

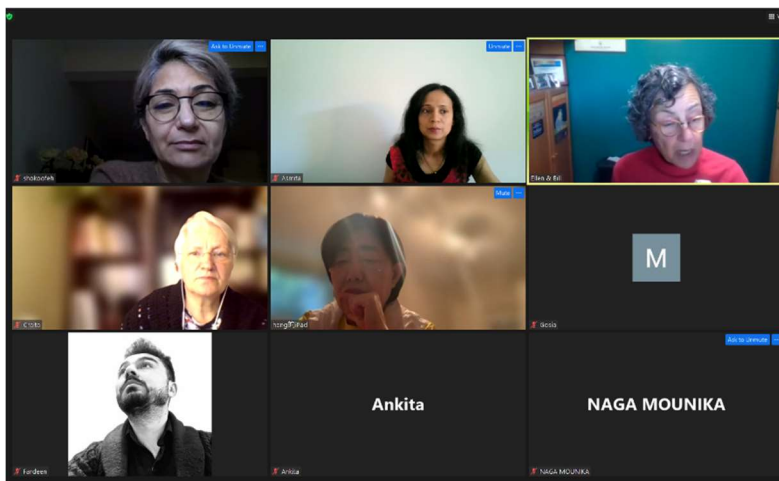
## 2023 Annual General Report

**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 2023

#### Writing Program



Culture Chats received funding from IRCC to conduct writing workshops and to organize reading events to share the stories written by participants. Throughout Summer starting end of May 2023 writing workshops were conducted. This year digital content development workshops were also planned with the help of Seymour Digital Media. One sharing event was organized on Nov 13. Our storysharing event was a very grand success. It was a very multicultural event. The workshops were conducted online, and the reading events were organized in person. We were fortunate to receive additional funding for digital content development workshops from IRCC. We worked with professional instructors and the participants benefited from learning language development skills, online content development skills and the networking during the workshops and the sharing event.

Culture Chats will also participate the Stride Festival in Feb 2024 and participants of our writing program will get an opportunity to read their published stories to children and families at the McGill Library, Burnaby.

The Program will be completed by end of March 2024. Written stories of the participants will be published in a booklet. Culture Chats has actively connected with community organizations with a view to organize suitable community engagement opportunities from these partnerships...



### Multicultural Storytelling and Craft Event

Culture Chats organized a storytelling and craft event on Nov 13. Culture Chats organized storytelling, multicultural dances, live music performances and invited children to participate in various activities. Our community was enthusiastically participating with about eighty to hundred people in attendance. We had Literacy Now as a partner who offered free books and engaged children. There were also other multicultural activities for children including portrait making and Christmas crafts by the Edmonds Youth Group.





Edmonds Youth Group

### Anti Racism and BC Statistics Information Session

Culture Chats organized two information and dialogue sessions on September 16 and September 17. This was intended to raise awareness particularly among the South Asian Community regarding the themes of AntiRacism and Multiculturalism. Further we invited attendees to fill out survey forms for BC Statistics and informed them about the ongoing work related to collection of data and legislative progress for AntiRacism. Both sessions were very well attended and received.





### Surrey Community Dance Workshops

Dance workshops were conducted in Surrey through summer 2023. Folk dances were introduced to participants by professional instructors Dale Adams and Palak Dhiman. Every year Culture Chats organized about eight weeks of dance workshops through July and August.



Participants worked on a group choreography and presented it at the Bell Performing Arts at a community event on September 3. This was a wonderful experience for the dance workshop participants and they came together to create a new choreography based on the workshops. It

was an opportunity to engage collectively in the creative process and also make connections with each other in a multicultural setting during the project.

### Storymaking project for children and cookbook project

United Way of LowerMainland provided two grants in April and June 2023. We conducted a workshop for children in April that introduced the art of story making with the help of words and craft at the Tommy Douglas Library. This was a very fun project for the children and their creative stories amazed the audience during the sharing that was done at the end of the event. Culture Chats also created a story cookbook over June and July 2023. This was a unique cooking project at the Edmonds School and Culture Chats conducted a complimentary project to record the stories of the cooks and also include their recipes to create a unique cook book. There was a final presentation on June 17 2023 and the cook book was shared with all the cooks, their families and their friends.



## Burnaby Festival of Learning

Culture Chats organized a multicultural music event in May 2023 as part of the Burnaby Festival of Learning. Live music and singing by local community artists from different musical traditions including Turkish, Indian, Chinese, Romanian, Peruvian and Filipino made this a very multicultural event. It was very well appreciated and rated among the top four events at the Burnaby Festival of Learning.



## Art and Craft Workshops in New Westminister

In February and March this year we conducted art and craft workshops for the community in New Westminister with a sharing event on March 24. The artists participated in the New West Arts Council display and exhibition at the New West Quay in June 2023.



## 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. We have invited another member of the community to join our board. Wen Chi has been a long supporter of Culture Chats and she has also been volunteering with our society for the past two years on an informal basis. She will be appointed as Director and her term commences on Jan 01 2024. She will serve the role of Treasurer. Asmita Lawrence will continue to serve in the role of Program Director, managing the programs and operations of Culture Chats. She is responsible for making funding applications, program design and development for Culture Chats through the year. She had been employed as an independent contractor through 2023 to work in Planning, Admin work & Organization support, Marketing, PR and Communications, Coordination & Facilitation for events and workshops, Outreach work to experts, professionals, speakers, partners, stakeholders. She will continue to do this work in 2024.

## Operations

Culture Chats benefits from counsel and support of Directors Craita Isbasescu, Lawrence Francois, Shokoofeh Mostofi and Asmita Lawrence also serves as the Program Director. Wen Chi will be joining as Director from 2024 January. We have served over hundred clients in this year through our arts and craft events and workshops and our writing program and various multicultural events. The presentations and online publishing of participants' works reached a much wider audience. Our annual revenue amounted to \$ \$44,605, and our annual expenditure amounted to about \$43,319. Our annual AGM was held on Dec 23 2023

Culture Chats has further undertaken some strategic HR support from a consulting group and they will provide an updated HR policy as well as other recommendations in January 2024. Based on these recommendations, the internal policies of Culture Chats are likely to be updated. We would gratefully like to acknowledge the work of Advisory committee members Maria, Shruthi and Touran. Several community members have worked with us this year in various activities such as event organization, artwork development, workshop coordination thus extending key voluntary support including Christine Hui, Robin Sheriland, Wen Chi. We are thankful for collaborations with various community partners including Burnaby Neighbourhood House, BIPT, Literacy Now and Burnaby Festival of Learning. We are thankful for support from Surrey Board of Trade, New West Arts Council and AMSSA.

Thank You