

CVIMS Impact Report

2022 - 2023

Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS) is a non-profit settlement organization located in Nanaimo, BC, Canada. Established in 1979, CVIMS provides support to newcomers and refugees. Services include settlement, employment, family and language programs. We are client-driven and committed to being accessible and responsive to, as well as reflective of, our diverse community.

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Central Vancouver Island
Multicultural Society

MISSION STATEMENT

We are leaders in providing services to our community, with a focus on newcomers. We are committed to promoting the values of equity, diversity, inclusion and respect for all peoples.

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Mark Seneviratne
President



Yee Shi
Vice President



Gavin Lin
Treasurer



Shauna DeBodt
Secretary



Eun Jung (EJ) Jang
Member at Large



Melquiades Azcarraga
Member at Large



Arooj Shah
Member at Large



As I reflect on the year, I'm grateful for the chance to have taken on the President's role last September.

Let me begin by expressing my deepest appreciation to Gerald LaPorte, our former President, for his six years of devoted service. Through his leadership, CVIMS has transformed into the lively, all-inclusive organization it is today.

I feel privileged to be a part of a board that boasts such experienced and enthusiastic directors (Shauna DeBodt, Yee Shi, Gavin Lin, Arooj Shah, Eun Jung (EJ) Jang, and Melquiades Azcarraga) who bring their valuable expertise to CVIMS. Their contributions and counsel continue to propel CVIMS to new heights of success.

Our current Executive Director, Mikaela Torres, deserves recognition for her contributions to CVIMS. Her effort and dedication to securing funding, revising contracts, and upgrading the CVIMS offices is commendable.

CVIMS has achieved significant milestones this year. We've transferred RAP clients from temporary housing and obtained more funding, while our HIPPY program continues to thrive. Our outreach to a broader community has opened doors for cultural exchange and appreciation.

As President this year, I attended and spoke at significant CVIMS-sponsored events like the February Newcomers Welcome Event at the Vancouver Island Conference Center, and the March Newcomers Wellness Fair at Beban Park. During these events, I conversed with a range of individuals, including dignitaries, parliament members, city council members, and new immigrants. I discussed how CVIMS impacts people's lives and our settlement services, LINC classes, and employment services.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to every staff member and volunteer for your ongoing dedication and commitment to the CVIMS mission.

Mark Seneviratne
President



2022-2023 was a year of growth and opportunities for Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS). I would like to express my gratitude to our team at CVIMS for consistently providing quality service to our clients during the organization's significant expansion.

This year, CVIMS secured the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) contract, funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to provide support to Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) within the first 4-6 weeks of their arrival to Canada. This marks the first time for an organization in Nanaimo to be awarded this contract. To date, we have welcomed over 70 families in the community under this program. We have also secured a second office location to house our RAP team given the space limitations in our current office.

Some of the notable achievements during this year include:

- Assisting over 1934 clients from 99 countries who have made Nanaimo their new home.
- Partnering with the City of Nanaimo for the Newcomers Welcome Event to welcome CVIMS clients to Nanaimo this past February at the Vancouver Island Conference Centre. The event had over 190 participants in attendance including newcomers, community stakeholders and local dignitaries.
- Hosting CVIMS' Newcomers Wellness Fair with over 220 participants and 28 community vendors.
- Organizational expansion including 7 new Team Leads to support Management as well as the substantial growth of CVIMS from 27 staff members to almost 50.

With the upcoming call for proposals for both provincial and federal funding, the CVIMS team is hard at work preparing and brainstorming ideas on how to further improve our programs and services. We thank you for your continuous support as we further expand and enhance the work that we do for newcomers and refugees in our community.

Mikaela Torres
Executive Director



Our Clients

Top 5 Countries of Origin

(April 2022 - March 2023)



Ukraine

18%



China

13%



India

10%



Syria

9%



Philippines

6%



Others

44%



Total Clients

1,934



Top 5 Languages Spoken

(April 2022 - March 2023)



Hindi



Spanish



Mandarin



Arabic



Ukrainian & Russian

Year at a Glance

(April 2022 - March 2023)



- 825 clients accessed SWIS services
- 213 clients completed a Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Assessment
- 201 clients enrolled in Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes
- 172 clients benefited from the Work BC and BCSIS programs for employment support
- 79 children attended our Childminding program
- 48 families were visited weekly by our Home Visitors with the HIPPY program
- 20 clients accessed specialized employment support via the Career Paths program

A total of 278 group activities were delivered both on-site and out in the community.





CVIMS and the Settlement Journey



Wildwood Ecoforest, Aug. 2022

SETTLING *in Nanaimo*

Helping Newcomers settle in Nanaimo, Ladysmith and Parkville areas is the main focus of our Client Services Team. We continue to offer blended services to best accommodate our client's diverse needs.

We provide Orientation to Canada Workshops exploring topics like; Healthcare, Education, Law & Justice, Family Law, Money & Finance, Residential Tenancy Law.

To ease the connection of newcomers to our local community, we organized events like the Waterfront Scavenger

Hunt, Indigenous Peoples Day, Kite Making, Community Green Day, Community Spooky Halloween, Winter Driving, Saving money with BC Hydro, and much more.

Our Settlement Workers, Intake Worker and Settlement and Integration Specialist work together to provide quality service to all our local newcomers.

To assist Newcomers with their job search efforts, client accessed our programs: Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants, WorkBC and BCSIS Employment Services.



Elder Randy, Sept. 2022



Job Fair, Oct. 2022

An Employment Overview

We had an increase in Ukrainians in our community due to the recent war. These clients were accepted to the WorkBC program for their job search needs.

We saw many clients finding employment while working on their foreign credentialing to return to their occupations

here in Canada.

Through our partnership with the Immigrant Employment Council of BC client participated in the ASCEND (Applied Skills Curriculum to Empower Newcomers Development) program to develop new partnerships with employers in the community.



Nanaimo Night Market, Aug. 2022

Community Connections

Community Connections team has worked on strengthening partnerships through collaborations with community partners and participations at community events. Through our partnerships, this year, clients had the opportunity to participate in:

- Bikes for Kids (Brain Injury Society)
- Healthy Food Kits (Nanaimo Food Share)
- Essential Kits for Refugees (Wallace Pharmacy)
- Holiday Market at The Mews
- Newcomer Wellness Fair
- Nanaimo Newcomer Welcome Event

LANGUAGE *is key*

CVIMS caters to various language service needs as CVIMS functions as a language assessment centre in addition to a referral hub. Thanks to funding from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), we offer eligible newcomers free English language assessment and training through the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program. Eligible clients undergo the Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) to determine their language class placement level. To provide the best support to our students, we offer free childcare services for children aged 6 months to 5 years and transportation support for those in need.

Clients unable to attend regular classes for various reasons were referred to the LINC Home Study (LHS) program, which offers distance learning language training allowing students to learn from home using an online learning management system.

This year, we worked with three certified CLBPT assessors and 12 instructors, including a Head Instructor and Portfolio Based Language Assessment (PBLA) lead instructor, to serve 226 students across levels 1 to 7. In addition to on-site classes, we collaborated with one of the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) branches to offer evening classes as an alternative language learning option for those with scheduling conflicts.

The LINC program celebrated another year of success, with the survey indicating that more than 97% of students responded that they were satisfied with the LINC classes. As a vital hub for immigrant settlement and integration services, we are steadfast in our commitment to providing the most adequate language support to meet the diverse needs of our clients and ensure their seamless and successful transition into their new lives in Canada.



Language Instruction to Newcomers to Canada - LINC, 2022

CVIMS in local events

CVIMS was present in several community events throughout this past year:

- Nanaimo Night Market
- RockVIU
- Woodgrove community booth
- Business Expo with Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
- National Day of Truth and Reconciliation at Stadium District
- CVIMS' Newcomer Job Fair

Future plans include a focus on relationships with the Indigenous communities, other marginalized communities and partnerships that would improve the quality of experience for our clients.





CVIMS and the Settlement Journey

CHILDREN & youth

In Spring 2022, the CVIMS Childminding program fully resumed services, primarily catering to clients attending LINC classes. Our team prioritized the well-being and belonging of families and their children aged 6 months to 12 years, supporting a total of 56 children. We also formed partnerships with various early learning stakeholders to expand our care and address the unique needs of the families we serve.:

- Immigrant Parents as Literacy Supports (IPALS) program with the Central Vancouver Island Literacy.
- Professional Development with the Early Childhood Pedagogist Rachel Philips.
- Supporting Early Year Transitions to Kindergarten with support from the School District 68 (SD68).

Guided by the British Columbia Early Childhood Framework, we strive to provide culturally responsive care and support to our diverse families.

This year, the Settlement Worker in Schools (SWIS) offered group sessions at high schools to assist older students with gaining credits for their academic pursuits. Recognizing the unique needs of these students, we investigated British Columbia Curriculum and identified themes that we could support, with diversity being one of them. The team prepared the materials and tools that would help the students create a Diversity mural.

By providing students with the opportunity to express themselves artistically and explore themes that resonate with their experiences, they became empowered to embrace their cultural identities while fostering an environment that celebrates understanding and diversity.

SWIS' day camps offered safe, inclusive, and enjoyable activities. It provided newcomer youth the opportunity to engage in educational, recreational, and culturally diverse experiences, fostering connections with their peers and the broader community.



Childminding Program, Jan. 2022

"When I heard about participating in SEY2KT, I felt overwhelmed ... It was one of the biggest events for me since I moved to Canada ... Every time I joined the meeting, my confidence got stronger and stronger ... I was scared to join family programs because of the language barrier but I feel more comfortable joining activities now ... The biggest part for me was getting a big confidence as a newcomer parent after all."

- Anonymous Parent

HIPPY a program for families

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) offers newcomer parents an opportunity to prepare their children to enter kindergarten. Home Visitors deliver the curriculum to the parents in their homes, for thirty weeks, and the parents teach their children.

Forty-eight parents participated this program year who emigrated from China, India, Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam, Japan, South Africa, Ukraine, Egypt, Afghanistan and Thailand. The parents were dedicated and committed to teach their children regardless personal struggles, settlement issues, time constraints, job demands, etc.

The parents had the opportunity to connect with other parents, share personal experiences and learn about community resources through the monthly Group Meetings. Several community partners presented on topics such as Positive Parenting,

Dental Hygiene, Computer/ Mail/ Telephone Fraud and Early Years Education.

This fiscal year, a parent and a Home Visitor were invited to share their experience of the HIPPY program at the Mothers Matter Conference in April. In September, HIPPY was fortunate to receive funding from the BC government to offer the program to parents with Student Visas, Naturalized Canadian Citizenships and Work Permits which includes CUAET, Refugee Claimants, International Mobility Workers.

Many parents shared they were excited and pleased with the abilities and skills their children gained through HIPPY.

"My daughter is fully ready for elementary school, and I am getting more confident with parenting". KW



HIPPY Activity, Feb. 2022

"I am so grateful for the HIPPY program! My family and I attended with our two children and have been an incredible resource for us. Thanks to HIPPY, I feel more confident and empowered in my role as both a parent and a teacher. I'm grateful for this program and its positive impact on my family. Highly recommend! "

- MI



HIPPY Parents Gathering, Mar. 2022



Showcasing Diversity through Art, May 2022



CVIMS and the Settlement Journey

RESETTLEMENT *Assistance Program*



RAP & client volunteers on Move-in Day, Nov. 2022

The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) is a vital initiative aimed at supporting the successful integration and resettlement of government-assisted refugees (GARs). Through a range of comprehensive services, the program provides essential support to refugees as they rebuild their lives in their new communities. Immediate and essential services are delivered by CVIMS, generally within the first 4-6 weeks of a newcomer's arrival in Canada

The program served a total of 72 Government-Assisted refugee clients. This number exceeds our initial target of 50 clients a year.

With the implementation of key activities, and the dedication of our staff and stakeholders, we have been able to positively impact the lives of numerous refugees in our community. We remain committed to continuously improving our services and creating new opportunities for the successful integration of our clients.



RAP, Oct. 2022



Wallace Pharmacy, Jul. 2022

A client-centered environment

The team is the first point of contact with Government-Assisted Refugees as they arrive in their new community. From the airport to their first home, the team:

- Welcomes newcomers at the airport or final destination in Canada

- Arranges temporary accommodation
- Provides basic orientation to Canada, life skills training and financial orientation
- Hands on assistance with securing permanent accommodation
- Referrals to other settlement programs, and/or community resources.

A big THANK YOU to local business for working with us to support our RAP clients:

- Re/Max Property Management
- 460 Property Management
- Devon Properties
- Saywell Contracting LTD
- Nexus Primary Care clinic
- Wallace Pharmacy (PharmaChoice)
- Nanaimo Division of Family Practice
- Scotiabank

The RAP program would not be able to succeed without partnership and collaboration from our community members, businesses and stakeholders in Nanaimo.

Newcomer GARs are able to smoothly transition to their new homes due to the support and warm welcome they continue to receive.

DIGITAL LITERACY *& Seniors*

Senior newcomers face unique challenges when they arrive in Canada. Many do not have English language skills to learn about and engage with the community in which they now live, access services, or meet others of their age. As a result, many newcomer seniors become isolated.

CVIMS recognizes the barriers that newcomer seniors face.

This program was designed to assist senior newcomers in developing digital literacy skills they need to address social isolation and connect with family, friends, and the community, thereby enhancing their independence and well-being.

Classes provided participants with educational and social experiences focusing on digital skills to access information and services and communicate with others. We delivered the classes in partnership

with Vancouver Island Regional Library whom provided and shared their beautiful space. The program utilized advisory committee made up mostly of newcomers 55+ to help inform class topic, activities, structure & duration.

There were two cohorts of 24 participants in total including seniors' volunteers; with vast majority of age 65+.

The classes ran six weeks for each cohort, with two classes/week, two hours/class. Participants benefitted from the experiences of other newcomers and gained knowledge and skills that were suited to their needs. They also became aware of community resources relevant to them.

All participants showed improved ability and good confidence in digital skills.



Senior Newcomer Program, Sept. 2022



Senior Newcomer Program graduation day, Sept. 2022



Newcomer Events



Wellness Fair

- 250 in people in attendance
- 28 estimated exhibitors/vendors
- 22 CVIMS Staff (plus 5 interpreters)



With the increasing number of newcomers and refugees in our community, we envisioned an event such as a Wellness Fair that would connect newcomers to community wellness and healthcare providers.

This event provided an opportunity for attendees to learn more about various health providers and services that would assist in their transition to their new community.



CVIMS' Newcomer Job Fair, June 2022

2022 Job Fair

In June 2022, CVIMS hosted the first Newcomer Job Fair since 2018. With over 50 clients in attendance and 16 employers participating, the fair provided an opportunity to participants to network, engage and find employment opportunities in the community.

The fair was the perfect opportunity to strengthen our bonds with local employers, while opening our doors to the local community.



City of Nanaimo Welcomes Newcomers

City of Nanaimo has re-introduced the Newcomers Welcome Event, after a pause since 2020. This event provides an opportunity for newcomers to Nanaimo to meet and connect with politicians and community leaders as well as bring the community together to celebrate diversity and inclusion. 2022 had over 190 participants in attendance including newcomers, community stakeholders and local dignitaries.

Citizenship Test Preparation Classes

CVIMS' Canadian Citizenship Test Preparation curriculum is drawn from the content of the official study guide "Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship" and its 7 main topics (Rights and responsibilities of citizenship, history, geography, economy, government, laws and symbols). The content of each lesson is reinforced by using support resources like videos, articles, and mock tests.

In order to meet our clients' needs, as well as expectations in terms of availability, last fiscal year we offered our classes in blended (July 2022) and on-line (February 2023) formats. In total, 10 client completed the course, and 2 clients applied for citizenship, and were successful.





2022-2023 Financials

Thank you for Your Support!



Revenue	2021-2022	2022-2023
Federal Funding	\$1,369,298.73	\$2,355,480.00
Provincial Funding	\$190,056.42	\$308,821.00
Other Funding	\$197,755.00	\$183,462.00
Grants	\$90,693.45	\$35,902.00
Fee For Services, Donations, Other Income	\$107,203.32	\$65,081.00
Total Revenue	\$1,955,006.92	\$2,948,746.00



Expenses	2021-2022	2022-2023
Wages and Benefits	\$1,491,367.00	\$1,891,250.00
Direct Program Expenses	\$171,395.00	\$470,456.00
Office and General Expenses	\$394,709.00	\$414,354.00
Total Expenses	\$2,057,471.00	\$2,776,060.00



CVIMS would like to express our deep gratitude to community members and stakeholders who continuously support us in the work that we do. It is through your generous donations and valuable time that we are able to continue to help newcomers in the community.



HIPPY children fundraising, Oct. 2022

Thank You



TD Bank, Mar. 2023

