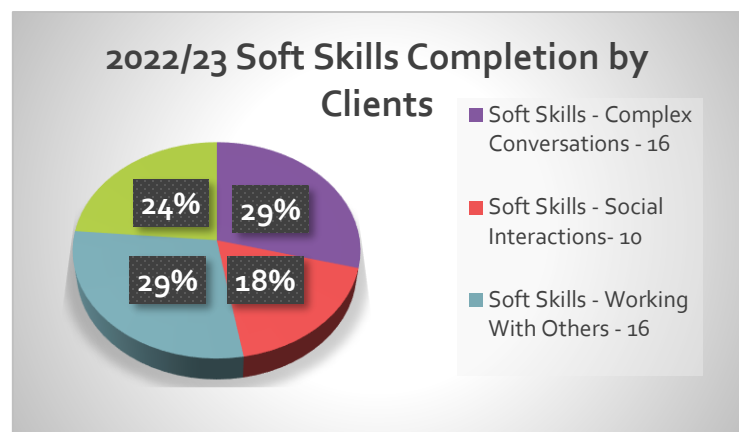
■ Employment Counselling	323
■ Passport to Success	13
■ Working in Canada	168
■ Introduction to Business in Canada	88
■ Canadian Workplace Integration	160
■ Job Search Strategies Express	158
■ Job Search Strategies Facilitated	116
■ Soft Skills - Complex Conversations	93
■ Soft Skills - Social Interactions	108
■ Soft Skills - Working With Others	107
■ Soft Skills - Workplace Communication	82

Client Feedback

Prospective immigrants really appreciate the one-on-one live intake session they have with Mila upon registering for SOPA. Nazym from Kazakhstan said, *“Thanks a lot for the wonderful and totally useful meeting. You are very kind and answered all my questions. I have learned a lot. It was very valuable and it lessened my fears.”* A Nigerian client, Blessing, said, *“The session gave me valuable insights into the job market and how I can transfer my skills and adapt them to the Canadian workplace.”*

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead to next year, administrators of the SOPA program nationally, hope to see an increase in the number of clients who complete the courses they register for, particularly the Soft Skills courses. This chart shows the percentage of registrants who completed the soft skills courses listed, despite efforts by online facilitators to encourage clients by responding quickly to assignments and questions, and despite peers in Canada emphasizing the importance of these courses for success in Canadian careers.



Computers for Life (C4L)



The Computers for Life program is offered at 2 Levels and is easy to customize and adapt to the level of the learners. The curriculum consists of 24 hours of instruction, delivered 2 or 3 days a week, over the course of 1 month. At the end of the class, students receive a free computer to take home, provided by our partners Computers for Schools Manitoba and Electronic Recycling Association. Class hours and days depend on what students ask for when they register. Classes may be taught in person or online, although Level 1 classes are usually delivered in person.

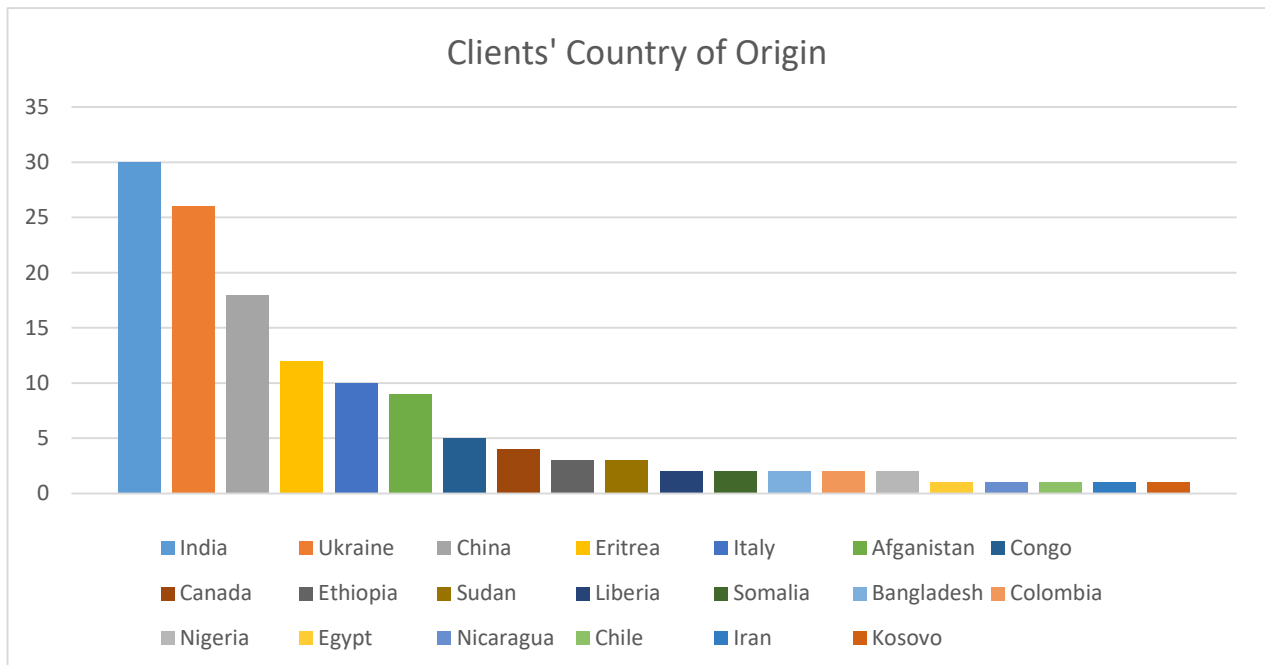
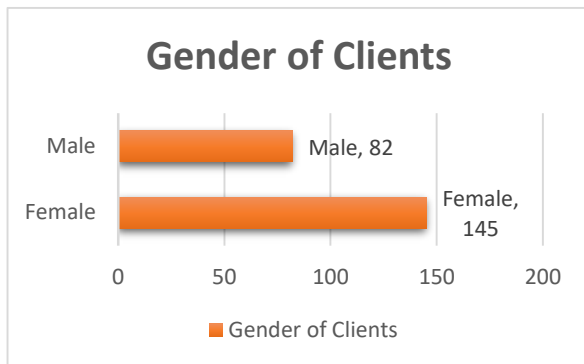
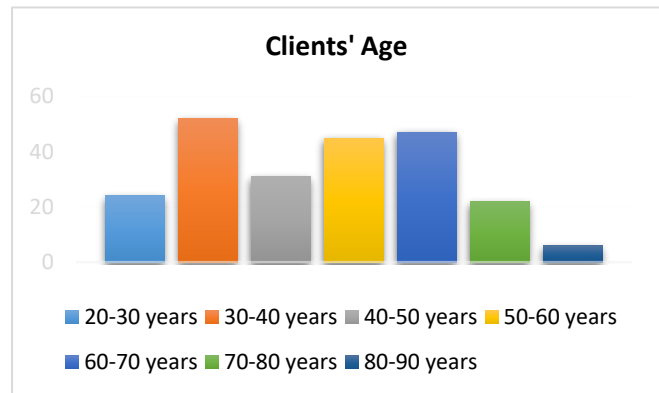
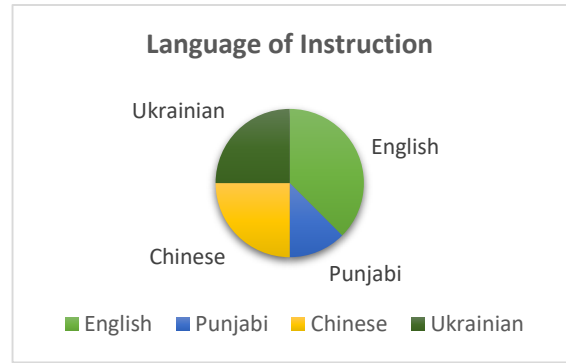
It was a difficult year for the Computers for Life program because there was no stable source of funding while we waited for the delayed Call for Proposals from Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada. We applied for many grants, and managed to secure 4. With this money, we were able to serve about 250 clients and deliver 23 four-week courses. We also

- Established a new partnership with the Caboto Centre to serve Italian seniors
- Launched computer classes in Ukrainian in response to the demand from newcomers
- Increased the number of senior clients from previous years
- Increased our class size from 6 people per class to 12-14 as it was in pre-COVID times

Although anyone can attend the program, most classes are comprised of immigrants. Since many of our instructors are immigrants themselves, we offered 6 first language classes in Chinese, 3 in Punjabi, and 6 in Ukrainian, with the remaining 9 classes taught in English.

A majority of the clients in the program were 30-40 years old. The next largest age categories were 50-60 and 60-70, recruited with funding from New Horizons. The youngest client was 18 and the oldest was 89 years old.

Learners came from 20 countries, with the top 3 being India, Ukraine, and China. As in the previous years, females comprised almost two-thirds of the clients.



Client Testimonials

Paula Gonzalez, *"I have a 27 years old son who lives with autism. He was homeschooled during most of his K-G12 education so he didn't have a big exposure to computers. I found the Computers for Life (C4L) course option as a great option that suited his need to improve his skills on the matter. He completed both levels of C4L. The teacher and staff were very accommodating. He learned new things about computers and the Internet that he can now use in his job as a photographer and in his daily life. I would recommend other people dealing with special needs to take the C4L courses. The small size of the group, the materials and the instructor's experience help the students to succeed. I hope more people with barriers would benefit from the continuation of the C4L program."*

Olga Herbelin: *"My mother, Larisa Zonova, attended your classes and this became the catalyst for her rapid immersion in the world of computer possibilities. Since she has English language classes at the institute, some lessons are held online, so it is necessary to constantly interact with Google products, the lessons came in handy. And I am very grateful to you for your sensitive attitude and understanding of a person of an already respectable age for his speed of perception and assimilation of information. You created an atmosphere where even a very tense person was able to relax and gradually believe in his own abilities to master new knowledge. Although at one time she worked as a space engineer and had a lot of innovative ideas implemented for that time."*

Our Computer Instructors



Looking Ahead

We received our 2nd grant from Innovation, Science and Economic Development to continue delivering Computers for Life just 2 months before the end of the fiscal year! The Agreement is for 2-years, which allows us to breathe more easily till March 2025.



Green Team

For the second year in a row, AML received a Green Team grant to hire young people for summer jobs in 2022. With a slight increase in the grant, we were able to hire 19 youth between the ages of 15-29 to work on a variety of outdoor jobs at Myriad Village (Armstrong Municipality), Portage la Prairie, Ste. Agathe and Winnipeg.

When record breaking spring rains fell on soil already saturated with an unusual amount of melting snow, the water had nowhere to go, causing flooding in many parts of the province. This set back the planting season by several weeks, and forced farmers to divert flood waters so they could work their land. Residents of Myriad Village were particularly thankful for the help of green team employees, who helped dig channels and put in culverts to keep water off the roads and direct it towards the natural wetlands.



Other projects the Green Team helped with were:

- Preparing, planting, tending and harvesting organic gardens using ‘regenerative agriculture’ techniques
- Tearing down an old barn and cleaning the wood for recycling
- Helping a farmer harvest crops and prepare his chicken barn for winter
- Grounds-keeping around the Waverly Mosque
- Designing an ‘ashram’ or meditation centre out on the land – done by an international student trained as a civil engineer
- Participating in a pilot project by attending and providing feedback on a series of Indigenous Orientation workshops delivered by our staff.

Looking Ahead

We received another Green Team grant of \$20,500 (5,000 less than last year) to hire young people for the summer. Two teens will be working at Myriad Village, and others will be assist us as Youth Outreach Workers for the Safe Spaces project, recruiting young teens to participate in the Indigenous Orientation workshop series we’re developing.

“Safe Spaces” Project & Youth Drop-In Centre

In May we received a 2-year grant from Canadian Heritage to develop a series of 8 workshops about Indigenous history, experience of colonization, and current issues, and adapt it for youth, ages 14-18. The topics spring from the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and are part of the Indigenous Orientation Tool Kit (IOTK) currently being developed for adult immigrants in English language programs in Manitoba.

The purpose of the project is to bring together Indigenous and immigrant youth and provide them with the essential knowledge and skills to debunk myths, raise awareness about Indigenous history, share common experiences, and build positive relationships.

In addition to the workshops, we wanted to create a "Safe Space" at our Centre for youth to gather and develop friendships outside of the sessions. We hired a project coordinator to work on outreach, set up a Drop-In Centre and provide logistical support, and 2 co-facilitators - one Indigenous and one immigrant - to develop the curriculum and deliver the workshops.

We managed to get ping pong and pool tables, a variety of games, books and couches. We set up a prayer room with a comfortable rug, an arts and crafts area, and cubbies for studying or using the computer. Central Park is just outside the door for those who want to play sports, and the Knox Church will allow us to book their gym in the winter.



Field Trips and Indigenous Perspectives

In order to provide newcomers with firsthand experience and insight into Indigenous history and current perspectives, the Drop-In Team organized field trips to significant cultural sites, including Fort Whyte, Festival De Voyageur, and the Manitoba Museum. Through these visits, both the participants and facilitators deepened their appreciation for Indigenous culture.

Challenges

Despite all our efforts, we could not find youth to come to our Drop-in Centre. Eventually we expanded our definition of youth to include anyone up to the age of 29, and the Drop-In Team got friends and acquaintances to make up the first cohort of participants. Eight to ten participants attended each of the workshops and provided valuable feedback.

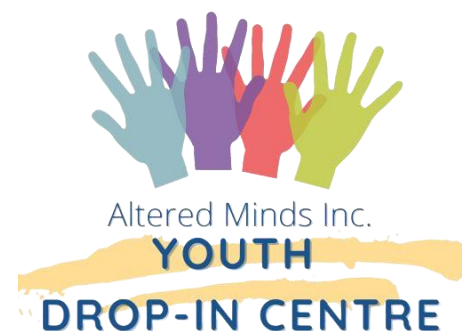
Accomplishments

Despite the difficulty of finding 14-18 year olds to practice with, co-facilitators have completed and piloted all 8 curriculum modules. Because of the breadth and depth of the topics, they divided each module into 2 3-hour workshops, creating a total of 16 workshops. The next step is to refine the materials and determine the best format for the modules.

Looking Ahead

With the help of our Indigenous staff and a renewed effort to draw teens to our Centre, we hope to deliver all 8 modules of the Indigenous Orientation workshops again in July and August, when teens are out of school. We are thrilled that the Louis Riel School Division has invited us to deliver the workshops after school at the Renee Deleurme Centre on Mondays and Wednesdays for 16 weeks beginning in October 2023! They have well-developed youth leadership programs for both newcomers and Indigenous youth whom we hope will be interested in the topics and the opportunity to share personal experiences together.

The summer sessions at our Centre and the workshops at Renee Deleurme will give our facilitators two more opportunities to hone the content and activities of the Indigenous Orientation workshops to make them relevant and engaging for teenagers. We hope that the completed modules will be used as a companion guide for youth, alongside the IOTK for adults, and promoted in other school divisions throughout Manitoba.



Strategic Planning

The past 4 years have been tough for Altered Minds but we managed to reach some significant goals. We have been successful at diversifying our funding, and we became a registered charity, which were major priorities identified at our strategic planning session in 2018. However both of these accomplishments require us to learn new skills, build our capacity, rethink who we are and what we want our focus to be as an organization.

Our mission statement was out of date. We were no longer serving only immigrant adults, but had expanded our services to include Indigenous youth. We were contorting our identity to match grant criteria, and we still had not figured out how to creatively and effectively use our role as a charitable organization to access resources. Clearly, it was time for another strategic planning session. Thanks to Winnipeg Foundation, we got the funds to hire a facilitator who guided us through the process of rewriting our organization's Mission, Vision and Values, and draft an Operational Plan for the next two years.

Our old mission statement...

Altered Minds Inc. welcomes refugees and immigrants to Manitoba and promotes the well-being of their families and communities by providing responsive programs and services that assist individuals in adapting to change and overcoming barriers to a good quality of life.

Our New Mission Statement!

Altered Minds provides responsive programs and services that assist individuals in acquiring skills to overcome barriers, build community and create positive change in the world.



Looking Ahead

So far, we have secured the following resources for projects and programs in 2023-2024 and beyond, and will be hosting more interns from the Green Team, Manitoba Start, and U of M's Applied Business Management program to help reduce our costs.

Projects for 2023-2024

CIBC Computer class	25,000.00
Winnipeg Foundation (Computer classes)	20,000.00
Housing Research	106,975.00
Settlement Online Pre-Arrival	324,462.15
Digital Literacy Exchange Program, ISED	390,000.00
Safe Spaces Project / Youth Drop-In	110,000.00
Canada Summer Jobs	6,759.00
Green Team	20,095.00
TOTAL	1,003,291.15

Board of Directors

Chair Monika Chakraborty Interpreter & Training Facilitator <i>Served from Mar 2010-Jul 2013, & Jul 2021 to present</i> 	Vice Chair Adebowale Onafowora Agribusiness Entrepreneur <i>From Jan 16, 2023 to present</i> 
Treasurer Gordon Campbell Educator, EAL Instructor <i>Served from July 2021-present.</i> 	Secretary Elena Davidenko Outreach Coordinator, Educator <i>From Jan 16, 2023 to present</i> 
Member at Large Ayoola Ajibare Communications Coordinator <i>Served from July 2021-present.</i> 	Sergii Stuzhuk Business coach / consultant, PR specialist <i>From Jan 16, 2023 to present</i> 
Raymond Ngarboui CEDA, Community Dev't Coordinator <i>Served from July 2021 to present.</i> 	Wenchuan Wang Interpreter, Import/Export Mgr <i>Served from July 2021 to present.</i> 