

Together We're better

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019-2020



KAMLOOPS
IMMIGRANT SERVICES



Alex, David Alvaro, Erica, David Leonardo,
MJ, Mariana, Ofelia, Adrian & Paula

Contents

- 1 Message from the President
- 2 Report from the Executive Director
- 3 Our Mission
- 4 2019-2020 at a Glance
- 5 Program Updates
- 6 Anti-Racism Network
- 7 Looking Ahead to 2020-2021
- 8 Serving during COVID-19 pandemic
- 9 Thank You

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



To the membership

It is always a pleasure to address membership and staff. This year has been a very exciting and challenging year for the agency. We have taken exciting steps forward to expansion which will bring prosperity to the agency in fulfillment of its mandates.

At the same time, it has been a challenging year as we bid farewell to one of our friends, prior ED Paul Lagacé, who we lost to cancer. You will be remembered our friend.

Notwithstanding the current pandemic that we all find ourselves in, our team has risen to the occasion and have excelled in the provision of the much needed help required during these difficult times by our clients

A great thank you to our funders who have supported us through these unprecedented times and have allowed us to continue to be the strong foundation that our immigrant communities and visible minorities need.

I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to the staff and board for their continued excellence and commitment to the agency and its objectives. We would not be where we are was it not for the dedication of all those involved in our mandates.

I would like to welcome our new Executive Director France Lamontagne to her first Virtual AGM, she has quickly become a tremendous asset to the agency, we are fortunate to have her.

Leadership and staff are strong within our agency as we look forward to our exciting future and expansion of services.

We welcome you all to join us in this exciting journey!

Yours truly,

David Cruz
President



Paul Lagacé Blanket ceremony, November 2018

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It is with pleasure that I share highlights from our year with you. The theme for this year has clearly been connection, collaboration, and resiliency, and our collective success can be attributed to the strength of relationships amongst our staff and within the organization, with our clients, our partners and our community.

Our contract with the provincial government has been extended to 2022, and we were able to successfully negotiate a 5-year contribution agreement with the federal government—a first for the settlement sector—which enables us to do meaningful long-term planning to best serve our clients and continue to build capacity in our staff. To further plan for our sustainability, the Board and I visited other settlement agencies to learn and share best practices, discuss strategies for revenue diversification, and explore new programs and services that would focus on our core competencies and attract new clients, but without compromising our focus on newcomers to Canada.

Strengthening existing ties and fostering new ones provincially and locally has had excellent results. We held a Migrant resource fair collaboratively with MOSAIC, created a formal collaboration agreement with WorkBC, reimagined the *Diversity Walk* as the *Tapestry Multicultural Festival* and secured major sponsorships in partnership with the North Shore Business Improvement Association, which will launch in May of 2021, COVID permitted!

We were able to provide support to temporary foreign workers in our region and extend our reach as far as Chase, Clinton and Douglas Lake through a new collaboration project with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and MOSAIC. We are moving closer to renovating the basement into a Learning Lab, which will enable us to increase access to training for our clients, and a Memorandum of Understanding has been reached with Habitat for Humanity, a critical step in developing a housing project for newcomers to Kamloops.

These relationships not only benefit our clients and the community, but they provide our organization with key leveraging funding streams to deepen and further our impact.

As we move forward, I would like to offer thanks and gratitude to Schlaraffia Kamloops for their support of our agency and their role in our history. We wish them the very best.

And finally, with sadness and respect, we acknowledge the brilliance and grace of our friend Paul Lagacé. His commitment to and vision for our agency laid the foundation for the continuing strength of our team, our key position in the community, and the sustainability of our work. His focus on empowering people is his legacy; he is sincerely missed. The Paul Lagacé Memorial Scholarship Fund was created in his memory.

France Lamontagne

OUR MISSION

To deliver programs and services designed to advance immigrants, migrants, refugees, visible minorities, first-generation Canadians and their families in becoming full and equal members of Canadian society.

Advocate for settlement, integration and multicultural issues on a local, regional and national scale. Take actions to eliminate racism against immigrants and visible minorities.

Raise awareness on the importance of immigration, multiculturalism and diversity in Canadian society. Promote respect and understanding in the elimination of barriers and challenges faced by immigrants, migrants, refugees and minorities.



2019-2020 at a Glance

By the Numbers

9,800

Clients walked through our doors

600

New clients served

225

Activities, events and workshops



65

Local Partners

50

Active Volunteers

22

Dedicated Staff



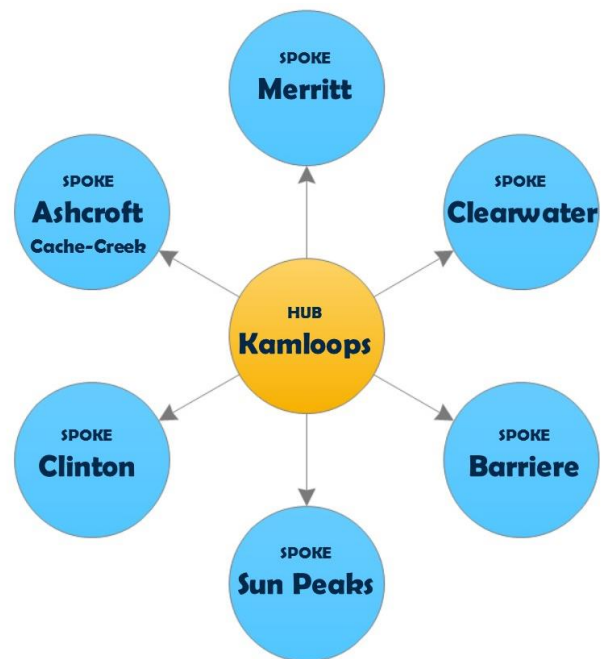
Program Updates

Settlement Services

Our services include Immigrant Settlement & Integration Program (ISIP) and BC Settlement and Integration Services (BCSIS). Through a SPOKE model we were able to serve 52 new clients in communities of the Thompson-Nicola Region and beyond with Outreach Settlement Services.

Our 2 SPOKE Settlement Counsellors also established connections with local employers, business, associations and community services to facilitate clients' access to welcoming and culturally sensitive services and opportunities.

Through our regular visits, we have been able to establish great relationships with service providers such as Thompson-Nicola Regional Library and Community Futures. These agencies have generously offered space for one-on-one meetings with migrant worker clients and group orientations. With COVID-19, we have successfully continued to serve these clients remotely. We will begin a promotion campaign in Merritt this September to reach out and stimulate new connections.



Language Training to Newcomers



This year we conducted 176 Language Assessments following the Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) standards. The tests take place at the agency, facilitated in person, are conducted by our certified CLBPT Assessor Lucia Mapplebeck. The test helps determine which class level clients are most comfortable to participate in. The results can also be used for placement into workplace training programs with a language component.

82 new clients and 72 returning clients attended our in-person classes from Literacy to level 8. Due to COVID-19 we have developed VIRTUAL classes for all levels daytime and night time with in-person support weekly during the day. We are seeing the benefit of this blended model with increased registrations these past few months and consistent attendance. Our LINC instructors will continue offering classes with this model post-pandemic.

Employment-Related Services

Submitted by Darcy Gorrill, Employment Counsellor

Our clients continue to benefit from the strength of our formal collaboration agreement with WorkBC, which outlines protocols to minimize duplication of effort, support clients culturally and with crucial language support, and ensure that clients' competencies are recognized and promoted in their job search efforts.

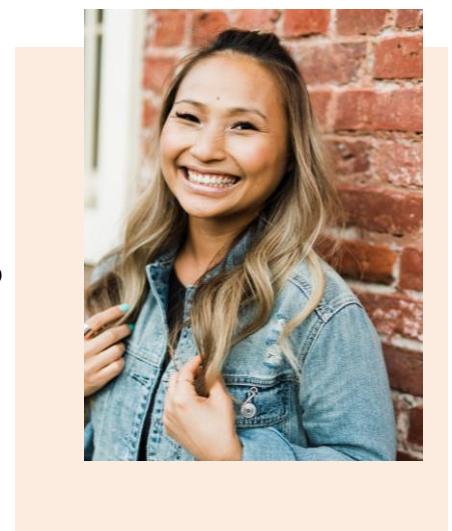
- Working with clients that have low level English to be in LINC classes and volunteer with the agency to develop various skills and acquire experience in job placements until their English level improves to obtain a paying job.
- Strategizing with WorkBC to help clients of both KIS and WorkBC work with us until they get to a level at our agency where they will seamlessly fit into the WorkBC programs through a service flow approach.
- Working on a project with TRU to bring basic computers 050 to KIS as not only a course credential for University but also to help clients gain basic computer knowledge for job search and job retention. The program was set to start in March or April when Covid-19 hit. It has been postponed.
- Hosting our first Career Fair in October with vendors from educational institutions, employers, job placement organizations and Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants.

Kathryn was positive & determined

Kathryn had left a long-term relationship where she had looked after her partner's kids since she came to Canada in 2016. She had never held a job in Canada. She was suddenly left without a place to live and had no job.

In December 2019, she visited KIS Settlement Team

The team assisted Kathryn with housing and counselling needs. Then, the Employment Counsellor worked with her intensively to help her gain confidence in her skills and assisted with resume and cover letter writing. She learned the best practices of looking for a job and what it looks like to work in Canada. Once she was feeling comfortable and a bit more confident she was referred to WorkBC. Shortly after she landed a great job but ending up losing it after a few months because she still lacked some of the skills that was needed for job retention. KIS Employment Counsellor then continued to work with Kathryn on developing those skills and she went back to WorkBC program to get further training, helping her become even more "employable". Kathryn found a new job in June 2020 and is still currently working full-time.



Settlement Worker in Schools (SWIS)

Submitted by Amy Paran, SWIS

Many of our clients have diverse and complex needs. The SWIS program connects families with additional government and community supports including special needs services, mental health supports, recreational opportunities, after-school care and others. This year, with the support of funds from the United Way, SWIS coordinated weekly Art Therapy sessions for two refugee students; helping these students explore their emotions and manage stress. SWIS also helps families obtain funding supports such as Jumpstart, KidSport, ARCH and BC Affordable Childcare Benefits to allow equal access and full participation in community activities.

Now in its second year of programming the SWIS program was able to successfully offer the following additional supports and services to newcomer parents and students in School District 73:



- Mind the Gap: In collaboration with District 73 ELL teachers, newcomer secondary students completed a series of visits to Thompson Rivers University campus to learn about university life, programs offered and available funding.
- Youth Sport Night: Offered in partnership with the City of Kamloops to introduce newcomer youth ages 13 – 18 to various sports.
- Pro D Day presentation to teachers in partnership with District 73 ELL teachers
- Two CAST (Community Agency Support Team) presentations to District 73 Principals and community agency leaders
- Bi-weekly visits to 4 Conversation Circles in Kamloops Secondary Schools in collaboration with District 73 ELL teachers
- Understanding Your Children: Presentation on stress and PTSD in children facilitated by Child and Youth Mental Health clinicians for newcomer parents
- Me and My Tween facilitation
- Presentations at Elementary School staff meetings
- Kids' Summer Camp in collaboration with KIS Community Connections
- Home Alone Course for newcomer youth
- Potluck picnic for newcomer Secondary Students



With the new 5 year contribution agreement, starting this fall the program will offer more support with 2 “SWIS” doing outreach work assisting students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 and help them and their families easily transition and integrate into school life and ensure success at school and in the community.



Support Services

Childmind

Submitted by Leanne Coombes

Our Childminding program is more than just looking after children while their parent attend English Classes. It is a way for us to work with the children holistically, helping each one develop their language, pre-reading skills, cognitive, social and emotional development. It also gives us the opportunity to support the parents and provide them with a variety of tools and resources. We worked with 89 children this year.

Here are some of the Challenges our clients are facing and shared with us:

- Feelings of anxiousness/lack confidence about supporting their children with speaking/reading English.
- Understanding how to integrate their cultural beliefs and parenting strategies with Canadian parenting beliefs and strategies.
- Understanding child development in relation to guidance (behaviour modification), nutrition, mental health, physical and social skills.
- COVID restrictions of in-person services.

How we were able to help overcome these challenges:

- Provided 2, 4 week sessions of a parent participation program called "Comfort, Play & Teach"
- Provided a 6 week parenting program called "Parenting In Canada" with childmind supports.
- One-to-One sharing times for our vulnerable clients facing domestic abuse situations in collaboration with Settlement Counsellors.
- Followed up with referrals and personal support to community resources at clients request.
- Launched 9 weeks of video sessions of Childmind activities and then zoom sessions with materials provided to the families.
- Weekly communications with parents via email or phone during COVID to provide emotional and social supports for any questions/concerns they had about their children's development and for themselves.



Feedback & Success Stories

- Parents shared with us several times about how they are thankful and appreciative of the support they received through Childmind program and parenting programs.

"Sometimes, I can't find a word how to I say in English. I can learn a lot from you. Thank you."

"Thank you for telling me. Your advice are wholesome to us."

"Dear Leanne and teacher. I think she grew up thanks to you. She didn't interest about other kids before. And she talk to me about CHILDMIND program well. It seems that she read alphabet. Thank you."

"Every night, (child) wants to read both language books."

A parent shared with the staff that "my son wasn't interested in books before Comfort, Play & Teach and since attending the program his interest has improved with the books he brings home."

"Recently (child) doesn't want to back home, because she loves Childmind so much!"

"This is (Parent) (Child) mommy. I have to tell you guys, "thank you for your support." This situation I'm not sure what I can do for my kids. Your program works for our family. And we had a good time. Again, Thank you so much."



Support to Migrant Workers

For the first year and with the support of the Government of Canada's Migrant Worker Support Network led by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and MOSAIC, KIS became a collaborating agency for the purposes of making a positive impact on migrant workers and employers in the Thompson-Nicola-Cariboo regions through education and direct support.



Prior COVID-19, two Settlement Counsellors were able to make regular visits to the communities of Ashcroft and Cache-Creek to meet with community service providers, farm owners and migrant workers. Then the pandemic hit and connecting with workers became a challenge. We offered meetings through WhatsApp and Zoom, offered virtual information sessions and Conversation Circles for those interested in improving their English and connecting with new people but we had little response. We completed our first contract at the end of March.

More recently, with the pandemic really highlighting the need for increased services, the program was extended. KIS put in an additional request for collaboration, received additional funds and contracted out a dedicated Migrant Worker outreach, Mitch Ward, who has been connecting with over 150 foreign workers, mostly farm workers and 30 employers in-person. Mitch has been mapping out the area with Google Maps, in an attempt to expand knowledge of workers in those regions. A resource package is being developed, ongoing casework including crisis counselling and social visits are taking place weekly. We are participating in various regional and provincial roundtables and making recommendations to the governments that would improve the conditions of TFW.



Challenges reported:

- Locating workers without a master list
- Workers need for translation navigating community services and institutions
- Employers overstating the need for worker quarantine after 14-day period, increasing isolation and reducing access to community resources
- Navigating racism in smaller communities
- Employers using COVID to justify preventing outreach workers from speaking to employees or to justify the confinement of workers to the farm property
- Navigating shifting government bureaucracy in COVID times.

Diversity Outreach Program

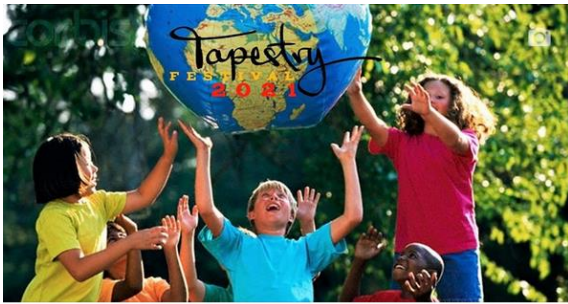
Submitted by Graham Specht, Diversity Outreach Coordinator

Traditional Outreach:

The meaning of outreach: 'Meet people where they are', both in the literal sense – going to the people you want to reach, and figuratively speaking by trying to see things from others' point of view.

School Event Highlight:

This year KIS Diversity teamed up with KIS SWIS program coordinator Amy Paran to approach secondary school for programs and events. The highlight school event was at Valleyview Secondary School. To begin with, school administrators were hesitant to take on a new multicultural event project, but after two inspiring meetings with the vice principal and law teacher, their staff mobilized the entire school to do a multicultural station event building-wide. Classes, teachers and especially students created culture stations with food, music, performance, decorations and games.



This year we finally took the plunge to transition the annual Diversity Walk into the Tapestry Arts & Culture Festival. A lot of planning and preparation meetings took place, and foundations like sponsorship and publicity were prepared. Unfortunately shortly after launching the promotion, COVID forced us to postpone until 2021.

MAY 15
Public - Hosted by Tapestry Festival, Kamloops North Shore BIA and 3 others



Supporting Cultural Organizations:

Graham continues to represent KIS at the Kamloops Multicultural society, and support their activities. This year for Canada Day he helped organize the Canada Day Drumming event where KMS members prepared a (physically distanced, outdoor) drumming event at KIS which was broadcast simultaneously across Canada with 27 other cities. Graham also facilitated the TRU iDays Multicultural Cooking Show again as well.

Anti-Racism Network



RESPECT NETWORK
thompson okanagan

Regional Outreach:

Inter-community collaboration

KIS is part of the Respect Network Thompson Okanagan. This group is made up of representatives from immigrant-serving and community development organizations in the interior communities who work together to bring awareness, education and social development to our locales and the region.

This year, under the new Resilience BC Anti-racism network (Formerly OARH, Organizing Against Racism and Hate) we will continue to act as a spoke through a “hub and spoke” model and lead anti-racism and anti-hate work at the local level. We will also share ideas and best practice with the agencies in our regional Network. Our mandate is to build awareness of what comprises racism and hate, mobilize our communities to respond to Hate Crimes and Hate Incidences in supportive and collaborative ways, and lead discussions and anti-racism education opportunities. The Spokes will receive supports from the Hub, engage with the Hub’s activities, and be an active participant of the broader Resilience BC Network.

Graham Specht, our Diversity coordinator is a member of Resilience BC strategic planning committee and he took part in the recent Virtual Townhall on Anti-racism in BC. Through this he has also connected with several anti-racism leaders in other jurisdictions in BC, to discuss a provincial approach to coordinating anti-racism across regions.



Looking ahead to 2020-2021



Housing Development

In October 2019, the agency entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Habitat for Humanity Kamloops (HK) for the Development of a new housing facility at 448 Tranquille Road. HK will act as Developer and Construction Manager. The Project will incorporate the existing commercial facility with the addition of 30+ rental, residential units offered primarily to Newcomers and below market rates.

Under the architectural services of Bluegreen Architecture Inc., the preliminary design of the residential/commercial property will begin this fall alongside other activities that will take us to a key milestone; our Development Permit Application with the City of Kamloops. The agency was successfully granted CMHC seed funding to begin the project. The MOU will transition into an Integrated Project Delivery Contract this month.

We can anticipate delays in some of this second phase due to COVID-19 but we hope to see phase 3 (Design Development) Architectural & Engineering by Spring 2021.



En Route Program

Within the new 5 year contribution agreement, the agency created an additional program to assist and support newcomers and their families who may

be experiencing crisis and facing multiple barriers preventing access to KIS services and ultimately settle and integrate. The program is lead by the En Route Program Navigator, Senior Settlement Counsellor, Liza Ferris Ortiz.

Together with other services and community resources, the client will receive one-on-one case management support, social and emotional support, mobilization of emergency services when necessary and individual advocacy. The program structure offers weekly and bi-weekly follow-ups for a period of 2 to 4 months. This holistic approach will build vulnerable clients' capacity to independently navigate settlement programming, community and health services.

Canada Emergency Community Support Fund via United Way for 2020-2021

With the pandemic creating an increase in demand for local services, the agency received over \$30,000.00 to provide additional support to clients in need: This will give us the ability to pay for Tutors for Youth and Children in need during the school year; pay for Counselling and Art Therapy for Vulnerable clients experiencing hardships; and pay for Interpreters for clients with low-English literacy levels to access existing health care, paramedical services and navigate social programs.

Serving during COVID-19 pandemic



The values of our organization and the principles that guide our work proved to be vital as we quickly adapted to the challenges that the COVID pandemic has presented. The focus of service to our clients shifted to the very practical matter of accessing critical government services and funds for which we are uniquely positioned in terms of providing translation and interpretive services, an area that government took a while to secure.

Redefining our service delivery models was effective, and our staff were standouts in adapting to using technology to ensure continuity and quality of service. Our LINC classes, which shifted to on-line classes, had the unexpected outcome of increasing participation rates and welcoming new clients to language learning.

Without a doubt, our ability to adapt is confirmation of the quality of the relationships on our team and with our Board of Directors, our resiliency as an agency, and the strength of the not-for-profit network in Kamloops which quickly mobilized to create a productive platform for agencies to discuss issues and collectively problem solve, direct agencies to relevant information and resources, provide a safe place to share concerns, fears and wisdom. At a time when continuing funding in our field is uncertain and our ability to deliver services challenging, it is a testament to our community that our instinct was to help each other, not focus merely on protecting ourselves. Though the long-term impact of the pandemic remains unknown, it is heartening to be able to trust in our community.



WEAR A MASK. PROTECT OTHERS.

Thank You!

We couldn't have done it without you!

Employees



Rajinder Lotay



Liza Ferris Ortiz



Min Chen



Zoher Elbietar



Darcy Gorrill



Amy Paran



Harsha Boodhun



Shiro Abraham



Lucia Mapplebeck



Brittany Kanigan



Elizabeth Leston



Diane Clark



Graham Specht



Leanne Coombes



Debbie Marshall



Gillian Woods



Dianne Desbiaux



Anselma Ammerdorffer



Suzanne McCloy



France Lamontagne

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Wally Kloubek

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Hisako Takahashi

Dilip Maurya

Tesh Dagne

Sonja Hot

Contractors

Monica Johnson

Kim Turgeon-Hardman

Sara Arias Palacio

Amal Sari

Mitch Ward

And our dedicated
volunteers, tutors
and mentors