



2021/22

**ANNUAL
REPORT**





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ABOUT US

VIRCS is a non-profit organization founded in 1989 by three former refugees. VIRCS serves an average of 3000 newcomers (immigrants, refugees, and new Canadian citizens) annually via settlement, resettlement, and adaption services.

VIRCS is governed by a Board of Directors and is made up of over 50 employees across 10 programs.

MISSION

To assist in the settlement and adjustment of newcomers in Canada, and to provide services designed to increase participation in Canadian society by assisting the newcomer to overcome barriers.

INNOVATION

VIRCS is a part of the Social Innovation Centre, a non-profit society that owns a building housing other non-profits, including VIRCS, to share administrative supports, collaborative space, and a trauma-informed daycare.

VIRCS acknowledges and respects the ləkʷəŋən peoples on whose traditional territory the organization sits and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



A Brief History



1989

The Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS) is founded by three former refugees (Viet, Hereity, and Carlos) as a result of two generous donations from the Catholic Foundation of Victoria and Saint John the Divine Anglican Parish.



1994

5 years after opening its doors, VIRCS is a pillar in the community. The centre receives federal and provincial funding allowing it to establish its Settlement Program, introduce an ESL class (2900 attendees in the first year) and citizenship preparation classes. VIRCS also implements a new federally-funded Settlement Program to assist African newcomers.



1996

VIRCS connects to the internet! This enables counselors to find more job openings, access employment opportunities, access training, and connect clients to community services. VIRCS organizes a 3-day Latin Music festival that brings in 600 attendees and VIRCS receives provincial funding to produce its TV show, 'Ethnivision', for Shaw Cable.



2000

By 2000, the demand for settlement services grows immensely and the number of clients served by VIRCS increases by an average of 20% annually, while inquiries rise by 40% to an incredible 50% in 2002. Staffing increases to 20 employees.



2005

In 2005, VIRCS completes "First Step", a multi-year project funded by Canadian Heritage to promote multiculturalism and anti-racism among children. VIRCS distributes 10,000 children's books and 5,000 parents' books to schools and community organizations.



2010

By 2010, VIRCS expands to include a program focused specifically on newcomer children and youth (Enable, 2006), a cultural bridging host program, and numerous ESL and employment programs. In 2010, VIRCS moves from its initial location on 535 Yates Street to 637 Bay Street to accommodate the organization's growth.



2015

In 2014, VIRCS celebrates 25 years by launching an annual scholarship of \$25,000 to sponsor newcomers seeking help with education leading to professional qualifications. By 2015, VIRCS begins a relationship with Paragon Testing to become the first CELPIP testing site on the island and secures funding to start the Welcome Gardens program.



2019

In 2018, VIRCS joins the Social Innovation Centre at its new location at 1004 North Park, signs an MOU with the District of Oak Bay to provide transitional housing to refugees, and secures two employment service contracts (BC SIS and P2PTE). In 2018, the Social Innovation Centre also secures funding approval for a trauma-informed daycare. At the end of 2019, VIRCS experiences its first pandemic and must adapt quickly to changing Provincial Health Orders and legislation. In Spring 2020, VIRCS closes the centre to clients, but continues to provide services online and via telephone. VIRCS expands previously-existing community Emergency Assistance Resources services and starts an Emergency Food delivery initiative.



2021

In 2020, the murder of George Floyd Jr. by a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, sparks global Black Lives Matter protests and in 2021, Covid-19 fuels anti-Asian racism and xenophobia. As a result, VIRCS organizes a local response. In 2020, VIRCS is selected by the Province of BC to serve as the provincial hub of the Resilience BC Anti-Racism network. The pandemic continues well into 2021; however, VIRCS is able to open to some limited in-person programming and continues to provide critical services to newcomers.

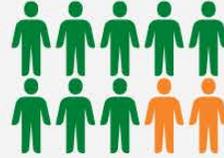


Who are We?

VIRCS Staff Demographics

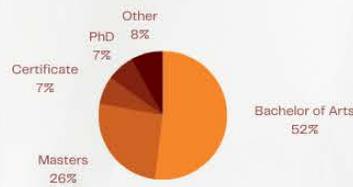
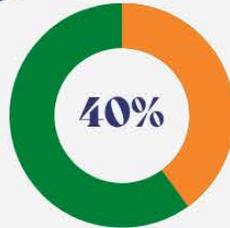
GENDER

80% of our staff identify as female, and 20% identify as male.



AGE

43% of VIRCS staff is between the ages of 25 and 34; 25% is between 34 and 44 years old; 14% is between 45 and 54; another 14% is between 55 and 64 years old; and 4% is over 65 years old.



Level of Education

52% of VIRCS staff have a BA, 26% have or are working towards a MA, and 7% have or are working towards a PhD.

Female and BIPOC-led

VIRCS and VIRCS Board of Directors is led by racialized women of color.



First-hand Experience

90% of our staff have first-hand experience of being an immigrant, refugee, or second or third generation immigrant. All of our staff are settlers on this land.



ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Our staff represent over 20 different ethnicities.



LANGUAGES SPOKEN

Our staff speak over 25 different languages/dialects.



FUNDERS & PARTNERS

We are grateful for the support of the following funders:

- Service Canada
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Ministry of Jobs, Trade, and Technology
- Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Department of Justice
- United Way
- BC Gaming
- Public Safety
- Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture
- Children's Health Foundation
- New Horizon
- Victoria Foundation - Vital Victoria Fund & Anonymous Fund
- Telus Friendly Covid response
- City of Victoria
- Minister of Employment and Social Development
- Victoria Foundation - Marymax Fund
- Vancity
- MOSAIC
- Rotary Club of Royal Oak
- Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
- Ending Violence Association of BC
- Article Furniture
- Khalsa Aid



2020/21 AGM MINUTES

Chaired by: Osaro Ezomo

Called to order and territory acknowledgement at 6:05 p.m.

1. Approval of the AGM Minutes 2019/20 Financial Statement, & Financial Report

"I move the adoption of the Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting as presented."

Moved: Aaron Hall / Seconded: Patti Grey

2. Approval of the Business Agenda

"I move the adoption of the Agenda for the 2020 VIRCS AGM."

Moved: Haixia Liu / Seconded: Ye Li

3. Acceptance of the Executive Director, President's report

"I move the acceptance of the 2020 Executive Director & President's report."

Moved: Ye Li / Bruce McGuigan

4. Acceptance of the Treasurer's report

"I move the acceptance of the 2020 Treasurer's report."

Moved: Aaron Hall / Seconded: Osaro Ezomo

5. Appointment of Accountant 2021/22

"I move the appointment of the accountant Ashgrove to prepare the 2021/2022 Financial Statements"

Moved: Aaron Hall / Seconded: Ayodeji Kuponiyi

6. Appointment of Directors

"I move the acceptance of all existing Board members"

Moved: Aaron Hall / Seconded: Ayodeji Kuponiyi

7. Approval to adjourn the Annual General Meeting 2020 /21

"I move the adjournment of the business section of the 2020 Annual General Meeting."

Moved: Patti Grey / Seconded: Ye Li

Meeting adjourned at 6:32 p.m.



MEET THE BOARD

OSARO joined the VIRCS board in 2017 and currently serves as the board president. As a current public servant for the province of British Columbia, Osaro continues to assist the delivery of technology solutions to British Columbians in her role as a Senior Team Lead in the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's Information Services Division.

Osaro, a first-generation immigrant who came to Canada in 2012 to pursue a master's degree at Royal Roads University, faced the challenges and hardships that come with being a newcomer to Canada. Osaro continues to remain grateful for the privilege of living and working in the traditional territories of the Lekwungen peoples with her spouse and two children.

LIZA has extensive experience across government departments. She has an M.G.M. (Royal Roads University), a B.A. International Studies (Simon Fraser University), and a B.A. Economics (Simon Fraser University). She has worked on projects that range from regional economic development to international export development. With her passion for working with newcomers, she led the Foreign Qualification Recognition program at the Government of B.C.

Liza looks forward to promoting diversity and multiculturalism through her involvement in the community.

YE joined VIRCS in early 2020 as a board member and has served as Treasurer since early 2021. She came to Canada in 2001 to pursue post-secondary education. She has started working in Accounting since 2007 and has worked in public and private sectors. She is a Chartered Professional Accountant. As an immigrant, she understands the journey is not easy for new Canadians and is committing her time to help those who need help.



OSARO EZOMO

President



LIZA SEHIC

VICE PRESIDENT



YE LI

TREASURER

BRUCE is Professor of Sociology at Vancouver Island University. He is also the former Executive Director at Family Services of Greater Victoria, founder of the Victoria Social Innovation Centre, and former Senior Policy Advisor and Manager of Policy with the BC Provincial Government. Bruce started his working life working with youth at risk at North Shore Family Services in the 1970s.

As a sociologist and as a descendant of refugee settlers in Canada he is committed to welcoming new Canadians and creating an environment in which they prosper and contribute to Canadian society.

AARON lives in downtown Victoria with his wife and three children. Both Aaron's parents came to Victoria from the United Kingdom as children. He grew up mostly in Fernwood, and spent his high-school years in Colwood. He has worked as a real estate agent since 2008 and enjoys volunteering for a variety of different organizations in the community. In the past, Aaron also worked as an Aquaculturist in and around Fanny Bay and as a West Coast Commercial Fisher. Aaron was interested in volunteering as a VIRCS Board member as it provided him with an opportunity to use his professional and local knowledge to help guide the organization in creating policy to help VIRCS achieve its mandate.

PATTI studied at the New York School of Interior Design, and has had her own Interior Design company for 23 years! Prior interior design, she worked on Real Estate launches and she also has a background in the Film and Television business.

Over the years, Patti has volunteered in the community; however most of it has been around using her Design skills with set-up and props. Two years ago, Patti spoke to a friend asking where she could once again get involved in her community, and her friend promptly introduced her to VIRCS.

Patti does not shy away from learning new skills, leans in with her heart, and embraces new opportunities, especially around helping others.



BRUCE MCGUIGAN
SECRETARY



AARON HALL
CO-SECRETARY



PATTI GREY
MEMBER AT-LARGE

Dr. KUPONIYI has extensive experience spanning over two decades in both Private and Public sectors across three countries and two continents. He completed his BSc and MSc from the University of Lagos Nigeria, moved to North Carolina, USA on a NASA/NSF scholarship for a second MSc in Physics. He moved to Victoria in 2012, with his family, to study for a PhD in Geophysics.

He currently works in Information Technology with the BC Public Service and actively contributes scientific research to the several initiatives of the Government of Canada.

In 2013, he became a member of VIRCS Board of Directors due to his passion to support the immigrant community in Canada, drawing from his personal experience obtained from living and working in several North American communities. He served as the Secretary of the Board for over 5 years and has contributed to VIRCS in other capacities. He is excited to continue supporting VIRCS in the quest for excellent service delivery to newcomers in Canada.

SARAH graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and worked as a Registered Nurse for a number of years prior to becoming a lawyer. She now owns her own firm, Alasaly Law Group, in Victoria BC and specializes in the area of family law and wills and estates. She is also a Family Law Mediator and a Collaborative family lawyer.

Sarah volunteers much of her time to her community and serves on various boards. She joined VIRCS in 2022 and is delighted to be able to serve her community. She loves a challenge and is always seeking to improve the lives of those around her!



AYODEJI KUPONIYI

MEMBER AT-LARGE



SARAH ALASLY

MEMBER AT-LARGE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am delighted to welcome you to our 2021/22 AGM.

This year we made giant strides and served thousands of clients in the Greater Victoria area and neighbouring communities. Our services expanded, funding nearly doubled, and our team grew and served more clients as a result. This remarkable work could not have been accomplished without your help and genuine concern for the agency. I also want to recognize the efforts and contributions of staff and volunteers. Your tenacity and resilience through the pandemic and adjusting to these new times is commendable. I want to express my gratitude to the VIRCS management and leadership team for all their hard work. To all VIRCS staff, thank you for showing up each day and bringing your whole self into service for newcomers and settlers in Victoria.

*Osaro Ezomo
Board President*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



This year was an exciting year, as Board and staff worked to rebrand the organization to represent its history, changes through time, and new programs. We also worked to highlight the diversity of our Board of Directors and staff and the stories and needs of our clients. This rebranding is reflected in our new website, new social media pages, and new logo!

Over the past year, the size of our organization has increased significantly, as VIRCS has continued to secure funds to expand programs and launch new programs. With the addition of new staff and return to in-person service provision, we re-evaluated our space and programming needs, and identified IT as an urgent area of need. Towards the end of the 2021 fiscal year, we received \$35,000 from the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction for a technology infrastructure upgrade project. This project is integral to the ongoing operation of our organization and will assist us in providing a modern, cohesive IT solution that will allow employees and managers to work more efficiently with a system that will be more affordable and sustainable in the long term. As a growing agency, we continue to seek funding to support growing administrative costs, expenses not often eligible under most funding agreements. Information technology, human resources, reception, and accounting and bookkeeping are among those most in need of long-term and consistent funding.

Our organization continues to adapt to the changing needs of newcomers and find innovative ways to collaborate with community agencies to meet the need. We also continue to advocate for newcomer communities experiencing racism, discrimination, and prejudice. Unfortunately, the war in Ukraine put a spotlight on the inequity in response to refugees based on the color of their skin, as we saw disparity in response from individuals and community in areas of housing and donations. As an agency, we continue to advocate for all newcomer communities and call for equity and empathy for all in need.

As an Executive Director, I am only as effective as my team, and on a daily basis, I find myself expressing gratitude for our funders, Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers who show unwavering commitment to this organization's mandate. It is truly a privilege to work alongside the VIRCS team, and I look forward to seeing what the next year brings.

*Karen Hira
Executive Director*



PROGRAMS

2021/22 PROGRAMS



Newcomer Wraparound
Support Program



BC Settlement & Integration
Services



Pathways to Professions,
Trades, & Entrepreneurship



Newcomer Women's
Projects



Resilience BC Hub



Enable Child & Youth
Program



Welcome Gardens



ESL / CLBPT Program



Volunteer Program



Oak Bay Welcome House

NEWCOMER WRAPAROUND SUPPORT PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION

The Newcomer Wraparound Support program supports newcomers facing overwhelming or complex barriers towards settlement and integration in Greater Victoria. Services are client-driven and holistic, and programs are designed to provide 360 degree of support services so that newcomers can find meaningful integration into a new community. Services are provided through individual, family, and/or group setting. We provide personalized, holistic settlement support for newcomers by creating individualized life plans and providing information and referral services to various community partners and resources.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 400 intakes were completed for the year.
- Over 3,300 settlement services were provided including individual, group and family orientation sessions.
- Completed 110 group sessions covering various topics including rental skills, financial literacy, health systems, parenting, transportation, Canadian law (e.g. rights and responsibilities in Canada) and crisis intervention. These activities were very well attended and clients provided positive feedbacks.
- With support of IRCC, we were able to add 1 additional staff (Enhanced Youth Worker) and additional activities (community connection & short-term counselling).
- Our youth team successfully provided additional settlement support to newcomer youth and young adults through personalized settlement supports as well as 20 group Employment and Education related workshops.
- In response to the Afghan refugee crisis, our Enhanced Youth Worker who speaks Dari, Farsi, Arabic, Aramaic provided significant support to newcomers and refugees from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq.
- From the September 2021 – March 2022, many of the newcomer youth and young adult clients successfully obtained a job or getting their first job interview. 7 youth obtained a first job in Canada! 14 youth are going to school and more success stories to come!

FUNDER

Immigration, Refugees and
Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

STAFF

Asuka Hirai
Director of Settlement

Haixia Liu
Intake Coordinator

Angela Gallentes
Alejandra Mendez
**Adult & Families Case
Managers**

Bushra AlQudayri
Iman Skati
Arabic Case Manager

Hannah Peterson
Youth Case Manager

Heleina Dahlias
**Enhanced Youth
Worker**

Hannah Morrison
Mackenzie Perry
Saurabh Joshi
Liliana Wright
Practicum Students

2022/23 GOALS

- Continue to address the needs of newcomers via timely, client-driven/centered, service provision.
- Work with community partners to increase community capacity.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS CONTINUED

- Under the Community Connection activity, music class for adults and children was added and ran for 8 weeks. It was aimed at connecting clients with other caregivers and learning positive parenting skills and ways to communicate with their children through music & stories. Parents reported these activities to be their favorite and that it provided much needed connection during the pandemic.
- Strengthened partnerships with other settlement agencies across BC through participating in the MAP Alliance, SDI Research Project (Subcontracted by MOSAIC), AMSSA and Multi-Agency Partnership meetings.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

This client is a single mother who came to Canada from Afghanistan and shared her story with us. She said,

"I need this program, it is very good for me. Before no reading, no writing. I could not go to school when I was in Afghanistan because I am a woman. When I was living in my country, I recognized money with color because I could not read the number on the money. Here in Canada everything number, street has number, money has number. Now, I know how to read the number. My life difficult, difficult, and difficult. When I came to the office first time, the office door widely opened and my case manager greeted with open arm and said "Salam" with smile. I felt welcomed like my family and my home."

As Director of Settlement, I meet people from all walks of life. This story highlighted the importance of community in helping people overcome adversity. At VIRCS, we support people who have experienced, and who continue to experience many hardships. It's easy to forget that something which appears to be a part of ordinary life can be a monumental hurdle to others. Through understanding and collaborative work, we can build a stronger community one person at a time.

Our client has gone on to show her spirit for her community through participating in our group activities and lending her helping hand to other newcomers on their settlement journey.

BC SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION SERVICES (BC SIS)

DESCRIPTION

BC SIS targets newcomers who are not eligible for federal settlement services, specifically, Temporary Foreign Workers, Provincial Nominees who are awaiting their permanent residency approval, post-secondary International Students, Refugee Claimants, and Naturalized Citizens.

BC SIS staff assist eligible clients to navigate immigration processes; meet settlement needs; connect to the community; access labour market information; and support and upgrade English language proficiency where appropriate. All services are free of charge and are delivered by VIRCS staff with cultural sensitivity and confidentiality.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 340 needs assessments completed
- Over 90 workshops delivered on various topics (food skills, digital literacy, healthy lifestyles, parenting, employment, education, transportation, citizenship, etc.)
- Some group information sessions were offered on understanding COVID-19 and health related information, finding credible resources and information about vaccination. Some clients did not have internet access or information technology infrastructure or were sharing a cellphone/laptop with their entire family. For them, COVID-19 information was inaccessible at the beginning of the pandemic. We were able to provide translated information to our clients with the support of trained multi-language VIRCS staff.
- Created weekly educational and community resource information for clients who are receiving emergency food and supply hampers to reduce social isolation and obtain information about emergency phone services including health line (online and via trained multilingual staff at VIRCS).

FUNDERS

British Columbia -
Welcome BC

Immigration Policy &
Integration Branch

Ministry of Municipal
Affairs

STAFF

Nasim Hamed
Program Manager

Serena Lee
**Employment
Counselor**

Jayanthi Rajkumar
Natasha Pakula
Settlement Workers

Kamala Pilgrim
ELT Teacher

2022/23 GOALS

- Increase hours of Settlement Workers (SWs) to full-time and secure funds to hire more SWs
- Increase staff wages to be in alignment with others in the industry
- Strengthen connections in Sooke and Sidney locations

PATHWAYS TO PROFESSIONS, TRADES, & ENTREPRENEURSHIP (P2PTE)

DESCRIPTION

P2PTE supports the social and economic integration of newcomer youth by providing employment services to newcomer, Indigenous, and disabled youth between the ages of 18 and 30 who face multiple barriers to employment through the provision of employment skills training and quality work experience.

P2PTE offers employment skills training to youth facing barriers to employment. For 6 or 8 weeks, participants study in class to learn about employment related skills and career exploration while being paid a living allowance. At the end of this training, they have the opportunity to complete a work experience which can lead to permanent, long term employment.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

- Increased funding by \$600,000 through ESDC Fall Economic Statement
- Created three new P2PTE staff positions
- Returned to in-person learning Spring 2022
- Delivered employment skills training to 64 participants
- Maintained a success rate of 85% of participants in long-term quality employment or returned to school
- Developed community and employer partnerships and increased our presence in the community
- Expected to deliver program to 40 more participants through new funding

FUNDER

Service Canada Youth
Employment and Skills
Strategy and Fall Economic
Statement

STAFF

Jennifer Rawlinson
Program Manager

Amrik Thind
Program Assistant

Shazia Rashid
**Intake & Outreach
Coordinator**

Samira Wanas
Kamal Panesar
**Employment
Coordinator**

Dallas Posavad
Brennan Crabb
**Instructor &
Employment
Coordinator**

2022/23 GOALS

- Continue to increase community presence via partnerships and social media promotion
- Prepare to increase capacity to deliver employment programs at VIRCS
- Host an employer and participant recognition event in fall 2022

P2PTE SUCCESS STORIES



Moloud Mazaher

Moloud is a 3rd-year biochemistry student at the University of British Columbia and a P2PTE graduate. Here's what she has to say about her experience: "VIRCS staff have always been supportive of my dreams and ambitions. Last summer, I attended their P2PTE program to develop my career goals. During this class, I learned how to create an outstanding resume, which I used to get my current TA position at UBC, and also gained more information about how to become a dentist. The P2PTE program kindly sponsored me for my Dental Admission Test. I took my exam on January 6 and scored 20 (top 15%) only with 2 weeks of studying! 3 years ago, my high school advisor told me I should not pursue dentistry because it would be too competitive for me as a second language speaker, but I am here today to prove her wrong and inspire other immigrants who have doubts. If I did it, so can you :)"



Ikram Boutahi

Ikram arrived in Canada six months ago and joined the P2PTE program in February 2022, hoping to gain more information on how to successfully join the workforce in Victoria.

Ikram has extensive training and education in geotechnology and wanted to find an entry level job in her field. Although she found communicating in English challenging, she was still able to land her dream job in Canada! She now works for SGS Laboratories in Sidney as a Lab Assistant.

RESILIENCE BC HUB

DESCRIPTION

The Resilience BC Hub provides support to members of the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network who operate in communities across the province. The network sees a society free from racism and hate. They are bringing communities together to do the hard work and make that vision a reality.

We recognize the impact of systemic racism and the damage it inflicts everyday. We educate to understand each other, our histories, and contributions to society. We work to break down systems that perpetuate prejudice, discrimination, inequity, and exclusion. We recognize that each person in our community has a role to play in eliminating racism and hate; from the person in a position of power, to the bystander who witnesses an incident of hate. Everyone is responsible and everyone must be accountable.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

- The Resilience BC Hub supported 8 Network members to deliver online bystander trainings in their communities.
- In May 2021, the Resilience BC Anti-Racism Network announced that the website resources and information on reporting incidents of racism and hate was now available in 13 languages.
- The Hub continues sharing weekly emails, upcoming events, and resources for their communities. A variety of guests were invited to engage with Network members during monthly meetings and two separate discussion groups were organized.
- With additional funding from the Province of BC, the Hub supported 5 rural Network members to conduct consultations on the creation of new Race-based Data Legislation. Network members invited people from Indigenous communities, communities of People of African Decent, Asian communities, and other racialized communities to participate in this online process.
- In partnership with Simon Fraser University, the first Taking Action! Lecture was held in October of 2021. Dr. Eva Jewell, Research Director for the Yellowhead Institute and Assistant Professor in Indigenous Feminisms at X University, was the guest speaker. SFU Wosk Centre for Dialogue Fellow Ginger Gosnell-Myer, masterfully moderated the session, engaging Dr. Jewell in discussion about decolonization and the individual steps we can all take toward reconciliation. Over 300 people attended this 90 minute online event.

FUNDERS

BC, Ministry of Attorney General and Ministry Responsible for Housing

Victoria Foundation

STAFF

Jane Hurtig
Manager, Anti-Racism Programs

Jean Penola
Communications & Outreach

Jamison Schulz-Franco
Social Media & Events Coordinator

Avneet Randhawa
Program Assistant

2022/23 GOALS

- Continue to bring network members together to share experiences, learn from one another, and provide anti-racism education opportunities to their communities
- Engage network members in updating their 2020 Strategic Plan
- Present, in partnership with SFU, the second Taking Action! lecture

NEWCOMER WOMEN'S PROJECTS (NWP)

DESCRIPTION

Newcomer Women's Project (NWP) collaborates with community partners to provide accessible information to newcomer women in Victoria on issues related to women's physical and mental health, as well as their safety, wellbeing, and legal rights as they relate to their relationships with their spouses and their children.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

Safe at Work Project (BC Civil Forfeiture)

- 15 workshops with 60 client participants plus staff attendees
- 13 guest speakers: 8 officers from VicPD, 1 officer from Saanich PD, 2 representatives from the Regional Domestic Violence Unit (RDVU), 1 from the 911 Emergency Communication Centre, and 1 from the Community Based Victim Support Program
- The workshops were fun and very well received, as well as extremely informative.
- Information compiled into a user-friendly Community Safety booklet, available for free public distribution.

Safe at Work (Dept of Justice Canada)

- Curriculum development process completed: 4 comprehensive modules that are easily adapted for both employers and newcomer employees focused on definitions, protections, and reporting processes around safe and healthy workplaces.

COVID-19 Response Project (Canadian Women's Foundation)

- Part-time Community Liaison & Outreach Worker hired to connect vulnerable newcomer women escaping violence with transition houses and other safe, affordable housing and support services for themselves and their children
- Covered the costs of delivering good quality donations of furniture and beds to vulnerable newcomer women setting up new, safe homes
- Also covered the costs of membership fees to local food share programs in order to support vulnerable newcomer women facing food insecurity.

FUNDERS

Department of Justice

BC Civil Forfeiture

Canadian Women's Foundation

STAFF

Asuka Hirai
Program Manager

Cleia (Nadia) Sangster
Program Coordinator

Yoko Izawa
Administrative Support

Fiona Henderson
Curriculum Developer

2022/23 GOALS

- As we continue to recover from the Covid-19 Pandemic, NWP plans to return to programming that includes more opportunities for socializing together and getting to know the City of Victoria.
- We also plan to continue offering workshops where clients can learn about available supports and services around the community.

ENABLE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

DESCRIPTION

The Enable Program plays a vital role in providing services to newcomer children, youth, and young adults ages 6 to 25. The program supports and empowers young individuals in their academic, social, and emotional settlement needs as they transition to their new lives in Canada. A holistic, client-centered approach is used to meet young people in their lives and provide them with opportunities to increase their sense of identity, belonging, and community within their environment. The Enable Program aims to reduce settlement-related barriers for immigrant and refugee children and youth by increasing access to education, employment, resources, services, and recreational opportunities, and has successfully provided services for the last 25 years. Programming includes: Homework Club, Youth Activity Night, Youth Strides Summer Camp, Adjustment Support Groups, and SPARKS program.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 100 newcomer and youth served
- Over 80 in-person and online workshops and weekly tutoring support delivered throughout the year.
- Over 50 volunteers supported various aspects of programming.
- Built partnerships with over 30 community organizations
- Organized a Children's Winter Celebration for young newcomer children. This was a wonderful event filled with music, arts and crafts, and meeting Santa. Each participant took home backpacks filled with school supplies, and Christmas gifts. This event was made possible thanks for the wonderful donations from Save On Foods, Khalsa Aid, Salvation Army, the Maritime Museum, and Island Health.
- No cost Art Therapy sessions were provided by Bateman Foundation for Youth Art Therapist.

FUNDERS

United Way of Greater Victoria

BC Gaming

Children's Health Foundation

Telus Friendly Future Foundation

Bateman Foundation

Peter Golden Social Justice Fund

STAFF

Jenn Rubin
Program Coordinator

Brittany Dunstan
Program Facilitator & Youth Worker

2022/23 GOALS

- Expand program delivery beyond newcomers to include BIPOC children and youth
- Expand partnerships with Indigenous service organization to increase engagement and learning opportunities
- Boost volunteer opportunities
- Enhance program evaluation methods

WELCOME GARDENS

DESCRIPTION

Welcome Gardens is a VIRCS settlement service program. Designed to battle food insecurity and help newcomer and vulnerable populations to overcome barriers to their wellbeing. The program provides the necessary tools and resources for newcomers and senior community members to grow nutritious, affordable, and culturally-preferred foods together while fostering intercultural collaborations that strengthen Victoria's social, environmental, and economic resilience.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 120 newcomer clients served.
- 40 hands-on gardening workshops and multicultural food classes delivered at the Welcome Gardens sites including, but not limited to: how to plan your garden all year round, starting your own seeds, all about garlic, native plants and flowers, pollinators, harvesting, pruning, garden maintenance, organic fertilizers, etc.
- We have increased the participation of children and youth in program, as we recognize the importance of opening the space and activities for them.
- Distribution of gardening supplies to 30 newcomer families including: soil, vermiculite, compost, seeds, trellises and fabric and plastic pots to help them start their garden at home.
- Provided personalized gardening mentorship on 10 newcomer households.
- 12 monthly neighbourhood gardening work parties in the Native and Pollinator Garden at Franklin Green.
- Fresh organic vegetables produced in our transitional house for refugees' garden with our program participants were distributed during the growing season through the food initiative to a more than 30 newcomer families.
- 3 newcomer families continue to grow their own food at the plots provided in partnership with the Yates Community Garden.
- Our North Park boulevard garden continues its work on attracting pollinators and helping the environment thanks to the maintenance provided from our program.

FUNDERS

Service Canada - New Horizons Seniors Program

BC Gaming and Enforcement Branch

City of Victoria

STAFF

Asuka Hirai
Program Manager

Cenit Munoz
Program Coordinator

2022/23 GOALS

- Increase collaborations with community organizations that help us offer more free opportunities to access nutritious food to our clients.
- Implement programming that allows more children, seniors and people with different abilities to easily access our program.
- Provide opportunities of leadership roles to program participants from communities that have been racialized.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE & CANADIAN LANGUAGE BENCHMARKS PLACEMENT TEST

DESCRIPTION

At VIRCS, we have been delivering quality English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to the community for more than 30 years. Our beginner, intermediate and advanced classes are taught by a TESL certified instructor. Additionally, we have partnered with the Greater Victoria Public Library to offer evening conversation classes at several branches in Victoria. Our program focuses on a communicative approach to language learning and we are open to everyone in our community through the generous funding from BC Gaming.

VIRCS is also a licensed Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Test (CLBPT) site. We offer both remote and paper based testing for clients and private individuals. We have two trained and certified assessors on staff to provide this service to our clients and to the community.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS - ESL

- Increased student roster by 50%
- Returned to in person classes post pandemic
- Delivered CLBPT to more than 100 clients through Sprott Shaw and Cambria College.
- Developed new curriculum based on best practices in Second Language Acquisition.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS - CLBPT

- 76 CLBPTs administered for Cambria College.

FUNDER

BC Gaming and Enforcement Branch

CLBPT is regulated by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks

STAFF

Jennifer Rawlinson
Program Manager

Maya Pereira
ESL Instructor

2022/23 GOALS

- Increase revenue through tuition fees and CLBPT fees
- Promote ESL program through social media
- Create new classes in the evening for students who work during the day.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

DESCRIPTION

The volunteer program is a vital, dynamic part of the larger VIRCS portfolio of activities designed to meet the specific needs of individual newcomers, their families, and the wider community with targeted, client driven services.

2021/22 HIGHLIGHTS

- We have provided new furniture to 40 clients
- Longtime staff member, Amarjit Bhalla, retired from the program
- We secured funding for a new position - Community Liaison, which will take on volunteer recruitment as part of a larger role that includes outreach, promotion, social media, community events, etc.

FUNDERS

BC Gaming and Enforcement Branch

STAFF

Amarjit Bhalla
Volunteer Coordinator

2022/23 GOALS

- Revamp the program with a strengthened outreach and recruitment strategy
- Increase program budget by 30%

OAK BAY WELCOME HOUSE

DESCRIPTION

The Welcome House initiative was established in 2018 by VIRCS, in partnership with the District of Oak Bay. The initiative was the first to provide interim affordable housing for refugees on Vancouver Island.

2021/22

- On December 2, 2021, VIRCS and the District of Oak Bay agreed to terminate the lease agreement for the Oak Bay Welcome Houses effective May 7, 2022
- In total, the Welcome Houses supported 10 refugees
- Over 500 volunteer hours by Odd Fellows, community, skilled professional, and VIRCS Board members supported upgrades to completely refurbish both homes
- Over \$40,000 was raised to support essential needs for a Syrian family
- Over 50 volunteer hours were contributed by Oak Bay Rotary Club to support residents to learn about, and connect to, community
- Over 50 settlement and integration workshops were attended by residents

PARTNER

District of Oak Bay

2022/23 ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Increase Community Awareness of VIRCS Programs

VIRCS aims to secure funding for a Community Liaison position to dedicate time to conduct outreach to communities and at community events across South Vancouver Island to ensure that community organizations and newly arrived immigrants and refugees are aware of VIRCS's services and programs. We hope increased visibility of the organization reduces barriers to integration, as newcomers know where they can turn to for support.



Increase Collaboration with Indigenous Organizations

This year, VIRCS has the pleasure of collaborating with the Oasis Society for the Spiritual Health of Victoria on a more consistent basis. This collaboration reiterated the need for us to create opportunities for newcomer groups to engage with Indigenous communities; learn about current issues impacting Indigenous communities; learn Indigenous history and culture; debunk myths and stereotypes about both Indigenous and newcomer groups; and strengthen inclusion and acceptance.



Increase Funds for Administrative Support Positions.

As a growing agency, we continue to seek funding to support growing administrative costs, expenses not often eligible or restricted under most funding agreements. Information technology, human resources, reception, and accounting and bookkeeping are among those most in need of long-term and consistent funding.



Strengthen Advocacy and Support Services

VIRCS continues to see a rise in incidents of hate, racism, and discrimination. At the same time, we have identified a gap in advocacy and support services for the demographics we serve, and hope to strengthen collaboration with community agencies to create safe spaces for newcomers to share their stories, learn about their rights, and seek support.



THIS IS US!





VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Financial Statements
Year Ended December 31, 2021

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Index to Financial Statements
Year Ended December 31, 2021

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INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONER'S REVIEW ENGAGEMENT REPORT

To the Members of Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society

We have reviewed the accompanying financial statements of Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (the organization) that comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2021, and the statements of changes in net assets, revenues and expenditures and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO), and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Practitioner's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on the accompanying financial statements based on our review. We conducted our review in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements, which require us to comply with relevant ethical requirements.

A review of financial statements in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements is a limited assurance engagement. The practitioner performs procedures, primarily consisting of making inquiries of management and others within the entity, as appropriate, and applying analytical procedures, and evaluates the evidence obtained.

The procedures performed in a review are substantially less in extent than, and vary in nature from, those performed in an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Conclusion

Based on our review, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society as at December 31, 2021, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with ASNPO.

(continues)

Independent Practitioner's Review Engagement Report to the Members of Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (*continued*)

Report on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements

As required by the Societies Act (British Columbia), we report that the accounting principles in Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

Victoria, British Columbia
June 30, 2022



CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 484,443	\$ 295,288
Accounts receivable	130,516	143,320
Prepaid expenses	468	340
GST receivable	3,145	1,719
	618,572	440,667
FURNITURE AND LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS (Note 3)	78,196	92,516
	\$ 696,768	\$ 533,183
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable	\$ 18,322	\$ 32,959
Wages payable	38,258	36,160
Employee deductions payable	37,611	26,345
	94,191	95,464
DEFERRED REVENUE (Note 4)	680,652	413,620
DUE TO RELATED PARTIES (Note 5)	-	81,826
	774,843	590,910
NET ASSETS		
Operating fund	(50,684)	(44,656)
Capital fund	(27,391)	(13,071)
	(78,075)	(57,727)
	\$ 696,768	\$ 533,183

ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD


 _____ Osaro Ezomo, Board President


 _____ Aaron Hall, Co-Secretary
 07/29/22

See notes to financial statements

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Statement of Changes in Net Assets
Year Ended December 31, 2021

	Operating Fund	Capital Fund	2021	2020
NET ASSETS - BEGINNING OF YEAR				
As previously reported	\$ (44,656)	\$ (13,071)	\$ (57,727)	\$ (39,866)
Prior period adjustments	-	-	-	(7,293)
As restated	(44,656)	(13,071)	(57,727)	(47,159)
Deficiency of revenues over expenditures	(20,348)	-	(20,348)	(10,568)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	14,320	(14,320)	-	-
NET ASSETS - END OF YEAR	\$ (50,684)	\$ (27,391)	\$ (78,075)	\$ (57,727)

See notes to financial statements

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures
Year Ended December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
REVENUES		
Operating Grants	\$ 1,827,774	\$ 1,599,508
Gaming	69,357	64,611
Donations	18,384	61,545
Social Events	100	1,543
Training	26,796	22,886
Interest Income	163	805
Rental	30,968	16,379
	<u>1,973,542</u>	<u>1,767,277</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Amortization	14,320	14,404
Office and Supplies	20,299	17,901
Direct Program Costs	312,393	200,486
Travel and Transportation	7,629	3,445
Recognition, Training and Recruiting	5,101	1,138
Building Occupancy	146,132	135,788
Miscellaneous	-	831
Wages and Contracted Services	1,446,963	1,367,448
Professional Fees	41,053	36,404
	<u>1,993,890</u>	<u>1,777,845</u>
DEFICIENCY OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES	<u>\$ (20,348)</u>	<u>\$ (10,568)</u>

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Statement of Cash Flows
Year Ended December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
OPERATING ACTIVITIES		
Deficiency of revenues over expenditures	\$ (20,348)	\$ (10,568)
Item not affecting cash:		
Amortization of furniture and leasehold improvements	14,320	14,404
	<u>(6,028)</u>	<u>3,836</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts receivable	12,804	31,811
Accounts payable	(14,637)	12,408
Deferred revenue	267,032	135,638
Prepaid expenses	(128)	(340)
GST receivable	(1,426)	(347)
Wages payable	2,098	35,161
Employee deductions payable	11,266	7,041
	<u>277,009</u>	<u>221,372</u>
Cash flow from operating activities	<u>270,981</u>	<u>225,208</u>
FINANCING ACTIVITY		
Advances from (to) related parties	(81,826)	(104,118)
INCREASE IN CASH FLOW	189,155	121,090
Cash - beginning of year	<u>295,288</u>	<u>174,198</u>
CASH - END OF YEAR	\$ 484,443	\$ 295,288

See notes to financial statements

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Notes to Financial Statements
Year Ended December 31, 2021

1. DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION

The Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society is incorporated under the Society Act of British Columbia as a not-for-profit organization and is a registered charity under the Income Tax Act. The purposes of the Society are to assist in the settlement and adjustments of immigrants and refugees in Canada and to provide services designed to increase the newcomers' participation in Canadian society by assisting the newcomers to overcome barriers.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of presentation

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNFPO).

Fund accounting

The purpose of each fund contained in the financial statements is detailed as follows:

Operating Fund - accounts for the Society's program delivery and administrative activities. This fund reports unrestricted resources and restricted operating grants.

Capital Fund - reports the assets, liabilities, revenues and expenditures related to the Society's capital assets.

Revenue recognition

Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions.

Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Restricted contributions for the purchase of capital assets that will be amortized are deferred in the Capital Fund and recognized as revenue on the same basis as the amortization expenditure related to the acquired capital assets. No such deferral is recognized until ownership is approved by the contributor.

Interest revenue is recognized on a time proportion basis.

(continues)

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Notes to Financial Statements
Year Ended December 31, 2021

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (*continued*)

Donated services

The Society benefits greatly from donated services in the form of volunteer time for various committees. The value of donated services for donated time is not recognized in these financial statements.

Furniture and leasehold improvements

Furniture and leasehold improvements are stated at cost or deemed cost less accumulated amortization and are amortized over their estimated useful lives at the following rates and methods:

Furniture and fixtures	30% declining balance method
Leasehold improvements	10 years straight-line method

The organization regularly reviews its furniture and leasehold improvements to eliminate obsolete items.

Furniture and leasehold improvements acquired during the year but not placed into use are not amortized until they are placed into use.

Financial instruments policy

The Society's financial instruments consist of cash, accounts receivable, operating grants receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities and deferred operating grants. Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the Society is not exposed to significant interest, currency or credit risks arising from these financial instruments. The fair value of these financial instruments approximate their carrying values, unless otherwise noted.

3. FURNITURE AND LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2021 Net book value	2020 Net book value
Furniture and fixtures	\$ 248,842	\$ 248,385	\$ 457	\$ 653
Leasehold improvements	140,931	63,192	77,739	91,863
	\$ 389,773	\$ 311,577	\$ 78,196	\$ 92,516

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Notes to Financial Statements
Year Ended December 31, 2021

4. DEFERRED REVENUE

Deferred contributions represent funds received during the year which relate to the subsequent period.

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
BC Gaming	\$ 28,282	\$ 21,906
Canadian Women's Foundation	-	16,414
Children's Health Foundation	10,633	13,000
City of Victoria	6,893	590
Community Food Centres Canada	-	910
Department of Justice of Canada	5,702	13,344
Ministry of Attorney General	25,000	-
Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness	20,116	12,475
Ministry of Public Safety	20,147	24,733
Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture	96,379	95,356
Service Canada	445,365	135,605
MOSAIC	885	-
Second Harvest Food Support Committee	-	6,580
Telus	-	12,088
Third party donation	3,570	2,740
United Way of Greater Victoria	-	6,380
Vancity Community Foundation	457	5,688
Victoria Foundation	17,223	45,811
	<u>\$ 680,652</u>	<u>\$ 413,620</u>

5. DUE TO RELATED PARTIES

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
<u>Victoria Social Innovation Centre Society</u>		
BC Gaming	\$ -	\$ 81,826

In 2018, the Society applied and received the a \$197,571 (BC Gaming) on behalf of Victoria Social Innovation Centre Society. The grant received was spent for renovation costs to improve the building at 1004 North Park Street. The amounts due are non-interest bearing and are due on demand.

In 2021, BC Gaming grant has been used in full. No outstanding balance is between Victoria Social Innovation Centre Society and Victoria Immigrant & Refugee Centre Society.

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Notes to Financial Statements
Year Ended December 31, 2021

6. OPERATING GRANT REVENUES BY CONTRIBUTOR

	2021	2020
HRDC	\$ 472,477	\$ 311,676
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	442,520	401,236
Ministry of Jobs, Tourism & Skills Training	298,981	308,017
Foundations including Provincial Employees Community Services Fund and Victoria Foundation	141,425	106,667
Service Canada and Department of Justice	157,438	199,123
Other Ministries	298,024	227,924
Miscellaneous other grants	17,612	40,866
Ministry of the Attorney General & Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism	-	4,000
	\$ 1,828,477	\$ 1,599,509

Ongoing operations of the Society depend on the continued support of these contributors.

7. DONATION - VICTORIA FOUNDATION

The Society invested \$40,000 in the Victoria Foundation in order to establish the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society Legacy Fund for Newcomer's Integration. The Victoria Foundation is bound to hold the funds in trust, in perpetuity, for the benefit of the Society while the Society retains the right to income in perpetuity, from the fund and additions thereto. Since the Society only receives income and has restrictions to access the capital balance of the funds, the endowment is not shown as an asset on these statements.

8. LIABILITY INSURANCE

Liability insurance has been purchased for directors and officers to mitigate the cost of any potential law suit of action.

9. REMUNERATION OF EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTORS

As required by the British Columbia Society Act, it is noted that there were no employees/contractors paid greater than \$75,000 during the year.

VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CENTRE SOCIETY
Notes to Financial Statements
Year Ended December 31, 2021

10. COVID-19

These financial statements were prepared using accounting standards that apply to an operating society. This assumes that the society will continue its operations for the foreseeable future and will be able to realize its assets and discharge its liabilities in the normal course of operations.

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic due to COVID-19. The situation is continuously developing and the economic impact has been substantial to both Canada and the globe. In response to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, the government of Canada introduced various subsidy programs for companies that had to shut their operations and furlough staff.

The Society did not apply for any subsidy in 2021 fiscal year.

These financial statements do not reflect adjustments that would be necessary if the going concern assumption were not appropriate. This is because management believes that the aforementioned measures it has taken or intends to take will mitigate the effect of the conditions and events that cast doubt on the appropriateness of this assumption.



Contact

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