

IMPACT SNAPSHOT

2025

Strengthening Community • Advancing Equity • Building a Prosperous Future.



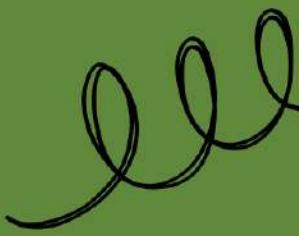
Message from the President

In 2025, NIROW continued its mission of fostering belonging, celebrating culture, and advancing the socioeconomic well-being of Nigerians and Black communities across Waterloo Region. This year represents our strongest period of growth, partnership, and measurable community impact. Through culturally responsive programming, economic empowerment initiatives, youth development, food security, advocacy, and multi-sector collaborations, NIROW demonstrated what is possible when communities lead with intention, unity, and vision.

With more than 3,000 members, NIROW is one of the largest ethnocultural organizations in the region and a vital partner in building an inclusive, prosperous Waterloo Region for all.



The year in review



2025 was a year of growth, impact, and strengthened community leadership for NIROW. We continued to advance our mission through culturally grounded programs that met the social, economic, and emotional needs of Nigerian and Black communities across Waterloo Region.

Our Food Distribution Program supported hundreds of families with culturally relevant food. This project has expanded to a Community Garden, which will allow us to grow fresh produce, build skills, and foster connection. The Roots to Resilience (RTR) mental health initiative provided culturally safe support for youth and families navigating stress, transition, and identity.

Our Summer Camp was one of our most successful yet, engaging children in cultural learning, STEM, outdoor exploration, and leadership development. Youth leadership remained a core focus, with Bookapedia Youth delivering a powerful presentation at the CYPT Youth Conference, showcasing creativity, literacy, and community pride.

We expanded community presence through major events, including INDEFEST, the Black Entrepreneur Market, Newcomer Orientation Sessions, and our annual Flag Raising, celebrating identity and belonging. We also delivered numerous workshops and strengthened partnerships across the region.

Organizationally, we launched the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan and onboarded two additional contract staff, including youth engagement support, positioning NIROW for sustained, long-term impact.

2025 KEY IMPACT AREAS

Organizational Growth and Governance

STRENGTHENED INFRASTRUCTURE

NIROW advanced its long-term sustainability through the creation of the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, expanded its membership to over 3,000 people, enhanced financial controls and accountability, supported by an audited financial report, and deepened its visibility and credibility through strong, multi-sector partnerships across the region.

PATHWAY TO CHARITABLE STATUS

NIROW continued strengthening its internal systems and governance structures to meet eligibility requirements for future charitable receipting. This work positions the organization for greater funding opportunities and long-term stability. NIROW is evolving into a sustainable, future-ready organization prepared for expanded community impact.

Youth Engagement & Leadership Development

MYTT SUMMER CAMP

The MYTT Summer Camp engaged over 40 children and youth in a vibrant, full-day program filled with leadership development, outdoor exploration, arts, STEM activities, cultural learning, and community building. Extending the program to a full day allowed for deeper engagement, stronger relationships, and more meaningful learning. The camp boosted confidence, identity, social skills, and overall well-being in a safe, supportive environment.



BOOKAPEDIA

Bookapedia is a youth-led literacy and storytelling initiative promoting representation through diverse books. With 12 sessions hosted to date, it builds confidence, identity, and leadership. Youth gain mentorship and real-world skills in public speaking, teamwork, innovation, and entrepreneurship, making Bookapedia a powerful model of youth-driven learning and representation.

ROOTS TO RESILIENCE (RTR)

Roots to Resilience is NIROW's culturally grounded mental health program supporting Black and immigrant youth and families. Through workshops, peer support, and healing-centred practices, RTR fosters emotional well-being, coping skills, confidence, and belonging. The program reduces isolation and helps participants strengthen resilience, identity, and family connections. To date, over 10 youths are in counselling, and more than 30 youths attending the healing circles.



Economic Empowerment, Food Security and Family Support

BLACK ENTREPRENEUR MARKET

The Black Entrepreneur Market showcased 40+ Black-owned businesses while activating the Gaukel Block in Downtown Kitchener with culture, commerce, and community energy. The event boosted visibility, strengthened revenue opportunities, and supported long-term sustainability for local Black entrepreneurs.



WELFARE AND FAMILY SUPPORT

NIROW provided critical support to families through culturally responsive guidance, referrals, and emergency assistance. This year, over 100 families received help navigating housing, education, health care, and settlement needs. This wraparound support reduced stress, strengthened stability, and ensured families, especially newcomers and vulnerable households, had access to the resources needed to thrive in the community.

AFRO-CULTURAL FOOD BANK

This project has served 1,000+ community members with culturally relevant food hampers that reflect the tastes, traditions, and dietary needs of our community. In 2025, NIROW strengthened this initiative through new partnerships with the KW Multicultural Centre (KWMC) and the Food Bank of Waterloo Region to expand its capacity, improve distribution efficiency, and increase access to culturally appropriate foods. This partnership will enhance food security, reduce isolation, and ensure families receive support that honours their culture and dignity.

Community Connection and Culture

INDEFEST 2025 & FLAG RAISING CEREMONY

INDEFEST 2025 brought together over 600 attendees to celebrate Nigerian culture, unity, and community pride through music, dance, food, art, and storytelling. The annual Flag Raising ceremony further showcased NIROW's growing visibility and strengthened cultural identity within Waterloo Region.

These celebrations fostered belonging, cultural preservation, and cross-community connection.



NEWCOMER ORIENTATION



NIROW's Newcomer Orientation welcomed over 100 newly arrived community members, providing essential information on settlement services, employment pathways, education, health care, and community resources. The session offered culturally grounded support to help newcomers navigate their new environment with confidence. Improved access to services, stronger community connection, and smoother integration for new families.

PEER HEALTH PROGRAM

The Peer Health Program provides culturally informed navigation support to help families understand and access the health system with confidence. Through one-on-one assistance and community outreach, the program reduces isolation and connects families to essential services and resources.

Its impacts include strengthened family stability, improved well-being, and increased access to culturally responsive



Peer NIROW's Strategic Partnerships

In 2025, NIROW strengthened and expanded a diverse network of strategic partnerships across Waterloo Region. These relationships enhanced program delivery, increased community reach, and positioned NIROW as a trusted collaborator in cultural, social, and economic development. Key partners include the Region of Waterloo, City of Kitchener, City of Waterloo, Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WCDSB), Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB), Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS), Waterloo Region Community Foundation (WRCF), Children and Youth Planning Table (CYPT), Family & Children's Services (FACS), KW Multicultural Centre (KWMC), Food Bank of Waterloo Region, CCAWR, ACAWRA, Afropolitan, Conestoga College, University of Waterloo, Adventure4Change, and numerous local Black-owned businesses.

Together, these partnerships supported major NIROW initiatives such as the Afro-Cultural Food Bank, Roots to Resilience, MYTT Summer Camp, Bookapedia, the Black Entrepreneur Market, and Newcomer Orientation.

Impact: Strengthened community capacity, improved program sustainability, and expanded opportunities for youth, families, and entrepreneurs.

“When partners invest in community-led solutions, the impact reaches far beyond one program; it transforms families, strengthens systems, and shapes generations.”

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

Strategic Priorities

- **Execute the 2026–2029 Strategic Plan**

Advance long-term goals including finalizing charitable status, hiring full-time staff, and strengthening NIROW's organizational and HR structures to support sustainable growth.

- **Expand Bookapedia & Youth Engagement Programs**

Deepen youth leadership, literacy, mentorship, and innovation opportunities through expanded programming and community partnerships.

- **Enhance the Afro-Cultural Food Bank**

Increase distribution capacity, diversify culturally relevant food options, and strengthen partnerships to better support African families experiencing food insecurity.

- **Grow the Community Garden**

Expand participation and production, supporting food sovereignty, cultural education, and community connection.

- **Improve & Scale MYTT Summer Camp**

Offer an enriched, full-day program with greater capacity, stronger curriculum, and enhanced leadership opportunities for children and youth.

- **Deliver the Black Entrepreneur Market (BEM) – Bigger & Better**

Return with an expanded edition featuring more vendors, increased visibility, and continued activation of Downtown Kitchener's Gaukel Block.

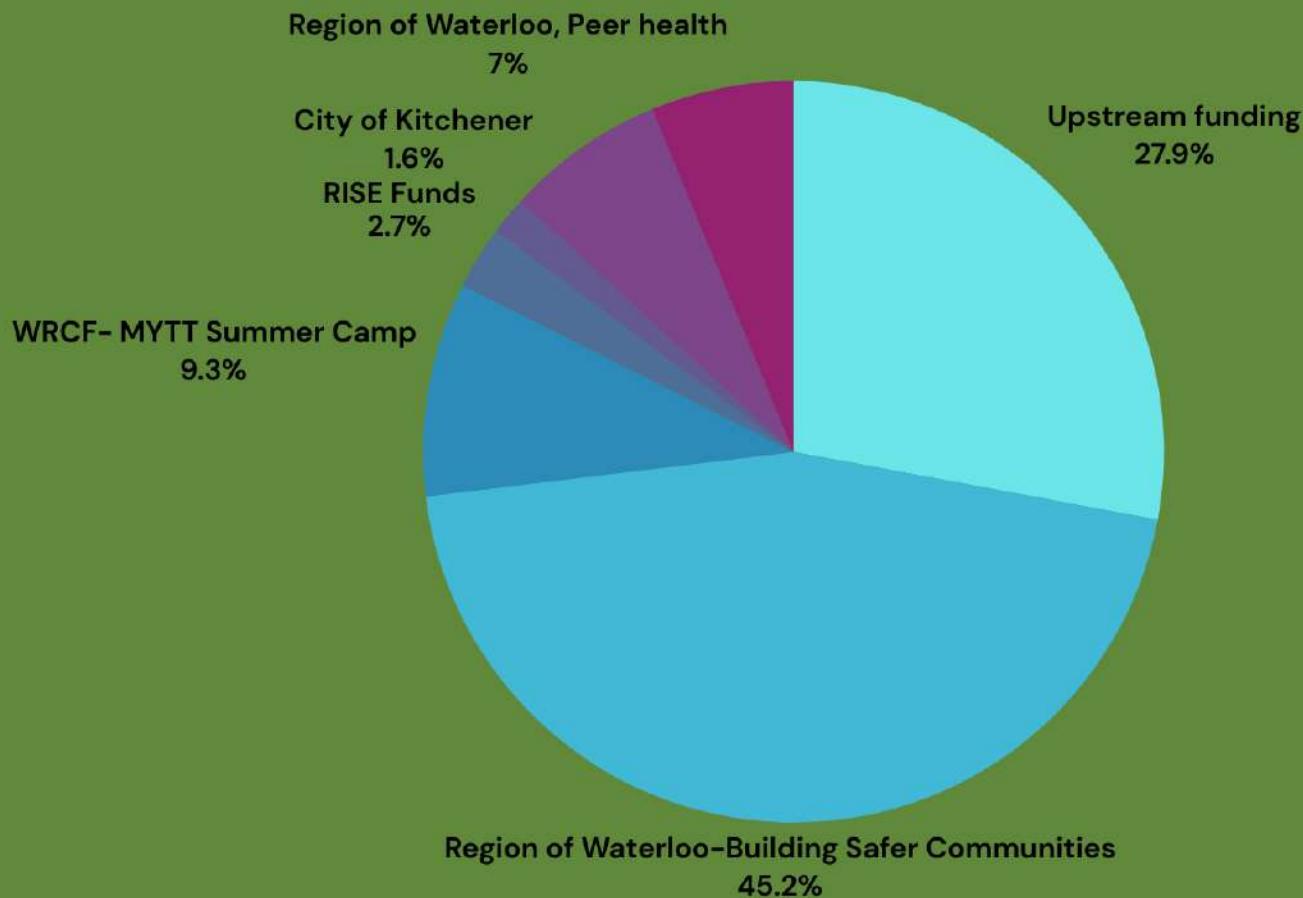
- **Increase Advocacy & Representation**

Strengthen NIROW's voice across municipal, regional, and sector tables to champion equity, cultural safety, and community-informed policy.

- **Strengthen Board Capacity, Volunteers & Evaluation Systems**

Enhance governance, volunteer leadership, and monitoring and evaluation practices to support a resilient and future-ready NIROW.

Financial Report



We would like to
thank all our funders
for their

generous *support*



Region of Waterloo

