



# KIS 2025-2026 ANNUAL REPORT

## BUILDING BELONGING IN OUR COMMUNITY

Kamloops and the Thompson-Nicola Region



# ABOUT US

## OUR MISSION

Our mission is to support newcomers as they build their lives, connect to community, and succeed in Kamloops and the Thompson-Nicola region.

## OUR VISION

A community where newcomers are welcomed, included, and able to fully participate.

 Inclusion

 Respect

 Empowerment

 Dignity

## OUR COMMUNITY

**1982**

Year Established

**36**

Staff Members

**49**

Volunteers



# WHAT WE DO

We support immigrants, refugees, migrant workers, racialized individuals, naturalized citizens, and their families to build strong, stable lives in our community, no matter the challenge.

Our programs and services are designed to move people forward, helping them achieve their goals and create a meaningful future in Kamloops and the Thompson-Nicola region.

**2,460**

new immigrants supported

**210**

school-age students engaged

**248**

Naturalized Citizens

**805**

Temporary Foreign Workers



# MESSAGE FROM OUR ED



This was a year of steady progress, with moments that required us to adapt and make thoughtful decisions. We remained focused on what matters most, supporting newcomers with care and consistency. Our staff, volunteers, and partners helped individuals and families move forward and find their place in the community. We also assumed leadership of the Local Immigration Partnership, bringing partners together around shared goals of inclusion and a more welcoming region. We move into the next year grounded in our commitment to equity, inclusion, and responsive services.

**France Lamontagne**  
KIS Executive Director



# MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present this year's annual report.

Kamloops Immigrant Services has continued to lead with purpose in a changing environment, delivering high-quality services while responding thoughtfully to emerging needs. We are proud of the KIS's role in leading the Local Immigration Partnership, deepening community collaboration and advancing inclusion and belonging across the region.

The Board extends sincere thanks to our staff, volunteers, community partners, and Executive Director for their dedication and care.

We look ahead with confidence in this agency's direction and its continued impact for newcomers and the broader community.

**David Cruz**

Board President



# THE PEOPLE WE SERVED



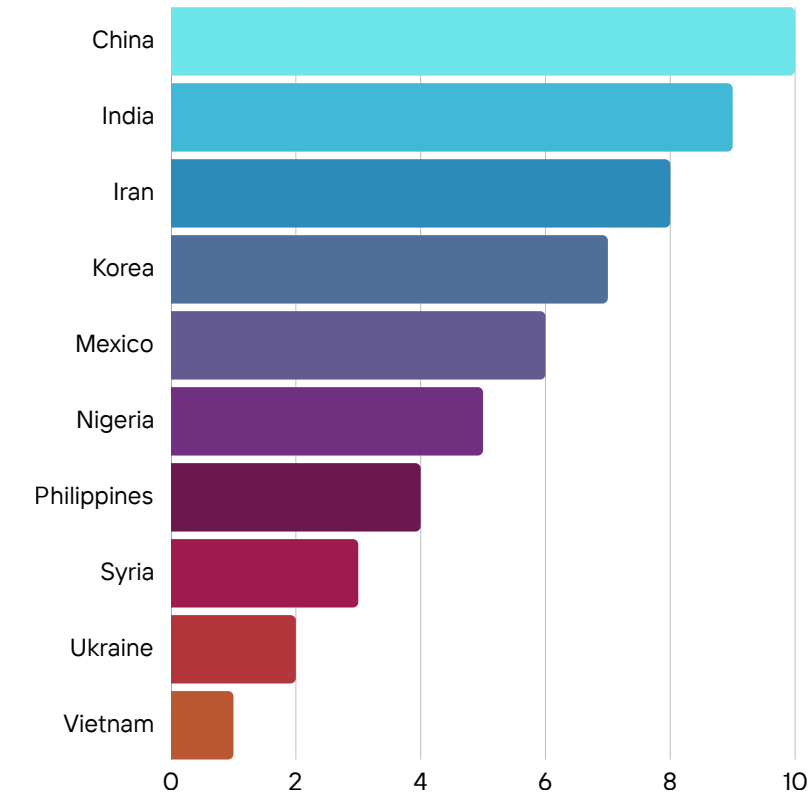
**3,200**  
New and  
returning clients



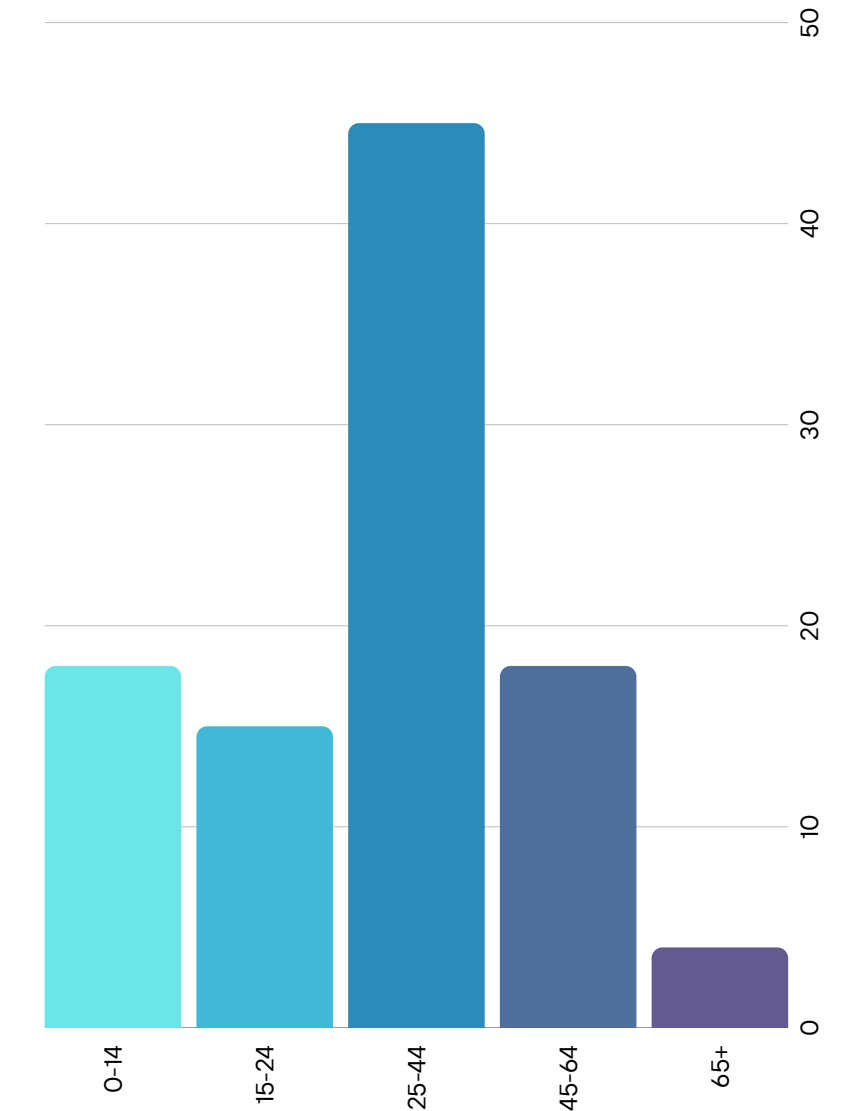
**15,935**  
**individuals**  
Crossed our door

This includes Refugees, Permanent and Temporary Residents, International Students, Refugee Claimants, and Naturalized Citizens.

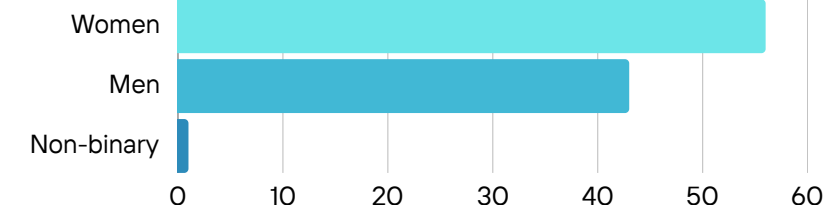
## TOP 10 COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



## AGE GROUPS



## GENDER



# CLIENT SERVICES DELIVERED



**11,059**

Information and Orientation Sessions



**950**

Employment related services performed



**150**

Learners attended formal English classes



**1462**

Community Connections activities



# OUR PROGRAMS



# SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

## Continuing the Legacy



### 🏆 32-Year Legacy

After 32 years, Rajinder Lotay retired, leaving a profound legacy of advocacy for human rights, gender equity, and inclusion. AMSSA hosted a special forum; KIS showcased our office to BC and Yukon agencies.



### ✨ Path to Protection

A client arrived with little English, no stable home, and an uncertain future. Through LINC classes and community connections, they rebuilt their footing. After receiving protected status, they now volunteer to help others on the same path.



"Everyone I spoke with was kind and knew exactly how to help me"

— Service Survey Respondent

## Refugee Support

27

Refugee individuals & families welcomed, including 1 family sponsored by RAFT

70

Refugee claimants supported: medical, housing, employment & counselling services

# ACHIEVE PROGRAM

38

Individuals & Families Assisted



The Achieve Program brought together a powerful network of community partners to provide holistic wraparound support for newcomer families navigating complex challenges.

## 🌟 Student Success

A client from Afghanistan is pursuing studies in science and chemistry at TRU while working part-time to support their family. A story of remarkable resilience and determination.

### Community Partners:

ICS

MSDPR

Ask Wellness

SD 73

MCFD

Salvation Army

The Tree

Hopewell

+ More

51

Children Supported This Holiday Season



## 🎄 Children Celebrated

The Christmas Gift Program promoted inclusion, joy, and connection for newcomer families experiencing transition during the holiday season.



The people here treated me with dignity and understood my situation.

— Service Survey Respondent

# CHILDMIND

## Empowering children

Childmind goes far beyond simply caring for children. Every day, our dedicated staff nurture the mental, emotional, and educational growth of every child in our care by providing a safe, engaging environment where children feel valued, build friendships, and develop the confidence they need to thrive in school and beyond.

### Holistic Child Development

Carefully planned activities and play strengthen social skills, emotional resilience, and school readiness — with individualized attention for every child, including assessment support.

### Family Support and Newcomer Integration

By working closely with parents and creating inclusive spaces, we support newcomer and refugee families in building community, accessing guidance, and gaining confidence in their new environment.

### English Language Confidence

These warm, natural settings have helped many families gain confidence in English — parents and children who once struggled to communicate now participating actively and comfortably.

## Nurturing the Entire Child


1,937


Children Served


857


Parents & Adults Engaged


### Special Events & Activities


 Baby Corner

 Toddlers in Motion


 Meet the Author

 Yoga for Kids

 Easter Egg Hunt

 Zumbini

 Mother Goose

 Christmas Celebration

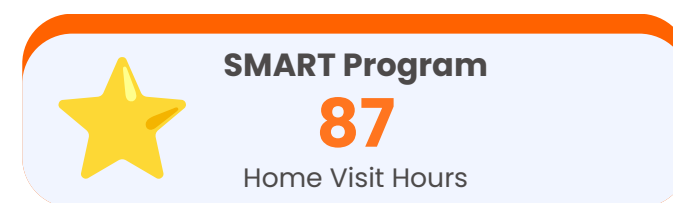


# HIPPY & SMART PROGRAMS

## Empowering mothers

Launched just over a year ago, the HIPPY Home Visiting Program was built on a bold vision: to equip mothers with the tools, confidence, and support they need to prepare their children for lifelong success. Through weekly home visits and structured role-play using a proven early childhood curriculum, the program creates meaningful and lasting change.

With strong momentum and generous support from Literacy in Kamloops, we launched the companion SMART Program now supporting mothers raising toddlers during those critical early years.



### Celebrating Our First HIPPY Graduates!

Some children are now in Kindergarten, and parents report that HIPPY prepared them well for school routines and academic tasks

## Fostering school readiness

**28**

Mothers Enrolled

**35**

Children Enrolled

**79%**

Program Completion Rate

**16+**

Languages Spoken by Families

**519**

Total Home Visit Hours Delivered

**15**

Countries Represented by Families

**831**

Hours of Parent-Child Learning Time

**10**

Activities Group Hosted



# LINC PROGRAM

## Learning with intention

The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program supports literacy, English language learning, and cultural integration, helping newcomers build the confidence and skills needed to fully participate in community life.



"I can say KIS is always important for immigrants."

— Program Participant

## Some Highlights

- Writing & exchanging holiday cards
- Writing thank-you cards to volunteers
- Celebrating Halloween with cultural context
- Language skill building in everyday scenarios
- Cultural knowledge & community integration
- Building confidence & sense of belonging

### Program Impact

LINC creates more than language skills, it builds community, confidence, and a sense of belonging for every learner who walks through our doors.

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

## Bringing Kamloops together

Community Connections program provides free activities and workshops to help newcomers build social connections, gain life skills, improve physical well-being, access local resources, and raise awareness of Canadian heritage, culture and life in Canada.



"From STEM camps to yoga in the park, we create spaces where every member of our community can connect, grow, and belong."

**Angie Falk** – Community Connections Coordinator

## Program Highlights



### Christmas Craft Fair

30 vendors · 100 attendees

30 vendors featured art from various cultural backgrounds. Over 100 attendees purchased artwork to support newcomers and local artists.



### Lunar New Year Celebration

Cultural gather · 110+ attendees

Over 110 people from diverse cultural backgrounds learned Chinese culture through crafts, games, performances, and a potluck.



### Youth 4 Youth – STEM Camp

16 Youth · 5 Days

Sixteen youth aged 13 to 19 engaged in a five-day STEM camp that focused on sustainability, innovation, cultural heritage, and



### Seniors Group – Seniors Night Out

24 Seniors · Live Music

The Seniors Group had a nice evening at Riverside Park, enjoying games and live Music in the Park, fostering connection and friendship.



### Photos With Santa

100+ Families & Individuals · Free Photos

Over 100 families and individuals received free, high-quality photos, capturing joyful holiday moments to cherish for a lifetime.



### Yoga in the Park

150–200 Participants · 4 Sessions

150 to 200 adults joined guided outdoor yoga, and children took part in art activities, and a nearby soccer game offered extra movement.

# EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

## Connecting newcomers job seekers

Over the past year, KIS employment services became more focused and better connected to local hiring needs. Programming reflects what employers are looking for, with workshops and one-to-one support grounded in current hiring practices, and more opportunities to connect job seekers directly with employers.



"From first resume to first paycheck we walk alongside newcomers at every step of their employment journey."

**Catherine Litt** – Employment Coordinator

## Program Highlights



### Meet the Employer Mini Job Fair Series

Smaller, single-employer events replace large job fairs. Employers share details upfront, giving job seekers time to learn before approaching, making conversations more focused and productive.



### She Leads Women's Empowerment Series

Supported newcomer women in building confidence, strengthening workplace communication, and exploring leadership. Ran twice in 2025, confirming the need for ongoing women-focused employment readiness programming.



### The HUSTLE Youth Entrepreneurship Camp

A two-week, hands-on program for Canadian and newcomer youth. Participants developed real business ideas and ended with a successful pop-up restaurant at Yew Street Food Hall.

### LOOKING AHEAD — 2026 PRIORITIES

- Individualized resume, interview, and job search support
- New workshops on Artificial Intelligence and the changing employment landscape
- Expanding the Meet the Employer and She Leads series
- Continued youth employment and entrepreneurship programming

# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

## Building Strength & Independence

The Women's Empowerment Program delivered focused workshops on healthy relationships, self-confidence, and emotional wellbeing — while also providing hands-on support for participants navigating complex life transitions.

### Key Outcomes

Participants found pathways to renewed independence, housing stability, and hope with guidance through court processes, employment challenges, and personal transitions.



"Finding my voice and my community here changed everything for me."

— WE Program Participant

## Program Highlights



# PRIDE GROUP

## A Safe Space to Belong

The WE Pride Group provides a safe, affirming, and welcoming space for LGBTQ2S+ newcomers who are navigating both the challenges of starting a new life and exploring their identity in a new context.

**28**

Participants  
Engaged

**23**

Sessions  
Held

**3**

Permanent  
Residency  
Achieved

### Major Achievement:

Three refugee claimants from the WE Pride Group successfully obtained permanent residency in 2025 — a life-changing milestone supported by their community at KIS.

## Activities & Milestones

- Kamloops Pride Parade participation
- TRU Pride Resource Fair engagement
- New partnerships for queer film programming
- Peer support and community building activities



"I finally found people who understand what it means to start over in a new country while also figuring out who you are."

— WE Pride Program Participant



# SWIS & MET PROGRAM

## Settlement Workers in Schools

**420**

Total  
Clients  
Served

**210**

School-Age  
Students

**101**

Families  
Assisted

SWIS provides school orientation, referrals, workshops, spring & summer camps, and mentoring, connecting newcomer youth with the resources they need to thrive.

### Key Initiatives:

TRUST Group at TRU, monthly SWIS newsletter, ~44 students mentored & tutored, enhanced family engagement programs.

## Tutoring Program



"My tutor helped me feel confident and supported."

— Tutoring Program Learner

### Key Partnerships:

SD73

BGC Kamloops

TRU

Nature Kids BC

Genesis Counselling

# TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM

## Supporting Workers Across the Region

We supported temporary foreign workers across Kamloops, Merritt, Ashcroft, 100 Mile House, and surrounding communities; ensuring they know their rights and have access to support.



## Services Provided

- Workers' rights information & education
- Community connections & social integration
- Emergency support network
- Liaison with MPs, MLAs & Consulates

## Employment Sectors:

 Agriculture

 Hotels

 Restaurants

 Customer Service



# LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP (LIP)

## From welcome to true equity

The Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) creates facilitated spaces where newcomers speak directly to city leaders and organizations ensuring that representation isn't just a buzzword, but a tool for shifting the social fabric of Kamloops.



"I felt welcomed very quickly, but I started to see that not everyone was having the same experience. It made me realize that inclusion can look very different depending on who you are."

- Australian newcomer, LIP Council Session

## Strategic Milestones

- Multi-Agency Governance
- Democratic Representation
- Evidence-Based Strategy
- Collaborative Impact
- Intercultural Learning Workshops

## Overview

24

Organizations  
on LIP Council

20+

Intercultural  
Workshops  
Delivered

400

Individuals  
trained

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## Connecting community

We offer volunteer opportunities to school-age youth, skilled workers, and retired seniors who want to engage with a diverse community, whether by gaining professional experience, giving back to the community, or learning how to create a more welcoming environment for newcomers and contribute to a sense of belonging for everyone.

**184**

Volunteers  
Applied

**1,697**

Volunteer  
Hours  
Contributed

**431**

Activities  
Supported

**214**

Hours  
Contributed

**A heartfelt thank you to Suresh**, our dedicated data entry volunteer, who generously contributed more than 200 hours of his time.

## Our Superheroes



“With sincere appreciation, we celebrate our volunteers and the positive impact they make every day in the lives of newcomers and in the heart of our community.”

**Ruben Quast** – Volunteer Coordinator

# ENGLISH TUTORING PROGRAM

## Learning in a welcoming environment

The continued success of the English Tutoring Program is a direct result of the generosity, care, and commitment of our 7 volunteer tutors, whose contributions have made a lasting and positive impact on newcomers and the wider community.



"My tutor helped me feel confident and supported."

— English Tutoring Program Learner

## Areas of Support

- Foundational Language Skills
- Employment Preparation
- Citizenship Preparation
- School Communications
- Community Confidence

339 hours of tutoring became 339 moments of learning, confidence, and connection.

**339**

Tutoring  
Hours  
Delivered

**7**

Dedicated  
Volunteer  
Tutors

# MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

## Learning in a welcoming environment

Through friendly one-to-one matches, newcomers receive practical support with community orientation, gain confidence, practise English in everyday situations, and feel more connected to their new home. The program creates space for friendship, shared learning, and a stronger sense of belonging for both newcomers and mentors.



“Thanks to my English mentorship, my children’s school invited me to be a grade 9 teacher substitute.”  
Joey - English Mentee

## Areas of Support

- English as a Second Language
- Employment Skills
- Guitar Lessons



**240** Mentoring Hours Delivered

**23** Dedicated Volunteer Mentors

**20** Mentees were matched

# PARTNERSHIPS & SPONSORS

## Thank You to Our Partners & Funders

None of our work would be possible without the generous support of our government funders, community partners, and local sponsors. We are grateful for your continued commitment to newcomers in Kamloops.

### Grantors:

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### Generous Contribution

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### Funded by / Financé par:

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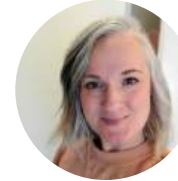











# OUR AMAZING TEAM

## Board of Directors

<b>David Cruz</b> President	<b>Satwinder Paul</b> Vice-President	<b>Eva Bechtel</b> Treasurer	<b>Gloria Ramirez</b> Secretary	
<b>Ambo Dhaliwal</b>	<b>Dilip Maurya</b>	<b>Dr. Bob Rishiraj</b>	<b>Deniz Demirkapi</b>	<b>Tanya Manning-Lewis</b>



## Staff

- |  |   |  |  |   |   |  |   |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| <br><b>France Lamontagne</b><br>Executive Director | <br><b>Sage Chang</b><br>Settlement Lead    | <br><b>Kate Cheng</b><br>Settlement Counsellor             | <br><b>Pamela Palma</b><br>Settlement Counsellor                  | <br><b>Toby Abegunde</b><br>Achieve Coordinator                   | <br><b>Ankit Mehta</b><br>Settlement Counsellor | <br><b>Catherine Litt</b><br>Employment Coordinator            | <br><b>Beatrice Taiwo-Jubril</b><br>Employment Counsellor | <br><b>Talita Primolan</b><br>Youth Employment Advisor              | <br><b>Angie Falk</b><br>Community Connections                                     | <br><b>Emily Shuttleworth</b><br>Community Connections            | <br><b>Erin White</b><br>WE Program Assistant      |
| <br><b>Darcy Gorrill</b><br>WE Coordinator        | <br><b>Clara Kong</b><br>SWIS              | <br><b>Anna Ediger</b><br>SWIS                            | <br><b>Lucia Mapplebeck</b><br>LINC Lead                         | <br><b>Ren Powers</b><br>LINC Instructor                         | <br><b>Lian Clark</b><br>LINC Instructor       | <br><b>Asma Koli</b><br>LINC Instructor                       | <br><b>Angie Naslund</b><br>Childmind Team Lead          | <br><b>Anselma Ammerdorffer</b><br>Childmind Staff                 | <br><b>Becky Wu</b><br>Early Childhood Educator Assistant                         | <br><b>Brittany Levitt</b><br>Early Childhood Educator           | <br><b>Sabrina Castilla</b><br>HIPPI Home Visitor |
| <br><b>Lina Shubbar</b><br>HIPPI Home Visitor     | <br><b>Yenny Yao</b><br>Programs Team Lead | <br><b>Regha Mattamana</b><br>HR & Mentorship Coordinator | <br><b>Ruben Quast</b><br>Communications & Volunteer Coordinator | <br><b>Shiro Abraham</b><br>Accounting and Payroll Administrator | <br><b>Mahmood Zafar</b><br>Finance Director   | <br><b>Sue Northcott</b><br>Administrator & Tutor Coordinator | <br><b>Petro Kondrashov</b><br>IT & Digital Instructor   | <br><b>Rajneet Chhatwal</b><br>Kamloops & District LIP Coordinator | <br><b>Mackenzie Anderson</b><br>Regional Integration Liaison Project Coordinator | <br><b>David Cazares</b><br>Migrant Workers Outreach Coordinator |  |