

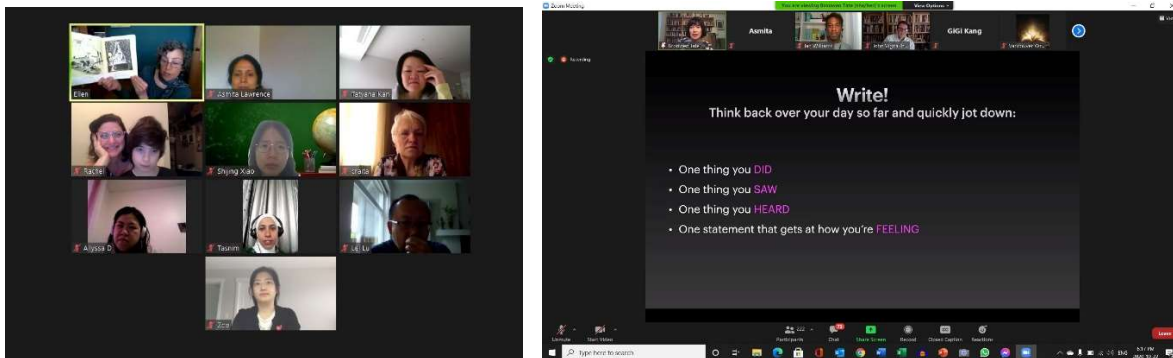
2020 Annual General Report

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

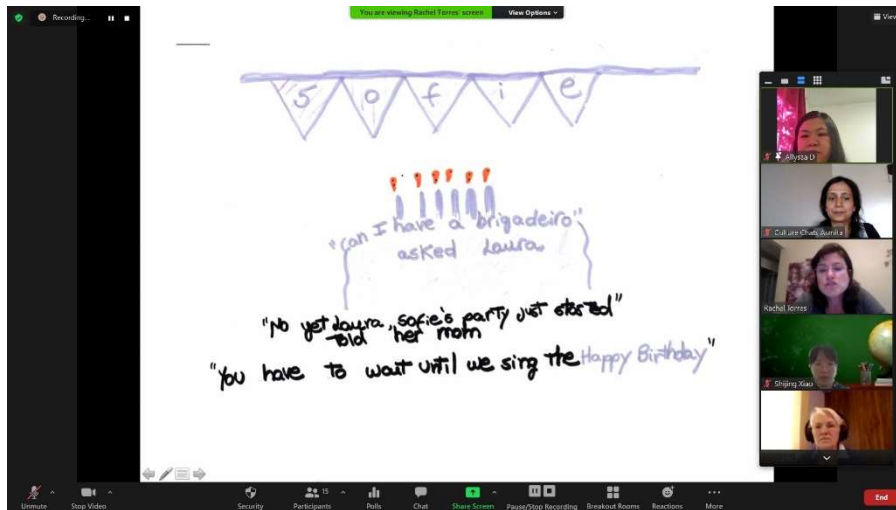
- To build awareness, interest and participation of people from all cultures in literary arts and other arts whilst increasing community cohesion
- To offer opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to develop their skills and interest in language and literary arts.
- To play a prominent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

Programs and Events in 2020

Writing Program



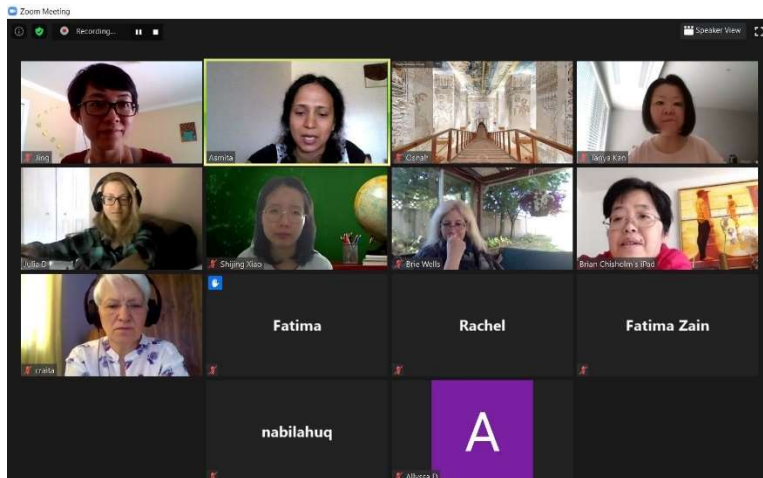
Culture Chats received funding from IRCC to conduct writing workshops and to organize reading events to share the stories written by participants. About 15 writing workshops were conducted between May 2020 and August 2020. Two online sharing events were organized on Oct 24 and Nov 7. Three community events were attended at the Word Vancouver Festival on Sep 26 and one at the Vancouver Writers Festival on Oct 22. Readers also participated in a multicultural celebration organized by CultureChats on Nov 21 and a meetup group was created to promote this online event. The Program was conducted online due to the pandemic. Funding from IRCC amounting to \$13,283.15 was allocated between from April 2020 to Dec 2020. The Program will be completed by end of March 2021. Written stories of the participants will be published, and a community booklet has been produced to share the articles written by the participants during the program. This is available on the [Culture Chats Website on the Projects Page](#).



Prior to this, in the first quarter of 2020, CultureChats organized writing workshops with a \$2000 grant from Canada Post. These were organized at the Burnaby Neighbourhood House before Covid. The in-kind support of the Burnaby Neighbourhood House is gratefully acknowledged. This writing workshops were successful, and the stories produced by participants are available here: https://culturechats.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CultureChats_Childrens_Stories.pdf

Research Project in partnership with a Researcher from SFU

As part of a MITACS funded research project commenced in September 2019, Culture Chats received a funding of \$500. Writing workshops were organized in three phases through the year 2019 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 in 2019 amounting to \$11,000. The first set of workshops were conducted in Jan/Feb 2019 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, 2019.



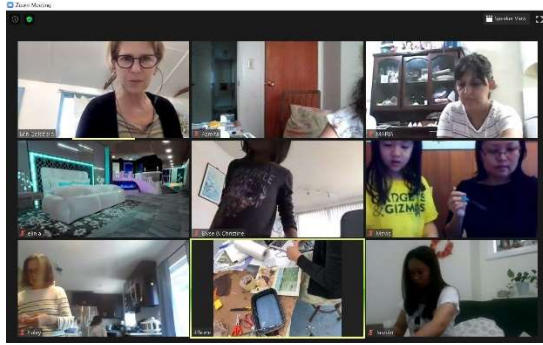
The remainder of the funding obtained for the community writing and research project started in 2019 amounting to about \$1266 was spent to complete this project by end of March 2020. The work of Culture Chats in this project was featured on March 14 in a TV show on Shaw Multicultural called Close Look. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgoRh3mW6dY>

Alongside the writing, qualitative research was been undertaken as part of this project and this research was completed in summer 2020. The findings were presented in a zoom session on August 01, 2020 and all the participants to various writing programs of Culture Chats were invited for this session. Mitacs provided funding to the researchers i.e., Asmita Lawrence (on behalf of Culture Chats) received \$2,000 and Jing Li (from SFU) received \$5,000 from Mitacs as well as \$5250 from the Culture Chats Grant funding. The research report and writings from the project are available on this website: <http://culturechats.org/writings/>

The support and contribution of our instructor Gabrielle Wells, researcher Dr. Jing Li and Guide Dr. Suzanne Smythe and Dr. Cindy Xin is gratefully acknowledged.

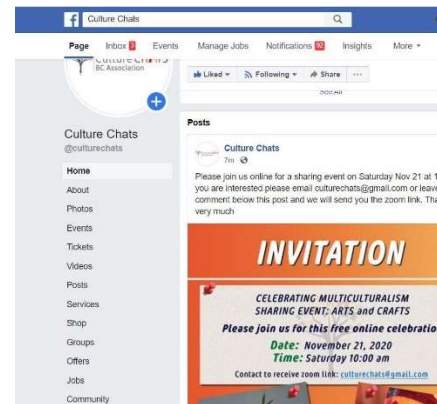
Art and Craft Workshops

Culture Chats received a grant of \$2000 from the City of New Westminster for organizing arts and crafts workshops facilitated by local artists. The workshops invited instructors to introduce multicultural arts. Recycled or upcycled materials were used where possible in creating the crafts. Workshops were conducted over eight weeks in Fall 2020. The images of their works shared by participants were shared on the [Culture Chats Facebook Page](#). The support of other local community partners such as the Arts Council of New Westminster is gratefully acknowledged in promoting the program as well as support provided in designing some of the workshops. A further \$300 was provided by the Arts Council of New West for web promotions. The grant money is also allocated to create a web art gallery to showcase the works from this project and future Culture Chats art projects.



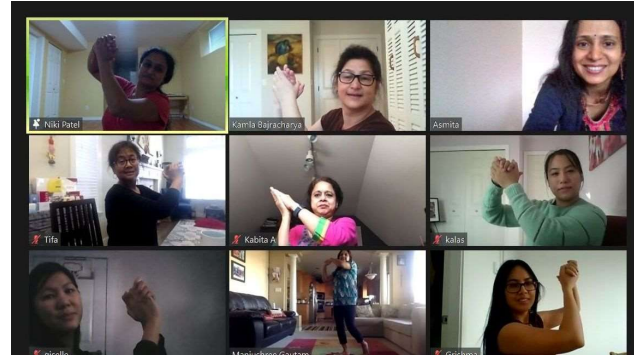
Multicultural Celebration and Sharing Event

A final sharing was organized for November 21st online. This was part of a larger multicultural celebration that was organized by Culture Chats with a grant of \$700 from Heritage Canada. (This event was originally planned for June 27 but it was postponed to Nov 21 due to the pandemic). BC celebrates multiculturalism week in the third week of November. This event served as a platform for local community artists from diverse cultural backgrounds to demonstrate their arts and participants shared with each other their experience of the workshops and their crafts created as part of the program. Some readings by participants from the Culture Chats Writing Program were also organized at this event. It brought together people from diverse cultures to celebrate this community event online.



Multicultural Dance Workshops

Culture Chats offered South Asian Dance workshops over the months of October, November and December. The participants learnt dance from few professional instructors including Niki Patel and Sujit Vaidya. The workshops were based on the theme of dances from India. Accessories were provided to the participants and all the workshops had to be conducted on zoom due to the pandemic. This project was funded by a grant of \$1,250 from the City of Surrey. A further \$400 was obtained from the Neighbourhood Small Grants. The support from Arts Council of Surrey is also acknowledged.



Operations

Culture Chats benefits from counsel and support of Directors Lawrence Francois, Mavis Gevido and Oana Capota. We served over 50 clients through our arts and craft events and workshops and our writing workshops and dance workshops. The online publishing of participants' works reached a much wider audience online. Our annual revenue amounted to \$31303.33 and our annual expenditure amounted to \$23,366.42 with the bulk of the remaining funds restricted for the IRCC project to be completed by March 2021 or other projects and a balance of \$799.68 CAD. Our annual AGM was held on Dec 27, 2020.

Culture Chats Team

Our work is supported by many volunteering hours. Our Directors have dedicated time to further the strategic vision and work of Culture Chats.



One of the Directors Asmita Lawrence also serves the role of ED, managing the programs and operations of Culture Chats. She is responsible for making funding applications, communication with stakeholders, program design and development as well as coordination of the all the activities of Culture Chats through the year. Another five or six community members have worked with us this year in various activities such as event organization, artwork development, workshop coordination and advisory support. Thank you to Mr. Galo. We would gratefully like to acknowledge the work of Maria Vargas, Giselle Hao-Palanca, Ranjita Das Chaudhary, 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.

Partners

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 Gabrielle Wells, Kimberly Barwich, Rachel Ridley, Tara Flynn, Branka Vlastic, Stephen O'Shea, Zahida Rahemtulla, Ellen Schwartz, Claire Lordon and many others. 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 grateful for the support of our partners and sponsors.