

# Urji Women Support Association of Edmonton

## Annual Community Report

2022

2023

*Urji Women Support Association of Edmonton team acknowledges that we are in Treaty six territory, the traditional meeting grounds and ancestral land of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux and Nakota Sioux.*

# Table of Contents

- About our Organization 01
- Vision & Mission 02
- Core Values 03
- Board of Directors 04
- Urji 2023 Programs 05
- Overseas Program 07
- Urji 2023 Activities 08
- Achievements 09
- Thank you to Urji Volunteers 10
- Partners and Funders 11



# About Our Organization



## A Brief Story About Urji Association

The story of our organization began in 2013 when our President, Iftu Abdalla was living in Saskatoon. Iftu got connected with Bridget who worked for an organization called Global Gathering Place. Bridget reached out to Iftu because she needed help with managing the excessive donations that her organization was receiving, by being involved in this task Iftu helped to coordinate sending donations to those who needed them in Ethiopia. In 2018 when Iftu moved to Edmonton, she realized how important it was for her to continue doing this work, as she had seen firsthand the impact that those donations have made in people's lives and in the community. She got connected to the Edmonton Mennonite Center for Newcomers where she was encouraged to find others from her community with similar interests in supporting her idea. By founding other members of the community and through a set of meetings, it was found that many other women in the community were in need of receiving support through donations both in Edmonton and back in Ethiopia.

Urji Women's Support Association of Edmonton registered as Non-profit organization under the Alberta Society Act in 2019.

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# Vision

A prosperous and progressive society to help one another thrive.

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# Mission

Support Canadian newcomers to integrate and succeed in Canadian society, by providing resourceful settlement programs and services designed to each individual needs.

We also support the education of children and the development of women overseas.

To accomplish our mission we partner with individuals, communities, and organizations to mobilize the support needed to meet the settlement needs of Canadian newcomers.



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# Core Values



01 Compassion

02 Confidentiality

03 Non-judgmental

04 Inclusive

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# Board of Directors & Officers

Iftu Abdishakur Abdalla	President
Qabale Liban Guyo	Secretary
Hawi Ganamo	Secretary
Balkisa Garane Shil	Treasurer
Leyla Anfote Gelcha	Treasurer
Yusra Abdulrazak Mohamed	Treasurer
Kieneni Muktar Mohammed	Communications
Darmi Liban Guyo	Auditor
Karu Abbagure Bayan	Assistant Auditor





# Urji 2023 Programs

## Settlement Services

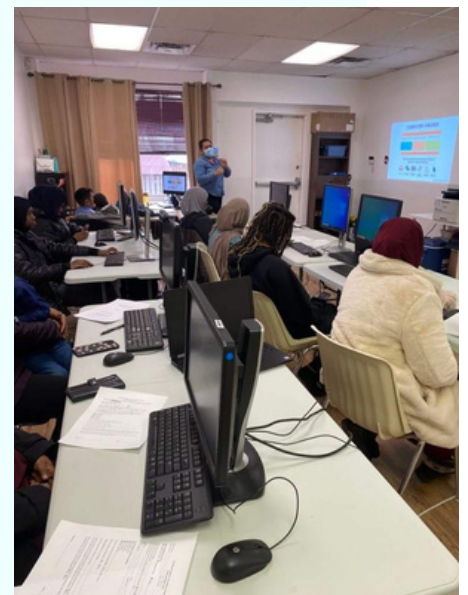
Urji Association has been able to support newcomers in Edmonton in the last year. Families and single individuals have been able to access the Settlement program were Urji Settlement Practitioner has been able to provide information, orientation and supported referrals to:

- Affordable and subsidized housing
- Financial services
- Transportation
- How to access healthcare services
- Children's education and language training for adults
- Mental Health programs
- Cultural activities



## Computer Classes

Improve the knowledge and skills using computers from the basics to, using and browsing the internet. In addition of learning common office software, and file management. By providing this program Urji women participants have gain confidence and the skills to perform activities in a computer.



## English Circle Practice

Coming to a new country with zero knowledge of one or two of the national languages can be a huge disadvantage for newcomers. For such a reason at Urji Association we promote the learning and practicing of the English skills in a group setting. These classes also aid in supporting women to feel confident when speaking the language and feel integrated in a community and do not feel isolated in their new home and country.



## Children Programs

While mothers participate at Urji Women programs children have also the opportunity to participate in different activities. Some of the activities that children enjoy during those times are painting, crafting, practice math, Arabic, science and more.





## Employment Training and Support for Women

The association hosts various activities and sessions aimed at personal and professional development. These activities help women gain valuable skills, boost self-confidence, and enhance their overall well-being..



## Managing Immigration Stress

Urji Women Support Association of Edmonton provided sessions to permanent residents and conventional refugees ages 18+ who are facing difficulties with families, their own health such as depression, anxiety, home sickness and culture shock. During in person sessions participants were provided with various resources and were educated on how to manage stress and how to cope with the new environment in Canada.



# Black Women Empowerment Safe Circle

These gatherings provide a safe space for Black women to openly share their experiences, challenges, and triumphs, creating a supportive network that promotes solidarity and mutual understanding.

Urji Women Support  
Association of Edmonton



The Urji Women Support Association is a cornerstone in the lives of Black women, offering a platform for discussion, personal growth, cultural celebration, and a supportive community that empowers its members to thrive in all aspects of life.



# Overseas Program

Urji Women organization in collaboration with volunteers in Ethiopia were able to purchase and deliver school supplies for children in need. Thanks to the contributions of Urji members and non-members is that this project has been a success in Ethiopia .

We thank you for all the hard work of each volunteer for taking their time to deliver these supplies in the villages of:

- Guji
- Arsi
- Borana
- Bale
- Hararge.



# Urji 2023 Activities



- Financially supports for newcomers families with funds to pay for rent, utilities or emergencies.

- Board members attended workshops were they were able to build skills on areas such as; grant writing, financial management and donations management.



- Celebration of Urji Family day on September 11, 2023 .

- Work collaboratively and strategically with Edmonton Mennonite Center for Newcomers and the Edmonton Chamber of Volunteers Organization.

- Creation and run of the 2023 Summer Camps with Educational Support for children in Mathematics, Writing, Reading and Arabic.

- Donations collected throughout the year and provide those donations of winter clothes, toiletries and furniture to Newcomers families.





# Achievements

- Being able to set root foundations at our office location and continue with the support of funders and supporters.
- Be able to create and get fund for new programs and services.
- Expansion of new staff at our location and more participation of volunteers.
- Access computers for the organization and for the use of clients.

## Putting Down Roots Urji Women Support Association of Edmonton

Urji Women Support Association of Edmonton (Urji) was founded in 2019 by a small group of Oromo women interested in supporting members of their community in both Edmonton and Ethiopia. Not long after, Urji and EMCN started working together through EMCN's Putting Down Roots organizational capacity building program for ethnocultural community groups.

Early 2021 found Urji distributing groceries and other basic necessities to community members, using funds secured through their second successful application to the Red Cross's emergency supports program. Urji's project reached over 300 community members, and EMCN supported Urji to create and submit interim and final reports to the Red Cross to highlight their achievements.

At the same time, Urji wanted to create opportunities for its members to learn more about other supports and services available to newcomers and partnered with EMCN to organize a community information session on EMCN's full range of programs and services. Urji was also able to present an overview of their own services to EMCN's Complex Cases team, raising their profile among established service providers as an organization offering accessible, community-based support to newcomers.

Another high priority for Urji was starting the process to sponsor community members living overseas for resettlement in Canada. Urji and EMCN investigated different sponsorship options together, and Urji chose to move forward with an application to act as a community sponsor. Urji and EMCN held regular follow-up work sessions together, reviewing drafts of the community sponsorship documents and developing a settlement plan.

EMCN also worked with Urji to support their operations as a non-profit. They explored sponsorship and the financial requirements associated with this raised their interest in developing a fundraising plan. After meeting with EMCN to explore fundraising options, Urji carried out a successful fundraising barbecue during the summer 2021, and continued to raise funds through social media platforms for the rest of the year. EMCN supported Urji to investigate grant funding opportunities, and determine which options aligned with their own vision and goals for their programming.

Urji ran their second virtual AGM in late 2021, and EMCN held several planning meetings with Urji's leadership to support their development of an annual report, audit report, and virtual facilitation plan. Urji ran this year's AGM independently, without day-of support from EMCN.

Urji also wanted to secure a space that would allow them to both offer programming on site, and store donated items before distributing them to community members. Urji explored different space options, informed by conversations with EMCN about balancing the cost of space rental with their other programming and community support priorities. Urji applied independently to the City of Edmonton's space rental subsidy, and their success allowed them to rent a space that met their needs. This experience encouraged Urji's leadership to continue pursuing funding opportunities independently: at the end of 2021, they were developing an application to the Government of Alberta's Women's Economic Recovery Challenge grant program to offer a basic skills training program for newcomer women.

Over the past year, Urji has continued to build the foundations of a strong, sustainable, and effective community organization. Most importantly, their leadership's confidence in their own capacities has grown, pushing them to explore different opportunities to achieve their goal of supporting newcomer women and their families to thrive.

**Thank you to  
Edmonton Mennonite  
Center for  
Newcomers for their  
support**



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# Thank you to Urji Volunteers and Supporters

Mohammedtofik Abdalla  
Ahmed Umer  
Azima Arabu  
Asha Kadir  
Xaha  
Abdulgafar  
Abdi Bahar  
Shoba Guyo  
EvaGay  
Halima Qasim  
Obse Aliyi  
Aliya Hussein  
Sultan

Steffanie Beekman  
EunJin Kim  
Angelika Matson  
Abayomi Karunwi  
Caroline Omar  
Madihan  
Samiya  
Hawa  
Sadiya Sora  
Ubeydi  
Fatya  
Ayan Abdurahman  
Madihan

A special thank you to  
Matthew Hundert and his team from EMCN & Karis Nsofor  
from ECVO, for all their guidance and support during this  
year.



Urji Women Support Association of  
Edmonton wants to acknowledge and thank  
you all partners and funders for all their  
support during the 2022 – 2023.

2022 – 2023 Partners & Funders



Edmonton Chamber  
of Voluntary Organizations



**Urji Women  
Association  
Members**



Government