

2023

# COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION REPORT

urban  
matters



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## MESSAGE FROM COMPANY LEADERS

Dear Friends, Partners, and Community Members,

As we reflect on the past year at Urban Matters CCC, we are filled with gratitude and pride for the strides we have made together.

This year marked our first under a distributed leadership model, with three of us steering the organization towards our shared vision of systemic change where communities thrive. This model has not only enriched our decision-making but has also deepened our commitment to the communities we serve.

This commitment is further enriched with the quality of relationships we have developed. Over the past year, we have been intentional about deepening our local community connections, recognizing that these relationships are crucial for sustaining outcomes well beyond specific projects. Our projects are proof that strong relationships, collaboration, and the incorporation of lived experience are powerful ingredients for addressing and filling systems gaps.

Additionally, we are proud to announce that this year, Urban Matters has reached a significant milestone in its impact: \$1 million in community contributions since inception! This achievement is a testament to our collective effort and dedication to driving positive change. Our latest round of community contributions totals \$450,000, supporting projects that embody our vision for a more inclusive and equitable world.

As we embark on another year, we remain committed to our mission of driving social change. Our distributed leadership model has strengthened our resolve and our ability to make a meaningful impact. We are excited for what the future holds and are grateful for the continued support of our partners, team members, and the communities we serve.

Together, we are reshaping systems for a more equitable tomorrow.

Warmest regards,



Jen Casorso



Jade Arignon



Erin Welk

Co-Leaders, Urban Matters CCC



# LOOKING BACK ON 2023

## MEASURING AND REFLECTING ON OUR IMPACT

Over the last number of years, we have been measuring and tracking our impact in communities using a scoring system that outlines nine key areas. We have favoured this type of methodology over trying to pick specific indicators of progress because our work intersects with a variety of complex systems (such as housing, health, or employment, for example).

For us, readying the systems in which we are working for change becomes paramount. As such, we measure each of our projects against these nine areas that serve as critical indicators of our ability to deliver system readiness:

- ▶ **Partnerships:** We know that a variety of partners bring knowledge and differing perspectives. We seek work where most of the key systems stakeholders who are directly impacted by the challenge are represented, consulted, or partnered with.
- ▶ **People Focused:** The project was designed to support people-centric outcomes, especially those who might not otherwise be represented.
- ▶ **Valuing Lived Experience:** It's essential to us that there are high levels of representation of people with lived and living experience built into the project design and delivery.
- ▶ **Reflecting and Learning:** Our learnings from projects are shared within our team and externally to support knowledge transfer.
- ▶ **Systems Understanding:** Our teams are made up of people and partners with deep systems understanding of the issues at play.
- ▶ **Working to Fill a Clear Systems Gap:** The project was focused on addressing root causes of systems challenges and was aligned with a clear impact gap.
- ▶ **Timeline:** Sufficient time was allocated to project planning, implementation and follow up.
- ▶ **People Match:** The skills / experience / knowledge of the team expertly fit the needs of the project and we felt like we were the right community partner to take on the work.
- ▶ **Measuring and Evaluation:** Sufficient planning, time, and budget were allocated to support measurement and evaluation, and these outcomes were directly used to adjust the project to support better systems outcomes.



Overall, within our projects in 2023, we observed strong alignment and “fit” between our capacity and team skills and our work, thus generally scoring high in the metrics related to “systems understanding” and “people match”. With a good selection of our work, we were able to incorporate and value lived experience. (For a strong example of how we did this, coupled with excellent partnerships, see the **Project Highlight** section of this report.)

Our Impact Metrics also serve to highlight areas where our work is not scoring as well and there is room for growth, namely within measurement and evaluation. We recognize that these elements often emerge at the end of a strategy development process and can be an afterthought. We are committed to raising the importance of monitoring and evaluation as we are conceptualizing work and then follow through on delivering robust frameworks.

Done well, the benefits to our clients are evident as a thoughtful monitoring framework supports ongoing decision making, strategy iteration, and greater learning and understanding of the systems in which we are all working. As a result, in 2024 you will see us focusing on raising our capacity related to evaluation methods, likely seeking an individual with this experience to join our team.



## THE ROAD AHEAD

Urban Matters is dedicated to expanding our reach to drive social change in communities, a focus that will persist into 2024. With a strong foothold in British Columbia and an increasing presence in Alberta, our attention will now turn towards expanding eastward. Priority will be given to exploring opportunities in Saskatchewan, where communities face similar social challenges. Recognizing this need, we aim to extend our support to these communities.

Throughout 2024, we will engage with community actors in this market to understand their needs better and how we can assist them. Additionally, we will seek to establish relationships with potential partners and clients in the Saskatchewan market to ensure a comprehensive approach.

In terms of focus areas, we continue to work with local governments who are increasingly grappling with their positioning and role in addressing complex social challenges that spread across health, economic and safety issues. Both the health and social sectors are facing significant capacity challenges. At the same time, community needs are growing and changing and the provincial and federal policy landscape is shifting rapidly. This requires us to be nimble, but also to deepen our understanding, relationships, and ability to bring diverse partners to our work with communities.

We have observed several other trends and evolutions in communities, such as:

- ▶ **Systems Mapping:** Understanding complex service and problem landscapes continues to be a significant area of interest for all government and not for profits. Our work has focused on a range of projects, from very large endeavours with significant engagement to smaller more nimble exercises. This sustaining need in communities has caused us to begin to streamline our processes and consider how we communicate our results. In 2024, we will continue these efforts by more actively learning between our teams and sharing these more broadly.

- ▶ **Safe Communities:** Safety has continued its emergence as a key theme for local governments. We have recognized the value of bringing a trauma-informed approach to provide a counterpoint to enforcement approaches, such that a diversity of perspectives emerge for conversations and actions related to community safety. Ultimately, this work is leading us much further upstream into prevention-based implementation activities. You'll see us increase our focus on prevention in the coming years.
- ▶ **Social Finance:** We are seeing growing asks from communities to explore social finance to support key initiatives. We are excited to be moving strategies forward with some of our clients to focus on collaborative implementation (i.e., activating community and partnerships). We are looking forward to continuing to explore our own understanding of these elements and see this as a growing part of our practice going forward.

In the upcoming year, you will see us stretching into integrating systems understanding and innovation earlier and more deeply into our projects. To do so will also require a commitment to bringing our client relationships along with us in this shift, deepening the value of our work with them, and supporting a focus on more upstream collaborative approaches across multiple sectors in communities.





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## RESHAPING SYSTEMS TO PRIORITIZE INDIGENOUS HEALTH

### Urban Matters harnesses lessons learned through series of projects to catalyze systems change

With extensive frontline and leadership experience working with social-serving organizations, Urban Matters' Ali Butler has been dedicated to improving the health, safety, and well-being of communities in the Okanagan over the past 15 years. As a Social Health and Well-Being Consultant with Urban Matters, she is focused on developing community initiatives that not only improve the delivery of social services for Indigenous communities, but fundamentally shifts the way our social systems approach and understand Indigenous health and well-being.

In 2020, Ali helped launch the **PEOPLE Peer Navigation and Capacity Building Project** – a partnership between the City of Kelowna and PEOPLE Lived Experience Society. Funded with support from the federal government, the program recruits Indigenous people with lived or living experiences to serve in paid, meaningful roles across the community – such as in libraries, recreation centres, and youth programs – to support those experiencing vulnerable circumstances and to create accessible pathways to culturally safe services.

“Peer navigators are individuals who have firsthand knowledge and resilience, who have been through life experiences that support a deep understanding of social challenges, conditions, or life circumstances,” Ali says. “These experiences may look like adverse childhood experiences, substance use, poverty, discrimination, and more. It is often these very experiences that foster a remarkable capacity to overcome and persevere, which has the potential to instill hope for those that may be excluded from fully participating in and contributing to community. Instead, the Peer Navigation program gives people with lived and living experience the tools and an opportunity to use their personal knowledge and expertise to care for others while also being valued for their work.”



## STRONG COMMUNITY COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

This innovative program has led to a chain of other community projects focused on leveraging lived experience and improving Indigenous well-being. For example, Knknxtəwixt is a harm reduction program dedicated to increasing the availability of culturally safe harm reduction and health services for Indigenous peoples.

“It's a powerful program that involves the mobilization of an Indigenous Harm Reduction Team – made up of a nurse, social worker, Indigenous peers, and Elders – to provide education and service referrals for Indigenous individuals seeking support with substance use and wellness,” says Ali. “It uses evidence, storytelling, and cultural worldviews as a way to ensure Indigenous people receive the health care services they need to improve their health and wellness outcomes.”

The project also seeks to share knowledge and seeks solutions around systemic violence of Indigenous people within the healthcare sector through education and the development of pragmatic solutions. In partnership with Interior Health, the team will be investigating potential next steps based on feedback from a series of workshops delivered.

To further raise the level of services and support for Indigenous communities, the Xastwilxtn – **A Place to Get Better** - Project was developed as a temporary crisis response to ensure Indigenous individuals are able to access culturally safe housing while in transition from hospitals, corrections, and withdrawal management programs to permanent housing or recovery-based programs.

It is a pilot project launched in partnership with PEOPLE Lived Experience Society and the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society and funded from the Indigenous Reaching Home Designated Communities fund that will support the addition of 10-15 Indigenous-specific beds in community. While Urban Matters initiated this project, the sustainability of the project in community is promising.

As homelessness and the housing crisis continue to intensify, both within Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike, Urban Matters understands that critical research is needed to better address systemic challenges. To help with this, Ali and the team will also be supporting a research project – funded through by Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) – to explore how organizations can best support Indigenous communities in moving towards healthy housing outcomes, and begin to address the inequities and capacity challenges faced.

The end result will be a culturally responsive strategy that will articulate a path forward to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations in Kelowna to strengthen culturally appropriate housing and services for all Indigenous residents of Kelowna experiencing housing challenges.

### GROWING IMPACT AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

By bringing together insights across all these different projects, the team at Urban Matters, alongside community partners and people with lived experience, aim to fundamentally shift the way our social systems approach Indigenous health and well-being.

“Our collective learning across projects acts as a compass, guiding us towards more informed, compassionate, and collaborative approaches to overall systems change,” says Ali. “As we challenge and redefine our systems, we aim to reshape the current approaches to be inclusive of Indigenous worldviews and move away from westernized or dominant definitions of health. By doing so, we can collectively seek to create a more equitable tomorrow.”





# ANNUAL COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

## 2022 CCC UPDATE

As a Community Contribution Company (CCC), we firmly believe in the power of purpose-driven business, where success is measured not just in profits but in the positive impact we can make on the communities we serve. Every year, Urban Matters directs a large portion of its profits towards community projects every year to support the well-being of the communities it serves.

Previously in 2022, we chose to contribute \$225,000 to three outstanding community organizations: Green Violin in Edmonton, PEOPLE Lived Experience Society in Kelowna, and B.C.'s Community Action Initiative (CAI).

Over the past year, these three organizations have done impactful work in the areas of affordable housing and the empowerment of people with lived and living experience (PWLLE).

- ▶ **Community Action Initiative** – Through a second year of micro-grant funding, 12 peer-led organizations in B.C. have received between \$5,000 to \$10,000 to complete important projects related to substance use and mental health. From leadership workshops to community outreach programs, these groups are engaging in knowledge sharing and advocacy, cultural training, anti-stigma initiatives, capacity building, and more in their local community.
- ▶ **Green Violin** – Over the last year, much work has been done to develop the framing, community awareness, and momentum needed to launch an exciting new housing project in Edmonton. The project explores the potential of “unconventional actors” to become more central players in Edmonton’s affordable housing space. Through this initiative, two populations with acute needs have been identified, Indigenous peoples and veterans, who could greatly benefit from innovative approaches to housing.
- ▶ **PEOPLE Lived Experience Society** – PEOPLE has been an integral part of successful systems change in the Okanagan. With the funds it received from Urban Matters, PEOPLE secured its first-ever location, where they host training sessions, day programs, and community gatherings. The organization recently submitted and won a grant application from the federal government focused on updating and modernizing its communications approach to help improve programming.





## CELEBRATING \$1M IN COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS!

This year, Urban Matters (UM) reaches a major milestone: \$1 million in annual community contributions since 2016!

“ This achievement reflects not just financial strength, but a commitment to being a force for good in the communities that surround us,” says co-CEO, Erin Welk. “The \$1-million milestone is a collective victory for every UM team member, partner, and collaborator who believes in our mission. It is a celebration of the power of collective impact and underscores our belief that business, when driven by purpose, can be driving force for positive change.”

### Latest contributions

We are thrilled to announce this year’s selected projects for our latest round of annual community contributions! In 2023, we chose to contribute a total of \$450,000 to six community projects, ranging from innovative approaches to funding social change to impactful community-centric initiatives.

Each project was chosen for its potential to spark foundational change. They represent more than mere collaborations; rather, they signify our team’s shared vision and ambition to see a more inclusive and equitable world.

### Meet the recipients of Urban Matters’ latest community contributions!



#### COMMUNITY PARTNER:

New Power Labs



#### CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT:

\$100,000

We encountered New Power Labs during our social finance learning journey as a company. We are working in partnership to launch a Mothers with Lived and Living Experience Fund, which aims to mobilize finance capital and disrupt typical power dynamics to support the healing journeys and foster belonging for mothers and their children who have lived and living experience of homelessness and/or substance use.



#### COMMUNITY PARTNER:

Tea Creek Farm



#### CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT:

\$20,000

Tea Creek Farm aims to revitalize the culture of economic interdependence and food production that was a central part of life for Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. Focused on providing culturally safe, hands-on training for Indigenous people, they aim to enhance the resiliency and health of Indigenous communities and economies. The team at Urban Matters will be supporting Tea Creek in building staff capacity and training, particularly around leadership and program management.



# ANNUAL COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS



## COMMUNITY PARTNER:

Employ to Empower



## CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT:

\$65,000

Based in the Downtown Eastside, Employ to Empower works to help individuals who face employment and social barriers to cultivate community connections through entrepreneurship and self-advocacy opportunities. Using its contribution funds from Urban Matters, Employ to Empower will support 13 participants to access programming including the Business Skills and Mentorship Programs as well as other resources as needed.



## COMMUNITY PARTNER:

Cariboo-Chilcotin Partners for Literacy  
Just in Time Tutoring



## CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT:

\$40,000

Just in Time Tutoring is a new social enterprise that provides subsidized tutoring services to youth. They have developed a business model that combines sliding scale and sponsored fee structures to provide equitable access based on the needs of families. Focused on building strong relationships between tutors and young people, Just In Time has achieved great success as a pilot program and will be focused on refining and expanding programming as well as gaining technical support with business coaching.



## COMMUNITY PARTNER:

Community Action Initiative Provincial  
Peer Network Year



## CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT:

\$100,000

CAI's mission is to strengthen the role and capacity of the community sector to improve mental health and address substance use for British Columbians. This funding is a continuation of the partnership we have fostered with CAI to provide support to People with Lived or Living Experience-Led (PWLE-led) organizations in their goals of addressing the drug toxicity crisis, saving lives, and removing stigma.



## COMMUNITY PARTNER:

Penticton Substance Use System of Care  
Systems Change Project



## CONTRIBUTION AMOUNT:

\$125,000

In 2021, the Penticton Community Action Team (CAT) partnered with the City of Penticton and Urban Matters to explore how we might shift the substance use system of care in the South Okanagan from a one-size-fits-all model to one that embraces nuance and diversity and offers multiple pathways for care. Using this funding, we are supporting efforts to design preferred service provision pathway prototypes and remove the financial obstacle during the testing phase.





Urban Matters team gathering in person on the territory of the Okanagan Sylix people in December 2023.

## ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

As a Community Contribution Company, Urban Matters makes annual strategic contributions to community-led initiatives that apply innovative thinking and evidence-based strategies to target gaps in our social systems.

Community contributions align with the company's four main focus areas, also known as Impact Themes:

- ▶ Housing and Affordable Housing Solutions
- ▶ Elevating the Voices of People with Lived and Living Experience (PWLLE)
- ▶ Building Belonging and Inclusive Communities
- ▶ Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action 92 - Allyship and Collaborative Exploration

[READ MORE ABOUT OUR PREVIOUS COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS](#)



# The Fine Print

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

With that comes our annual disclosure statements, in legal ease for clarity, and coincident with our 2022 fiscal year end (December 1, 2022 to November 30, 2023). Every year, Urban Matters CCC must disclose:

- 1 The remuneration and position held of each person whose remuneration during that year was at least \$75,000, or, if there are more than 10 persons whose remuneration during that year was at least \$75 000, the remuneration and position held during that year of each of the 10 most highly remunerated persons.

**URBAN MATTERS CCC HELD NO POSITIONS IN FISCAL 2022 FOR WHICH THE REMUNERATION EXCEEDED \$75,000.**

- 2 The financial position of the company in that year.

**URBAN MATTERS CCC'S NET-PROFIT, AFTER-TAX, FINANCIAL EARNINGS WERE: \$146,707. SEE TABLES BELOW FOR A SUMMARY.**

Statement of financial position (unaudited)

|                                           | 2023                | 2022                |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                             |                     |                     |
| Current Assets                            | \$2,498,480         | \$1,675,809         |
| <b>LIABILITIES + SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY</b> |                     |                     |
| Current Liabilities                       | \$1,945,049         | \$1,269,085         |
| Long-Term Debt                            | -                   | -                   |
| Shareholders' Equity                      | -                   | -                   |
| Share Capital (note 6)                    | 12                  | 12                  |
| Retained Earnings                         | \$553,419           | \$406,712           |
|                                           | <b>\$ 2,498,468</b> | <b>\$ 1,675,797</b> |

Statements of comprehensive income (unaudited)

|                                      | 2023        | 2022        |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Revenue                              | \$4,653,816 | \$2,864,200 |
| Expenses                             | \$4,443,594 | \$2,829,721 |
| Earnings before Income Taxes         | \$210,222   | \$34,479    |
| Income Taxes                         | \$63,515    | \$11,571    |
| Net Earnings                         | \$146,707   | \$22,908    |
| Retained Earnings, beginning of year | \$406,712   | \$383,804   |
| Retained earnings, end of year       | \$553,419   | \$406,712   |

- 3 The following information about dividends declared in relation to shares of classes or series of shares:

- i. For each of those classes and series of shares, the aggregate amount of the dividends declared in that year in relation to shares of that class or series of shares.
- ii. The identity of all entities that hold or beneficially own shares of that class or series of shares.

**URBAN MATTERS CCC DID NOT DECLARE ANY DIVIDENDS IN FISCAL 2023.**

- 4 The amounts transferred with a fair market value in excess of the prescribed amount, other than to a qualified entity, to persons who are related to the company or to any other persons unless the provision of that financial assistance is in furtherance of the company's community purposes.

**URBAN MATTERS CCC DID NOT TRANSFER ANY SUCH MONEY OR OTHER ASSETS IN FISCAL 2023.**