



Great Zimbabwe Cultural Society of BC (ZICUSO BC)

2023 Annual Report

Land Acknowledgment

ZICUSO BC recognizes that our work takes place on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), q̓ic̓ə́y̓ (Katzie), k̓w̓ik̓w̓ə́łəm (Kwkwetlem), q̓w̓ɑ:ń́łəń́ (Kwantlen), q̓iq̓éyt (Qayqayt), x̓m̓əθk̓w̓ə́y̓əm (Musqueam) and s̓c̓əw̓aθən m̓əsteyəx̓w̓ (Tsawwassen) First Nations. We respect their past, present, and emerging leadership in land stewardship. Their knowledge and traditions provide context to the work we do. ZICUSO BC recognizes the importance of reconciliation in building inclusive and strong communities.

Message from the Executive Director

The challenges of community work are many. When you add the settlement challenges that immigrants face as they settle in a new land, a complex picture of intersecting issues emerge.

In this document we celebrate the accomplishments that the society and community have realized in 2023. We do this without forgetting that there is much to be done and the effort of every one of us is very much required.

The sacrifice that many volunteers have made has paid off in amazing ways. The continued direction from our Board members has ensured that we do not go off-course. The many hours that have been put by our admin staff has enabled a solid foundation to our programming and displayed financial accountability to our sponsors. Community members' needs are many. At ZICUSO BC these needs have been met by a commitment to excellence and a deliberate commitment to grow and improve on our services by partnering with other organizations and infusing a learning culture in the organization and community.

As we look back to the progress accomplished by ZCUSO BC in 2023 and are thankful for the immense support from the community, volunteers and generous sponsors of the different programs. We look to the future with a renewed vigour and hope in anticipation of a productive journey that we have all embarked on as we support each of our community members to realise their highest potential.

Our Vision

Our mission is to see our people thriving in a land of equal opportunities.

Our Mission

ZICUSO BC runs culturally appropriate programs for immediate and ongoing support to uplift individuals and families to their highest potential.

Our Strategic Objectives

Cultural Support
Financial Stability
Volunteer Management
Organization Integrity
Research
Strong Governance



Regional Networking

In 2023, the Executive Director and admin team conducted community engagement exercise by visiting members in their local areas across the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley, and Vancouver Island. These visits helped to understand the challenges faced by community members and at the same time inform members about ZICUSO BC's services. By engaging directly with members, this ensured widespread recognition of the organization's resources, enhancing its ability to support individuals throughout the region.



Richmond



Victoria



Abbotsford



Food Security Program

Our food program provides culturally appropriate fresh food items to black people in BC. Our dedicated staff and volunteers tirelessly support families to put culturally appropriate meals on their dining room tables. We are all grateful for this wonderful dedication. In 2023, ZICUSO BC food security program provided and continues to provide culturally appropriate food to more than 470 families with a total of individuals of over 1300 people.



We cover the whole of Lower Mainland. Our community members are spread all over from Victoria to Hope. The people assisted are immigrants from 17 Africa countries Angola, Botswana, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan, eSwatini (Swaziland), Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

ZICUSO BC Cultural Event

The ZICUSO BC Cultural Event Day was held at Bombay Banquet Hall on the 8th of July 2023. The event, which is funded by City of Surrey, showcased arts and cultural activities from within the ZICUSO BC community. This included music performances, dance, media and art displays.



Seniors' Led Crop Farming

In 2023, seniors actively engaged in a series of enriching farming projects, generously supported by the New Horizons Seniors Program grant Kwantlen Polytechnic University. The primary aim of these endeavors was to fortify social participation among the seniors of ZICUSO BC. Throughout the summer of 2023, seniors, alongside diverse community members, enthusiastically volunteered their time to sow, nurture, and harvest an array of cultural vegetables. Children, 12 years and below were introduced to farming and engaged in the farm activities on selected days.

This collective endeavor not only yielded bountiful produce but also served as a powerful catalyst in diminishing social isolation, nurturing a profound sense of inclusion, and cultivating a shared sense of belonging within the community. Moreover, complementary sessions on financial literacy and digital proficiency were integrated into the program. These sessions not only equipped seniors with essential skills to safeguard against financial exploitation but also empowered them to seamlessly connect with loved ones and access vital resources through online platforms.



Senior's Program

Through the crop farming initiative, community members, with interest in farming were introduced to farming techniques in Canada. This has resulted in a group of community members embarking on Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in 2024.

The initiatives undertaken in 2023 represent an approach to senior's empowerment and community enrichment, underscoring the profound impact of collaborative endeavors in fostering vibrant and resilient communities.



Research Program

In collaboration with Adler University Vancouver and funded by Vancouver Foundation, ZICUSO BC carried out research to determine the Social determinants of health that have highest impact on black immigrants when they settle in BC. The research has provided valuable information that is now being applied in the various programs by our organization. Both the process and the results have provided valuable information about the challenges that black immigrants are facing and why some of these challenges are not addressed by mainstream programming.



Refugee Support Program

In collaboration with DIVERSEcity of Surrey, our organization has been supporting refugees from Central and Southern Africa with culturally appropriate food hampers and winter kits. The program shares information on housing, employment, mental health and well-being with the recently arrived refugees.



System Design (Community Services Recovery Fund)

The COVID 19 Pandemic exposed the vulnerability of non-profit organizations and the challenges they face in providing services to their members. The Government of Canada, through United Way BC provided funding that is being used for program innovation and redesign of systems and processes. ZICUSO BC is redesigning the purchasing system in order to link the food security program with producers and suppliers of the various items identified as culturally relevant by the research. This will increase the capacity of the organization to effectively provide the service as well as react effectively to any disruption in the service. We are also researching on what products are available locally and who are the suppliers, be they farmers, manufactures or distributors. We are researching on effective storage methods including indigenous methods. Exciting results have already emerged, and they will be shared with the community.

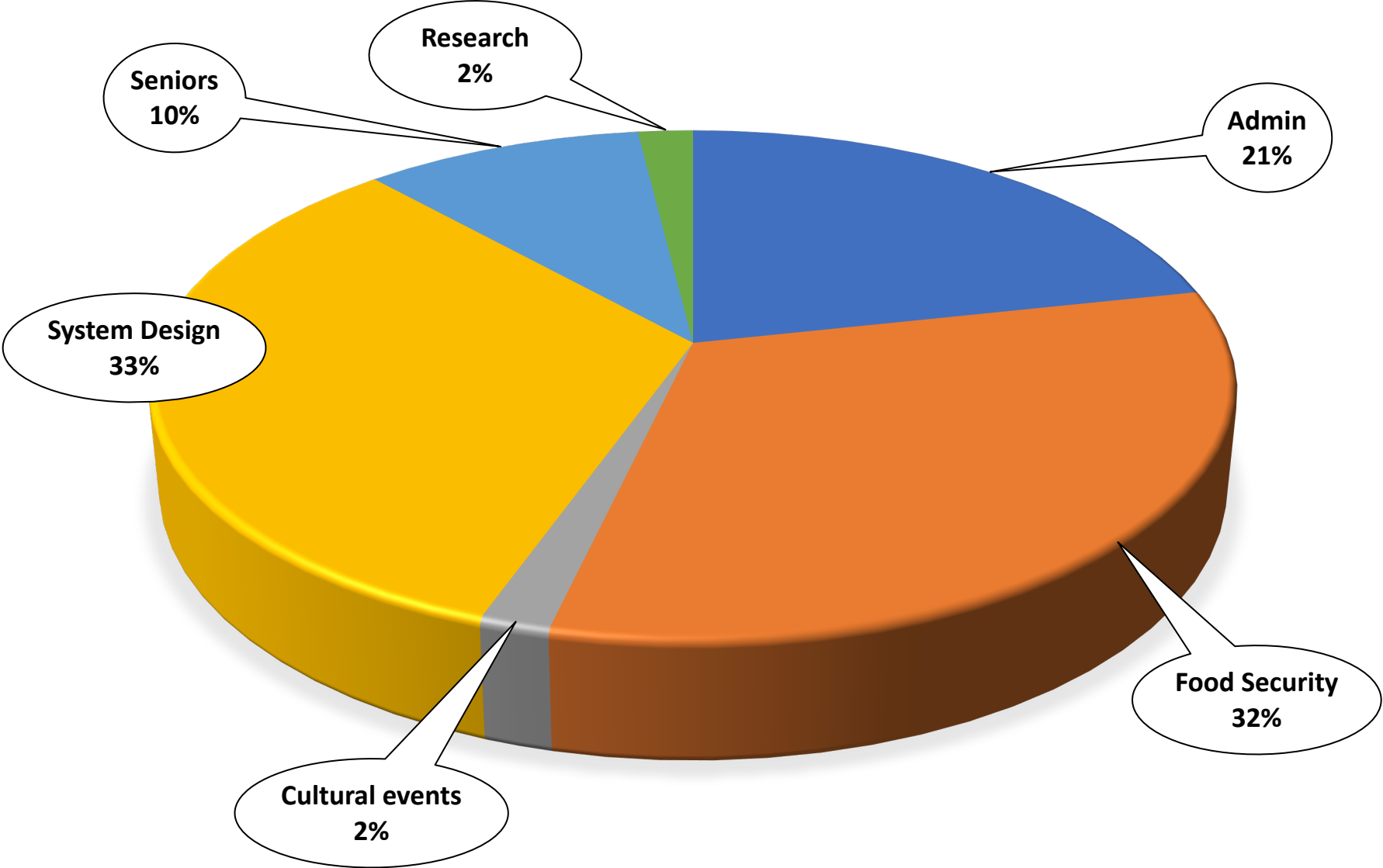




Office

In December 2023, ZICUSO BC signed a lease agreement for office space. The offices offer space for additional programming as well as space for functions and community meetings. We have a fully equipped IT Lab where members can come and upgrade IT Skills as well as attend various courses and sessions that are provided. Additional programs are being added every month.

2023 Funding



Our Funders and Sponsors



United Way
British Columbia

Working with communities in BC's
Interior, Lower Mainland, Central
& Northern Vancouver Island



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

Community Gaming Grants



Employment and
Social Development Canada

Canada



FOOD
BANKS **BC**



DIVERSE *city*
community resources society

vancouver
foundation