BCSIS Provincial Virtual Summit
February 24 & 25, 2021

BC Public Libraries: Supporting Community Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic
Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

As a provincial umbrella association, AMSSA would like to acknowledge that BC is home to 198 First Nations. We would also like to express and recognize the privilege that we have as settlers on this land.

We wish to acknowledge that AMSSA’s operations is on the unceded traditional territories of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.
Funder Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.
Presenter Information

**Mark MacKichan**
Coordinator, Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre, Vancouver Public Library

**Shideh Taleban**
Community Librarian, North Vancouver City Library
BC Public Libraries: Supporting Community Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Shideh Taleban – North Vancouver City Library

Mark MacKichan – Vancouver Public Library
Overview

• Who are we?

• Overview of public libraries during the pandemic

• Key challenges that we identified

• Conclusion

• Q&A
Shideh Taleban
Community Librarian, North Vancouver City Library
staleban@cnv.org

Mark MacKichan
Coordinator, Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre, Vancouver Public Library
mark.mackichan@vpl.ca
Public Libraries During the Pandemic

- Temporary closure/no in-person services
- Takeout services
- Expanding digital collections
Public Libraries During the Pandemic

- Shifting to online programming
- Enhancing remote reference services (chat, phone, email)
Public Libraries During the Pandemic

- Digital library card registration
- Building upon our history of work in the areas of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
Key Challenges

- Social isolation
- Discrimination/racism
- English language learning
- Finance/employment
- Mental health
Social Isolation

• Social isolation is a challenge for everyone, but newcomers are uniquely affected

• Many newcomers arrive with little to no social network; COVID-19 has impacted their abilities to expand their network and/or interact with their existing network
Take-home Technology and TELUS Grant Devices

North Shore Public Libraries
Programs and resources on how to use technology such as Zoom

Providing computers and Wi-Fi

Numerous library systems
Partnering with local organizations on virtual community dialogues and programming

Numerous library systems
Offering cultural programs and programs in other languages

Numerous library systems
Library Champions Project

NewToBC
HELPING NEW IMMIGRANTS DISCOVER LIBRARIES AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

Public Library InterLINK
Offering virtual book clubs and other opportunities for socialization

Numerous library systems
Lending out board games and puzzles to support family bonding

North Vancouver City Library
Racism and Discrimination

- Although racism was always there, this pandemic brought racism to the surface.

- Lots of newcomers and immigrants experienced racism and discrimination more than before.
Partnering with local organizations (NSMS, CDI, NSIIP) to offer anti-racism Town Halls and workshops

Numerous library systems
Anti-Racism Book Clubs/Chats

Numerous library systems
Weaving Our Humanity

North Shore Public Libraries
Anti-racism Readers’ Advisory:
- Booklists
- Video Book Talks

Numerous library systems
English Language Learning

- The pandemic disrupted many community ELL programs/services
- This exacerbated the community’s need for library supports in this area
Online English conversation circles, and related programming and outreach

Numerous library systems
Digital Language Resources
(e.g., Mango, Rosetta Stone, ClarityEnglish)

Numerous library systems
Language kits and readers for all skills and levels

Numerous library systems
Resources in multiple languages, including links to reliable public health information in translation

Numerous library systems
The pandemic catalyzed high levels of unemployment and financial precarity, which disproportionately affected newcomers.

Libraries have responded with added supports in these areas.
One-to-one help

Online programs for all

Online employment guides
(www.vpl.ca/siic)
Numerous library systems

Lynda.com

Free video courses made by experts; courses include employment and finance
Partnership programming related to employment and finance

Numerous library systems
Free access to technology and books/entertainment

Numerous library systems
North Vancouver City Library
Burnaby Public Library
Others
The pandemic has generated tremendous stress and limited access to key services.

Newcomers are particularly vulnerable to mental health challenges.

Libraries have pursued ways to support mental health.
Providing information about accessible community services

Numerous library systems
Partnership programming on a wide range of mental health topics

Numerous library systems
Collections and reading recommendations on self-care, self-help and other mental health topics

Numerous library systems
Remember: Libraries are here for you!
Thank You

Mark MacKichan  mark.mackichan@vpl.ca
Shiden Taleban  staleban@cnv.org