



# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2021 - 2022**

**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<sup>w</sup> (Katzie), Kwantlen, Kwikwetlem,  
x<sup>w</sup>məθkwə́yəm (Musqueam), Qayqəyt,  
S'ólh Téméxw (Stó:lō), Stz'uminus,  
Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), sḠəwəθənaʔt  
təməx<sup>w</sup> (Tsawwassen), selílwitulh (Tseil-  
Waututh), and Á,LEḠENEḠ ḠTE  
(ḠSÁNEḠ) nations.



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# VISION & MISSION



## VISION

Our vision is a society that honours the **strengths** of diverse women and **empowers** their contributions.

## MISSION

Our mission is to deliver accessible, inclusive, low-barrier programs for immigrant and refugee women and their children that create a sense of **belonging, meaningful participation and leadership.**

COURAGE | INCLUSION | EMPATHY  
COMMUNITY | ACCOUNTABILITY | COMPASSION

# REPORT FROM BOARD & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PIRS staff, board, volunteers and donors are Super Heroes capable of extraordinary feats, just like the main characters in the movie Everything Everywhere All at Once. And this year could be characterized as just that.

While another COVID year placed a heavy economic, social, and mental toll on many immigrant and refugee women, PIRS programs continued to be a lifeline for some of the most vulnerable: providing food, referrals to community resources, emotional support, and meaningful connections.

At the same time, the Board made governance and structural changes to better support PIRS' work. And we completed a strategic planning process which resulted in a bold new vision, mission and strategic plan that charts a course for success. We are finding our voice and working on building back better with a restructured leadership team and by centering im/migrant women's voices through projects like the Building a Childcare System that Works for Immigrant and Refugee Women and involvement in consultations on Anti-Racism Data Legislation which has now become law.

With our updated Vision Mission and Values, we are broadening 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.

Funding for one significant project, Digital Literacy Education Project, came to an end in 2021. Yet, we have embedded the capacity for digital literacy education into all that we do. We are ever grateful to donors who donated in-kind food, supplies, and services at a value of \$244,098 and cash donations totaling \$193,857.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to the 72+ volunteers who contributed more than 2,500 hours in programs, on committees, and the Board. And we thank those who moved on to new adventures including Yasaman Bashir, Ida Reiman and Naiely Cabrera. You remain a part of the PIRS family.

With every new challenge, PIRS staff, board and volunteers found opportunities to do things better, to do more. Thanks to all of you we are moving forward stronger, together.



**Mariam Bouchoutrouch,  
Executive Director**



**Kathy Price,  
Board Chair**

# PIRS STRATEGIC PLAN 2022 - 2025

## Attract and retain qualified people who live our values

- Retain our people by supporting their growth and development
- Invest in our people
- Build the capacity of our Board and volunteers



## Strengthen PIRS brand

- Build PIRS' communication and marketing capacity
- Develop our brand to ensure consistent messaging across the organization
- Increase awareness of PIRS with stakeholders

## Deliver responsive programming

- Pursue research activities to achieve PIRS' vision and mission
- Cultivate our culture of evaluation
- Leverage partnerships to enhance outreach and bridging of immigrant and refugee women to key services



## Build a culture of abundance

- Improve PIRS infrastructure by investing in administrative and organizational systems
- Diversify our funding
- Steward PIRS' donor relationships

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Statements of Operations

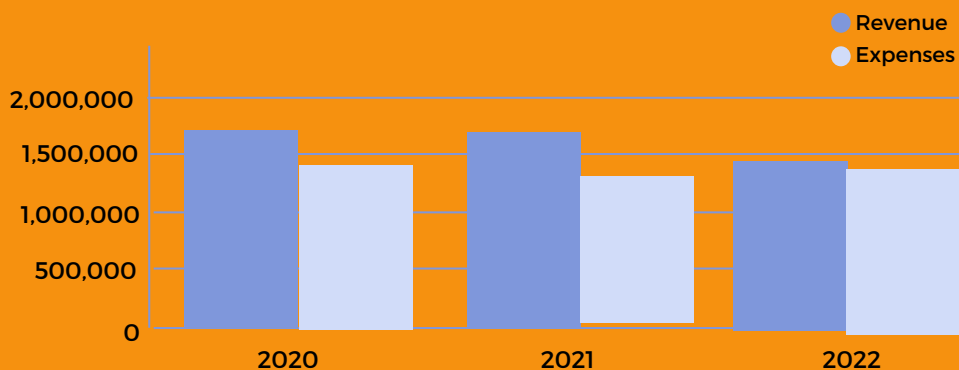
REVENUE	2022	2021
Grants earned	745,853	812,965
Donations - in-kind	244,098	256,954
Donations - cash	193,857	120,020
Other income	217,200	358,530
Interest and other	4,090	6,510
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,405,099</b>	<b>\$1,554,979</b>

EXPENSES	2022	2021
Salaries and benefits	942,592	796,867
Program Expenses	379,409	452,994
Office and other	48,532	55,733
Community relations	27,948	17,929
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,398,484</b>	<b>\$1,323,523</b>

Revenue over expenses for the year	\$6,615	\$231,455
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*\*Full Audited Statements Are Available Upon Request*



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Over the 2021-2022 programming year PIRS has continued to navigate the path of feminist pandemic recovery for and with immigrant and refugee women. Access to child care and food security came to the forefront of our work this year as two of the biggest barriers for women. As a result, the programs offered spaces for participants to come together and get the support they need, while fostering equity and engaging in meaningful advocacy.

In September 2021 we celebrated the return of our in person Community English Classes after 1.5 years of being online! Participants attended classes in Vancouver, New Westminister, Burnaby and Surrey, with two classes remaining accessible online. We are grateful to our Outreach team, Teachers and volunteer Teaching Assistants for supporting the students in this transition.

LEAD, Building Bridges and Immigrant Women Advisory Committee (IWAC) programs welcomed new cohorts of participants pursuing their personal and professional development goals. Thanks to funding from Vancouver Foundation, IWAC members were able to develop and implement important advocacy projects to address gender equity issues for immigrant and refugee women in key areas of anti-racism, child care, employment and mental health.

Our parenting and children's programming explored stress management for parents and kids (Mothergoose, Nobody's Perfect and Kids Have Stress Too), outdoor activities and making connections (Summer RUN), food and health literacy (Healthy Together and Kindergarten Transition: Healthy Together Program), 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 continue to support newcomer families as they build their new life in Canada.

# PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

This year we served 942 women and 374 children across 22 programs. The majority of our participants were racialized, coming from 42 countries of origin and speaking 23 different languages. This is a **112% total increase** from last year.

**73% of  
participants  
arrived as  
refugees**

**Top 10  
languages spoken:  
Spanish, Cantonese,  
Dari, Arabic, Mandarin,  
Tigrinya, Tagalog,  
Russian, Korean,  
Punjabi**



# ADDRESSING FOOD ACCESS



**3,679 food hampers distributed**

**448 people continue to be served weekly through emergency Food Hub**



**Partnered with South Vancouver Food Hub, Journey Home, New Westminster Food Bank, Muslim Food Bank & Greater Vancouver Food Bank**

# BETTER TOGETHER

We had 71 generous program volunteers who contributed 2471 hours of service within programs and as board and committee volunteers!



# EMPOWERING WOMEN TOGETHER



**836 hours of programming delivered**

**75 women participated in 4 leadership & pre-employment training programs**



**19 guest speakers and community partners shared leadership, advocacy and community engagement expertise with program participants**

# THE GEORGE SISTERS' BURSARY

## 2020-2021 Recipients



**Carolina Macias Gallardo**

**Awarded: \$2000**

A Building Bridges (2020) program graduate. She's currently a second year student of Airport Operations program in BCIT. The bursary helped her pay the tuition. She's also working a part-time job at YVR and is busier than ever!



**Mariam Salehizadeh**

**Awarded: \$1500**

The bursary enabled Maryam to buy a laptop equipped with JAWS accessibility software. Now she is able to attend computer classes at Vancouver Community College while also training for a world championship in Portugal coming in December. The computer training will increase her chances of getting meaningful employment.



**Zahra Chasempour**

**Awarded: \$800**

Zahra used the bursary to pay for the IELTS test, and a course titled "Physiotherapy Practice in Canada" from the University of Alberta. Presently she's quite busy preparing for the physiotherapy licensing exam scheduled on November 14th.

# Engaging in the Childcare Conversation

Access to affordable and culturally appropriate child care remains one of the biggest barriers to gender equity and pandemic recovery, especially for immigrant and refugee women. PIRS recognizes that without reliable child care mothers can't access employment and education. This is why our programs provide high-quality care and early education for children while mothers are in class. This year we are able to take it one step further.

Funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE), [Building A Child Care System That Works for Immigrant and Refugee Women](#) is a 2.5 years strategic initiative to foster equity in the child care system. As the federal government begins to set up a universal child care system and as the \$10aDay Child CareBC rolls out, PIRS wants immigrant and refugee women's voices to be heard and integrated in the system's design.

The first Childcare Leadership Group (CLG) cohort was held in the spring of 2022. Bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience, 12 participants identified intersectional barriers in the child care sector, conducted research and engaged in advocacy through storytelling for advocacy, media training, public speaking, and understanding the policy cycle. Advocacy projects focused on factors affecting child care waiting times, community approaches to child care, social inclusion, and re-defining quality child care. In addition, the project became part of the Wage Grid Advisory Committee from the Coalition of Childcare Advocates of BC.

**"I learned that if something needs to be changed, we can change it. At first, as an immigrant, I thought I should be silent, but now I know that we should talk about what needs to be changed. Through advocacy, we learned we can work for change. Felt better, I'm a piece of this community"** - CLG participant

# Substitute Child Care Staffing Solutions Research Study

In 2020, COVID-19 lockdown negatively impacted Pop-Up Child Care (PIRS' Social Enterprise) as in person events and programs were shut down. PIRS had to pivot. With funding from the City of Vancouver, PIRS tested and evaluated an innovative Child Care Substitute Staffing Solutions model to determine the need for and potential impact of a centralized substitute child care staffing service.

This research is timely due to expansion of child care services to accommodate the \$10aDay Child Care BC and a critical workforce shortages.

**215 children received  
2,300 hours of high-  
quality care and early  
education**



**10 partner  
childcare centres**



# KEY LEARNINGS

1. Current system is failing to provide quality, accessible child care to meet the needs of families. It also fails to meet the needs of child care educators for equitable pay, good working conditions or adequate opportunities for career development.
2. Collaborative approaches to substitute child care are few or have been unsuccessful. There is a high demand for a centralized substitute system. 98.3% of respondents require substitute staff to run their programs, 68.4% expressed interest in a centralized service.
3. Immigrant, refugee and non-permanent resident child care staff are significantly overrepresented amongst substitute child care providers, the lowest paid staff. Survey showed that they are paid less than the living wage by most child care providers.
4. The majority of child care credentialing programs and training do not address systemic barriers to access for immigrant and refugee women. This further prevents them from upgrading their certifications to be able to earn an equitable pay.
5. Current approaches to substitute child care do not meet the needs of Indigenous child care sites and training for substitutes lacks decolonizing lenses.



# Anti-Racism Data Legislation Consultations

In October 2021, PIRS became one of almost 70 organizations to facilitate community sessions to provide input on the [Anti-Racism Data Act](#). We facilitated 6 community sessions with program participants, volunteers, our Child Care and Outreach teams to gather input to share with legislators. In June 2022 the Anti-Racism Data Act became law.

Immigrant women who participated shared how they prefer to identify or represent themselves, their experiences of providing personal information to government agencies, and how they would like their data to be used so that the government can work towards advancing racial equity. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute and proud to have the voices of immigrant and refugee women inform decision-making in BC!

Special thanks to the Parliamentary Secretary for Anti-Racism Initiatives Rachna Singh, the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Branch, Ministry of Attorney General, B.C.'s Human Rights Commissioner, First Nations and Métis leadership, racialized communities and other British Columbians who work to build a better, more inclusive province for everybody.

Read report summary and download full report: <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/antiracism/community-led-engagement/>

# Food Security Research Project

Many immigrant and refugee women need additional support on how to handle, cook, and eat local foods that they have never encountered before. New foods also require new knowledge of nutritional values to optimize family health. Moreover, newly arriving families undergo a learning curve with purchasing and managing food in a new context and on a limited budget.

PIRS is excited to continue working with Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) to launch the Immigrant Women Food Policy Group to engage in further discussion and knowledge mobilization for policy change around this important issue, with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Vancouver Foundation,

This work builds on a study conducted with the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems (ISFS) at KPU to understand the needs and local food access among newcomers to Canada in the Metro Vancouver area.

To support families along the way we launched the Food Skills For Families program, where participants learn how to prepare and cook new and unfamiliar foods and to develop nutritional knowledge and budgeting skills.



# MORE HIGHLIGHTS

## Vancouver Half Marathon



On June 26th, 2022 PIRS participated in one of Vancouver's most popular running events, in support of the PIRS CRISIS FUND which was created in response to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine and Afghanistan and other conflicts globally. Team PIRS included a whopping 18 runners and 99 donors of all ages who helped us raise \$10,074.34. Thank-you to our staff, runners, and donors for their tremendous support. We look forward to another successful event next year!

## Online Auction: Afghan Women Fund



In 2021, PIRS saw a 150% increase in the number of women and children from Afghanistan seeking our services. In November 2021, we held an online auction to be able to meet this growing demand. Through the online auction we raised over \$3000 to help provide English language classes, culturally appropriate mental health support and accessible childcare. As the tensions continue to rise in Afghanistan, we anticipate hundreds of refugees to arrive in Canada, who will need our support. We will continue to work to support Afghan women and their children, as we aim to raise \$50,000 to help at least 50 families.

# PIRS CREATING CHANGE

## 2022 IRCC BC/Yukon Summit hosted by AMSSA

Earlier this year we got a chance to share our work with a larger audience at the [2022 IRCC BC/Yukon Summit](#) organized by AMSSA. It was a wonderful event full of connection and learning and we are thankful for the opportunity to present! In *Building Foundation for Feminist Recovery: Trauma-informed and Healing-centered Approach to Settlement Programming for Immigrant and Refugee Women*, we discussed emerging challenges facing immigrant and refugee women because of COVID-19 pandemic and the work PIRS has been doing to meet them using trauma-informed healing-centered approach that is based on the principles of connection, meaning and control.

[View slides](#) / [Watch the recording](#)

## Innovation Learning Lab - Who are we missing? by ABC Life Literacy Canada

In April 2022 PIRS was invited to participate in [Innovation Learning Lab](#) series hosted by ABC Life Literacy Canada. The panel discussion *Who are we missing?* focused on how to reduce barriers for diverse adult learners and make our learning communities more inclusive and accessible. We are thankful to the organizers and audience for an insightful discussion!

[Watch the recording](#)



*In 2021 PIRS won the Council of the Federation Literacy Award. Read more about it [here](#).*

# PARTICIPANT STORY

Sunnie joined PIRS in 2021, as a participant in our LEAD program. Through the program Sunnie was able to learn about Canadian culture and society, which allowed her to adapt into Canadian life, as she was a new immigrant at the time. However, it was also important for Sunnie, who is a mother of two children under the age of 5, to address problems around the childcare system.

Sunnie expressed concerns about the childcare system, and the difficulties around affordable and accessible childcare for working immigrant mothers. In response to this problem, Sunnie has been a part of two IWAC groups at PIRS, which are working on barriers to equitable child care and employment for immigrant women. In her childcare group, Sunnie, along with two other immigrant mothers work together to propose practical solutions to stakeholders.

Sunnie reminds us of the importance of having immigrant women who are the experts of their experiences at the table when discussing systemic changes: **“As immigrants or refugees, we do know the situation in BC. We know our needs and our children’s needs. We know the weaknesses of the system and problems childcare providers are facing. We hope that you give us a chance, so we can figure out practical solutions to establish more accessible and equitable childcare services.”**

In the short year since Sunnie joined PIRS, she has contributed so many ideas and engaged in projects that work towards a better society for immigrant women. She is a constant inspiration in our community.



# STAFF



**Amal Nsaif, Amira Chache, Anastasia Gaisenok, Anastasia Sapelnikova, Ann Asselstine, Arlene Ordonez, Azadeh Shakeri, Camila Torres, Cathy Xu, Deirdre Pfaff, Dilpreet Tatla, Erika Infante Pizarro, Elizabeth Montgomery, Faaiza Vakil, Feri Dehdar, Gabriela Cervantes, Gloria Mander, Gui Ling Sheng (Alisa), Guohong Xia (Anna), Honey Aujla, Holly Benna, Jae Yeon Jung (Jane), Jean Etienne de Dieu Tuyisenge, Laila Zamani, Leanna Inokoshi, Maliha Mayeed, Mariam Bouchoutrouch, Mariana Gassmann, Maria Pinchukov, Melody Yin Yun Wise, Naiely Cabrera, Natalie Siewert, Nazira Frotan, Ning Wang (Jennifer), Nongkran Ho, Noor Alrefaei, Qing Du (Chelsea), Rabia Kaihan, Razia Waziri, Ross Tremblay, Sanja Sladojevic, Sanzida Habib, Sawsan Hamie, Shogofa Alizada, Souad Ghomari, Steffi Burgi, Suad Al-Taie, Suzane Helal, Valerie Lai, Wai Kiu Chan (Vikki), Yuchen Li, Zahra Nikkhah, Zarminah Mohammad Ali, Zi Wei Zhang (Victoria)**

# VOLUNTEERS



Ada Sit, Alison Delaney, Andrea Hurtado, Anjali Siega, Ann Talbot, Basil Alabadilah, Bernadette Klassen, Christopher Bell, Claudia Orellana, Coleman Lai, Daniela Cardenas, Dianne Archer, Elizabeth Staples, Fiona Wu, Francis Melbridge, Gabriel Arevalo, Hamida Parvin, Hannah Lai, Herbert Shum, Howard Wong, Iris Toro, Jade Khotjak, Jandal Alrefaii Mohammad Najeeb, Jason Lau, Jennifer Chan, Jose Rodriguez, Karen Shum, Karmen Wong, Keefe Wong, Laura Bluementhal, Lisa Yiu, Mandeesh Atwal, Maryam Hashimi, May Yiu, Miriam Ortiz, Nalini Mud, Neil Bailey, Nicole Saldias, Noor Alrefaei, Noora Al-Otaibi, Nooshin Rad, Ourida Charbi, Perla Retiz, Hernandez, Peter Kam Tong Cheung, Philip Dick, Poonam Mahendru, Rabia Kaihan, Rebecca Delacruz-Bunderson, Romina Sobie, Ruddy Romero, Ruta Hidat, Samia Hamwi, Sarah Isabel Delaney, Shahlla Abawi, Shanice Yu, Simon Cheung, Soumaia Qari, Sudhakar Bakki, Suneel Kailey, Sylvia Dudeck, Tamara Mckenzie, Victor Ho



# BOARD MEMBERS



**Kathy Price**  
Chair

**Angela Heino**  
Vice Chair

**Melissa Guillergan**  
Treasurer

**Annie Aftab**  
Secretary

**Fatima K. Ahmed**  
Director

**Ida Reiman**  
Director

**Prerna Thaker**  
Director

**Sidra Mobin**  
Director

**Sonam Swarup**  
Director

# PARTNERS, KEY FUNDERS, FRIENDS

Partnerships allow us to extend our mission and do more with less. We thank ALL of our partners and collaborators and would like to acknowledge the following:

## Partners

- BC Council for Families
- BC Institute of Technology
- Cameray Child and Family Services
- Columbia College
- Decoda Literacy Solutions
- Greater Vancouver Food Bank
- Healthy Together Program
- Holy Trinity Cathedral
- Journey Home Burnaby
- New Westminster Food Bank
- Kids Have Stress Too Program
- Institute for Sustainable Food Systems, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- MOSAIC
- Muslim Food Bank
- Vancouver School Board

## 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

## Funders

- BC Centre for Disease Control
- BC Council for Families
- City of Vancouver
- City of New Westminster
- CLICK Foundation
- Edith Lando Foundation
- Elliot Family 2011 Foundation
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Government of Canada
- Greater Vancouver Food Bank
- Hamber Foundation
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Johansen Larsen Foundation
- MAZON Canada
- Metro Vancouver
- Province of BC
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Second Harvest
- SurreyCares Community Foundation
- TELUS Friendly Future Foundation
- The Federation of Community Social Services of BC
- Vancity Community Foundation
- Vancouver Foundation
- Women and Gender Equality Canada
- United Way of the Lower Mainland
- WorkBC

## **PIRS is active in many coalitions and networks, including the following:**

- Alliance for Gender Justice in Migration
- Alliance for Racialized, Refugee and Im/migrant Women
- AMSSA Regional Service Provider Network
- Burnaby Early Childhood Development Table
- Burnaby Immigration Partnership Table (BIPT)
- Burnaby Inter-Agency Council
- Burnaby Intercultural Planning Table
- Cedar Cottage Area Service Providers
- Childcare Wage Grid Advisory Committee
- Family Initiatives CAPC Coalition
- Feminist Deliver Organizing Committee
- First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition
- Multi Agency Partnership (MAP)
- New Westminster Immigration Table (WINS)
- South Fraser Refugee Readiness Team (RRT)
- South Fraser RRT - Food Justice Working Group
- Surrey Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)
- South Vancouver Area Service Providers
- South Vancouver Early Years Table
- South Van Neighbourhood House Food Hub Spoke
- Vancouver Immigration Partnership





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