



Impact Report

2023



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Executive Summary

In 2023, Adoptee Futures CIC underwent a transformative rebrand, emerging as The Dunbar Project CIC. This change was prompted by a values misalignment between founder Shania and co-founder Annalisa. Following community concerns about Annalisa's behaviour and intent, she chose to step down and focus on her studies. Both founders have provided statements on this transition, and the organisation is now moving forward with a renewed focus and commitment.

The Dunbar Project is proud to introduce two new team members, marking a positive step forward in our journey. As we continue to evolve in 2024, we're actively seeking individuals with the right skills to join our expanding team.

Over the past year, our dedication has centred on developing Adoptees Healing Communities. Our primary objective has been to ensure accessibility for all adoptees, irrespective of their background. The "Kickstarting Our Communities" project, generously funded by The Blgrave Trust, has played a pivotal role in realising this goal.

This initiative focused on establishing support groups, particularly for adoptees facing challenges within multiple minority communities. Leveraging insights from our founder's undergraduate research, which emphasised the protective role of community for mental health, we have successfully laid the foundation for healing communities.

However, our commitment to growth comes with challenges. Running three sessions a month with minimal staff has proven emotionally taxing on our facilitators, who are adoptees on their own healing journeys. Recognising this strain, we are actively working to align the number of sessions with our team's capacity, with plans to hire more facilitators in the future.

Moreover, prioritising the mental health of our team remains paramount. We provide ongoing training on facilitating groups with lived experience. Our trauma-informed approach acknowledges the challenges adoptees may face when participating in new groups, prompting us to develop strategies to ensure a safe and comfortable environment. We're exploring improvements to our texting group chat to provide seamless support.

The Dunbar Project values your input and encourages suggestions on how we can better support any apprehensions you may have about attending our sessions. Your feedback is crucial as we strive to enhance our services and foster a more supportive and inclusive community.

Our Story So Far

OUR MISSION

At The Dunbar Project, we are dedicated to recognising and addressing the lifelong impact of adoption on individuals. We understand the unique challenges that adoptees face, making their journey through life complex.

Our mission is to provide a secure and supportive environment where adoptees can connect, share experiences, and learn from one another. We aim to cultivate a community that fosters healing, support, and a profound sense of belonging.

The Dunbar Project offers coaching and support groups tailored for adult adoptees navigating issues such as identity, attachment, and trauma. Through these programs, adoptees gain valuable insights and strategies to manage emotions and build healthy relationships.

Committed to holistic support, we extend our reach to adoptive parents, social workers, and professionals through training and workshops.

To unite the adoptee community, The Dunbar Project organises various events throughout the year. These gatherings serve as platforms for adoptees to connect, learn, and enjoy shared experiences.

Our mission is to reclaim the adoption narrative, reframe the world's view on adoption and help adoptees heal.

OUR PURPOSE

Our purpose is to establish a secure and empowering space, guided by adoptees and exclusively designed for adoptees.

Here, individuals can gather, finding solace and healing through the shared tapestry of their experiences.

Our commitment extends to crafting accessible resources that embrace a trauma-informed approach, ensuring every adoptee can access the support needed on their unique journey.

Community Member Testimonial

"I finally found a space where I felt I could be honest and validated.

The space was well organised, I felt safe after hearing the disclaimer at the beginning of the session.

It was timely, safe, effective and I really got something from this session. "

-Jamm

Organisational Overview

In 2023, Adoptee Futures CIC underwent a rebrand and became The Dunbar Project CIC. Due to a mismatch of values between our founder Shania and former co-founder Annalisa, and after taking into account the concerns of our community members about our former co-founder's behaviour and intent, she decided to step down and focus on her studies.

Below is a statement from our founder, along with Annalisa's farewell statement.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PREVIOUS CO-FOUNDER

After three incredible years as CEO and Director, I've decided to step down from my role to pursue my Ph.D. in journalism. It's a bittersweet farewell, as Adoptee Futures has been a remarkable journey and one I have enjoyed co-creating.

I want to express my gratitude to the Adoptee Futures Community, and I am confident that Adoptee Futures will continue to thrive under capable leaders.

Thank you all for being part of my journey.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Hi all,

After numerous complaints about Annalisa's behaviour from community members & a misalignment of values the joint decision was made that it would be in the best interests of the community for her to step down. Annalisa will now focus on her studies.

We wish her all the best on her continued healing journey.

Organisational Overview

Following our recent rebrand, we're proud to announce the arrival of two new team members.

We're excited to continue growing our team in 2024, so if you have the right skills and would like to join us, please don't hesitate to get in touch!

MEET JUDZIA



DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Judzia is the Director of Finance with expertise in operations management, strong attention to detail, and the ability to analyse financial data.

She is also a great communicator and collaborator who works closely with other departments to ensure financial decisions are grounded on solid footing, leading the company towards success.

MEET SIMI



YOUTH PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

We are pleased to introduce Simi as our Youth Programme Director.

Their primary responsibilities will include the development, implementation, and management of our upcoming programme that caters to adopted young people.

Programme & Service Highlights

For the past year, we've been dedicated to developing our Adoptees Healing Communities.

Our goal was to make sure these communities were accessible to all adoptees, regardless of their background or situation.

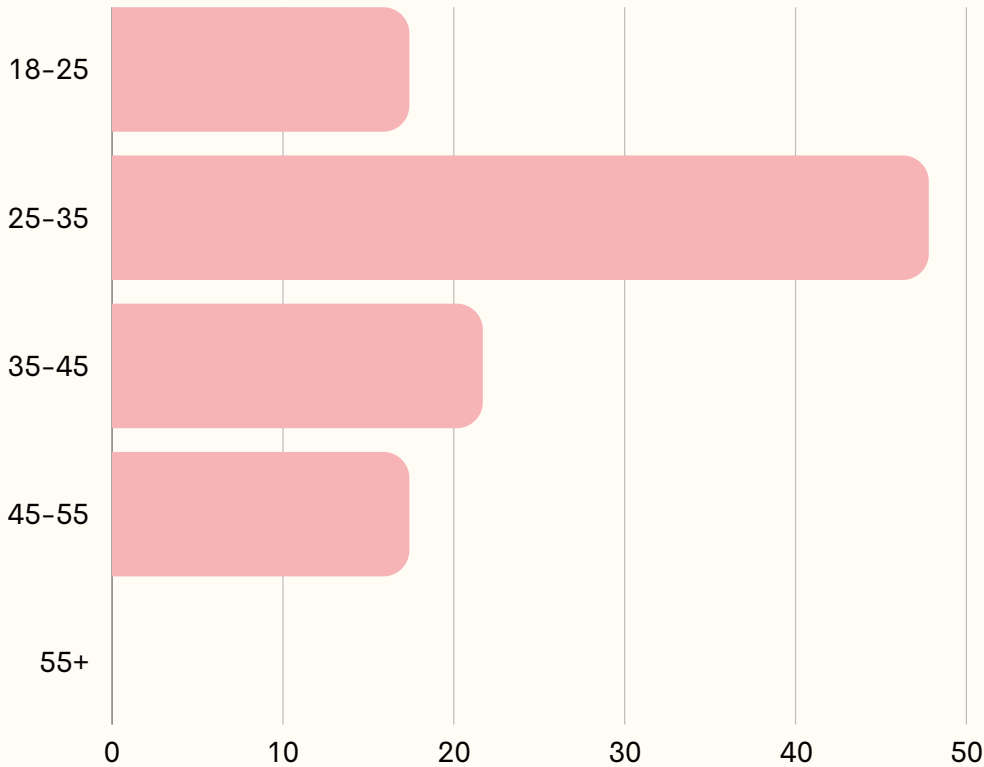
The "Kickstarting Our Communities" project, generously funded by The Blagrave Trust, helped us fulfil our goal of developing our healing communities.

The project aimed to establish support groups to address the unique challenges faced by adoptees, particularly those who belong to multiple minority communities. The project leveraged insights from our founder's undergraduate research, which highlighted the crucial role of community as a protective factor for mental health.



Quantifiable Impact Metrics

AGE BRACKET OUR OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS



273

Adoptees got involved with our services

30

Healing events hosted

HOW OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS RATED THEIR EXPERIENCE AT OUR EVENTS



Challenges Faced

This year has been marked by notable achievements, but we have also encountered some obstacles along the way.

We consider these challenges as learning opportunities and will use them to further enhance the quality of our services.

1 Adoptees who are also adoptive parents

Our organisation is dedicated to providing a safe and supportive space for adoptees seeking healing from their past experiences. Recently, we've faced a challenge within our healing groups with the addition of adoptive parents who are also adoptees. While we support and acknowledge all adoptees, we regret to inform you that we currently lack the resources to accommodate adoptees who are also adoptive parents.

The presence of adoptive parents who are also adoptees has been a source of discomfort for some of our adoptees, triggering their past trauma. Our values and commitment to the well-being of adoptees who are not adoptive parents must remain our top priority.

We believe that all adoptees deserve a place to unpack their trauma, however, we believe adoptees who have decided to adopt have access to the same privileges that all adoptive parents have & therefore have a wealth of support services at their feet.

It's important to note that our organisation does not condone the decision to participate in a potentially harmful practice and believes in family preservation. We advise adoptive parents in this position to seek out other resources and services available to them.

We will provide an update if we decide to create a designated space for adoptees who are also adoptive parents.

2 Looking After Our Mental Wellbeing

Running three sessions a month with minimal staff has proven to be a challenge, causing undue emotional strain on our facilitators.

This is particularly challenging as our facilitators are adoptees who are also going through their healing journeys.

Our experience has taught us that we need to align the number of sessions we run with our team's capacity. We are committed to hiring more facilitators in the future to support our goal.

Moreover, we prioritise the mental health of our team and provide them with training on how to facilitate groups with lived experience.

3 Addressing Nervousness In Our Community

The Dunbar Project recognises that participating in a new group or meeting new people can be challenging for adoptees. As a trauma-informed organisation, we understand the importance of making our members feel safe and comfortable.

We're in the process of developing ways to encourage community members to join our sessions. We're also exploring the possibility of improving our texting group chat to provide the necessary support for our members without making them feel uneasy.

We're always interested in hearing your suggestions on how we can assist you with any apprehension you may have about attending our sessions. Please don't hesitate to reach out and let us know how we can support you better.

Acknowledgements & Gratitude

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for your unwavering support and kind words regarding our rebrand.

A massive thank you extends to our incredible community members who consistently offer their support and encouragement. Your positive energy and commitment to this shared learning journey mean the world to us.

I also want to acknowledge and commend the efforts of fellow adoptee-led organizations and individuals dedicated to instigating positive change.

A special shout-out to the Adult Adoptee Movement for their continuous support and the impactful work they undertake to champion the rights of adoptees.

I firmly believe in the transformative power within us as adoptees to reshape narratives and facilitate healing.

Embracing collaboration rather than competition, our collective strength is undeniable. Moving forward, I am optimistic that our united efforts will bring about a significant shift in how the world perceives adoption. Together, we can make a meaningful impact.

Best Wishes,
Shania



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