

2024
TEEC
UPDATE



ANNUAL
REPORT
2024



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Message from chair of the board

Dear Supporters, Friends, and TEEC Participants,

It has been a true honour to sit on the board of TEEC over the past year. The staff of TEEC have one priority — supporting a thriving lifestyle for newcomer women from war-torn countries. Leadership staff work tirelessly to ensure that people who walk through the TEEC doors feel an instant sense of community and can access the resources they need to start their Canadian life.

Whether it's removing barriers by providing transportation or childcare, making sure there is healthy food available, or finding funding to expand and enrich programming, staff go above and beyond — working well outside of their work week and giving themselves very little chance for time off.

Over this past year, I have seen TEEC leadership create, furnish, and staff a computer lab, expand the summer camp program from 30 children to 50+ children, host a successful women's cabin retreat, and continue to run their regular programming of English lessons, sewing, wellness checks, and food boxes.

Even though TEEC provides incredible organized opportunities, we can also celebrate the community that has been created within the Centre, where newcomers meet new friends who have experienced similar hardships. I will never understand what it means to flee my home for fear of my life and to resettle in a new place, not knowing the language, the culture, or how I will provide for my family — but I do know that the Excel Empowerment Centre is here for women with these experiences and needs.

Rebecca Deng, Executive Director, and Mathew Joseph, Programming and Special Projects Director, are heroes of mine — I am grateful for all they do.

Please share with friends and family the vital role TEEC plays in the refugee community. And please consider giving from the heart in any way that you can — through time, money, or resources.

Thank you for supporting this vital organization.

Abby Flackman

Chair of the Board

The Excel Empowerment Centre



Message from the Executive Director

Dear Supporters, Donors, and Partners,

"Every ripple of kindness creates waves of transformation."

As we reflect on 2024, one word echoes through every classroom, every relief package, every healing circle, and every life we've touched with gratitude.

This year was not just progressive—it was transformative.

We witnessed children displaced by conflict stopping into classrooms with hope in their eyes. We saw women threading stitches not just into fabric, but into the fabric of their futures. We provided relief where there was once despair, and built connection where there was once isolation. We could not have done this without you.

Your unwavering support, your generous contributions, and your belief in our mission made every milestone possible. You stood with us not just as donors, but as partners in purpose. Every year reinforces our belief that change is possible—not only within one individual but across communities, borders, and generations. It is both humbling and awe-inspiring to see how far we've come. What once began as a dream has grown into a force for empowerment, healing, and hope.

As we look ahead, we do so with renewed strength and a collective spirit. Because when we rise together, the impossible becomes possible.

With deepest gratitude and determination,

**Rebecca Deng Executive Director,
Excel Empowerment Centre Inc.**



TEEC'S Programs in Winnipeg

TEEC'S Programs in Winnipeg

With the unwavering support of volunteers, generous donors, dedicated staff, partner organizations, and all levels of government, we continue to drive meaningful change in Winnipeg and beyond.

In 2023, our organization successfully launched transformative programs that have uplifted marginalized, war-affected women and girls in Canada and South Sudan. Through these initiatives, we are not only empowering individuals but also fostering sustainable community development, reinforcing our commitment to building a more just and equitable future.

English program

The English literacy class consistently engaged 26–32 participants per session, reflecting strong community interest. Unlike other women-only programs at the Centre, this class welcomes both men and women, upholding the values of inclusivity and equal access to education.



The program has been a vital support for newcomers and immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds, helping them adapt to life in Canada. Participants have gained practical language skills that directly enhance their daily experiences, including:



Navigating job searches and applications
Participating in job interviews
Communicating effectively during medical appointments
Engaging in deeper English conversations
Building diverse social connections beyond their native language groups

This initiative continues to foster integration, confidence, and opportunity for all who attend.

Sewing and Tailoring Program



To support girls' education and well-being, over 100 Dignity Kits and comforters were sewn and donated to South Sudan. Crafted by volunteers, the kits provide essential menstrual hygiene products, helping girls manage their health with dignity and confidence.



In regions where lack of supplies leads to missed school days, these kits remove a major barrier to consistent learning. This initiative promotes gender equity, educational access, and the right to health ensuring every girl can pursue her potential without interruption.

Childminding Program



In 2024, TEEC's Childminding Program supported 17 children aged 0–5, giving immigrant mothers safe, flexible care while they attended classes, work, or appointments. Children engaged in creative and social activities that boosted development and school readiness. The program helped mothers pursue education and employment, making it a vital support for family stability and integration.



Community Food Program

Food insecurity is rising rapidly, demanding urgent and sustained community action. In collaboration with Harvest Manitoba and First Lutheran Church, our volunteers provide essential food support to low-income immigrant and refugee women facing systemic barriers such as unemployment, mental health challenges, and housing instability.

Beyond food distribution, we advocate for holistic solutions, recognizing that hunger is rooted in poverty and inequality. Our mission is to empower individuals, foster inclusion, and uphold food security as a fundamental human right.



Nutrition Hampers

In May, 55 Nutrition Hampers were distributed to families facing food insecurity. Each hamper was thoughtfully packed with nutritious items, offering relief and promoting well-being.

This initiative reinforced TEEC's commitment to food as a fundamental right and a cornerstone of health and stability.



Volunteers prepare Nutrition Hampers to support families with essential nourishment.

Healing and Connection Retreat at Lake Manitoba Cottages



For three transformative days, 30 women, 15 youths, and 10 children gathered at the serene Lake Manitoba Cottages outside Winnipeg for an immersive camping experience. This retreat, themed "Healing and Connection," provided a rare opportunity to disconnect from the digital world and reconnect with nature, culture, and sisterhood. The women enjoyed activities designed to foster emotional healing, inner peace, and deep connections. At the same time, the youths took on the roles of organizers and caretakers, ensuring a nurturing and supportive environment.

Outdoor Bonding and Wellness



This retreat offered more than outdoor recreation—it was a transformative journey of grounding, cultural reconnection, and emotional healing. Free from digital distractions, participants embraced the theme of “Healing and Connection” through hiking, fishing, kayaking, and boat riding at Lake Manitoba, blending physical activity with emotional depth. These nature-based experiences fostered peer support, strengthened bonds, and provided a peaceful space for reflection and renewal. □



Bonfire gatherings offered a serene space for storytelling, reflection, and cultural connection, fostering healing, learning, and shared strength among women.



A woman participant showing excitement and pride in successfully catching a fish after long hours of patience. Outdoor activities at Lake Manitoba nurtured wellness, connection, and community among women participants.



Reflection and Closure

Youth supported the retreat by caring for children and preparing meals, enabling mothers to focus on healing and connecting with nature. Their efforts fostered a nurturing environment, culminating

in a final day of unity marked by lakeside yoga, shared meals, and a healing circle that brought closure, empowerment, and community.



Healing circles and shared meals deepened emotional bonds and marked a meaningful close to the retreat.

Children and Youth Summer Diversity Day Camp



TEEC's Summer Diversity Day Camp provided a transformative experience for 95 children and youth, offering newcomers and low-income families a safe, inclusive space to grow, heal, and connect. Divided into age groups—0–5 years (15 children), 6–12 years (40 children), and 13–17 years (40 youth)—the program focused on building leadership, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

Children Program



The Youth Program Coordinator and participants cooled down with popsicles during a field trip to Kildonan Park

Outdoor and Indoor Programming

Children enjoyed daily outdoor activities such as hiking and park visits, which boosted their physical and emotional well-being. These experiences were especially impactful for children from underserved backgrounds, helping them develop positive habits and avoid harmful influences. Indoors, age-specific educational sessions blended learning with play, including literature, math games, cooking, and arts & crafts—creating joyful, enriching summer memories.

Art City Collaboration

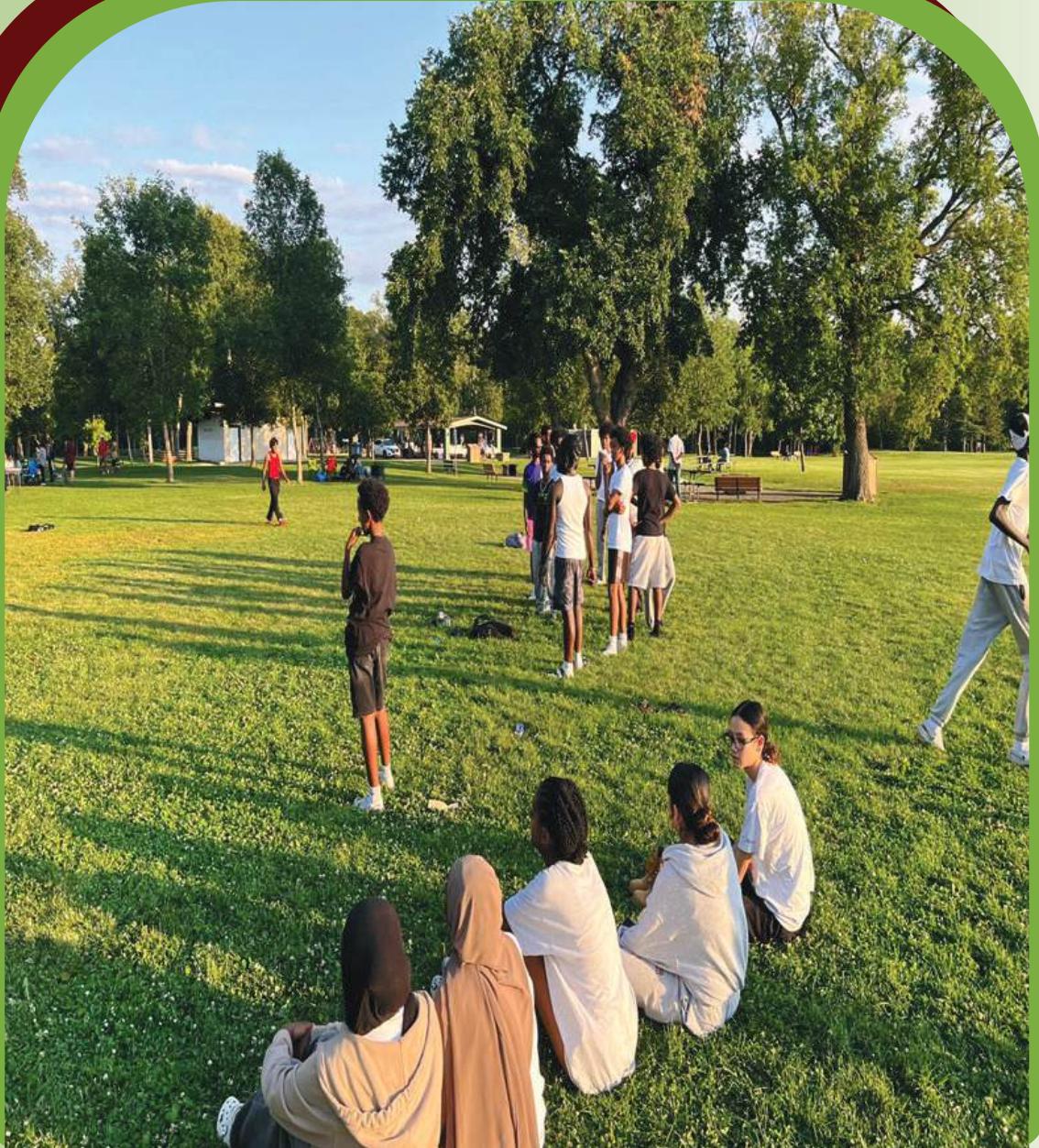


Art City sessions inspired creativity and cultural pride through collaborative art-making.

From July to August, Art City led weekly art sessions that celebrated diversity and creativity. Through painting, sculpture, and collage, children explored cultural pride, teamwork, and empathy. These hands-on projects helped participants express their identities and build stronger community ties.



Economic Development and Employment



This summer, TEEC delivered a dynamic suite of youth programs that empowered newcomer youth through employment, mentorship, career exploration, and recreation. These initiatives fostered leadership, community pride, and personal growth among participants aged 13–17.

Economic Development and Employment

Nine youth were employed full-time through the Urban Green Team and Canada Summer Jobs programs. As program graduates pursuing higher education, they gained valuable employment skills, built confidence, and demonstrated leadership—laying the foundation for future success.



Excel Youth Mentorship Program



Under the theme “building pride by giving back,” 10–15 youth volunteered weekly at Harvest Manitoba. Sorting groceries became a meaningful act of service, helping youth build empathy, social awareness, and mental well-being while strengthening community ties.



Mentorship participants sort groceries at Harvest Manitoba, giving back with purpose and pride.



Career Exploration: Fire & Paramedic Skills Camp

In collaboration with the City of Winnipeg, 15 youth attended a two-day camp at the Fire Paramedic Training Academy. They explored operational careers and gained insight into roles such as firefighter, paramedic, and communications operator—broadening their career horizons.



Youth explore emergency service careers at the Fire Paramedic Skills Camp.

BBQ Fridays and Cultural Recreation



Weekly BBQs at Kildonan Park offered youth a safe space to unwind, play sports, and engage in arts and crafts. Indigenous games led by Elder Blair added cultural depth, laughter, and connection. These gatherings welcomed 40–50 youth each week, promoting physical literacy and social bonding.



Youth enjoy soccer games and other recreational activities at Kildonan Park, celebrating culture, diversity and connection. TEEC's youth programming continues to nurture leadership, inclusion, and opportunity empowering the next generation to thrive.

Community Support and Celebration



This year, TEEC continued to strengthen community resilience through events that uplift, empower, and connect individuals, especially immigrant and refugee women through dignity-based care and shared experiences.





Sisterhood-Friendly Give-Away

In a powerful show of solidarity, TEEC hosted a Sisterhood-Friendly Give-Away, distributing 325 essential non-food items to 63 individuals. Clothing, shoes, and seasonal wearables provided not only comfort but also dignity and confidence to low-income women, immigrants, and refugees. The event fostered a warm, inclusive atmosphere where participants found both material support and emotional connection.



Participants browse donated clothing and essentials at the Sisterhood Friendly Give Away, embracing dignity and community.



Honourable Visit from Pastor Marie

Honoring Pastor Marie from Cameroon A heartfelt lunch gathering celebrated Pastor Marie's dedication to community service. Hosted by The First Lutheran Church, Pastor Larry and Pastor Michael alongside TEEC, the event highlighted the power of faith, gratitude, and shared leadership. It was a moment of deep appreciation and strengthened fellowship.



Eid participants share stories and traditional dishes, celebrating unity and cultural pride.

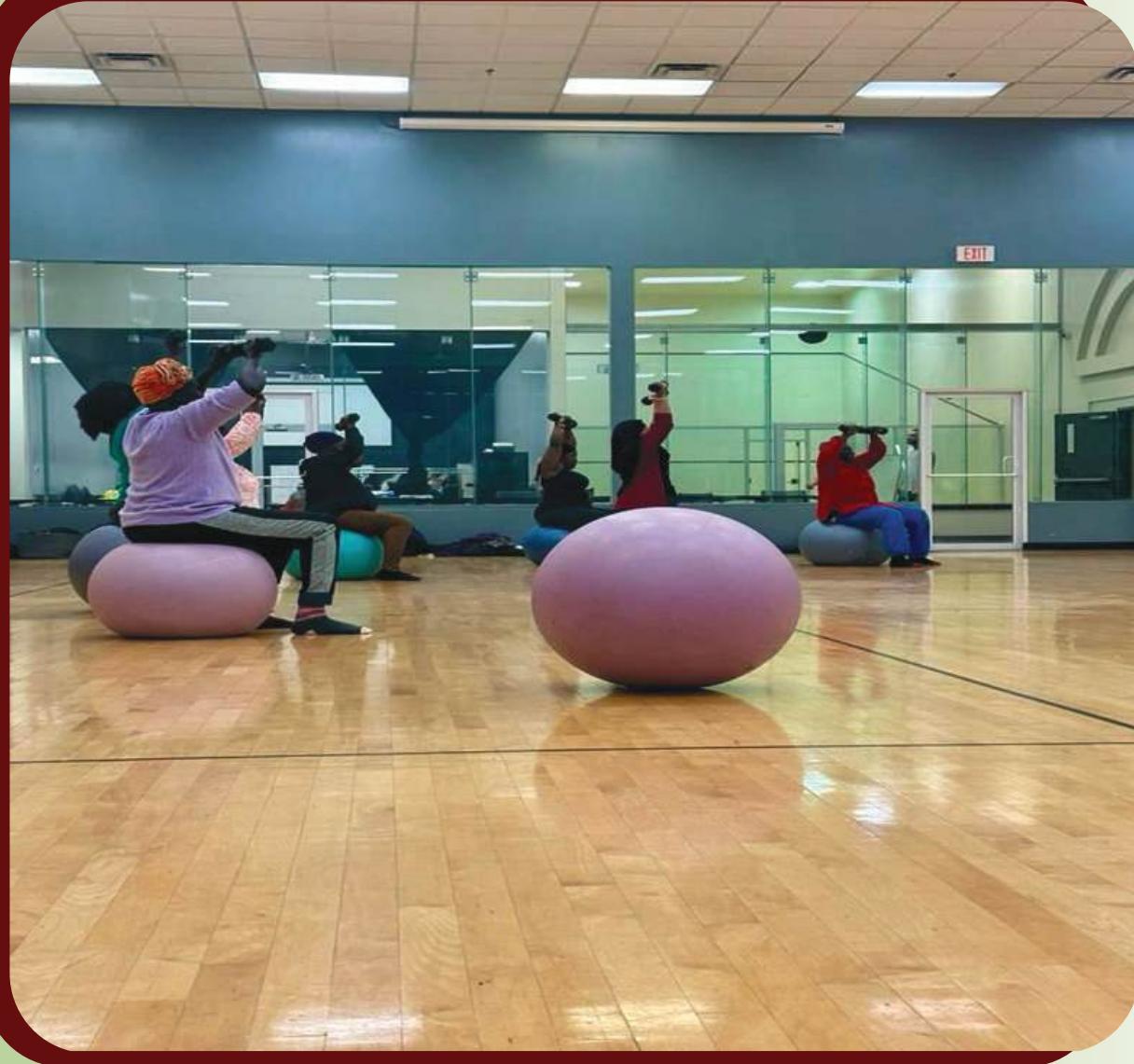


Digital Empowerment Through Fundraising



TEEC successfully raised \$9,600 through its annual fundraiser—just shy of its \$10,000 goal—to purchase computers for women's programs. This initiative launched ongoing computer classes aimed at integrating immigrant women into digital life. These classes are helping participants build essential tech skills, boosting confidence, employability, and independence in an increasingly digital world.

Stress Relief and Mental Health: Women's Fitness Program



TEEC's Women's Fitness Class at the YMCA provided a safe, inclusive space for immigrant women to prioritize their physical and mental health. Held after work hours and supported by on-site childcare, the program removed barriers for mothers and encouraged participation across diverse backgrounds. Led by female instructors, sessions included yoga, Zumba, strength training, and flexibility exercises tailored to varying fitness levels. The program fostered community, boosted well-being, and built trust among participants. Complemented by weekly wellness check-ins and resource referrals from TEEC staff, this initiative offered holistic support for women navigating settlement and personal growth.

TEEC'S Programs in SOUTH SUDAN



EmpowerHer: The Excel Empowerment Centre in Bor is a peace-building organization focused on economic empowerment for war-affected communities, particularly, vulnerable women and girls, youth, and children. Its programs provide essential skills and knowledge through literacy classes, tailoring training, baking, mental wellness workshops, gender-based violence counseling, life skills training, basic computer literacy, and refugee resettlement support.

As part of its ongoing efforts, the Adult Literacy Program enrolled 100 participants across different Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) levels, including IDP children's classes and Basic English courses. Participants developed their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, making significant progress despite challenges such as limited textbooks, overcrowded classrooms, high temperatures, and a lack of benches and desks. The Centre's new construction and project activities aim to expand access to economic opportunities and social support, ensuring long-term impact for displaced and vulnerable communities.

EMPOWER HER INITIATIVES



Empowered through skill and determination, she's one of 51 women who graduated and turned tailoring into a livelihood. Many now work or run their own businesses, stitching paths to independence.

Literacy Class



In May 2024, the Excel Empowerment Centre enrolled 100 women into its Literacy Class, offering ALP Levels One and Two, morning sessions tailored for internally displaced women (IDWs), and a Basic English Course. Although the term began later than expected, the program successfully aligned with the government curriculum due to the dedication of both the instructor and participants. The curriculum emphasized foundational grammar skills, helping women build a strong base in reading, writing, and sentence construction.

These newly acquired skills are enabling women to navigate daily life with greater confidence—whether reading signs, filling out forms, or communicating effectively. The program also opens doors to employment opportunities and vocational training, while fostering a supportive environment where women can connect, share experiences, and rebuild their lives. By strengthening both individual capacity and community ties, the initiative is contributing meaningfully to social and economic resilience.

Sewing Machines Class

The Sewing Machine Class empowered 60 vulnerable young girls and women through sessions held across two mornings and an afternoon, equipping them with practical tailoring skills aimed at fostering sustainable income. Participants engaged in hands-on training that covered machine assembly, posture techniques, and accurate garment measurement—building the confidence and capability to pursue self-employment, contribute to household income, and strengthen resilience in economically challenged settings.



MOBILE CLINIC

To strengthen our support for internally displaced persons (IDPs), we operate a mobile clinic that provides consistent and compassionate healthcare directly on our site. With a dedicated doctor available throughout the day and on-call at night, IDPs receive timely medical assessments, treatment for common illnesses, and referrals to the general hospital in cases of emergency. The clinic is also stocked with essential emergency medications, ensuring that urgent needs are met without delay.

This initiative has significantly improved the physical and mental well-being of IDPs, offering not only medical care but also a sense of security and dignity. By removing barriers to healthcare access and responding swiftly to health concerns, the mobile clinic has become a trusted lifeline helping displaced individuals recover, stabilize, and rebuild their lives with renewed strength.



Health and Wellness Workshops: Healing and Hope

The Health and Wellness Workshops have brought together around 50 women from different ages and backgrounds, many of whom have faced war, poverty, and personal loss. Led by wise elderly women, these sessions help participants talk about their pain, learn from each other, and find ways to move forward. The program has helped women feel stronger, more hopeful, and more connected. They've learned to live positively despite their past. These workshops also help restore confidence, build friendships, improve mental health, and teach useful life skills. Women feel more empowered to make decisions, support their families, and take part in their communities. As they heal, they become a source of strength for others around them.



Agricultural Empowerment Program

In 2024, our center introduced an agricultural empowerment program to support internally displaced persons (IDPs), literacy and sewing class participants, and young women. With guidance from an agricultural expert, the project began with a pilot plantation of tomatoes, sukuma wiki, Irish potatoes, and onions. This initiative has helped—and continues to help—women gain practical farming skills, improve their diets, generate income, and prepare for reintegration. It also strengthens the center's potential to attract future partnerships and support.



IDPS Relief and Medicals Supplies

IDPS Relief and Medicals Supplies

Rooted in the lived experiences of South Sudanese Canadians, our organization serves as a vital support system for refugees, immigrants, and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Sudan. Through a blend of emergency aid, transitional support, and long-term development, we help displaced individuals meet immediate needs while building pathways to self-reliance and stability. In 2024 alone, over 100 IDP families have transitioned through our programs, gaining access to critical resources and renewed hope.

At our centre in Bor, we provide trauma counseling, food assistance, and livelihood training, all guided by ethical frameworks such as the UN Principles on Internal Displacement and the Do No Harm Policy. These integrated services restore dignity, promote healing, and empower IDPs to rebuild their lives and reconnect with their communities. By bridging the gap between crisis response and sustainable development, we continue to strengthen resilience and foster long-term recovery for displaced populations.





Conclusion

At the heart of The Excel Empowerment Centre's mission lies a steadfast belief: every individual deserves the tools, support, and opportunity to thrive—regardless of their circumstances. From the foundational lessons of literacy to the empowering skill-building of the Sewing Machine Class, our programs are more than educational—they are transformational. They restore confidence, cultivate independence, and ignite hope.

In South Sudan, our commitment expands to reach those most vulnerable—internally displaced persons whose lives have been upended by crisis. Through relief, trauma-healing, and skill development, we walk alongside them as they navigate recovery, resilience, and reintegration. Every session, supply, and supportive word becomes a step toward stability, dignity, and self-reliance.

Together, these initiatives affirm a powerful truth: when education meets compassion, and skills are paired with support, communities rise. TEEC is not simply responding to need—we are nurturing potential, lighting pathways forward, and building bridges toward a future where displacement does not mean despair, but transformation and hope.

Donors' List

Name
Edith & Paul Cloutier
Terumi Kuwada
Hollie Andrew
Carolyn Smith
Megan Wells

#VALUE!

Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name
Table #1 (studne t)	Table #2	Table #3	Robert & Sylvia
Anais Biernat	Mary Scott***	Lisa Naylor	David & Brenda Newman
Ryan Mayo	Jennine Scott	Lisa's Staff	Helene Dyck
Fatuma Sufi	Richard Scott	Benjamin Plett	Muriel Smith
Nahla Abdelwahab	David Newman	Jamie Antonowich	Paula Fuller
	Brenda Newman	Elethide Mukesharugo	Adam
	Nadia Kidwai	Patricia Gerber Pauls	Adhieu Tap
	Joanna Weidenbacher	Patricia Gerber Pauls	John Deng Thuch
		Terumi Kuwada	Anais Biernat
			Michael Kurtz
			Sherri Walsh
			Rebecca Deng
Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name		Mary Scott
Table #4	Table #5		Achol Mayen Biar
Sunday Emmanuel	Malinda Pearce		Jane Malody Kurtz
Riak Kochduol	Zachary Nicolson		Tamsin Collings
Kuingu Puok	Gary Senft		Gilles Noel
Jessica	Dilyara Alivapova		Mach Maker
Nyamal Jack	James Kornelsen (MC/C)		Chol Deng Thuch
Kabasomi Harriet	Clayton Sandy		Atong's Friend 1
Jane	Duot Dong		Phyllis Olafson
			Atong's Friend 2
			Monica Majur
Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name
Table #7 (Students)	Table #8	Table #9	Sergeant Taco
Aduom Abkoy	Martha Helgerson	Gohe Ethiopian Restaurant	Jack Goodman
Muss Mawamat	Allen Mankewich	Martha Dhieu	Daniel Riak
Mohamed	Ken Kucher	Majur Deng	Michael Lansky
Mohamoud	Dough Sigurson	The Leaf	
Haggar Ousman	Dough Sigurson	Ramda Babella	
Djibrine Adam	Dough Sigurson	Josephine	
Mahamat Abakarissakh	Dough Sigurson	Hiwot Amare	
Abaakar Oumar Moustapha			
Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name	Guests First & Last Name	
Table #10	Table #11	Table #12	
Elizabeth Andrea			
Reuben Garang			
Chol Riak			
Khot Akuei			
Florence Okweudili			
Kelly Speak			
Darcy Ataman			



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‘Lifting women, transforming tomorrow’