

2019 Annual General Report

Mission: Our mission is to create a platform for local community members to strengthen intercultural connections through innovative programming promoting literary and other arts.

- To build awareness, interest and participation of people from all cultures in literary arts and other arts whilst increasing community cohesion
- To offer opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to develop their skills and interest in language and literary arts.
- To play a prominent role in offering innovative programs related to language, literacy and literary arts among local communities in BC

Projects and Events in 2019



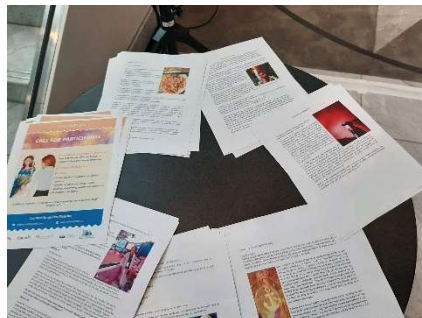
Culture Chats organized an Intercultural Community Arts Event on with support from the Burnaby Neighbourhood House and funding from City of Burnaby and the Government of Canada. other local community partners. About 200 people attended the event. Attendees included families, seniors, and youngsters. The Maywood Community School brought their students for this event. It served as a platform for local community artists (from over 20 different nationalities) to showcase their arts and handicrafts and build capacity in planning children's' activities for the visiting classes from the community school in the neighbourhood. Some multicultural dance and song performances were also presented. We also had an Eritrean Tea Ceremony demonstration.





Culture Chats offered South Asian Dance workshops over the summer months in July and August culminating with a presentation on Sep 1st. The participants performed at a cultural community event known as 'Namaste Canada', held at the Michael J Fox theatre. The workshops were based on shared learning of folk dances from India.

Writing workshops were organized in three phases through the year as part of the Community Reporting, Story writing and Research project. Community stories and articles were produced by participating women in these workshops funded by Vancity, Government of BC and the Government of Canada. The first set of workshops were conducted in Jan/Feb and a presentation of the stories was organized at the local library in March to mark the occasion of Women's Day. A second phase of workshops was organized in June/July and again for six weeks in September/October. Another readings event was organized on October 19 to share the work created in these workshops. The women's writing group was invited to the Winter Celebrations at New Westminster to present readings on Dec 22nd. This program has been successful and further writing workshops will be organized in Jan/Feb 2020 as some of the funding is available till end of March 2020. Alongside the writing a community research has been undertaken as part of this project and this research will continue also in 2020.



The research explores how multiculturalism is experienced in the community and the multicultural community stories developed during the workshops also reflect these experiences.

In September this year we facilitated again a discussion on engaging community through arts and cultural activities. This conversation was part of the '[On the Table](#)' initiative of the Vancouver Foundation. This small event was free and open to all held at the New Westminster Library. Culture Chats participated in the Burnaby Festival of Learning as well as the New Westminster Music by River Festival offering multicultural arts and craft workshops for children.

Operations

Culture Chats registered 30 members for the 2019 annual year. We served over 100 clients through our arts and craft events and workshops and our writing workshops and dance workshops. Our annual revenue amounted to \$14,356.60 and our annual expenditure amounted to \$13,014.68. Some of the remaining funds are restricted for our writing project and cash balance is \$75.59. Our annual AGM was held on Dec 21 2019

Culture Chats Team

Our work is supported by many volunteering hours. Our Directors Asmita Lawrence, Fiona Stevenson, Lawrence Francois have dedicated many volunteer hours to further the strategic vision and work of Culture Chats. Another five or six community members have worked with us this year in various activities such as event organization, art work development, workshop coordination and advisory support. We would gratefully like to acknowledge the work of Giselle Hao-Palanca, Shihori Scott Moncrief, Joy Vertucio Jung, Zelly Teferra, Rachel Stenberg, Craita Isbasescu and many others. We have invited these active volunteers to be part of our Advisory Committee. A HR Policy and a Mandate for the workings of the Advisory Committee inform our operations. These can be made available upon request to our members.

Our Founding Director Fiona Stevenson will be stepping down in 2020 from her role as Director at Culture Chats. We thank her for all her support in guiding Culture Chats through this period. Her support has been invaluable. Oana Capota and Mavis Gevido will be joining the Board of Directors.



We would also like to thank the network of partners who have provided us with invaluable support for our work. We express heartfelt thanks to Kimberly Barwich, Rachel Ridley, Ana Maria Bustamente, Branka, Vlastic, Miriam Matejova, Effie Klein and Maylen Crespo. We aim to secure more funding and expand our volunteer base and membership for next year. Our goal is to consolidate our existing program of activities and continue to initiate innovative projects. Culture Chats is expanding. We are very grateful for the support of our partners and sponsors.