Annual Report
2022-2023
About Us

Across Boundaries provides equitable and holistic mental health and addiction services for racialized people in the Greater Toronto Area. We do so by attending to our people's many and shifting needs, by fostering interdependence and improved quality of life. Our dynamic range of mental health programs and services work within Anti-Racism/Anti-Black racism and Anti-Oppression frameworks. These frameworks address the negative impact of racism and discrimination on mental health and well-being. What makes us unique is that our employees are members of the various communities we serve. We speak their languages, understand their cultures, and their current social realities.

Overview of our Programs & Services

- **TRANSITIONAL AGED YOUTH**
  case management program for individuals aged 15-24

- **ADULT MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS**
  case management specialized in addictions and substance use management

- **MENTAL HEALTH & JUSTICE INITIATIVE**
  two specialized programs focused on incarcerated racialized individuals - short term crisis support as well as case management

- **2SLGBTQIA +**
  case management program specialized for members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

- **AT HOME/CHEZ SOI**
  case management program specialized in obtaining housing for unhoused individuals with mental health challenges

- **PSYCHIATRIC CONSULTATION**
  psychiatric consultations available once weekly

- **TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE**
  traditional chinese medicine and acupuncture available once weekly

- **SOCIAL REHABILITATION**
  onsite daily programs such as skills building, access to hot meals + groceries, etc. to assist with social reintegration of individuals who may have had experienced life altering challenges.

- **PEER SUPPORT GROUPS**
  a safe space for service users to share experiences, give feedback and provide supports to one another

- **PSYCHOTHERAPY PROGRAM (OSP)**
  psychotherapy services supported through CMHA & the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy program

- **SHORT TERM COUNSELLING**
  short term counselling supports for individuals experiencing acute crisis/mental health challenges
Quality First
Over the past year, we've placed a renewed focus on improving the quality of everything we do. Quality, to us, means maintaining high standards in our programs, services, and the well-being of our dedicated staff. As part of this journey, we've engaged with third-party assessors to ensure that our actions align with our words. We are collaborating with Accreditation Canada and Excellence Canada to review our efforts and provide input. This has been a massive undertaking for the organization, and would not have been possible without the support of our incredible staff, board, service users, and caregivers, all committed to reflecting our organization's values in every facet of our work.

Strategic Directions
In 2022-2023, we invested our time and collective wisdom in crafting a three-year strategic plan. This plan not only addresses the needs of the communities we serve but also aligns with the priorities of Ontario Health. Under our new vision statement, "A just and healthier society for racialized communities," we've outlined three core goals: Our first goal is to evolve into a data-driven organization, ensuring we go beyond data collection to deeper insights for more informed decision-making. Our second goal is to ensure the capacity to sustain and succeed through and with our most important resource, our staff. Lastly, our third goal is to continue to support and promote the dismantling of systemic racism and oppression in the mental health and addiction sector.

Investment in Systems Level Change
For 28 years, we've proudly led the charge in providing holistic, equitable care to racialized communities. Our presence at local, provincial, and national tables is rooted in a simple purpose: being a voice for the rights of the most marginalized in our communities. The last few years has seen some critical shifts in the understanding the impacts of racism and oppression. This has resulted in more attention and more resources applied to research, planning, and implementation of anti-racism policies and practices, aimed at achieving more equitable health outcomes for vulnerable communities. While this shift is a positive consequence of the recent publicized tragedies, we recognize it would be very easy to become complacent, as such we remain vigilant and committed to our role as advocates for systemic change.

Moving Forward
As we envision a brighter and healthier future for all, we will continue to work closely with our valued stakeholders to build upon our past successes. Numerous challenges still loom, including food insecurity, mental health stigma, income instability, housing insecurity, employment issues, and various other forms of discriminations. We're prepared to face these challenges with grace and determination.

Finally, this brief report fails to capture the countless hours of dedication from our board and staff. The words "thank you" cannot fully convey our deep gratitude. We extend our appreciation to every individual who has been part of our agency, whether as volunteers, paid staff, service users, caregivers, partner agencies, or vendors. Your contributions are invaluable.

Regards,

Dr. Babatunde Fakunle
Board Chair

Aseefa Sarang
Executive Director
Vision

Our vision is to create a fair and healthier society for racialized communities. We have three core goals:

- To transform into a data-driven organization, using insights for better decisions.
- To nurture and empower our staff as our greatest asset, recognizing them as our most valuable asset.
- To champion the dismantling of racism and oppression within our societal structures.
Our Team

Board Members (April 2022 - March 2023)

Dawnmarie Harriot
Fay Sun
Fizza Khalid
Hugh Williams
Mahedar Mellkamu
Maryam Ebrahimpour
Nadia Aleem
Nicola Holness
Roger Love
Simone Atungo
Tunde Fakunle

Our Management Team

Aseefa Sarang – Executive Director
Andrine Johnson – Director of Program and Quality
Christian Avila – Program Manager
Maria Lydia Suarez – Program Manager
Bolanle Ajiboye – Program Manager
Genoveva Policarpio – Office Manager
Kay Layne – Communications Manager
Alena Peters – Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression Training Manager
Tahreem Dogar – Quality Improvement Coordinator
Moonis Tariq – Quality Improvement Manager
OUR IMPACT

ACROSS OUR 14+ HOLISTIC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, WE SERVED 1,088 SERVICE USERS
Strengthening Support: Fostering Family Engagement

Alongside support of management and the board, in 2022-2023 we strengthened assistance for our service users' families. Our commitment to accountability led to direct engagement, as our board engaged with stakeholders regularly, absorbing feedback from service users and caregivers. To cultivate a sense of community, provide support, education and training as well as get feedback in the evolving quality standards, we introduced monthly engagement events for caregivers and family members.

Enhancing Care: Advancements in the Mental Health and Justice Program

The year 2022-2023 brought an uptick in referrals to the 'Mental Health and Justice and Short-Term Crisis Bed Program'. We responded to a defined need in the community, and increased our presence in city wide committees like SPIDER tables, FOCUS tables and in courtrooms. Additionally, we improved referral protocols, and prioritized case manager involvement in discharge and pre-release planning. These strategic adjustments enabled us to better support clients and assist in their re-connection into society, from the moment of release.
Black Joy Mental Health Retreats

Two retreats were organized, providing a nurturing space for 10 Black queer and/or Trans individuals navigating their own mental health journeys. This weekend wellness escape outside the city served as a haven for connecting, sharing experiences, and engaging in Afro diasporic healing practices that fostered comfort, reduced stigma, and prioritized safe spaces. Participants enjoyed physical wellness, restorative therapies, and vital mental health conversations.

Master Classes (OSOV’s Masterclass Series)

Masterclass Series convened experts to delve into topics pertinent to Black LGBTQIA+ mental health and wellness. Covering themes such as financial literacy, navigating therapy, and harm reduction, these sessions imparted practical knowledge in an accessible format. This series offered live-streamed (recorded) webinars, catering to the community’s questions and offering actionable insights for daily life.
Statement of operations year ended March 21, 2023

**Revenues : $3,855,844**

- Ontario Health: $2,499,094
- Canadian Mental Health Association: $770,528
- Addictions Services Central Ontario: $257,275
- Public Health Agency of Canada: $111,755
- City of Toronto: $41,711
- Donations and other revenues: $150,073
- Amortization of deferred capital contributions: $25,407

**Expenses : $3,761,764**

- Salaries, benefits and sub-contractors: $2,826,169
- Program supplies and general: $421,014
- Office rent and utilities: $146,047
- Maintenance: $99,174
- Training and travel: $60,561
- Telephone and tax: $60,037
- Sessional expenses: $42,495
- Professional fees: $41,919
- Contracted-out services: $32,820
- Amortization of capital assets: $25,407
- Printing and publicity: $6,321
Thank you to our Donors!

Our valued donors: Thank you for being the driving force behind our impactful work. It is because of your commitment that we have been able to make a profound and positive impact on countless lives, improving mental health and well-being for so many racialized individuals. Together, we are creating a brighter and healthier future for all.

List of Donors (2022-2023)

- The Benervity Community Impact Fund
- Winner Merchants International L. P.
- RBC Pay Edge
- OUCHA Spring Meeting
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Ontario Peer Development Initiative
- IBI Group Professional Services Inc.
- Enterprise Holdings
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Fidelity Investment
- Professional Women’s Hockey Players Association
- The Keg Spirit Foundation
- Charitable Impact
- Canada Helps
- Canadian Online Giving Foundation
- Charities Aid Foundation Canada
- Penguin Random House Canada
AGENDA

1. Welcome from the Chair
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Approval of Previous Year’s Minutes
4. Executive Director’s Report
5. Treasurer’s Report
   • Acceptance of Financial Report
   • Appointment of Auditor
6. Nominations Committee Report
8. Adjournment and Thanks
9. Program Presentation

1.WELCOME TO THE CHAIR

Chairman of the Board, Dr. Babatunde Fakunle, hosted Across Boundaries’ 27th Annual General Meeting and welcomed over 65 attendees in-person and virtually. It was noted that there was a quorum in the meeting. Tunde thanked the organization’s Board of Directors, management, staff members, and service users for the continued support Across Boundaries received during the pandemic. Tunde acknowledged all service users and stated that without them, there is no Across Boundaries.

2.APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda of the meeting was approved and
Moved by: Atul Nischal
Seconded: Steve Scott
CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS YEAR’S MINUTES

The minutes of the 26th Annual General Meeting (virtual) held on December 2nd, 2021, were approved and
Moved by: Sandra Surijdai
Seconded by: Sirene Qureshi
CARRIED
4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Aseefa greeted and welcomed everyone to the 27th AGM and presented her report. Aseefa directed everyone to the Chair and ED report in the annual report and highlighted the successes and challenges of the past year, including looking ahead to a time that is no longer focused on COVID-19. There have been many changes in the sector, the community and society in general. The future will be about navigating the “new normal”. Aseefa thanked the staff, the service users and the board for their supports and looks forward to another successful year for the agency.

5. TREASURER’S REPORT

i) Presentation of Financial Report
Simone Atungo, Treasurer of the Board, attended the meeting via zoom. She presented the audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2022, which has been done by independent auditors and reviewed by the Board of Directors. Simone presented the last fiscal year’s financial report, page 18 of the AB Annual Report. It was noted that Across Boundaries had a very good year from a financial perspective. As good stewards of funds, Simone stated that the money from Ontario Health agencies (core funding), CMHA & other sources, ASYR, Public Health Agencies of Canada and income from donations were handled seamlessly and successfully. She also added that Across Boundaries received positive feedback from the auditors and she commended the excellent work AB is known for.

Simone attested that as per the Auditor’s report, Across Boundaries finances were managed responsibly. She moved a motion for approval of the Audited Financial Statements for the fiscal year 2021-2022.

Moved by: Sirene Qureshi
Seconded by: Steve Scott
CARRIED

ii) Appointment of Auditor
Simone made a motion to appoint the firm of Hogg, Shain & Scheck Professional Corporation, to be the auditors for Across Boundaries for the fiscal year 2022-2023.

Moved by: Judy Simmons
Seconded by: Halima Tato
CARRIED
6. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Maryam presented the slate of nominees for the Board (2022-2023) as circulated. The following slate was tabled:

No new members.

Returning Board:

1. Babatunde Fakunle
2. Simone Atungo
3. Dawnmarie Harriott
4. Hugh Williams
5. Roger Love
6. Fizza Khalid
7. Mahedar Mellkamu
8. Nicola Holness

Not returning members:
Fay Sun & Maryam Ebrahimpour

Tunde expressed deepest appreciation and thanked Fay and Maryam for their service, commitment and guidance for the past years.

Moved by: Steve Scott
Seconded by: Moses Isanga
CARRIED

7. ADJOURNMENT AND THANKS

Tunde and Aseefa thanked everyone attending Across Boundaries’ first in-person Annual General Meeting after the pandemic. They both acknowledged and thanked everyone for their continued support and commitment to the agency.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6:30 pm.

Moved by: Judy Simmons
Seconded by: Steve Scott
CARRIED
9. PROGRAM PRESENTATION

Survey Results: Ontario Perception of Care, and Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression and Impacts of the Pandemic

Aseefa presented the analysis from the service user surveys. While the overall results in the surveys were very positive, there were areas of improvement noted by the participants. The comments from the service users will be shared with the Service User Advisory Committee to enhance program and service quality. Aseefa ended the presentation with a recognition of the hard work the staff of the agency do and the results of the survey are a testament to that.

Appreciation Awards
Ghulam Chishti and Ryan Tucker were recognized for their service and support to Across boundaries over the last 2 years. They have diligently ensured all hygienic practices were maintained, regular sensitization of all areas and increased sanitization of high traffic areas ensured Across Boundaries did not experience any outbreaks. They were presented with a certificate of appreciation.

Past Service User Presentation
Sirene Qureshi shared her experience with Across Boundaries and how she has stayed connected to the organization even after she had graduated from services. She spoke of the supports she had received, the encouragements and her journey of becoming an author of two books. Sirene thanked everyone for their support. Sirene invited participants to purchase her book and she was available to sign them.

Staff Choice Award
Rumi Rajkarnikar, presented the current fiscal year’s Staff Choice Award to Tegeste Emiru for her 12 years of hard work, devotion and commitment to the agency. Tegeste acknowledged the award and thanked her colleagues for this recognition.

Meeting Concluded at 7:00 pm.