



THE MANY FACES OF LUSO



2018-2019 Annual Report

Staff

As of March 31, 2019

Elisabete Rodrigues,
Executive Director

Tagreed Alhajjar
Mai Ashour
Rana Batal
Holly Brown
Jacqueline Craig
Maha El-Assadi
Mariela Garnica
Hussein Ghoneim
Katerina Hertman
Leroy Hibbert
Milagros Jimenez
Rawan Mahfoud
Dalma Merino

Kathy Milczarek
Hind Omer
Alejandra Pegg
Questyn Rodriguez
Gabriele Schotter
Netia Simpson-Weir
Kaila Swain
Gaurab Tewari
Oriana Trojanowska
Meagan Warwick
Sue Yang
Delanie Zettler

Mary Yanful (Jun 2018)
Tasha Williamson (Jun 2018)
Fanny Rosas (Aug 2018)
Jacob Winter (Aug 2018)
Moustapha Amadou (Aug 2018)
Rebecca Shiferaw (Oct 2018)
Brittney Balina (Oct 2018)
Mariam Hamou (maternity leave
-Feb. 2019)

Summer 2018:
Michael Adam
Kristine Duong
Hannah Somers



Board of Directors

Kasha McEwen-Doan, Chair
Christine Wilde, Past Chair
Tyler Gillespie, Treasurer
Pamela Goossens, Vice-Chair
Fatima Haq
Ryan Parsons
Samira Dean (until Feb. 2019)

Alicia Lawrance
Yanbo Wang
Luis Cortes
Michelle Ashbee
Laura llequay
Jennifer Hryniw (until Sept. 2018)
Zixiao (Sarah) Wang, Board Intern

Message from Board Chair

When asked to write this “greetings from the Chair”, I initially struggled. When looking around at the world today, it's easy to become disheartened and discouraged. It is easy because of everything you see in the news on a daily basis such as violence; volatile political situations; climate issues; and massive refugee situations across the world. Yet, when I looked at the work that LUSO is doing in the London community, it became infinitely easier to write this because LUSO gives me inspiration and encouragement. Good news is not always promoted with the same regularity as bad news, but it is so very important to highlight our accomplishments.

I am fundamentally lucky to have been able to participate and engage London through LUSO for the last year. It is so important to meet the vast array of community members through programs, staff, and board work. It is vital for our collective success that everyone needs to become involved and to stay active while paying attention to what is happening in our community. Looking at all the statistics in this report, I am simply blown away by the dedication of our staff and the impressive variety of programs delivered. They are amazing. The hope and desire for a better culture and a better future continues to keep me engaged and motivated everyday.

Lastly, I want everyone involved with LUSO (community partners, staff, participants, clients, government officials) to know just how much your daily commitment means to our entire community at large. You are actively promoting and creating the kind of future we want to see by being agents of change and not just sitting back and living in the world we have. Because of the work you do I have hope. Hope for people, hope for our communities, hope for London, and hope for our future.

Thank you for all that you do, and I look forward to an amazing 2020!



- Kasha McEwen-Doan



Message from Executive Director

In August of 1994 when I accepted a position with LUSO (then Portuguese Community Services), I had committed to a two year contract. It was a newly funded position by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to conduct a needs assessment of the community and develop programs to meet the identified needs. Although I was excited to have a full time position, I told family and friends "I will do this project, and then move on to something else, I am not sure I want to work in the non-profit sector."

Well, 25 years later I am still in the non-profit sector and I would not have it any other way! I never imagined that what I had seen as "just a job" would become a lifelong career that has provided me with many opportunities to grow as an individual and to meet many amazing people along the way. I have had the privilege to work with a very diverse group of committed, passionate, hard working individuals over the years, either as LUSO staff members, Board members, funders, community partners, clients or volunteers. Each and every person has contributed to the success of what LUSO is today, and it is because of the collective passion and synergy of working collectively that we have impacted the lives of many children, youth and families over the years.

There are many city-wide initiatives such as: Child & Youth Network, the London-Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership, the London Food Coalition, the Good Food Box Program that are working to improve our community; strengthen our neighbourhoods and improve the lives of those that are most vulnerable. But there are still individuals and families in our community struggling with issues of poverty, unemployment, mental health, depression, isolation and discrimination. As an organization, we continue to work diligently and partner with these initiatives to maximize our resources and make a meaningful impact in the community. I am thankful for the strong partnerships that LUSO has developed over the years. We simply could not be proud of our achievements if we worked in isolation. Strong partnerships have been the foundation of our success over the past 39 years and will continue to be the foundation to build upon.

While the Annual General Meeting is an opportunity to "stop and smell the roses" and celebrate our successes, it is also an opportunity to look forward and identify what still needs to be accomplished. As I look ahead to the next few years, I am excited about the opportunities and successes that are yet to come; the partnerships that are yet to be developed; and the amazing individuals that I am yet to meet. There is still so much to accomplish and I am grateful that "a job" led to a career that I truly love and still enjoy so many years later.



A tremendous Thank You to our community partners and funders that continue to believe in LUSO. Your support is greatly appreciated and valued.

A special heartfelt **Thank You** to the LUSO staff team and the Board of Directors. I am privileged to work with a group of supportive, energetic, dedicated and highly skilled people. You truly are an inspiration!

- Elisabete Rodrigues

Funders

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, Citizenship and Immigration Division
United Way Elgin Middlesex
City of London
Thames Valley District School Board (Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership)
Service Canada
London Community Foundation
May Court Club of London
Rotary Club of London Lambeth



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2018-2019



April 2018: New initiative in partnership with fellow Neighbourhood Resource Centres goes into full swing to support the social integration of newcomers.



May 2018: Literacy team offers Shared Beginnings program at a 3rd location, the Family Centre Fanshawe.



June 2018: LUSO is awarded the City of London's Innovation Grant of \$80,000 to implement Phase 2 of the Cultural Sensitivity & Awareness Project. In 2019, this project will develop tools to aid landlords in supporting London's Nepalese-speaking/Bhutanese refugee and Latin American communities.



June 2018: In partnership with Family Centre Carling-Thames, LUSO joins the Good Food Box Program, which offers local, seasonal & affordable produce to residents across the city of London on a monthly basis.



July 2018: LUSO partners with faith-based organizations in NE London to support 6 summer camps, providing over 7,400 breakfast/snacks to 214 unique children each day over a 7 week period.



August 2018: LUSO receives a \$5,000 donation through CIBC Miracle Day. Funds support a variety of literacy-based programs.



September 2018: LUSO recognizes Siloam United Church and volunteer Donna Rodrigues with its Community Award. The award recognized their significant impact on LUSO's programs and services.



October 2018: Over 100 people attended this year's Newcomer Family Pumpkin Carving event! Families had the opportunity to participate in the North American tradition of carving pumpkins in celebration of Halloween.



October 2018: We partnered with ReForest London to plant 160 trees in Admiral Park. 82 individuals participated, including many Newcomers who shared stories about the cultural significance of trees in their home countries



November 2018: Excited to support United Way's campaign by raising \$7,115 through LUSO's Workplace Campaign. We had set a goal of \$6,500.



December 2018: In partnership with United Way GenNext, LUSO helped facilitate the annual *Give Cold Feet the Boot* drive. We were thrilled to distribute over 130 pairs of boots to residents in NE London.



January 2019: "Dive into Reading", our Family Literacy Day event welcomed 184 unique participants to enjoy ocean themed literacy activities. Highlights included singing and playing with Beechnut Steel, making positive affirmation bracelets and buttons with NELCE. Families left with free books, resources and new ideas on how to boost literacy at home.



February 2019: Two Nursing placement students implemented a *Sustainable Food Options* program at our Community Portable, which provides clients with dried foods like rice, oatmeal and lentils in reusable containers, as well as information about cost effectiveness, and the nutritional value of these choices.



March 2019: Canadian-born and Newcomer families participated in a trip to the Kinsmen Fanshawe Sugarbush. Everyone learned about the history of maple syrup in Canada, the seasonal process of making it, and they enjoyed some of the final product on top of a hot stack of pancakes!



March 2019: The theme of LUSO's annual *Stop Racism Video Contest* was "A Generation Without Racism". Winners were celebrated at a awards ceremony at Saunders Secondary School on March 21st; The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Multicultural Outreach

The Multicultural Outreach Program provides workshops, presentations and training on race relations, racial bullying, cultural diversity and awareness to youth, parents, professionals and community groups. The program addresses audiences in schools, group homes, financial institutions, corporations, community organizations, sport teams, conferences, as well as home and school associations.



62 schools and **9** community groups received service

317 workshops and presentations were conducted



29 videos were submitted to the *Stop Racism Video Contest*

Over **300** people attended the award's ceremony



12,660 people reached in London

1,376 people reached in Middlesex County

1,178 people reached in Elgin County

Impact Story

The Multicultural Outreach Program was an amazing opportunity for me to create awareness in the community. With my poetry and everything that I've experienced as a young black woman in Canada, I was able to bring a unique perspective on the panel at the Black History Month Opening Celebration. To the same regard, being a young performer speaking at the A Generation Without Racism Video Contest Awards Ceremony, gave me insight to what other young kids like me think about important topics like racism and colourism.

- Fauzia



"I am not proud of the way humans treat each other, we attack and attack like we're hitting rubber. We extend and bend each other."

- Fauzia

Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of our organization. Many of our programs rely on the support of our dedicated volunteers. Volunteers positively impact the lives of individuals and families while enhancing their own professional skill set.



298 volunteers supported programs and/or special events



2,403 volunteer hours contributed

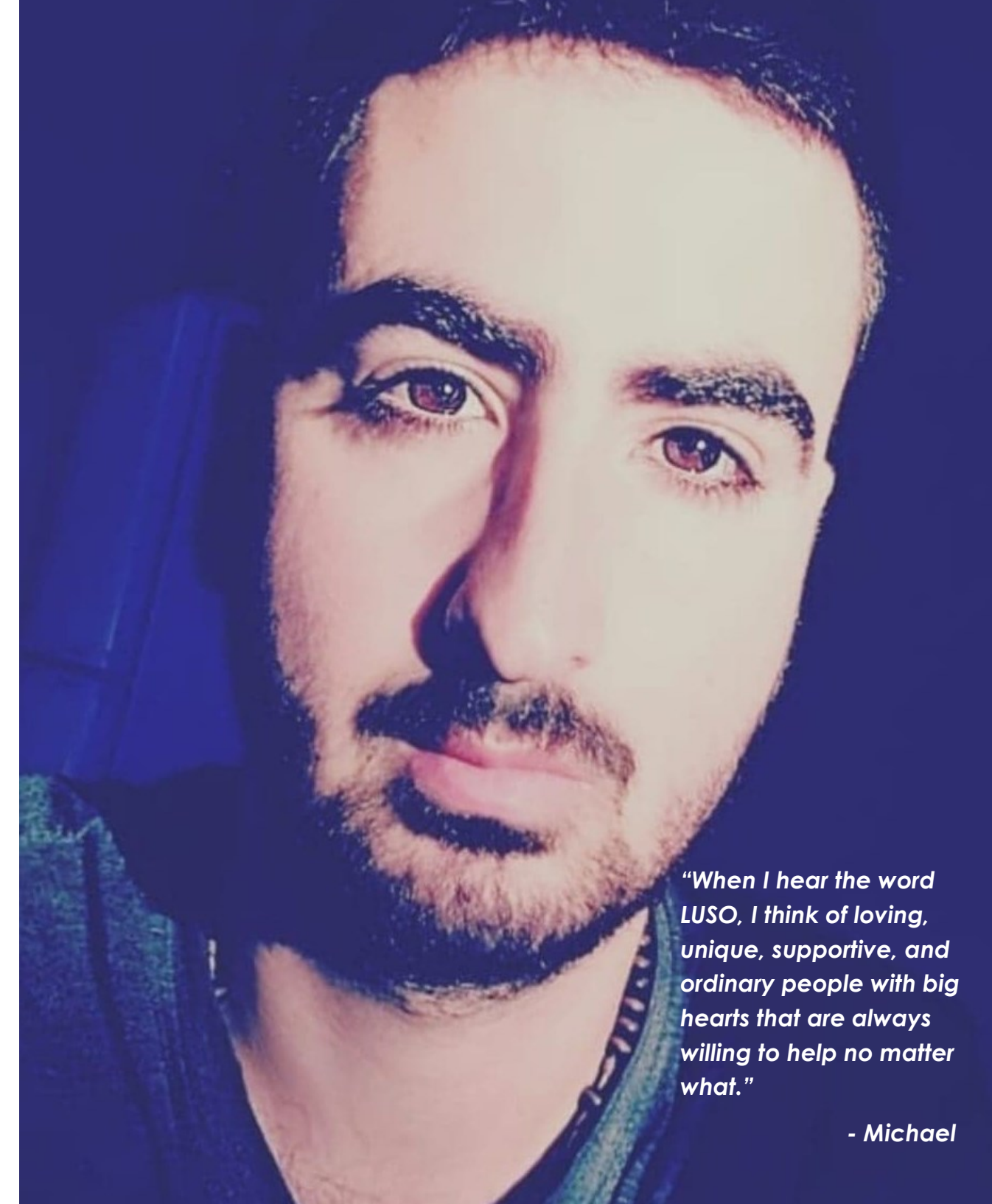


11 on-going programs supported

30 community events & special projects supported

Impact Story

Michael is a youth client that immigrated to Canada in 2011. He began his interactions with LUSO Community Services as a client of the SWIS program and soon became involved within the Northeast Youth Program. Being a client in many different programs, he soon began to build his English and confidence. He has always shown so much dedication and eagerness to get involved with the organization in whatever capacity he is able to do so. In 2014, he became a member of the Y.O.L.O. team where his personality and commitment shined so brightly. He continued to support this team as a youth leader/volunteer and after many conversations with the Youth Worker at LUSO he soon realized he wanted to pursue a career as a Child and Youth Worker. Michael has mentioned that the Youth Worker at LUSO inspired him to pursue a career working with youth, which is such a meaningful connection. Today Michael is completing the CYC Diploma Program at Fanshawe College, continues to support LUSO as a youth volunteer, and has worked two consecutive summers as an employee. Michael hopes to be a future employee of LUSO Community Services after graduation in 2020!



"When I hear the word LUSO, I think of loving, unique, supportive, and ordinary people with big hearts that are always willing to help no matter what."

- Michael

Youth

Youth Programs provide meaningful opportunities for young people between the ages of 11-19 to develop skills and become actively engaged in their community. Programs focus on four key areas: Relationships & Inclusion, Leadership & Community Engagement, Education & Skill Building, and Healthy Eating & Physical Activity.



362 unique youth participated in programs and/or special events

41 youth participated in Youth Leadership programs




15 events organized by Youth leaders



1,168 volunteer hours contributed to the community by Youth leaders

Impact Story

Curtis is a youth client that has been involved with LUSO Community Services over the past six years. He resides in the Argyle neighbourhood and has such a passion for being involved in his community. He is a dreamer and is not afraid to tackle any challenge that comes his way! He is one of the original youth leaders that formed the Y.O.L.O. team (Youth Organizing Leadership Opportunities) back in 2014 and is still very engaged in this group as a youth mentor. He continues to inspire others in his community and his confidence and infectious sense of humor shines through every single day! We are lucky to have a young person like Curtis blazing the path for other youth in Northeast London!



“Even though the youth change and the group grows, there is one thing that has stayed the same and that is Meagan and LUSO’s commitment to supporting youth and their needs while inspiring them and teaching them to follow their dreams. YOLO has taught me not just skills to become a better leader but a better person. To me it is not just a group youth coming together to work in our community, we are a family of youth that work together to bring happiness to our community while becoming closer in the process”.

-Curtis

Literacy

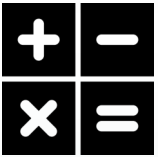
Programs provide a variety of literacy based activities and services for families and children up to 12 years of age residing in Northeast London. Programs aim to engage both children and their families in developing literacy and numeracy skills in a safe, fun, and supportive environment. Our literacy programs encourage shared learning and skill development of children, parents and caregivers.



19 Family Literacy Events hosted,
reaching **879** children, youth and adults



290 unique families, representing **612** people
access Shared Beginnings at **3** Community Locations



42 children and **37** adults participated in Family Math



33 children received weekly support through the
Literacy Booster Club

Impact Story

Children have been actively involved in literacy activities at our summer Books & Breakfast Program. The child pictured was very excited about reading under a sun umbrella with our staff and community volunteers each week. He developed the confidence to ask facilitators and volunteers to come read to him. His favourite book to read this summer was *Mom, The School Flooded* by Ken Rivard.



"I love coming here because people read to me, they are so kind, and breakfast is really good."

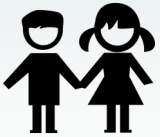
- Pictured Participant

Basic Needs & Community Support

The Basic Needs & Community Support Program provides information, referrals and support to residents in Northeast London. Residents can access our community portable and receive assistance with basic needs items such as: clothing, food, baby food and diapers. We also offer a variety of skill building sessions and opportunities for individuals to gain knowledge that will help with navigating through life's challenges.



865 unique clients, representing **237** households accessed the Community Portable



221 unique children at Breakfast Program (March + Summer)



2,341 breakfasts served (March Break + Summer)

Impact Story

Mike is a recipient of the Ontario Disability Support Program due to a brain injury sustained many years ago; living on a fixed income, his basic needs were not being met and he felt as if he was “struggling to survive.” In January, he vowed to seek help which led him to the NE Food Depot where he met LUSO staff and nursing students. In the following weeks, Mike visited the Portable for some additional supports and attended our Market and Sugarbush trips which served as a way to break isolation and meet other residents in the community. We learned quickly that Mike has many passions and interests. He loves music and is a talented guitarist; he had been creating a hand-built guitar for 18 months. In March, Mike brought the finished product to the Portable; it was a privilege to share in his joy and to hear him play. This moment demonstrated Mike's personal growth over the course of just three short months, growth that would not have been possible had Mike's basic needs not been met, and had he not felt supported and strengthened by his community. Mike continues to visit the Portable, sometimes as needed and sometimes just for a coffee and a chat!



"It is so nice to know that LUSO is always here when I need it."

- Mike

Settlement Workers in Schools

Settlement Workers are placed in both elementary and secondary schools within Northeast London. SWIS facilitate the integration of newcomer students and families into the education system and community. SWIS is a partnership with the Thames Valley District Board & the London District Catholic School Board.



1,727 unique individuals served in one-one-one, family and group sessions



24 elementary schools with regular service

5 secondary schools with regular service

7 schools with itinerant service



103 workshops delivered, reaching **897** people

Impact Story

"Since I came to Canada...I have been more involved from what I thought I could in my school and the community at large. It was not easy to start in a new country with too many different cultures, but once Questyn connected me to LUSO and its programs, I was able not only to be a participant but become a volunteer, and soon I started getting nominations to different awards in the community. At LUSO's programs I met wonderful people and some are now good friends of mine."

-Orthance



Library Settlement Partnership

Settlement Workers provide information & referrals to newcomers in one-to-one and group settings on issues pertaining to settlement and integration into the community. The program connects newcomers to community programs and services. LSP is in partnership with the London Public Library.



1,515 unique individuals served in one-to-one, family and group sessions



140 people attended the LSP Day Celebration



43 workshops delivered, reaching **417** people

Impact Story

LSP Workers have the pleasure of working with Taffy at Beacock library. Working in collaboration with such a great staff member makes both of our jobs enjoyable. LSP Workers always makes sure to introduce Newcomers to the library as part of their settlement journey in Canada. It is such a great advantage for individuals and families to be comfortable in their local library and to benefit and learn from its programs and services.



Community Connections

Community Connections activities are geared to those holding permanent resident status in Canada. Programs offer opportunities to build skills to assist newcomers adjust to life in Canada. Programming includes conversation circles, leadership development, family events and cultural activities for youth & adults.



336 unique youth & adult participants



17 special events, **12** field trips and a variety of ongoing programs including **113** conversation-based groups

Impact Story

"LUSO is a leading institution that seeks to spread Canadian culture to newcomers, of whom I am one of. LUSO has taught me much information ... It introduced me to a better way of life with certain sessions highlighting the health system ... the bussing system...simple mandatory things that are difficult for us as newcomers to get such as basic documents...and the ability to improve our English in conversation circles and making us feel valuable in Canada. I would advise anyone who doesn't attend LUSO to attend, it has been a blessing for myself and the many others around me, simple, helpful recommendations and information that I wouldn't be able to obtain is being given to me in an easy manner".

- Faheam



Settlement Counselling

Settlement Counsellors provide newcomers with individualized support, advocacy, information, and referrals on settlement and integration related issues. Settlement Counsellors provide one-to-one needs assessments to help clients with immediate settlement needs such as: housing, health care, education, employment, legal matters, immigration, and many others.



503 unique clients served by **2** Settlement Counsellors

9 Group sessions reaching **168** clients



4 Migrant clinics held in partnership with FCJ Refugee Centre and Law Foundation of Ontario supporting **96** clients

Neighbourhood Social Integration Project

Neighbourhood Social Integration project was a 15 month pilot project in partnership with other Neighbourhood Resource Centres. It aimed to provide targeted programming that was adapted to the needs of clients who faced significant settlement barriers. It connected clients to a lasting network of supports that are available in their neighbourhoods.



222 unique clients served in

443 client sessions



536 contacts via **45** different activities



148 of the clients served had been in Canada less than 3 years



Community Engagement



The group was established in 2016 and is comprised of faith based groups, service organizations and community members that have an interest in food access and security. As a chairing member, LUSO continues to play an active role in coordinating the meetings and the projects that the group deems as priority.



London Food Coalition
Rescue, Recover, Redistribute

We continue to be a member of the London Food Coalition. The Coalition is a coordinated food alliance that rescues high-quality fresh food and redistributes it to Londoners in need. As one of its members, LUSO has benefitted greatly; we have been able to provide fresh fruit and vegetables at our community food cupboard and programs and saved almost \$6,000 per year.



LUSO has been an member of the CYN since it's inception in 2007. As an active member, LUSO provides a voice in the larger strategy as well as participates in the Literacy, Ending Poverty and Family Centred Service System sub-groups.



LUSO is one of five **Neighbourhood Resource Centres** in London. We use a Community Development approach to empower London's vulnerable populations. We collaborate on initiatives with the other NRC's to respond to the needs identified in our neighbourhoods; deliver programs at multiple sites and empower residents.

Neighbourhood Resource Centres "Build Strong Neighbourhoods"



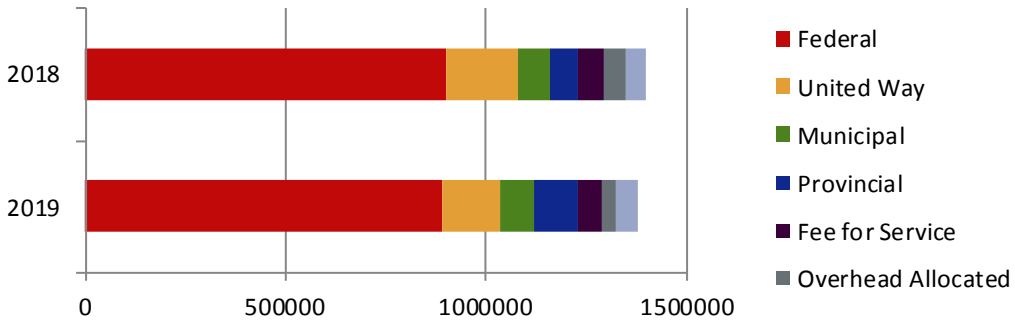
As one of London's Settlement Service providers, LUSO is a member of LMLIP and continues to provide support and input as a member on two of LMLIP's sub-councils: Settlement & Education. LUSO also supports LMLIP with various activities geared for the broader community to raise awareness of the value that immigrants and newcomers contribute to London.



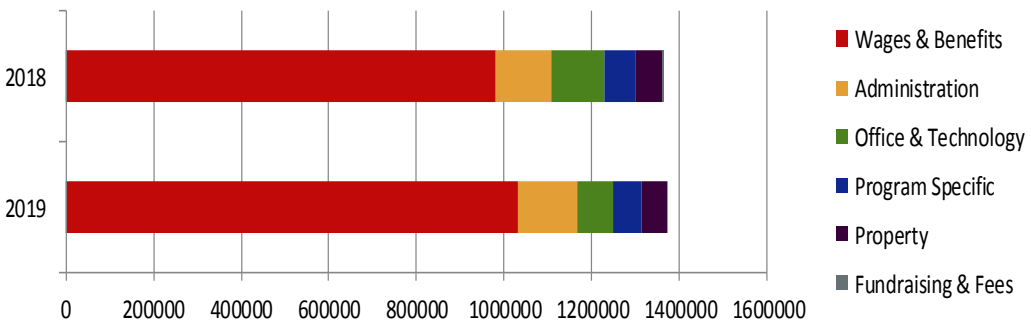
Partnerships with Family Centres have been paramount for service delivery and community engagement. LUSO has been providing services at three Family Centres in London: **Family Centre Carling-Thames; Family Centre Argyle and Family Centre Fanshawe**. The partnership with the Family Centres provides us opportunities to provide service to diverse children, youth and families in their own neighbourhoods.

Finances

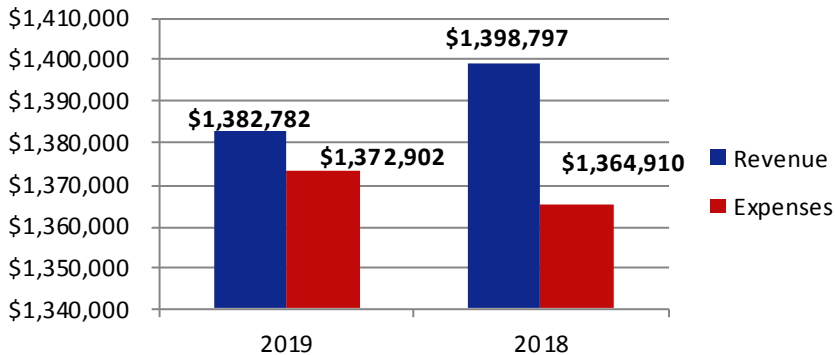
Revenue



Expenses




Overall Financial Position




LUSO is a multicultural neighbourhood resource centre dedicated to promoting inclusiveness, well-being and prosperity in the London community. We provide a variety of programs and services with a holistic approach to serving our community. Our programs support children, youth and families of culturally diverse backgrounds.


Our organization relies on community donations to support various programs including keeping our basic needs community cupboard stocked with non-perishable food items for families.


Please contact us to learn how YOU can make a difference.

 519-452-1466

 luso@lusocentre.org

 @luso_london

 [lusocommunityservices](https://www.facebook.com/lusocommunityservices)

 [luso_london](https://www.instagram.com/luso_london)



C O M M U N I T Y S E R V I C E S