

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

PACIFIC IMMIGRANT RESOURCES SOCIETY



The Pacific Immigrant Resources Society is grateful to carry out our work on the unceded, unsurrendered, and ancestral territories of the Coast Salish, Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group, sḠə́Cíyáʔt təməx^w (Katzie), Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem, x^wməθkwə́yəm (Musqueam), Qayqayt, S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō), Stz'uminus, Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), s'Ćəwəθenaʔt təməx^w (Tsawwassen), selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), and Á,LEṄENEḶ ŁTE (W̱SÁNEĆ) nations.

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VISION



Our vision is a society that **values the diverse contributions** of immigrants and refugees and promotes the **enrichment** of their lives.

MISSION



Our mission is to empower immigrant and refugee women and children to **fully participate** in Canadian life through **neighbourhood-based, accessible and inclusive** programs.



"[PIRS] teaches you to value yourself as a person, as a mother, as a woman...to look for ways to connect with people, to find training or future work, to be able to integrate into Canadian society."

Looking Forward...

PIRS is Transforming!

PIRS' 45th year was marked by endings and beginnings; introspection and change.

The past 18 months have been a period of constant change and awakening for our society. The next generation wants to see meaningful change. And while much has changed for women, much has stayed the same, especially for immigrant and BIPOC women; systemic barriers remain.

For PIRS, it has been a time for introspection and thoughtful reflection on what PIRS is known for, our unique approach to meeting the needs of immigrant and refugee women, and how to move forward during these challenging, uncertain times. Planning for the future requires assessing needs and responding with flexibility to current pandemic situations, as we continue to reassess our programs and consider methods of hybrid, in-person, and distanced delivery.

Despite its obstacles, the PIRS team found that the pandemic offered opportunities to reflect on how we do our work, why we do our work, and what we need to do differently. A smaller, nimbler team, we have started the long journey of decolonizing our work. We are working to broaden our understanding of how gender, sexuality, race, class, ability, faith, culture, and other identities intersect, combine, and multiply their impacts on immigrant and refugee women's lived experiences. We believe that women are the experts in their own lives. We are listening wholeheartedly.

PIRS has delivered accessible, inclusive, low-barrier programs for immigrant and refugee women and their children that create a sense of belonging, meaningful participation, and leadership for 45 years. We will continue to do so for as long as this work is necessary to ensure that migrant women and their children are not left behind.



BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR RECOVERY

The second year of the COVID-19 pandemic placed a heavy economic, social, and mental toll on many immigrant and refugee women. PIRS programs became the lifeline for some of the most vulnerable families: providing food, referrals to resources available in the community, emotional support, and meaningful connections. Together, we have weathered the storm and begun building the foundation for recovery in a way that meets the needs of immigrant and refugee women.

At the same time, the Board made progress on governance and structural changes that will better support PIRS' work. We are engaged in strategic planning to re-vision PIRS' role within the sector and to chart a course for success.

Funding for two significant projects, Pop-Up Childcare and Learning Journeys, came to an end in 2020. Yet, the programs are ongoing and continuing to make a change.

PIRS was honoured to receive two literacy awards this year. In August, we learned that PIRS received the top award in the 2021 Canada Life Literacy Innovation Award (LIA) and B.C.'s 2021 Council of the Federation Literacy Award. Literacy has been central to PIRS' work since its inception. It is a critical skill for establishing a sense of belonging and community in a new country.

We are astounded by the generosity of our supporters! We are ever grateful to donors who donated in-kind food, supplies, and services at a value of \$263,274.47.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to the 90+ volunteers who contributed 3,681 hours in programs, on committees, and the Board. And we thank those who moved on to new adventures including Erika Infante, Patricia Lomelli, Huda Allany, Sandrine Espie, Sunaina Sharma, and Darius Maze. You remain a part of the PIRS family.

This summer we learned of the passing of a long-time staff member of PIRS. Sylvia Hesby taught ESL classes at Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House and also coordinated the LEAD and Building Bridges programs. Sylvia touched the lives of many immigrant and newcomer women through the LEAD and Building Bridges programs. She will be missed.

We have learned so much, and PIRS has continued to grow despite the pandemic; if anything, the pandemic has proven our strength. We are so grateful for everyone who makes PIRS a family, and we are looking forward to another 45 years.

Kathy Price,
Board Chair

Mariam Bouchoutrouch,
Executive Director



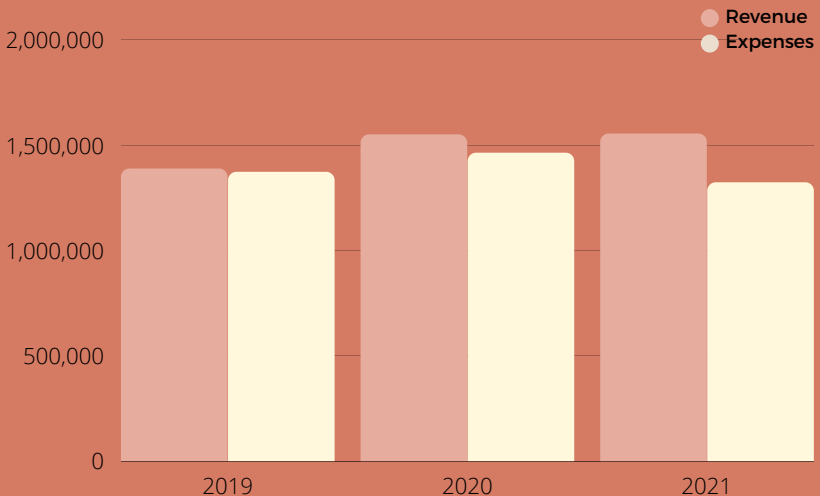
FINANCIAL REPORT

Statements of Operations

REVENUE	2021	2020
Grants earned	812,965	1,130,055
Donations - in-kind	256,954	112,721
Donations - cash	120,020	138,073
Other income	358,530	163,562
Interest and other	6,510	6,501
Total	\$1,554,979	\$1,550,912

EXPENSES		
Salaries and benefits	796,867	989,008
Programs Expenses	452,994	347,246
Office and Other	55,733	49,990
Community Relations	17,929	77,681
Total	\$1,323,523	\$1,463,925

Revenue over expenses for the year	\$231,456	\$86,987
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*Full Audited Statements Are Available Upon Request



Above: Learning Journeys group photo
Below: Pop-Up Childcare at the Flavours of Hope event

PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

Last year, PIRS served **619** women and children across our **22** regular programs. The majority of our participants were racialized, coming from **20** different countries and speaking **20** different languages. **69.5%** arrived to Canada as refugees (**36%** as refugee claimants), and **45%** had high school or less education.

served
454 + 165
women children

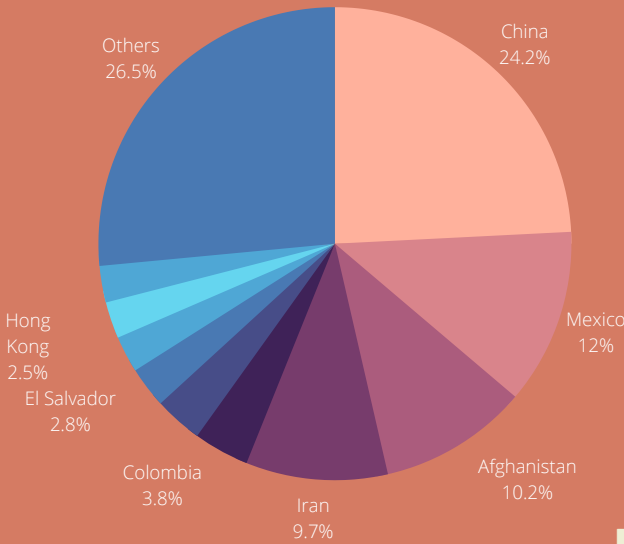
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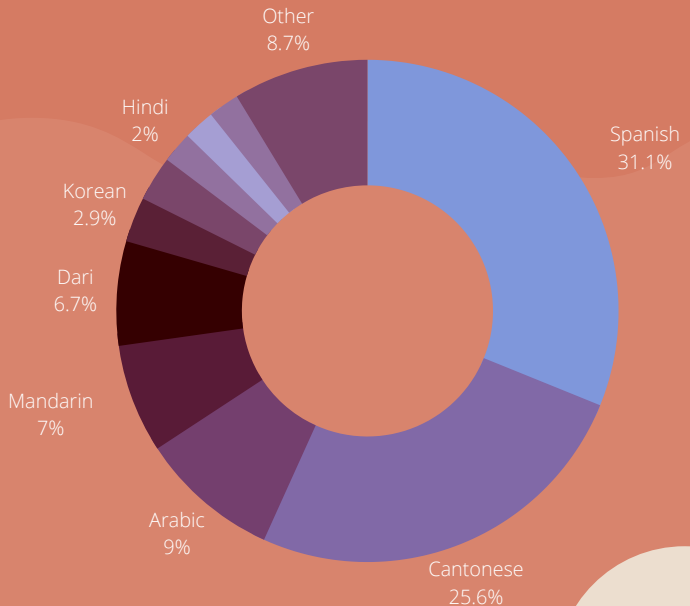


OUR PARTICIPANTS

Countries of Origin



Home Languages





GROWING CONFIDENCE: VIRGINIA'S STORY

Virginia started our Community English Class with very few digital skills. When the pandemic began, Virginia's husband bought her a tablet so she could attend our classes online. Mariana, our Outreach Support Worker, patiently guided Virginia through step by step instructions and taught her about Zoom, cameras, microphones, and all the necessary tech in Spanish. With Mariana's support, Virginia was able to attend our online classes during the Winter term, where she developed both English language and digital literacy skills.



Virginia at Our
Community
English Class

By the Spring term, she was more comfortable with various Zoom functions and was able to be more engaged, participating and communicating her ideas with growing confidence.

Virginia began stepping up to read and answer questions in class. She was also able to sign into Zoom on her own and navigate the controls, no longer dependent on Mariana's help, and began doing more homework online on her own. For our June speaking presentation on Canada ("What do you like or love about Canada?"), Virginia was able to send Mariana pictures and a video of herself to share online with the whole class. Virginia showed us pictures of herself enjoying mountains, rivers, and parks around BC. She also shared some artwork from her 2-year-old grandson. She was able to express her love for Canada and for Vancouver. We are so proud of Virginia's achievements in her digital and English skills!



Virginia with staff members, Mariana and Leanna, at Community English Class

PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

Over the 2020-2021 programming year, mental health and the need for increased digital literacy skills emerged as key barriers for immigrant women. As a result, PIRS programming focused on creating spaces for women to come together, learn, grow, and get the support they need, both virtually and in-person.

Our Community English Classes were held online and made accessible to learners in the digital environment. We are grateful for our Outreach team, who provided mental health support and contributed to creating a safe space for learning. We also continued our partnership with Burnaby Neighbourhood House in training digital literacy trainers, and we expanded our digital literacy work through a partnership with Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House.

Learning Journeys, LEAD, and Building Bridges programs continued to foster women's personal and professional leadership growth, including for women with disabilities. This year, we launched Building Bridges for Immigrant and Refugee Women with Disabilities (BBD) to provide more diverse and inclusive services.

Our parenting and children's programming explored food and health literacy (Healthy Together), stress management for kids (Kids Have Stress Too), literacy through physical movement (Raise-a-Reader), and supported mothers and their children through Early Learning-based one-on-one sessions (Home Visiting). Delivered in partnership with a number of community organizations, both online and in person, these programs brought joyful and creative learning to families during very challenging times.



Above: Staff collect children's books
Below: Volunteers at PIRS Food Hub, in partnership with United Way

2020 - 2021 AT A GLANCE

454 Women Served



165 Children Served

400

People Served/week at the Emergency Food Hub



3,116 Food Hampers Delivered

11,035 Individual Meals Served

1,381

One-on-one support calls and referrals made

235 Women Supported



10

Digital Skills Training Workshops

VOLUNTEERS' CONTRIBUTIONS

82

Active
Volunteers

2,433

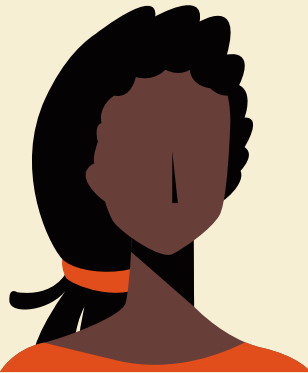
Hours of
Community Service

8

Board of
Directors

1,248

Hours of
Community Service



91

Volunteers at Our
Food Hubs

2,986

Hours of Service

Learning Journeys: Pathways for and with Immigrant Women

This year, PIRS partnered with BC settlement resource developer and community builder, Andrea Solnes. Together, we created a participatory research initiative to identify key elements of service delivery to improve settlement outcomes for immigrant women. The project culminated in the development of the Immigrant Women's Advisory Committee: a diverse and supportive group of immigrant women, who meet bi-weekly to develop and implement social innovation projects and contribute their experiences and perspectives.



Andrea Solnes with Tarana Sultan,
Learning Journeys participant and former coordinator

Learning Journeys participants have been actively involved with various projects through the Immigrant Women Advisory Committee (IWAC). They recorded podcasts, started a conversation circle, developed a peer mentorship curriculum, and played an active role in evolving the committee into its next phase by participating in two Sustainability Labs, guided by the principles of co-design.



Tina Balchandran

“IWAC for me has been a fulfilling and enriching experience; a passageway for new learnings and connections.”
- Tina Balchandran, IWAC member

Learning Journeys Key Learnings:

- Decentralized leadership creates space for all voices to be heard; unity and understanding grow as we grasp that there is no 'one-way-to-work' and move away from a top-down approach.
- Working from a place of shared experiences with a lens of shared purpose allows collective skills and passion to fully ignite, burn brighter, and powerfully illuminate.
- Women flourish within a relational approach that allows them to experience what they need to build and bring forth their confidence with their natural skills and strengths.

The Food Access Project

This initiative was started as an emergency response program to help reduce pandemic food insecurity among the most vulnerable PIRS clients. We distributed weekly healthy food hampers and care packages to 100 families, many with children and living in a low-income bracket, at our Food Hub locations in Burnaby and South Vancouver. The Outreach team built connections with families to offer additional help as needed, including mental wellness and parenting support, children's resources, and access to government financial aid and referrals.

This project has become a lifeline for the families we serve, and it has enabled the outreach team to maintain in-person connections and provide help during this period of isolation and hardship for so many families. PIRS is grateful to our partners and supporters, who provided in-kind support at a value of \$242,915.22, and the 91 Food Hub volunteers, who provided 2986 hours of service. As a result, we were able to deliver 3,116 food hampers and serve 11,035 individual meals.



Volunteers at our Food Hub



Volunteers at our Food Hub



Pop-Up Childcare

One of the hallmarks of PIRS' low-barrier model is our delivery of quality children's programs (on-site childminding) alongside most of our programs to increase accessibility. In past years, without adequate amounts of work to create full time jobs, we struggled to retain highly qualified and skilled staff. In our efforts to meet the growing need for on-site childminding, we unwittingly created low paying, insecure work for migrant women.

In 2018, PIRS embarked on a social innovation project to explore these issues and improve our children's programs. The project explored how to deliver quality childcare and increase women's access to services, while simultaneously providing living wage work in the settlement sector. As a result, we developed a social enterprise: our Pop-Up Childcare service. Despite COVID, Pop-Up Childcare continued to offer customized childcare services: providing high-quality childminding services and living wage work for migrant women by employing them through Pop-up Childcare and connecting them to other opportunities in the childcare sector.

This year, due to COVID, Pop-Up Childcare transitioned to providing staff only at licensed childcare centres, instead of at events as well. 79 immigrant women received Responsible Adult (Childcare) Training through PIRS, and Pop-Up Childcare provided 1,072 hours of childcare service to 34 children.



Above: Pop-Up Childcare at Burnaby Neighbourhood House with newcomer Afghan children

Below: National Truth and Reconciliation Day at Burnaby children's programs



Hamida, our volunteer, getting creative at the Food Hub!

STAFF + VOLUNTEERS

STAFF:

Amira Chache, Anastasia (Nastia) Gaisenok, Anastasia Sapelnikova, Ann Asselstine, Arlene Ordonez, Deirdre Pfaff, Erika Infante Pizarro, Feri Dehdar, Gisselote Patricia Lomelli Carpio, Gloria Mandera, Grisel Soledad Mejias, Gui Ling Sheng (Alisa), Guohong Xia (Anna), Huda Alanny, Irina Iordache, Jean Etienne de Dieu Tuyisenge, Leanna Inokoshi, Mahnaz Nakhaee, Maliha Mayeed, Mariam Bouchoutrouch, Mariana Gassmann, Mehreen Saleem, Melody Yin Yun Wise, Naiely Cabrera, Nongkran Ho Yuki, Ross Tremblay, Sandrine Espie, Sanzida Habib, Sheng Ching Song (Cheryl), Souad Ghomari, Valerie Lai, Yuchen Li, Zarminah Mohammad Ali.

VOLUNTEERS:

Aisha Khan, Aisha Zein, Althea Garcia Bernardo, Amanda Sherin, Andrea Hurtado, Angelique Mchawengan, Anjali Siega, Asma Al Habboul, Aya Halliday, Bernadette Klassen, Bhuvan Karim, Carolina Rodriguez Gil, Cecilia, Chanjuan Tan Sunny, Chase Lee, Christopher Bell, Claudia Orellana, Coleman Lai, Connie Concepcion Elbao, Connor Simpson, Daniela Cardena, Danna Houssain, Deacon Thornberry, Debbie, Diman Ahmed, Edilma Florez, Eduardo Adrian Barrera Sanz, Elizebeth Staples, Fiona Wu, Babriel Arevalo, Gustavo Gonzanga, Hamida Parvin, Hannah Lai, Helena Shum, Herbert Shum, Hon Man Eric Chan, Howard Wong, Humera Arshad, Iris Toro, Jaden Harbert, Jandal Alrefaii Mohammad Najeeb, Jason Lau, Jazz Dhillon, Jean Etienne Tuyisenge, Jennifer Chan, Jessica Wang, Joanne Liu, Joe Walker, Jose Rodriguez, Karen Shum, Laura Angelica, Laurie Grant, Lidiane Barreta, Manraj Parmar, Marcelli Vizeu Del Valle Jacques, Meghan McCaugherty, Naoko Iwata, Nasrin Soleymani, Neil Bailey, Nicole Saldias, Nooshin Rabierad, Nusrat Haque, Ourida Gharbi, Patricia B.A Cervantes, Perla Retiz Hernandez, Poonam Mahendru, rabia Kaihan, Ruddy Romero, Ruth Goh, Ruth Suarez Valenzuela, Saba dara, Samia Hamwi, Shadan Soloukian, Shahlla Abawi, Shanice Yu, Siemeen Fayez, Sudhakar Bakki, Suneel Kailey, Susan Pinkham, Sylvia Dudeck, Yan Yam

Immigrant and Refugee Women Lead the Way

We had an exciting and busy time with this year's Women's Leadership and Development (WLD) programs! We want to share some achievements of our participants, who completed Building Bridges (BB), Building Bridges for Immigrant and Refugee Women with Disabilities (BBD), LEAD and Learning Journeys.



Building Bridges on Zoom

Building Bridges (BB) is a signature PIRS leadership program that builds women's skills and confidence. Participants are encouraged to develop a project based on their passions and interests.

Three graduates have started volunteering for different programs, including English language and digital literacy training classes. Another graduate, Hamida, has been volunteering with the Food Hub for over a year.

Building Bridges Highlight

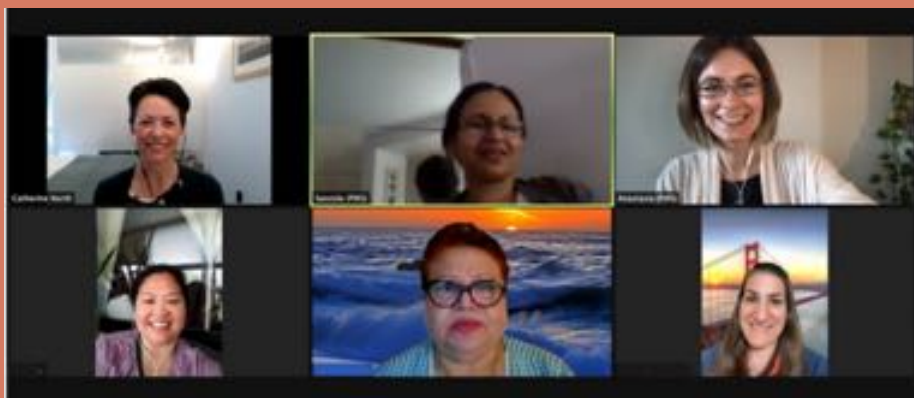


Nooshin leading a group exercise activity at our all staff meeting in June

This year, Nooshin Rad started an online Aerobics exercise class as a successful outcome of her graduation project. The program was promoted by PIRS and is open to clients and staff members. Nooshin has also volunteered for the Community English as an Additional Language Focus Group and was invited to the all staff meeting in June to facilitate a group movement activity session.

Learning Inclusivity From Our Participants

The BB-Disability (BBD) was a new program, launched this year, and has provided us with important learning opportunities in the areas of diversity and inclusion. Three participants of BBD undertook a group project exploring a fundraising campaign to improve visually impaired newcomers' access to technological support.



BBD on Zoom

Two of our BBD participants received the George Sisters Bursary— the first time it has been assigned to PIRS for distribution among immigrant and refugee women. This funding will support them in pursuing education and training required for career advancements.

Special thanks to the George Sisters (Crissy and Patsy George) for supporting our participants and our own learning as we aim to increase our inclusivity.

Graduating Conference

On May 23rd, we held a Graduating Conference event for participants from all Women's Leadership and Development programs, where they presented their projects. The day-long online event was attended by PIRS clients, staff, and board members, guests from different community organizations, and other stakeholders. Rumana Monzur delivered an inspirational and heartwarming keynote presentation. She is a sought after public speaker and lawyer, who is a survivor of domestic violence that left her blind. We also had Mr. George Chow, MLA for Vancouver-Fraserview, and Mr. Norm Leech, ED of Vancouver Aboriginal Community Policing Center, as special guests. It was a very inspiring and engaging event that showcased newcomer and immigrant women's talents, potential, and aspirations in Canada.

Conversation Circles

In the summer, we held Summer Conversation Circles as a way to maintain community-building, learning, and peer support groups for and by immigrant women. Community members and our English class participants had the opportunity to continue to build language skills and meet new peers, while our WLD graduates practiced group facilitation and public speaking to improve their communication skills and build confidence.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Chairperson

Angela Heino
Vice Chairperson

Gyda Chud
Past Chair

Melissa Guillergan / Kathy Price
Treasurer

Ida Reiman / Yassaman Bashir
Secretary

Perna Thaker
Director

Ida Reiman
Director

Darius A. Maze
Director

PARTNERS, KEY FUNDERS, AND FRIENDS

Partnerships allow us to extend our mission and do more with less. This year partners provided \$256,954 worth of in-kind contributions. We thank ALL of our partners and collaborators and would like to acknowledge the following:

Backpack Buddies
BC Council for Families
BCIT
Bonnie Bakery
Burnaby Pacific Grace Church
Cameray Child and Family Services
Canadian Red Cross
CCM
City of Vancouver
Click
Decoda
Disability Alliance of BC
First Book Canada
Fresh Direct Produce
Government of Canada
Greater Vancouver Food Bank
Health Together
Journey Home Burnaby
Kids Have Stress Too
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Lululemon
MOSAIC

Neighbourhood Houses (Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Burnaby Neighbourhood House, Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House, Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, Marpole Neighbourhood House, South Vancouver Family Place, South Vancouver Neighbourhood House)
Province of BC
Refood
Second Harvest
Telus
The Learning Partnership
The Lunch Lady
United Way
Van Whole Produce
Vancouver School Board
Vancouver Soup Company
White Spot



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