

# Annual Report

2024-2025



**KAMLOOPS**  
IMMIGRANT SERVICES  
TOGETHER WE'RE BETTER



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Funded by / Financé par:



WelcomeBC



Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada

# Message from the President



This past year has been one of connection, growth, and purpose. As Board President, I am proud to witness the continued evolution of Kamloops Immigrant Services and the unwavering commitment of its leadership and staff. Their efforts have not only strengthened service delivery but also deepened KIS's role as a trusted community leader.

KIS has continued to innovate—adapting programs, expanding partnerships, and leveraging multimedia outreach to promote inclusion and anti-racism. Every initiative reflects a shared belief in the value of diversity and the importance of creating spaces where newcomers feel welcomed and empowered.

One such milestone was the opening of a beautiful new Women's Empowerment space. Designed to be warm, safe, and inclusive, this newly renovated area now hosts support groups, workshops, and community-building activities that uplift women and foster belonging.

The launch of the Kamloops and District Local Immigration Partnership marks an exciting new chapter—an opportunity to bring together diverse voices, strengthen collaboration, and influence long-term change in how we support newcomers. This initiative is about more than coordination; it's about building a truly welcoming community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. We are confident in the KIS team's ability to lead this work with vision, purpose, and a deep commitment to inclusive community-building.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you to our funders, partners, staff, and volunteers. Your dedication continues to shape a stronger, more inclusive Kamloops.

With appreciation,

David Cruz  
President, Board of Directors



# ED's Report

As we reflect on the past year, I'm filled with pride in the resilience and achievements of the KIS team. It has been a year of growth, innovation, and deepened community connection. We remained dedicated to our mission—supporting newcomers through comprehensive settlement services, strong partnerships, and inclusive programming that fosters belonging.

We delivered core services with adaptability and care, responding to our clients' evolving needs. A major highlight was the launch of the HIPPY program, a home-based early learning initiative that empowers newcomer parents as their children's first teachers. Through weekly home visits and guided activities, families gain tools to support school readiness and integration.

We also celebrated the opening of a new Women's Empowerment space—a warm, welcoming environment for support groups, workshops, and skill-building activities that foster connection, confidence, and community among newcomer women.

In employment services, our team deepened relationships with the Chamber of Commerce, Venture Kamloops, and local businesses—promoting inclusive hiring and expanding opportunities for newcomers. With support from Canadian Heritage, we delivered 42 intercultural competency training sessions to employers, schools, and service providers—building allyship, breaking down barriers, and advancing workplace inclusion.

+ + Looking Ahead, we are honoured to be selected as the convenor of the new Kamloops Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)—a regional initiative to strengthen newcomer integration through cross-sector collaboration. As our city grows, so does the need for responsive, inclusive services.

+ + In the year ahead, KIS will continue to lead with compassion, innovation, and accountability. Priorities include expanding employer engagement, strengthening data systems, and deepening our advocacy for inclusive communities.

On behalf of KIS, I offer heartfelt thanks to our funders, employees, partners, volunteers, and Board of Directors. Your support makes our work possible. Most of all, thank you to our clients—your courage and contributions inspire everything we do.

With gratitude,

France Lamontagne



# Vision & Mission

## 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.

## 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.



# The people we served

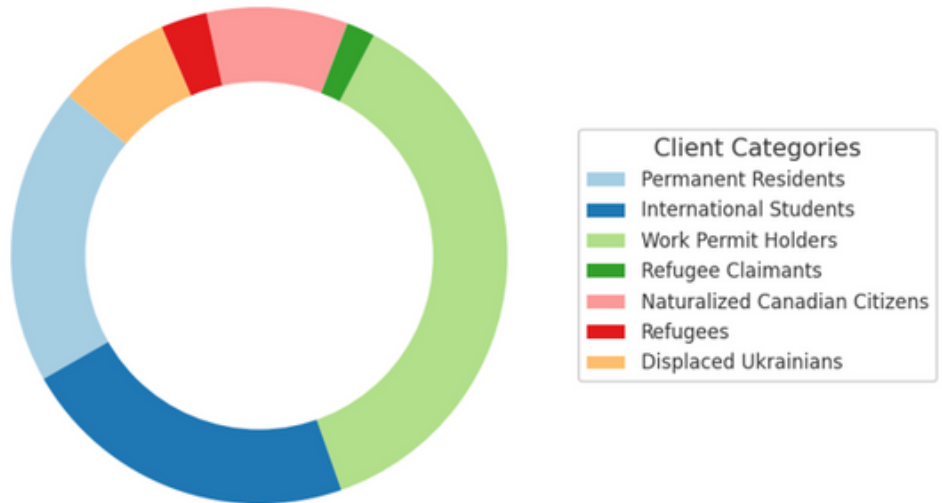
2,896

Clients served in total

2,202

New clients

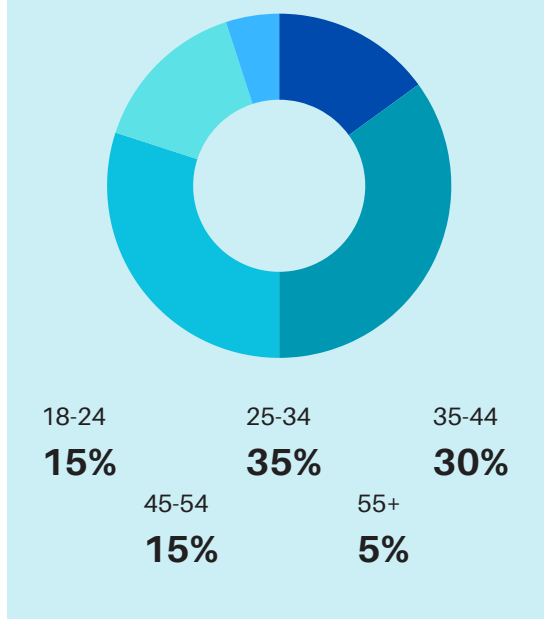
## Clients by Immigration Status



## Gender



## Age Group



## Top 6 Country of origins





# Our Year in Action



Services Provided  
**35,375**



Information and  
Orientation Sessions

**28,367**



Employment  
related services

**726**



Learners attending  
formal English  
classes

**251**



Learners attending  
informal English  
classes

**42**



Language  
Assessments

**147**



Community  
Connections participants

**1613**

## CLIENT SATISFACTION

**4.81** ★★★★★

"VISITING IMMIGRANT SERVICES IS ALWAYS  
PLEASANT, THE STAFF ARE VERY FRIENDLY AND  
MAKE US FEEL SUPPORTED."

-CLIENT THROUGH ANONYMOUS SURVEY

# Settlement Program

## A Journey of Hope and Determination: A New Beginning in Kamloops



In May 2022, after the Russian invasion, a mother and her young daughter arrived in Kamloops. With the support of settlement services and the SWIS (Settlement Workers in Schools) program, the daughter was soon registered in school and enrolled in the MET program, setting the stage for her social growth.



While navigating a new country as a single parent, the mother faced many challenges—but she never gave up. With resources and support from settlement, LINC and employment programs, she found a labour job and received support in learning English, building social connections, and preparing for long-term employment. Balancing work and parenting, she remained steadfast in her commitment to building a better life for her family.

Later that year, the family joyfully reunited in Kamloops, enhancing their integration journey. The mother improved her English and secured her dream job at TRU while balancing work and studies. The father advanced in his career, fostering family stability, and their daughter flourished in school, engaging in dance and sports. They have successfully embedded themselves in the Kamloops community and now consider it their second home, reflecting their resilience and determination.





# Champions behind the scenes

## Volunteers



Volunteer Hours



1,477



### With Heartfelt Thanks to Our Volunteers

To each of our incredible volunteers: thank you. The time, energy, and heart you've poured into supporting newcomers through our activities and workshops has made a lasting difference. Your presence, week after week, helps create the welcoming, inclusive community we strive for. Simply put, we couldn't do what we do without you. You are the heartbeat of our organization, and your dedication continues to inspire us all.



# Mentorship Program



This year, our mentorship program has continued to grow and build lasting relationships. We currently have around 20 active mentorship pairs, with five pairs continuing for over a year, demonstrating the strength and value of these connections.

Mentees and Mentors have shared positive feedback, success stories that highlight the meaningful support, shared learning, and personal growth gained through their mentoring experiences.



To celebrate and strengthen these connections, we hosted a Mentorship Network Party on March 1st, 2025, bringing mentors and mentees together in a warm, engaging space to share stories, reflect on their journeys, and build new bonds. The event was a powerful reminder of how mentorship fosters both individual and community growth.





# Champions behind the scenes

## Tutors



Tutoring Hours



375

Tutors



7

### With Gratitude to Our Tutors

The English Tutoring Program at Kamloops Immigrant Services is a valuable resource for newcomers, providing 375 hours of tutoring this year through a dedicated team of 7 volunteers. These volunteers foster strong relationships while helping learners of all levels improve their English skills for employment, citizenship, and education. The program emphasizes both language acquisition and a sense of belonging, with learners expressing appreciation for the personalized attention. The success of the program is attributed to the volunteers' dedication and care. Looking forward, the program aims to recruit more volunteers and adapt to the needs of the community. Thank you to all contributors for supporting this impactful initiative.

# Temporary Foreign Workers Program



Over the past four years, we've observed steady growth in the number of agricultural, farm, and restaurant/hospitality workers in the Thompson-Nicola region. As of March 31, 2025, our most recent data reflects the following trends:

Cariboo Region

**28 TFW**

Sun Peaks/Heffley

**56 TFW**

Cache Creek

**95 TFW**

Chase

**17 TFW**

Pritchard/Dallas

**31 TFW**

Ashcroft

**114 TFW**

Savona

**15 TFW**

Clearwater/Barriere

**27 TFW**

Lillooet

**6 TFW**

Kamloops

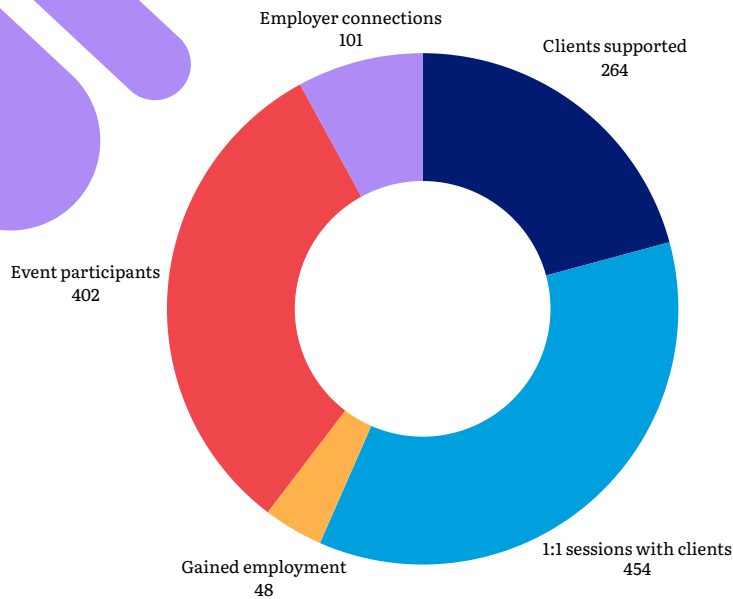
**124 TFW**

## Testament to Resilience and Support

“ Christian Romero faced abuse and discrimination at work after requesting time off for his son's medical appointments. Despite being on medical leave for a concussion, he was fired. Fortunately, he obtained an Open Work Permit for Vulnerable Workers and secured a new job, allowing his family to establish themselves and continue their son's treatment for Cystic Fibrosis. Their son's life expectancy has improved significantly, and they are grateful for the support from KIS that helped them find new opportunities.



# Employment



“ We worked with a single parent who was new to Canada and looking for their first job. With some help on their resume, job search, and workplace communication skills, they landed a job and are now on their way to becoming more independent and building a new life here.

Beatrice Taiwo-Jubril,  
Employment Counsellor



“ We supported a recent school graduate with interview preparation and resume writing. With their hard work and a bit of guidance, they landed a job at a bank and have now successfully passed their probation period. A great start to their career!

JY Li,  
Youth Employment Advisor

## Client testimonial:

“ As a newcomer with an open work permit, I got customised resume support and a referral for IT training. Now, I have a promising full-time job that gives me travelling and networking opportunities. Working with KIS has been inspirational and I always feel welcome and supported when I call my counsellor for information. Kudos to Kamloops Immigrant Services!”



As we reflect on the past year, we're filled with gratitude and pride. What began as a small support service for parents has blossomed into a vibrant, welcoming community rooted in connection and shared purpose.

This year, we supported over 2,000 children and their families—offering not just services, but a space where people feel seen, supported, and inspired. Our Childmind Room gave children a nurturing place to play, grow, and prepare for kindergarten, while parents focused on their English classes. Through our Parent-Child programs, families came together to laugh, learn, and build lasting bonds.

These gatherings have become powerful bridges—bringing newcomer and Canadian families together in celebration of culture, inclusion, and belonging.

As we celebrate the year's impact, we're also hearing a clear message from our community: they want more. More connection, more opportunities to grow, and more moments to share.



“

“Each gathering takes care and commitment, but we're excited to meet this beautiful demand in thoughtful, sustainable ways. Together, we're not just building community—we're celebrating it. And we can't wait to see what's next.”

Angie Naslund,  
Childmind Team Lead



# A Parent's Gratitude A Child's Happiness



“

**Panpan Zhou**

“Our time at Childmind has been truly special. The teachers are kind, patient, and supportive, and we’ve seen so much growth in our daughter, Xianing Hu. She has become more confident, independent, and joyful every day. She especially loves dancing and always looked forward to music and movement time. We really appreciate the creative activities and the warm, caring environment you’ve created. Thank you for everything! “



“

**Edmond Chu**

On behalf of my family and my grandchildren, I wish to take this opportunity to express our wholehearted appreciation for the hard works and arrangement for the various activities. I also wish to thank your sponsors for their generosity in providing supports to the various programs and activities.



# Community Connections

Community connections served **1,613 people** in 2024



On November 30th, 2024, Kamloops Immigrant Services proudly hosted our annual Christmas Craft Fair—a festive and heartwarming event that brought together community, creativity, and connection. With approximately 200 attendees filling our space, the fair was a vibrant showcase of talent, culture, and holiday spirit. Beyond the beautiful crafts, the true success of the day was seen in the meaningful interactions between clients, volunteers, and community members.



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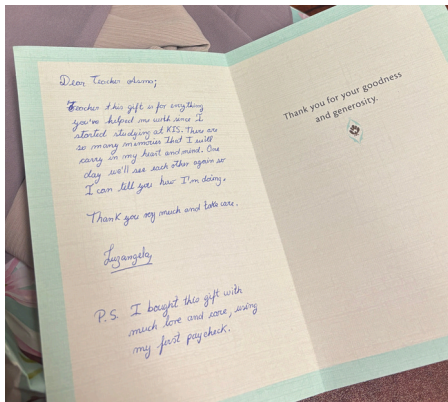
Ali

While snowshoeing, I found myself wondering why does this feel so good? Part of it is, of course, the incredible nature, but there was something more. Then I realized: I wasn't worrying about anything! As a solo immigrant, I'm always conscious of my responsibilities, both at work and at home. But during this trip, I could fully relax.



# Students' Gratitude, narrated by Lucia

This photograph captures our farewell party for Oksana, organized by my morning group. Oksana, who began in Brittany's literacy class and progressed to CLB 2, has been a dedicated student while working full-time as a caregiver. She expressed gratitude to KIS for supporting her English learning. Sadly, she had to leave for Spain for work.



This photo reflects our dedication at KIS. Luzangela Bejerano, one of my learners, secured her first job in Canada despite facing language barriers. After three semesters in my class, she reached level 3 and appreciates our agency's commitment to supporting newcomers.

This photo is from a collaging and storytelling project we did in conjunctions with Sara Arias's SFU- PHD project - How we express belonging and nonbelonging.



LINC students bring music, joy, and heartfelt respect to their classroom — celebrating their teacher and classmates through song and laughter

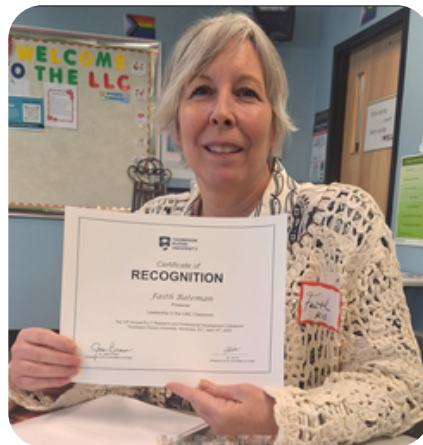
# Spotlight on Our Educator Leaders

KIS Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), Instructors Asma and Faith attended the Annual ELLT Research and Professional Development Colloquium hosted by TRU.



Asma delighted the audience with her presentation on the importance of intercultural communication for TESOL instructors. She engaged us with her visuals, videos, real-life scenarios, and clear, practical points. She motivated us not just to be professionals, but to go one step further—to discover things we don't yet know about other cultures, lands, and languages. These insights can lead to significant differences in how our facilitation is received and the outcomes we help create.

Faith brought to life, with dynamism, five practices of leadership that we can all benefit from: model, inspire, challenge, enable, and encourage. She shared how these powerful practices extend beyond management and into our relationships with clients and classes—debunking some of the myths around what it really means to inspire and lead. These are powerful and useful tools that can make a huge difference in our everyday effectiveness.



“

I must express my deep gratitude to be part of the LINC Team and KIS, and to look around and see not just Asma and Faith, but each passionate, gifted colleague shining in what they do best. It is truly a beautiful thing to be blessed with.

Lucia Mapplebeck, LINC Instructor & Team Lead



# KIS Women's Centre

We're excited to announce the completion of the newly renovated KIS Women's Centre at 397 Tranquille Road, a welcoming, inclusive space where women can access support, build skills, and connect with community.



The expanded centre features childminding, computer stations for job searching, private counselling offices, and a fully equipped kitchen for farm-to-table food preparation and culinary workshops focused on preparing healthy meals on a budget.

This bright, thoughtfully designed space now hosts workshops, peer groups, and trauma-informed, culturally safe programming—all in an environment that reflects care, comfort, and dignity.



“The centre is a vibrant hub of resilience, learning, and belonging. We're proud to share it with the community and grateful to those who helped bring it to life.

Darcy Gorrill  
WE Program Coordinator

# Women's Empowerment

## Client Success Story: From Crisis to Stability

During our International Women's Day celebration, one participant shared that it was her first time attending a women-focused event since arriving in Canada. At first, she was quiet and hesitant, but as the group began discussing gender-based violence (GBV)—led by Darcy—she became visibly moved. The session created a safe and understanding space where stories were shared and emotions were honored.

After the session, the client privately approached one of our staff members and shared that for years, she had experienced emotional and verbal abuse but didn't have the words to describe it or know where to turn. The workshop helped her recognize that what she was going through was not okay—and that she deserved support.

She also exchanged contact information with a few of the other women she met at the event and has since joined our regular women's tea and talk.

Her story is a powerful reminder of why these events matter—because when women come together to learn, share, and support each other, healing and hope begin."





# BC Regional Integration Liaison

KIS is proud to be one of five agencies selected across B.C. to serve as a Regional Liaison for the new BC Regional Integration Program, representing the Thompson Okanagan, Shuswap, and Kootenay regions.



**THOMPSON OKANAGAN  
SHUSWAP AND KOOTENAYS**

**BC NSP/SAFE HAVEN**  
Regional integration



This three-year initiative, funded by the Province, strengthens collaboration among local service providers, builds regional connections, and supports more coordinated settlement planning.

In our first year, we brought together 33 participants for an in-person regional meeting to share best practices, explore common challenges, and visit local agencies. We also delivered two targeted training sessions—one for frontline staff on effective referrals and role clarity, and one for leadership focused on innovation, program diversification, and funding opportunities.

KIS is looking forward to developing next year's project plan in collaboration with our partners, with summer meetings ahead to shape future priorities together.

“This initiative is helping us strengthen connections across the region—so newcomers can benefit from better coordination, stronger partnerships, and more responsive services.”

Sage Chang  
KIS Settlement Team Lead



# Achieve Program

**Through the Achieve program, KIS supported 22 families this year, positively impacting 54 individuals on their path to stability and success.**

## **Community collaboration:**

- Interior Community Services
- Hopewell
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- BC Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Askwellness
- Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society

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In 2024, a family of five moved to Kamloops, where the father quickly found full-time work. However, high living costs made it challenging to support the family on one income. The mother decided to stay home to help their children adapt to the new culture and school system. Through the Achieve program, in collaboration with ICS and KAFS, they received parenting support, insights into child development, and coping strategies. With assistance from Achieve, Employment Services, and the SWIS program, the mother upgraded her credentials to prepare for workforce re-entry. Today, the family is thriving, having welcomed a new baby and progressing toward full community integration.





# Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)

## TRU TRUST Group

The TRUST group at TRU is a collaborative initiative between the SWIS program at KIS and the Master of Education program at TRU. Its objective is to support newcomer parents with school-age children who are attending TRU. The group is led by students in the Master of Education program, where volunteers meet with newcomer students at TRU to share valuable information on how to support their children's school transition.



## MET Program

The MET program has been very successful, with around 30 students graduating last year. Each student received a graduation letter outlining specific skills and tools to support their school transition process. This played a crucial role in preparing students for success in their educational journeys, in addition to providing families with specific skills to support their children.

## SWIS-TRU Science Camp Partnership

Another exciting success story is the SWIS-TRU Science Camp partnership. Last year, we had a few students who had participated in the camp in previous years come back and volunteer their time. The camp itself provided newcomer students with experiential learning opportunities to explore various science concepts. One standout example is a student from Ukraine who speaks limited English. According to her parents, she was able to explain the camp activities and learning objectives to them at the end of the camp—an inspiring demonstration of growth and learning.



“

The SWIS team aided a newcomer family from Korea with two high school students facing challenges in adjusting to academic expectations and cultural differences. They connected the students with a mentor and coordinated meetings with the school to tailor course schedules and provide language support. As a result, the students significantly improved their English skills, gained confidence, and actively engaged in classes and extracurricular activities. Now, they are thriving academically and socially in the Canadian school system.

Clara Kong  
KIS SWIS Team

# Diversity & Anti-Racism



KIS Youth-4-Youth leadership program has been a force of creativity and change:

- 16 youth-led events
- 96 youth participants
- 6 youth leaders planned, delivered, and reflected on programming
- 3 focused learning sessions on identity, leadership, and social change

## Anti-racism social media campaign

“Some roots go back thousands of years. Others arrived last year. But when they grow together—something extraordinary blooms. Let’s celebrate our shared roots.”

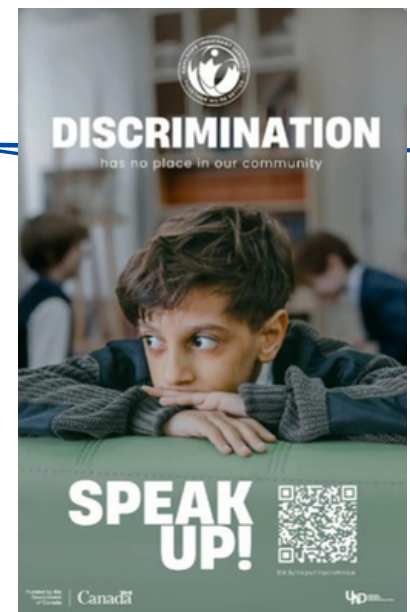
#RootedInRespect #AntiRacismWeek  
#KamloopsStrong



## School District 73 Collaboration

KIS Diversity Program

- Supported 2 inclusive diversity clubs
- Delivered 30 diversity presentations to over 725 students
- Shared 300 “Speak Up” pamphlets and 200 posters across schools





# Intercultural Competency Training

This year, thanks to the Canada Heritage Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program, KIS developed customized training and delivered a total of 43 workshops, engaging a diverse range of participants including local businesses, the City of Kamloops, community service providers, arts and culture organizations, clubs, and recreation groups.



**475 participants**



**21 new partnerships created**



**1405 engagements during the project**



## Community Impact

The project was evaluated through a combination of participant feedback forms, facilitator observations, and post-workshop reflections. Feedback was collected from attendees after each session to assess changes in awareness, understanding, and attitudes toward equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Participants reported greater confidence in intercultural interactions, increased awareness of unconscious bias, and a stronger understanding of inclusive practices. Many planned to apply what they learned in hiring, communication, and daily workplace interactions.

Several organizations noticed a positive shift among their staff and requested additional sessions, demonstrating the value and relevance of the training.

# OUR AMAZING TEAM

Rajinder Lotay  
Toby Abegunde  
Ankit Mehta  
JY Li  
Kate Cheng  
Erin White  
Darcy Gorrill  
Amy Verhey  
Sage Chang  
Anna Ediger  
Anselma Ammerdorffer  
Beatrice Taiwo-Jubril  
Emily Shuttleworth  
Talita Pires  
Connie Xiong  
France Lamontagne  
Mackenzie Anderson  
Vera Baryshnikova  
Pamela Palma  
Ellen Chen  
Leticia Kanywuiro



Lucia Mapplebeck  
Lian Clark  
Asma Koli  
Angie Naslund  
Yenny Yao  
Jenny Tran  
Ruben Quast  
Mahmood Zafar  
Shiro Abraham  
Sue Northcott  
Clara Kong  
Petro Kondrashov  
Rajneet Chhatwal  
Lakshana Ramdhonee  
Faith Bateman  
Becky Wu  
Brittanny Kanigan  
David Cazares  
Angie Falk  
Ghreehsma Nair  
Brittany Navitt  
Funmi Owa

Thank  
you!

## OUR PARTNERS & COLLABORATORS

Kamloops Community YMCA-YWCA  
BGC Kamloops  
Open Door Group's Gardengate  
Kamloops Naturalist Club  
Butler Urban Farm  
Mont Paul Community Food Centre  
Kamloops Pride Society  
Kamloops Chamber of Commerce  
Kamloops United Church  
Refugee and Friends Together  
Kamloops Canoe & Kayak Club

Venture Kamloops  
WorkBC  
Kamloops Legal Aid  
Kamloops Sexual Assault  
Counselling Centre  
Ministry of Children and  
Family Services  
NPower CanadaImmigrant  
Employment Council of BC  
YMCA Metro Vancouver  
City of Kamloops

Thompson Rivers University  
Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society  
L'Association Francophone de Kamloops  
Interior Community Services  
Elizabeth Fry Society  
Unique Get Together Society  
Kamloops Salvation Army  
People in Motion  
Kamloops Long Blades  
School District 73  
North Shore Business Improvement  
Association

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