



KAMLOOPS
IMMIGRANT SERVICES
TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER



ANNUAL REPORT

2023



KAMLOOPS
IMMIGRANT SERVICES
TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER



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MISSION

Kamloops-Cariboo Regional Immigrants Society, operating as Kamloops Immigrant Services, is dedicated to delivering programs and services to advance immigrants, migrants, refugees, visible minorities, first-generation Canadians, and their families in becoming full and equal members of Canadian society.



VISION

- To deliver a broad range of programs which are sensitive to the needs of a culturally diverse community.
- To inform and sensitize the region on immigration, settlement, integration, multicultural, anti-racism, challenges and opportunities.
- To promote the elimination of racism and to facilitate organizational and institutional change to meet the needs of a culturally diverse society.



VALUES

- Excellence in service delivery
- Mutual respect
- Inclusiveness
- Collaboration
- Harmony
- Diversity
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Equity



STRATEGY

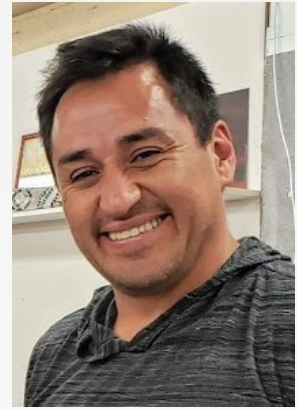
Expand services and programs to improve the ability of Kamloops Immigrant Services to fulfill its mission.

Place focus on government and foundation grant revenue specifically relating to the creation of new services and programs for newcomers.

Develop organized actions to address issues faced by newcomers and provide opportunities for community learning to advance social, political, economic and educational equity.

Commit to positioning Kamloops as a city of choice for immigrants by responding to emerging needs, offering innovative services, and enhancing community collaboration to ensure newcomers feel safe and empowered.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello Members,

It is with pleasure that I address you once again as the president of the Kamloops-Cariboo Regional Immigrants Society.

As we have emerged this past year out of the final stages of COVID and we have returned to our normal lives, it has been with great satisfaction that we can affirm the state of the agency is stronger than ever in the community, it is viewed as an essential service in the area and it has assisted vast numbers of new immigrants into Kamloops and surrounding community via its mandates.

The agency has been incredibly successful at fostering diversity, settlement and inclusivity in our community, it has assisted many new immigrants that have been displaced by war and conflict in other parts of the world. Through its partnerships with other agencies, it has carried those mandates to successful results.

It reflects the core values of our community and it is ever so brightly positioned to continue to be and remain the go to place where immigrants can receive help.

Our relationships with government and related funding partners are strong and vibrant.

All of this possible through the endless hours and volunteer hours that we receive from our members, staff, public at large and not lastly from our Directors.

We thank you for the bestowed trust upon us and we look forward to a bright future.

Kind Regards,

David Cruz

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we reflect upon the past year, there is one thing that stands out vividly in my memory: the incredible unity and support we witnessed from our team, community, and regional stakeholders in assisting displaced Ukrainians. It has been an extraordinary journey, and I am immensely proud of what we have achieved together.

In response to the crisis, we established the Ukrainian Response Team, and with the generous support of various organizations, we were able to provide over 100 children and youth with the opportunity to engage in recreational activities, including summer camps, science camps, and even speed skating. These experiences not only brought joy and excitement to their lives but also helped them to

heal and rebuild their sense of normalcy. More recently, United Way granted us funds to create a Youth Leadership Program, this will help foster new skills that will empower them to shape their futures.

Generous donations helped address individuals and families' urgent needs, and countless residents offered their time, expertise, and compassion to mentor and guide those who had been displaced.

This crisis highlighted the crucial role of community stakeholders coming together in providing rapid assistance and support. It served as a powerful reminder of the need to evaluate the potential benefits of establishing a local immigration partnership (LIP) in Kamloops and the surrounding region. The study we conducted in collaboration with a TRU research team and the symposium we organized were significant steps towards understanding the needs of immigrants and newcomers in our community. It provided a platform for open dialogue and brought together diverse perspectives to inform our decision-making process.

As we move forward, it is essential that we continue this collaborative spirit and engage community stakeholders in discussions about the potential establishment of a LIP. We expect to present a proposal to IRCC in the fall of 2023, as we believe a LIP will become a pillar of support for immigrants and newcomers in our region, building a more inclusive and welcoming environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.



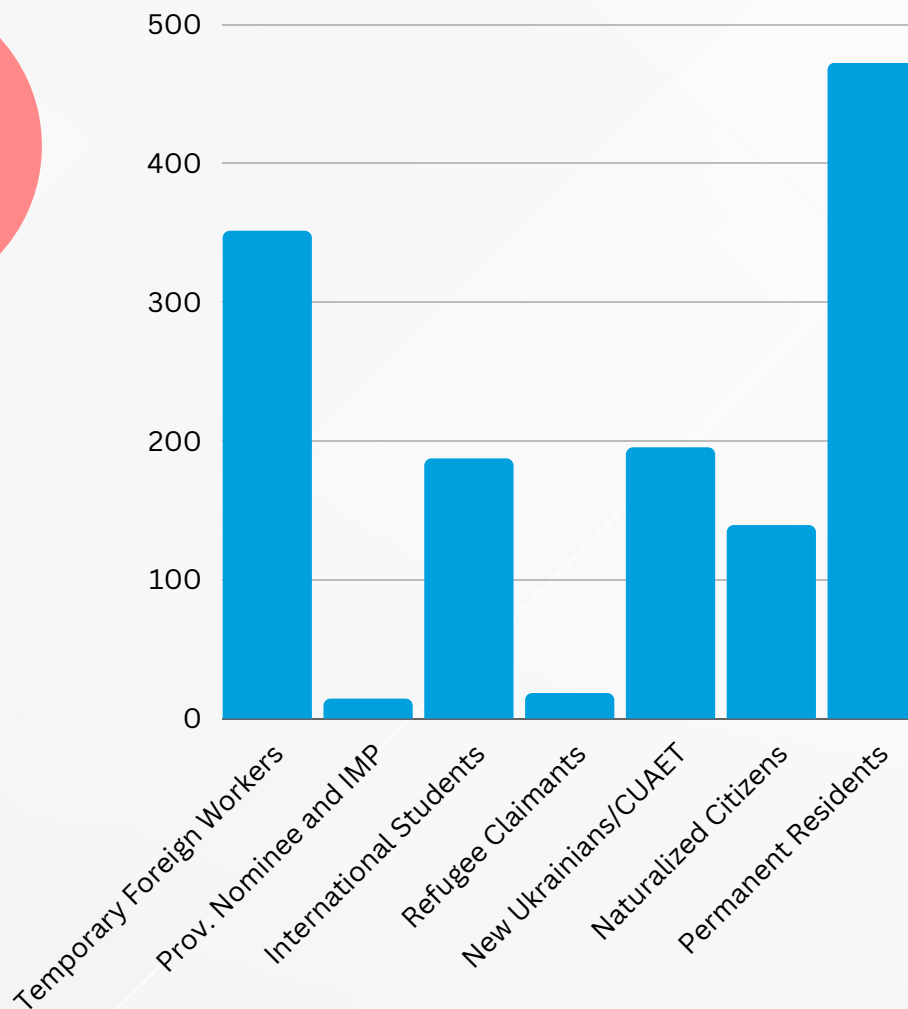
THE CLIENTS WE SERVED



During 2022-2023 our team served **472 new Permanent Residents** in Kamloops and the Thompson-Nicola region, and **990 new Temporary Residents**, including Temporary Foreign Workers, International Students, Refugee Claimants and Naturalized Citizens.

NEW AND
RETURNING
CLIENTS HELPED

2,175



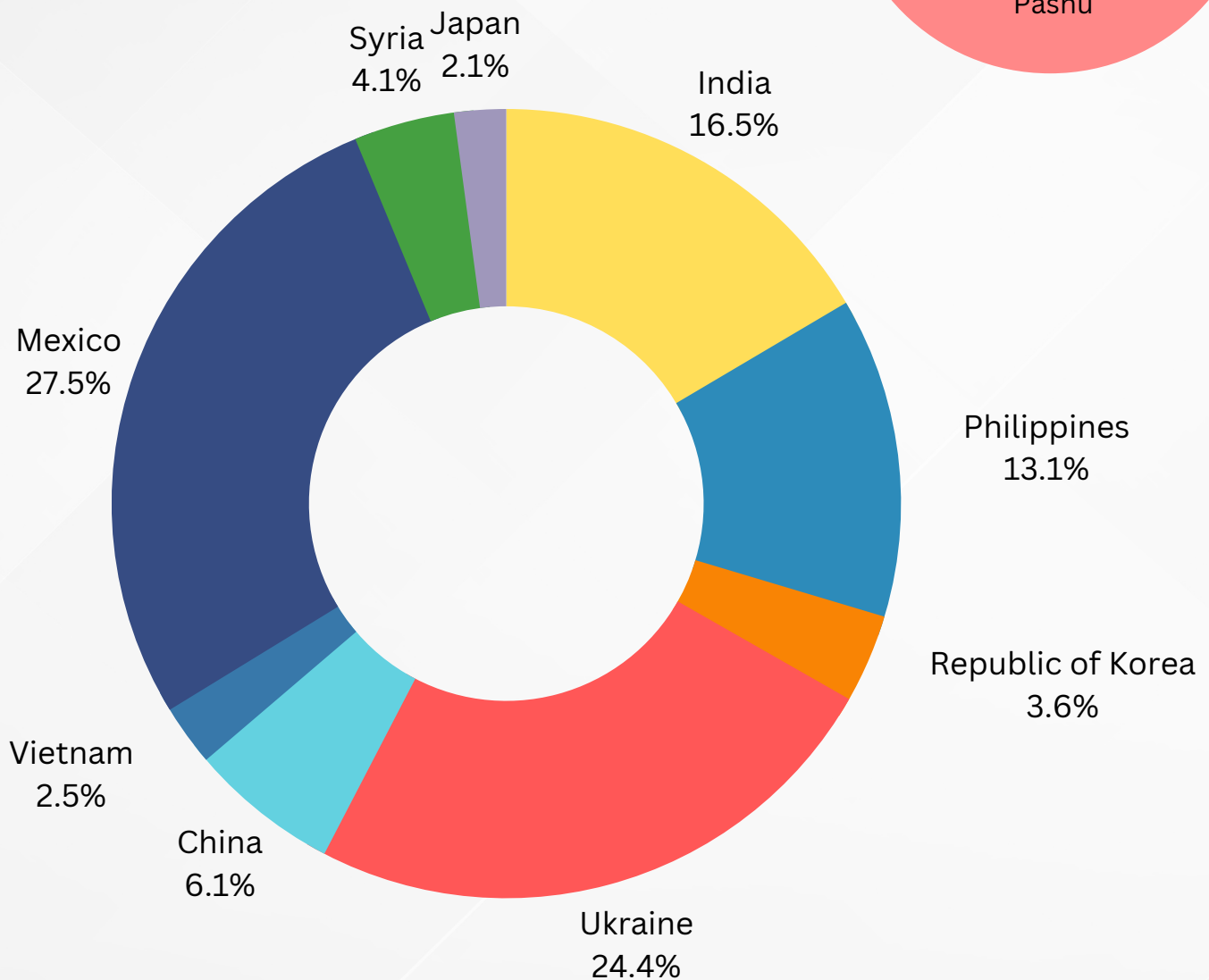
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

The **1462 NEW clients** who received support from the KIS team this year came from many different countries. Most Temporary Foreign Workers were from **Mexico**, while most Permanent Residents were from **India** and the **Philippines**.

TESTIMONIAL

"Today I had tears after my oath ceremony online because you helped me so much, and you encouraged me and now I am a Canadian! Thank you!"
Pashu

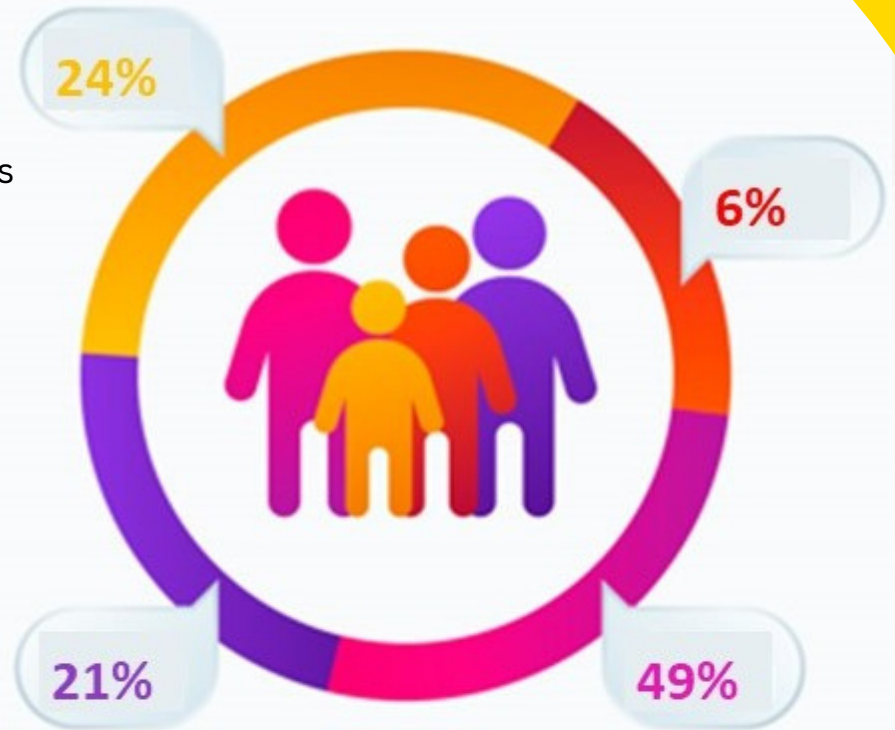
TOP 9 COUNTRIES OF BIRTH



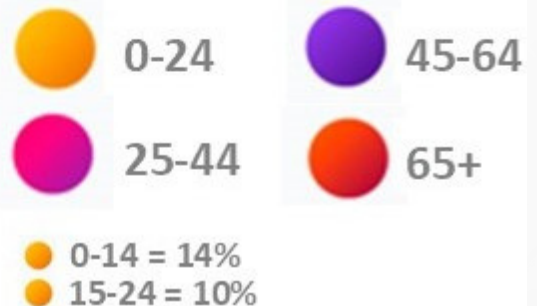
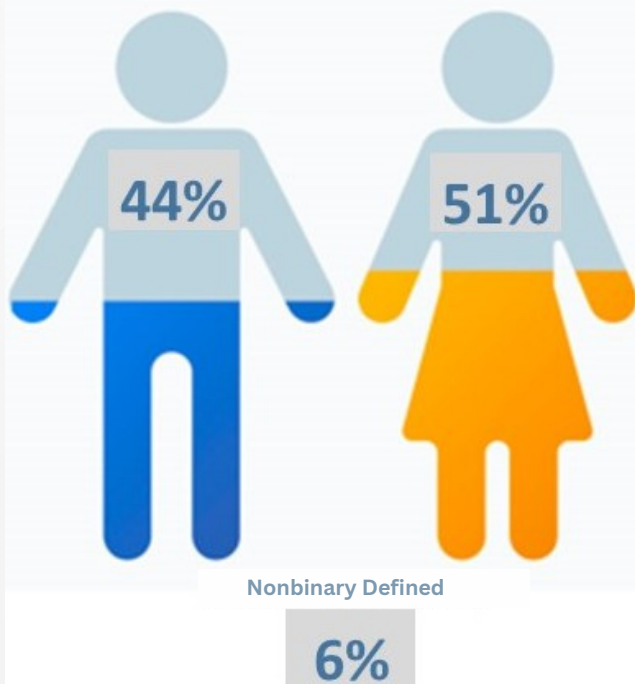
OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

Data was collected from the **2,175** new and returning clients served in 2022-2023.

AGE



GENDER



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

SETTLEMENT NEEDS (AND ASSETS) ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL

A total of **3,680 client needs assessments** were conducted on an individual basis. These assessments play a crucial role in identifying the unique needs and assets of both the clients and their families. This information enables us to make appropriate referrals to our internal settlement services as well as external community services. Subsequently, an action plan is developed and shared with each client, guaranteeing their access to services tailored to their specific requirements.

PROVISION OF INFORMATION

Throughout the year, the Settlement team went above and beyond, delivering over **25,000 comprehensive information and orientation services**. These services were conducted through various formats, including in-person one-on-one sessions with our dedicated settlement counsellors, as well as group settings. A substantial portion of these services, reaching **12,000 clients**, were effectively facilitated online, allowing us to cater to a wider audience and ensure accessibility for all.

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT AND LANGUAGE TRAINING

218 Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBT) or Assessments (CLBPA) were performed. The primary objective for seeking language training was to find employment, or improve their employment status. **154 adult learners** joined the Language Instruction for Newcomer to Canada (LINC) classes. KIS offered four levels: Literacy/1, Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) Level 2/3, CLB Level 4/5 and CLB Level 6/7. **The LINC team now has 4 full-time instructors**, 3 substitute teachers and **3 CLBP Certified Assessors**.



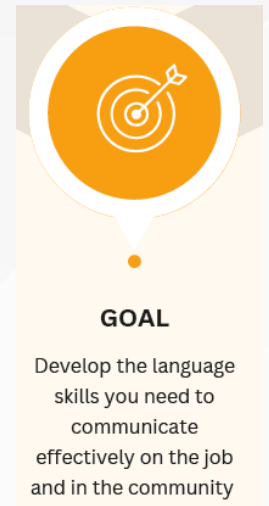
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

INFORMAL LANGUAGE PRACTICE

A total of **210 clients** thoroughly enjoyed our bi-weekly Language Exchange sessions and Conversation Circles. These two engaging formats provided valuable opportunities for clients to learn English while forging meaningful connections, especially for those unable to commit to a more rigid schedule throughout the week. Each session was thoughtfully crafted with the learners' real-world needs and future goals in mind.

Building upon our success, we are thrilled to announce that starting in June 2023, our esteemed English Instructors will be introducing an exciting addition: the "Progressive English Learning Program." This innovative program will be held every Friday, offering separate morning and afternoon sessions for Beginner and Intermediate levels. With a maximum capacity of **14 seats in each class**, we are eager to accommodate even more eager learners in their journey towards English proficiency.



DIGITAL LITERACY TRAINING

400
classes



The program offered small group classes, consisting of 5 to 14 clients, along with some one-on-one training, to assist newcomers in improving their digital skills.

Through these classes, newcomers were able to develop important abilities such as online communication, job searching, and accessing essential services, which complemented their LINC English classes.

The curriculum provided a comprehensive learning experience, and the experienced instructor played a crucial role in empowering newcomers to navigate the digital landscape. As a result, participants gained access to employment opportunities, educational resources, and social connectivity, enhancing their ability to adapt and thrive in the digital era.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES

The KIS Employment team has recently expanded with the inclusion of a Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) advisor. This addition has brought the team's composition to three dedicated individuals who are passionately committed to finding the optimal match between employers and clients. When considering potential job placements, the team takes into careful consideration the client's unique skill set, educational background, and professional experience. This ensures that the client is placed in a position that aligns with their abilities and aspirations, maximizing their chances of long-term success in the workforce. They coordinated workshops to learn in group setting, skills necessary for a successful job search including a networking event where the newcomers got a chance to meet industry experts.

626

**individual employment
counselling sessions**

The Employer Advisor has made significant progress in establishing connections with over 100 employers.

Working alongside The Kamloops Chamber of Commerce, education on hiring newcomers has been shared through panels at conferences, networking events, and sharing of resources distributed within the community. Being connected to more employers has resulted in them gaining valuable knowledge about the support and services provided by KIS.



60

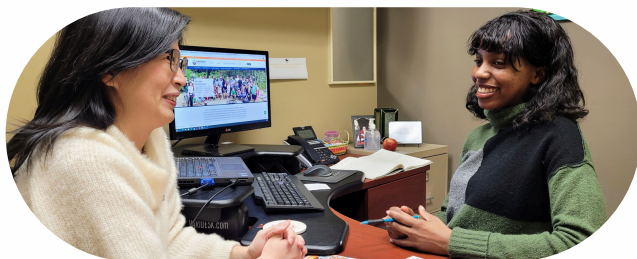
Job placements

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

...EMPLOYMENT-RELATED SERVICES

Partnerships with external resources like **Venture Kamloops, Community Futures, WorkBC, nPower, FAST IECBC**, etc., allowed us to bridge gaps in the Canadian Labour market. As an agency, we wouldn't have the capacity or resources to access these sectors alone.



Translators and interpreters within the organization effectively supported clients with foreign language documents. These documents were sent to programs like Career Pathways for Skilled Immigrants or World Education Services for foreign credential recognition.

INTERPRETATION & TRANSLATION SERVICES

78

trained
translators/
interpreters

35

languages

170

new clients
served

This crucial service connected individuals with limited English proficiency to various professionals including government organizations, medical practitioners, and lawyers' offices. The agency also liaised with the Society of Translators of BC to ensure high-quality services. I.e. Translating driver's license for ICBC. KIS also provided training to our contractors through workshops conducted by S.T.I.B.C. certified trainers.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

825
Volunteer
hours

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



KIS Community Connections program has responded to the diverse interests of our clients by establishing and fostering numerous partnerships within the community. Through these partnerships, we have successfully met the evolving needs of our clients. **More than 1,900 clients have actively participated in a wide range of activities**, including computer mentoring, art and gardening workshops, citizenship and driver's license study groups.

The program has also addressed the desire for socialization and connection among clients, organizing engaging monthly potlucks and multicultural cooking classes, visits to museums and field trips connecting to community resources and local services.

Additionally, recognizing the increasing demand for sports and recreational activities, we offered over **218 sessions** encompassing various sports programs such as yoga, ice-skating, dance, family sports night, skiing and snowshoeing. The program has seen the enthusiastic involvement of over 80 clients as volunteers, further highlighting its success and positive impact within the community.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

AWARD!

News release

The City of Kamloops has received the Program Excellence Award from the BC Recreation and Parks Association for the Community Wellness program. This program is offered in partnership with **Kamloops Immigrant Services** and PLAYKamloops.

The program provided opportunities to learn about Canadian culture through sports and physical activity. The program was initially targeted towards women and girls when it started in 2021, but expanded to include programming for all family members. Grant funding allowed for coach training and equipment purchases.

Yenny Yao, Community Connections Coordinator for Kamloops Immigrant Services, said the wellness partnership program has had a significant impact on newcomers. “It breaks finance, culture and social connection barriers. Newcomers value the opportunity to feel connected and have a sense of belonging. They invite friends to join the program and make new friends and connections,” Yao said in a statement.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM (WE)

The Women Empowerment (WE) program, specifically designed for women and vulnerable clients who are at risk or victims of domestic violence, has played a vital role in providing much-needed support and empowering individuals to make informed decisions.

As the program enters its second year, its significance and impact have become widely recognized throughout the city, resulting in daily referrals. Clients have expressed deep appreciation for the culturally sensitive support they receive through the program. This success has been made possible through collaborations with organizations such as MCFD, Royal Inland Hospital, Kamloops Sexual Assault, Y Kamloops Shelter, Ask Wellness, Family Maintenance, Victim Services, Elizabeth Fry, and many more.

Clients were also referred to Legal Aid, TRU Legal Clinic, RCMP, Victim Services, Housing supports, Parenting programs, Baby's Head Start, Foodbank, Farmer's Market, Peer Group support, driving lessons, and Stopping the Violence programs.

The program not only offers a safe space for women to connect with one another during community events, but also provides invaluable support for children and mothers, promoting a sense of normalcy and fostering meaningful connections. Additionally, the program assisted women with court documents, offering advocacy and attending meetings to support them in gaining independence and feeling secure in the services provided.

The Women Empowerment program stands as a beacon of support and empowerment for vulnerable newcomer clients, making a profound difference in their lives. In the upcoming year, we hope to develop a better open-door policy for Immigrants in the Queer community to feel safe and come forward to utilize the WE Program, and we will continue to work with The Gender Equity RoundTable, Thompson Rivers University Orientations of International Students, and workshops for their Stopping the Violence Program.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS (SWIS)

Newcomer families and school staff appreciated the partnership and wrap-around service provided by the SWIS team. After working with a SWIS worker, newcomer families felt more supported in their new community. There are observations of positive outlooks and better attendance at school. Newcomer students aimed higher academically in school, with 5 students graduating and moving on to pursue an education at the local university.

With reference to a survey given to school staff about the SWIS program, the school team appreciated the vital role in which SWIS workers play in the social emotional well-being of newcomer students and their families.

School staff appreciated how SWIS workers consulted with the school admin team on everything to do with the school environment, from academic to social. Additionally, parents mentioned about the progress made by their children around communication skills which led to meaningful friendships, connections, and positive changes in their children's attitude towards school in Canada.



The team also offered information and orientation sessions. These addressed challenges during the transition into the Canadian school system and provided tools and resources. The team also shared Social-Emotional learning strategies with students, fostering empathy and forming meaningful friendships to ease their integration.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

MENTORING, EMPOWERMENT AND TUTORING PROGRAM (MET)



The MET program objectives were to facilitate a higher level of Social-Emotional well-being and increase academic achievements among newcomer students. Throughout the school year, the MET program collaborated with teachers across School District 73 to support newcomer students as they transitioned into a new community.

In the most recent school year, the program worked with **ten qualified educators** to provide **65 newcomer students with academic and mentoring support**. The program also offered newcomer students a safe adult to practice different life skills in their new community. Moreover, the program's partnership with the City of Kamloops had provided our mentors with strategies for incorporating physical literacy into mentoring sessions. This indirectly gave our newcomer students the opportunity to participate in sports and recreation as a form of self-care.

Through a partnership with ELL teachers, a mentor from the agency had participated in weekly conversation circles with newcomer students across School District 73. During each session, the mentor facilitated conversations on bullying, perspective taking, and social-emotional strategies for wellness.

The MET program also collaborated with Thompson Rivers University and NatureKids BC at the beginning of summer on a pilot program. The aim was to build resilience in newcomer students by integrating social-emotional learning strategies into the science curriculum through experiential learning. This provided our newcomer students with an opportunity to inquire and think more deeply about the environment around them.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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OUTREACH SERVICES TO TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

KIS outreach services are essential for Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) as we provide interpretation support during interactions with their managers or employers and in medical situations. This year we continued to prioritize building strong relationships with TFW to establish trust and serve as a reliable source of support for their concerns. We have made significant strides in improving communication channels between workers and employers.



Many workers participated in English lessons offered by dedicated volunteers. This enabled them to communicate more effectively with their managers and employers, boosting their confidence and comprehension of job requirements.

Empowering TFWs with knowledge about their rights and available options remained a priority. We encouraged them to share this information with their co-workers, creating a network where strategies for justice were shared horizontally. We have already witnessed the impact of this approach, as workers from Mexico, Chile, and Guatemala have reached out to our outreach worker, even without personal acquaintance. They have sought assistance at the airport for challenges with the ArriveCAN process or to overcome language barriers with CBS officers.

Establishing positive relationships with employers is of utmost importance as it allows us to enlighten them regarding the invaluable contributions made by Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs) and the advantages of collaborative teamwork. Nowadays, a growing number of employers have come to recognize the significance of our endeavors and place their trust in our ability to cultivate effective



communication and enhance the well-being of all parties involved. Consequently, a strong foundation of trust has been established, compelling employers to actively support the welfare of TFWs, fully understanding the reciprocal benefits that such support brings about.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

TUTORING PROGRAM



390

Tutoring
hours

\$8190

In-kind
valuation

We were fortunate to have **12 qualified English language tutors and 14 learners** registered in our volunteer Tutor/Learner program, meeting on a regular weekly schedule. The program operated through collaboration between our LINC teachers and front office administrator. Learners were referred by their LINC teachers and matched with suitable tutors based on their goals and aspirations. A Needs Assessment tool was developed to facilitate this matching process.

Our tutors' generosity of time and expertise is invaluable to our organization, and their service provides immense value to our clients. The numbers demonstrate the increased hours invested by tutors and learners in learning the challenging English language.

The program is vibrant and regularly utilized, reflecting the ongoing interest and enthusiasm from both tutors and learners. Clients' goals and aspirations remain at the forefront of every interaction. Many meetings occur at KIS. Some meetings occur in homes, coffee shops, cottages, or other venues around Kamloops, taking advantage of the city's offerings. Over the past year, some clients have received tutoring on driving, studying for driver's tests (both online and physical), preparing for the CELPIP, and learning to navigate Kamloops' bus and transportation systems using their newly acquired English skills.

Impressively, one tutor continued online tutoring via Zoom for two learners while spending the winter months in Mexico, showcasing their dedication to the program.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

DIVERSITY OUTREACH



KIS participated in the first Diversity Summit in Kamloops and contributed to facilitating a round table discussion involving over 150 students from the entire school district. The event included Motion of Colour as well. It provided them with an opportunity to express their concerns regarding the lack of safe spaces, diversity, and inclusivity within classrooms, as well as incidents of racism, transphobia, xenophobia, homophobia, and discrimination. These concerns were documented and now serve as inspiration for the development of new programs in the school district. Additionally, they were given a platform to propose practical solutions for implementation by the start of the next academic year.

KIS Diversity Coordinator joined the Kamloops & District Chamber of Commerce "Anti-racism Task Force," which aimed to address issues of race and discrimination. The main objective initially was to review the BC Chamber EDI & IR Terms of Reference (BC Chamber for Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Indigenous Relations) and the new DEI Strategy from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Valuable input was provided to develop appropriate counsel for the new internal EDI policies at the Chamber. The task force was established by the Chamber to enhance diversity and representation on their board of directors.

ANTI-RACISM TASK FORCE



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

DIVERSITY OUTREACH

The Welcoming Workplace: Integrating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in workspace.

This year, KIS developed an online toolkit designed to provide the resources to discuss equity, diversity, and inclusion, what they mean and why they are necessary inside the work environment. This toolkit aims to dismantle stigmas, biases, and help generate safe spaces for Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour (IBPOC) and non-IBPOC community members. It also aims at assisting employers in developing strategies to attract and retain a culturally diverse workforce and alleviate barriers long experienced by minorities and underrepresented communities.



LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (LIP) FEASIBILITY STUDY



A feasibility study, supported by IRCC and in collaboration with a TRU Research team, concluded that there is strong support for a Local Immigration Partnership in the Thompson-Nicola Region. The study was led by a symposium on January 12, 2023, which had **90 participants**. The diverse range of participants included those with experience working with newcomers, serving as service providers, engaging in community-based projects, or having firsthand migration experience to Canada.

The study report emphasized the challenges involved in establishing such a partnership but also highlighted the willingness and commitment of local organizations to collaborate. The creation of a Local Immigration Partnership in the region is seen as crucial for promoting multiculturalism, engaging the community to leverage funds, and addressing the impact of exclusion and discrimination to create more welcoming communities for newcomers.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Highlights

CHILDMIND SERVICES



Last year, Childmind programming started to come back to life very quickly after the world began to recover from the pandemic. Our families, ready to fully dive into life outside of their homes, flooded our programs and services and we welcomed everyone back with open arms. Our **4 dedicated Early Childhood educators** supported KIS's ever growing clientele enrolling in English classes (LINC) and attending meetings and workshops.



Childmind, apart from being a drop-in service for our sister departments, has designed a separate program **preparing our youth for their entrance to pre-k and kindergarten**. Hosted at KIS, this program is designed for parents to attend with their children. Together they participate singing songs, reading aloud and building crafts. This program continues to thrive with over **20 participants each week**.



KAMLOOPS ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

In partnership with the North Shore Business Improvement Association, Kamloops Immigrant Services presented the first annual Tapestry Festival on September 19, 2022 at McDonald Park.

The Festival aimed to provide an inclusive and diverse environment for all members of society, building more cultural awareness to try and reduce racism and discrimination incidents and allowing the rest of the community to enjoy the diverse food, music, dances, history, and art that this event brings.



Over 4000 residents enjoyed delicious food, games, art and entertainment during the first event.



In 2023, with Dearborn Ford as title sponsor the Festival will take place **Saturday, September 16th**, from 12 to 5 p.m at McDonald park, on the North Shore. It promises to be rich in cultural diversity through music, dance, food, and the arts. The festival will feature 14 performances from various cultural groups, a Foodies Pavilion with 12 amazing food options from all over the world, art exhibits, and interactive activities for all ages through the Multicultural Neighborhood.



There is still space for cultural vendors and cultural Pavilions; people or groups interested can register at: tapestryfestival.com

STAND WITH UKRAINE

COMMUNITY CRISIS HUB

IT TAKES A VILLAGE!



As of June 2023, our communities, situated in Kamloops and the Thompson-Nicola Region welcomed 224 displaced Ukrainians, including 100 children and youth!

KIS led collaboration with 50+ stakeholders to ensure comprehensive support for newcomers in their journey was accessible. Initiatives included:

- Homestay program for hosts and displaced persons.
- Agreements with local Thrift stores for donations and free goods.
- Presentations to local groups on supporting the humanitarian effort.
- Monthly Social Community Dinners with Kamloops United Church.
- Recruitment and support of 80+ volunteers for transportation, interpretation, and dinners.
- Relationships with housing providers and landlords.
- Information booths at public events for volunteering and donations.
- Drop-in Summer Camp and recreation spaces for children and youth.
- Employment support for clients and employers.
- Emergency fund for dental procedures.
- Welcoming fund for basic needs and groceries.

THANK YOU

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated employees, selfless volunteers, and generous supporters for their unwavering commitment to our mission. Your tireless efforts have played a vital role in assisting newcomers in settling and succeeding in Kamloops and the Thompson-Nicola region. We sincerely appreciate your invaluable contributions, whether through your time, resources, or expertise.



Furthermore, we thank the community stakeholders who have partnered with us on this journey. Your collaboration and shared vision have been instrumental in creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for newcomers. We have built bridges and fostered a sense of belonging, empowering newcomers to embrace new opportunities and achieve their full potential.

We would also like to thank our funders. Because you believe in our work, we have significantly impacted the lives of newcomers. As we continue to work together we continue to be empowered to provide the necessary resources and services to help newcomers thrive.

We look forward to continuing this journey together as we strive to build more inclusive and vibrant communities for all.

Funded by:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Financé par :

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada



BRITISH
COLUMBIA



Canada



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in BC's
Interior, Lower Mainland, Central
& Northern Vancouver Island

