



Annual Report

2022-2023



With gratitude for the wisdom of Indigenous Peoples,
we acknowledge that SWAN Vancouver is situated on
the stolen ancestral lands of the x^wməθk^wə́yəm
(Musqueam), Skw̓xwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ
(Tseil-Waututh) Nations.



SWAN Vancouver

When volunteers walked into their first massage parlour with condoms more than 20 years ago, they never expected this small gesture of care and connection would transform into an organization that's still dedicated to im/migrant women engaged in indoor sex work decades later.

Those volunteers only planned to offer HIV harm reduction services, but they quickly realized the women they met faced a slew of issues related to the law, immigration, employment and safety.

SWAN Vancouver's person-centred, low-barrier, anti-racist and rights-based approach has assured women for decades they could continue welcoming us into their workplaces, point colleagues to our services and call us for help.

Some are increasingly involved in providing their perspectives on law reform, media coverage and the sex work industry to directly inform our advocacy, research and policy work. With their insights and experiences, we are able to advocate on their behalf to the government, law enforcement, anti-traffickers and crimmigration systems that often cause harm while trying to help.

SWAN is still a grassroots-at-heart, community-minded charity, but in the last year we've experienced unprecedented growth. We now have a team of 10 staff members and a growing number of volunteers. In this report, you'll see how the SWAN team has contributed to a rapid expansion of our non-stigmatizing, culturally specific services and advocacy.



Speaking on behalf of SWAN Vancouver's Board of Directors, I'm so proud to mark the completion of another year defined by resilience, expansion and transformative change.

A pivotal moment arrived with a significant change in SWAN Vancouver's leadership: after fourteen years of dedicated service, Alison Clancey departed as Executive Director. Her visionary leadership inspired innovative programs and partnerships.

We bid a heartfelt farewell to Alison as she embraces new challenges and adventures. Her contributions are immeasurable, and we wish her joy and success in her future endeavors.

As part of our commitment to SWAN's evolution and growth, we embarked on an exploration of different leadership models, engaging in thoughtful discussions on how best to uphold our mission and elevate the voices of those we serve.

It's an honour to welcome Angela Wu as our new Executive Director. Her enthusiasm and profound understanding of our community and values energize us all. We're also delighted that new board members, Bronwyn McBride, Kelly Yang and Stephanie Sia, joined us this year. Their expertise and dedication further enrich our collective wisdom, and their diverse backgrounds align seamlessly with our mission and invigorate us with their fresh insights and ideas.

In October 2022, SWAN Vancouver celebrated its 20th anniversary, prompting us to reflect on the changes, triumphs, and setbacks we've navigated, and to look forward to the path ahead of us.

Thank you to our tireless and talented staff and to the vibrant community of women we serve. And of course, we extend our deepest gratitude to all our partners, donors and supporters who have stood with us through all our transformations. You make everything possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mindy Abramowitz". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mindy Abramowitz
Board Chair, Co-Treasurer

As I step back as Executive Director in 2023, I reflect on my final year at SWAN. Major organizational change, if done well, takes time. Working collaboratively with SWAN staff and board in 2022-23, I am very proud of the thoughtfulness we engaged in to ensure a seamless transition to Angela Wu's competent leadership.

An essential part of the transition was centering care, safety, and well-being in SWAN's organizational culture, practices, and policies. By investing in these areas, SWAN focused on creating a more sustainable work non-profit environment that is responsive to staff needs and also better equipped to bring about lasting social change alongside the individuals we serve.

If SWAN is to keep operating and serving at the highest level, the time taken to roll out a well-thought-out succession plan that set everyone up for success was time well spent. Grounding SWAN's services, advocacy and activism through a time of major transition laid the pathway for new and exciting directions in the coming years.

I would like to thank all the community partners, donors, and supporters who have supported SWAN over the past 20 years. I would also like to thank the strong, resilient women I have served and worked with for shaping so much of who I am personally and professionally. I will excitedly observe the new heights you will achieve at SWAN from the sidelines.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alancey".

Alison Clancey
Executive Director

2022

April

- Peer Program starts second session of English classes.

May

- Campaign to End Immigration Detention in B.C. Jails (14 days of Action & a [letter](#) to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau).

June

- Red Umbrella March 2022.

July

- Collaboration with Peers Victoria in Victoria.
- B.C. announces it's ending immigration detention in provincial jails.
- [BC BDAR](#) Consultations kick off.

August

- Media Project focus groups.
- Rebranding and website project begins.

September

- First UBC pharmacy student begins practicum with SWAN.

October

- SWAN's 20th anniversary celebration.
- Annual General Meeting.
- Website and rebrand launched.
- Third session of English class begins.
- Law Foundation Racial Justice project launched.
- Halloween English class.

November

- Op-ed published in The Tyee.
- Giving Tuesday campaign starts.
- 12 Days of Action to End Immigration Detention in Provincial Jails.

December

- Annual Volunteer Appreciation event.

2023

January

- Second UBC pharmacy student begins practicum with SWAN.

March

- Second visit to Peers Victoria and knowledge sharing with Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA).
- Law Foundation of BC Racial Justice consultations begin.
- Canadian Women's Foundation's Shockproofing Communities: A National Summit for the Gender-Based Violence Sector in Ottawa.
- Program Manager Kelly Go speaks at the International Women's Day March in Vancouver.
- Staff & Board retreat.
- Farewell to SWAN Executive Director Alison Clancey.

February

- Three Brock University practicum students from Dr. Julie Ham's class examine what community justice looks like for im/migrant sex workers.
- Fourth session of English classes begins, this is the first session with separate beginner and intermediate classes.



SWAN responded to a greater demand for its services with a rapid expansion that involved training new volunteers, adding more outreach routes and hiring a Program Support Worker to help with Outreach and Netreach services.

693 WOMEN SERVED

181 ACCESSED SWAN FOR THE 1ST TIME

708,642 CONDOMS DISTRIBUTED

NETREACH CALLS:

Health accompaniments 30%

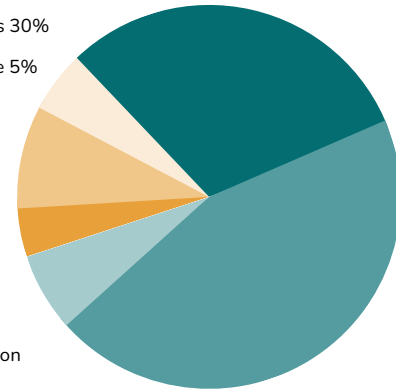
Accessing justice 5%

Legal matters (criminal, family law) 9%

Other (Immigration, housing, Peer Program) 4%

Safety & Violence 7%

Health information 45%



Abuser Alerts sent: 2

Requests for human trafficking support: 0

In the past, requests for harm reduction/safer sex supplies made up more than 60% of Netreach calls. This year, Outreach was able to take full responsibility for these requests because of the addition of a Program Support Worker who supports both the Outreach and Netreach teams.

“On only our second visit to a woman she couldn't stop telling us how thankful she was. The more we talked, the more she opened up about the complex challenges she faces - including trying to balance the demands of her job with taking care of her mother-in-law. It's heartwarming to see how our everyday services actually make a big difference, especially for women who don't have a strong support system in Canada. -Hayley Leung, Outreach Coordinator





PPE DISTRIBUTED:

26,050 MASKS

1042 HAND SANITIZER BOTTLES

521 BOXES OF GLOVES

Outreach

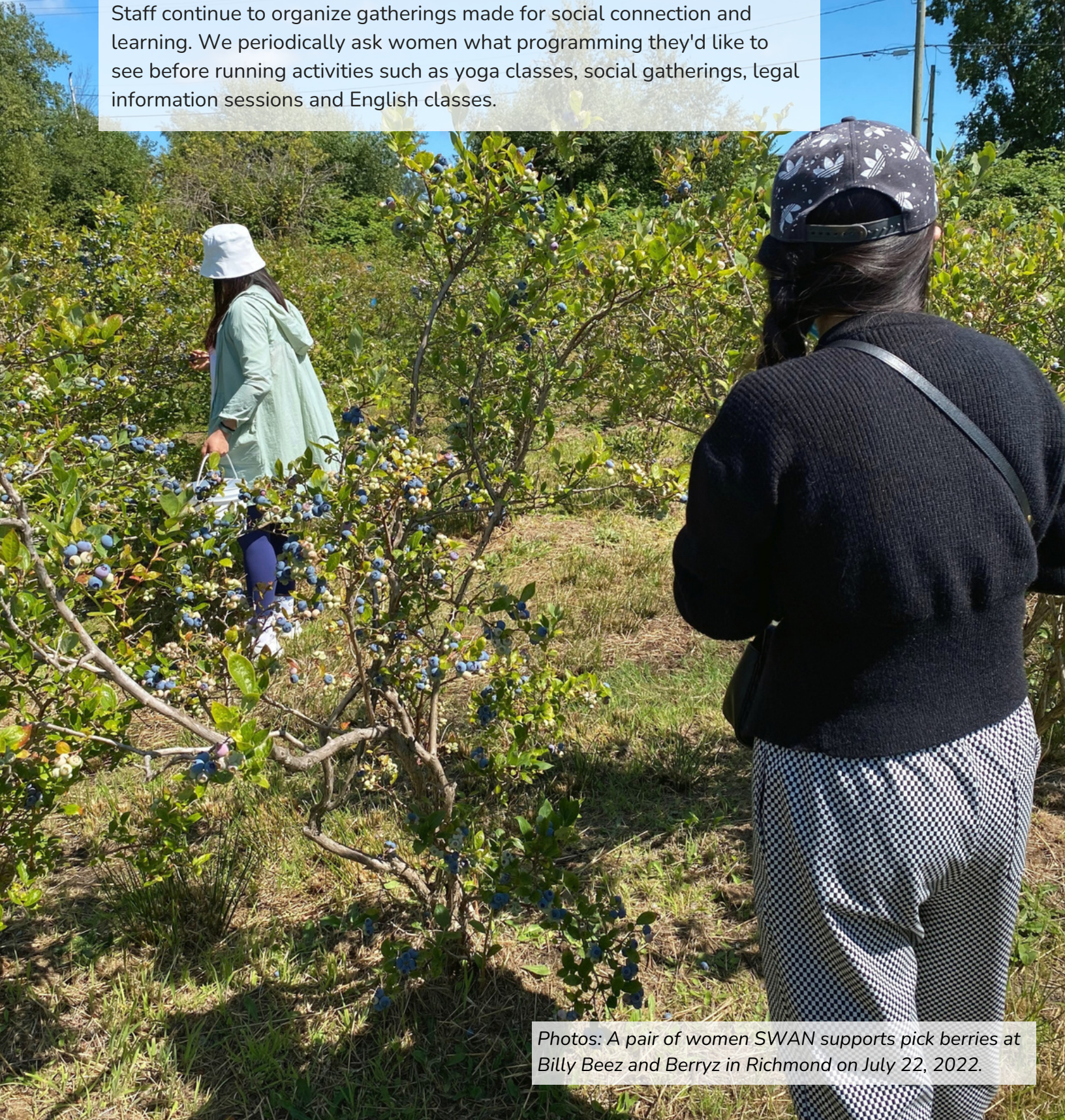
- Almost doubled the number of Outreach volunteers (from 7 to 12) in order to add new routes.
- Expanded Condom Packing Parties to two events a month to meet the demand from women and community members eager to volunteer.
- Collaborated with SHIFT Calgary to drop off supplies.

Netreach

- Supported two women detained at the British Columbia Immigration Holding Centre in Surrey.
- Spoke with multiple clinics to understand their intake process and determine whether women are able to access new clinics. More advocacy work will to be done next year to increase accessibility to health clinics.

*Thanks for SWAN's assistance providing translation and companion service during health appointments. You guys are angels.
-Woman accessing Netreach services*

More women are joining the Peer Program's social gatherings and activities, which shows we're providing safe spaces to build trust and run programs that are person-centred and based on the women's interests. Staff continue to organize gatherings made for social connection and learning. We periodically ask women what programming they'd like to see before running activities such as yoga classes, social gatherings, legal information sessions and English classes.



Photos: A pair of women SWAN supports pick berries at Billy Beez and Berryz in Richmond on July 22, 2022.

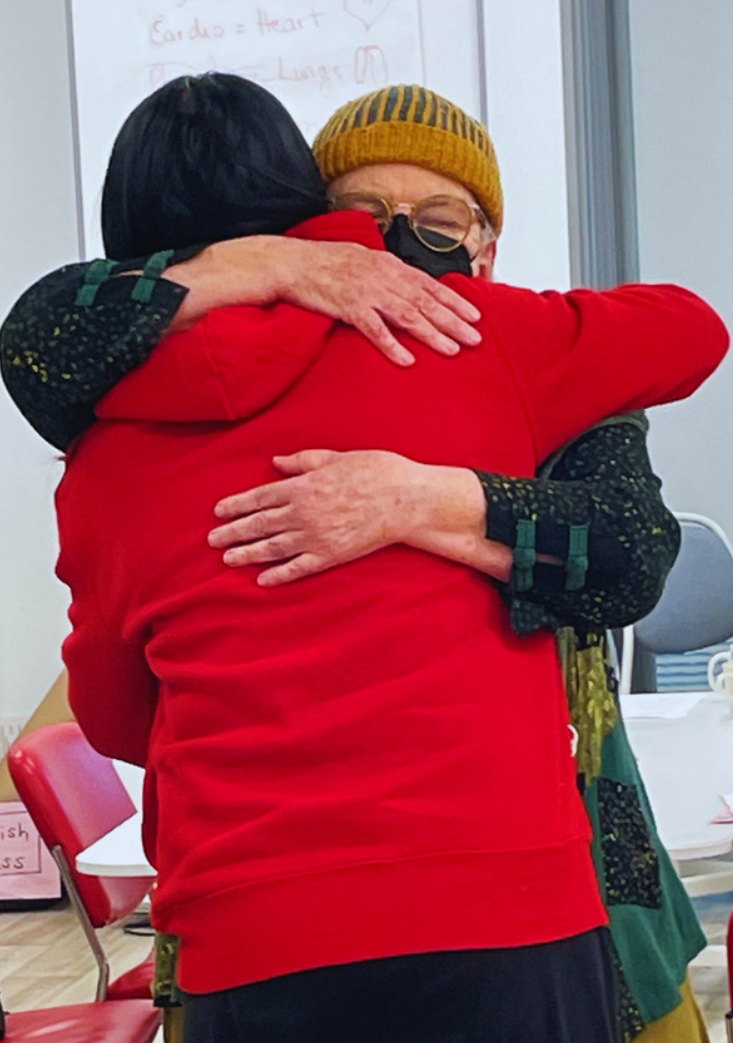
Peer Program Highlights

- Hosted three sessions of English classes.
- Started running separate intermediate and beginner classes.
- Organized activities such as yoga class, berry picking, peer lunches and a Lunar New Year celebration.

English Class

The low-barrier English class serves as a catalyst, not only for enhancing the women's English proficiency but also for fostering a warm circle of friendships. One of the participants enthusiastically shared that her English skills have notably improved since she joined the class. She also happily opened up about her son's wedding and delighted in sharing the delicious dishes she prepared with the group.

Running both intermediate and beginner classes allowed women to feel more comfortable in each class, no matter what level of English proficiency they have. This change was made after some women expressed their English may be “too advanced” for the class, while others felt like they couldn't keep up. SWAN will continue offering separate classes for each level this year with the goal of making the lessons more accessible and specifically designed for the women attending them.



Photos from top: A student hugs her teacher on English class Graduation Day, on November 28, 2022. Students and their teacher hold their certificates on Graduation Day - November 28, 2022.



SWAN is bringing women’s voices to the forefront of its Racial Justice Project by having them inform our research on how the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations’ (IRPR) ban on sex work impacts their rights, health and safety.

This project launched with a broad community consultation between our research team and the women we support. Four women participated in a focus group to ensure the project is informed by the expertise, knowledge and needs of the community we serve.

Because the IRPR interferes with migrants' ability to call police and access justice, we hope this consultation gives the women an opportunity to engage with the law, justice and the law reform process. Participants reviewed the project proposal and draft interview guide to improve the scope, wording, and feasibility (e.g., length, flow, understandability) of the interviews. A final report is expected to be released to the public in 2024.

COLLABORATION - PEERS VICTORIA

Meeting with Peers Victoria

SWAN staff travelled to Vancouver Island to make a lasting impact on im/migrant sex workers in Victoria. We collaborated with Peers Victoria on July 25 and 26, 2022 to assess how the sex worker support organization could make itself more accessible to im/migrant sex workers.



We also visited im/migrant women working in the city to deliver safer sex supplies and personal protective gear (PPE).

SWAN reached a major milestone through its Media Project by hosting its first-ever focus group with the women we support. While they've always been involved in our advocacy through other low barrier means, safety concerns, criminalization and stigma prevented them from feeling safe enough to participate in in-depth consultations with staff - until now!



We continued our three-year Media Project, which aims to shift representations of im/migrant sex workers in the mainstream media. Staff consulted with the women we serve to inform our resources for journalists—digestible documents explaining key issues im/migrant sex workers face, including Canada's laws and policies, poor and inaccurate representation in the media and harmful conflation with human trafficking.

SWAN contracted a media consultant, spoke with reporters, established ResponsibleReporting.ca for journalists' resources, published legal backgrounders and analyses on Bedford, the IRPR and created a Sex Work Law Timeline. SWAN also hired and onboarded a new Project Manager to create more resources and collaborate with a variety of experts.

This year, the Media Project will publish resources for journalists and the general public on sex work laws and policies, ethical and evidence-based reporting, using imagery in sex work reporting and more. A series of original, illustrated videos will also highlight how journalism impacts sex workers. The project will continue to consult with the women SWAN serves and will ensure they have the opportunity to give meaningful input and feedback on resources and ideas. The goal is for newsrooms to adopt responsible, accurate and ethical coverage of sex work and human trafficking.

VISIT
ResponsibleReporting.ca

We understand not all journalists can be experts on every subject – but we hope these resources will help you adopt responsible, accurate and ethical journalism when covering both sex work and trafficking.

2009
Bedford v. Canada, 2010 ONSC 4261 In the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, an application is brought forth by three former and active sex workers challenging the prostitution laws as unconstitutional.
Applicants: Terri-Jean Bedford, Amy Lebovitch

Anti-trafficking law ANALYSIS, BACKGROUNDERS, JOURNALISTS
In 2005, the Canadian gov enacted criminal laws agai human trafficking. To this d despite amendments, this trafficking goes back a sub- basis in empirical evidence
READ MORE

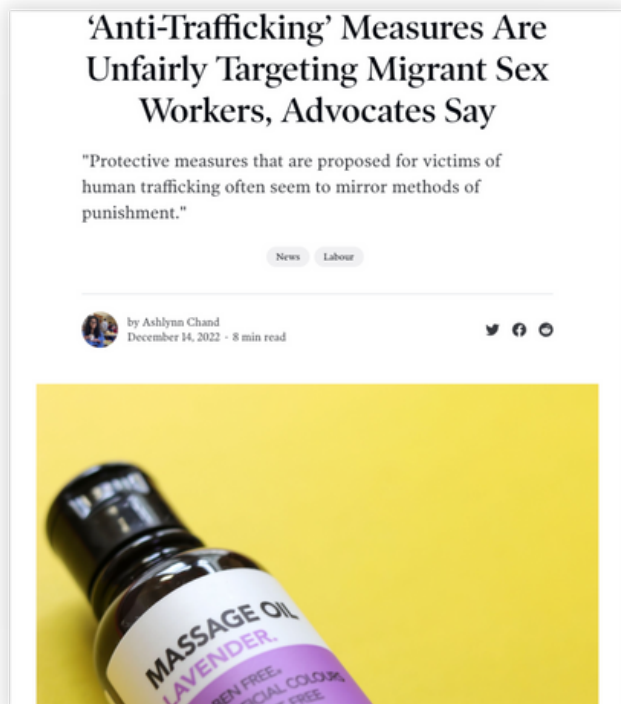
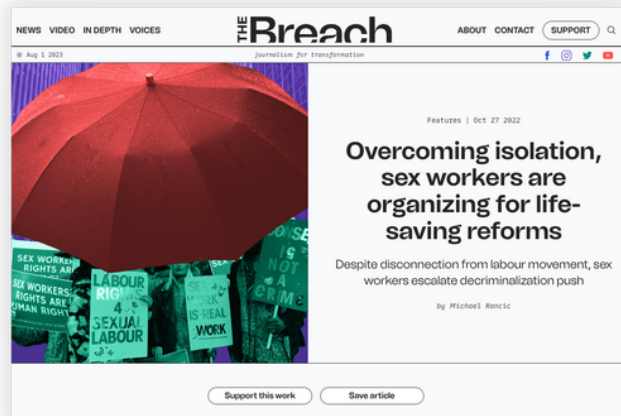
This project has been funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada's Women's Program.

Women and Gender Equality Canada | Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada | Canada

SWAN Vancouver raised awareness about im/migrant sex workers' rights and the harms of conflating sex work with trafficking by speaking with media and using their wide reach to educate the public.

Project Manager Angela Wu was interviewed by journalists from print and online publications that cover local and national news. She also wrote an op-ed about the conflation of sex work with trafficking in [The Tyee](#).

Media engagement is essential to changing the public perception of im/migrant sex workers and advocating for their rights and the full decriminalization of sex work. We're aiming to be the go-to source for media for comment on im/migrant women in sex work and the harms of many anti-trafficking campaigns. In the next year, we'll continue to build our capacity to do more interviews with reporters by having front-line staff and managers complete media training.





SWAN Vancouver and our partners (Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International Canada, the BCCLA and others) contributed to a major victory for migrant rights following the successful End Immigration Detention in B.C. Jails campaign.

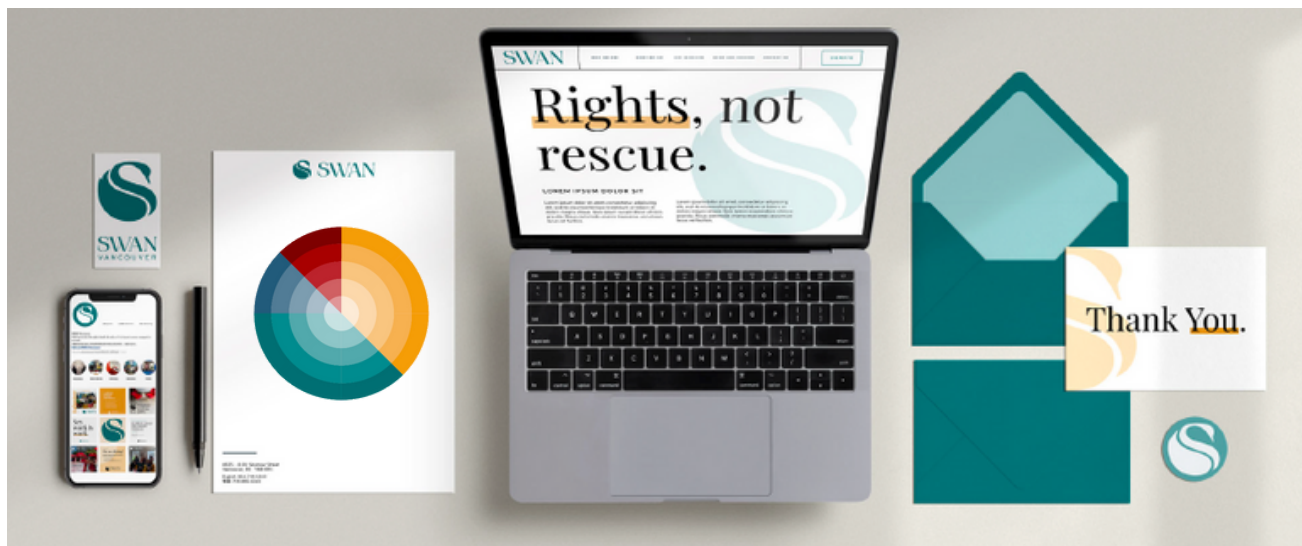
On July 21, 2022, the provincial government announced plans to end its agreement with Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) which involves imprisoning immigration detainees in provincial jails. Several other provinces followed B.C. by also ending their contracts with the CBSA.

In the past year, two women SWAN supports were detained at the British Columbia Immigration Holding Centre in Surrey. Along with our partners, we continue to call on the federal government to end immigration detention across Canada.



(Photos from top left: Advertisement from the campaign End Immigration Detention in B.C. Jails, Program Manager Kelly Go speaks at a Migrant Rights Rally on Sept. 19, 2022. SWAN staff listen to speeches at the International Women's Day March on March 5, 2022.

SWAN staff also regularly attend and speak at rallies and panels. It's just one of the ways we introduce our advocacy for im/migrant sex workers to a broader audience.



Rebranding

We launched the new swanvancouver.ca in October 2022, along with our new logo and brand identity. After reflecting on our core values, mission and vision statements, programs and advocacy, we developed a brand that honours our past and positions ourselves for the future. We want to be seen as safe, supportive and inclusive, yet also convey our tenacity and determination to fight for the rights of the women we serve. The new SWAN logo reflects the women we support, while the colour scheme and fonts we use convey a brand that's inviting and approachable. Our work can be nuanced and complex, but these elements help welcome anyone who wants to learn more.

Communications Strategy

Working with a consultant, SWAN developed a Communications Strategy to propel our advocacy, public education and

further connect with our supporters. The strategy outlines how we can ensure cohesive and consistent messaging on topics including the full decriminalization of sex work and the harms of many anti-trafficking campaigns. While this plan developed a strong foundation for our messaging, it has already evolved through an audit with our new Communications Manager.

Communications Manager

In March 2023, SWAN hired its first Communications Manager. This new role covers media relations, public education and advocacy using tools including the SWAN website and social media. Having a staff member solely dedicated to communications helps us change the public perception of im/migrant sex workers while keeping the public up-to-date on our front-line services. It also frees up SWAN leadership to spend more time on their core work.



Our work would not be possible without our Board of Directors. Thank you to our 2022-23 board members for your dedication.

Jackie Wong, Chair

Mindy Abramowitz, Chair & Co-Treasurer

Jane Li, Vice Chair

Jenny Zhang, Director

Bronwyn McBride, Secretary

Kelly Yang, Co-Treasurer

Steph Sia, Director



- Collaborate with inter-provincial community partners to increase access for im/migrant sex workers in Western Canada.
- Host an open house for individuals accessing our services.
- Offer more English classes and other activities for social connection through the Peer Program.
- Host and facilitate community consultations to inform the creation of a provincial bad date reporting system ([BC BDAR](#)).
- Address misrepresentations of im/migrant sex workers through the Media Project.
- Facilitate practicums for university students.
- Expand our communications and public education efforts.
- Continue to build infrastructure in the areas of human resources, finances, fundraising, and community engagement to ensure we can carry out our mandate.
- Expand volunteer opportunities to the general public.
- Continue to develop new opportunities for im/migrant sex workers to be involved in all levels of our organization.





Angela Wu will lead SWAN Vancouver into a new chapter of growth in front-line services and advocacy. She stepped into the Executive Director role in March 2023, just over a year after launching our Media Project as the Project Manager.

Angela worked for many years in the non-profit sector and holds both a Bachelor of Social Work and an LLM in Human Rights Law, her thesis focused on the impact of Canada's sex work laws on im/migrant sex workers. She is committed to SWAN's mission and looking forward to building a strong foundation for sustainable growth in this new era of the organization.

THE MILNE FAMILY

SWAN Vancouver would like to share its deepest gratitude to the remarkable generosity and ongoing support of the Milne family.

The Milne family's donation of \$50,000 made an enormous impact on our work and the lives of im/migrant women engaged in sex work.

This donation allowed SWAN to create a new position, the Program Support Worker, and lead the way for the rapid expansion of our Outreach Program which has provided hope, relief and a sense of community to newcomer women facing discrimination and criminalization.

Thank you, Milnes, for your extraordinary support!



Through generous donations, SWAN has been able to connect with more im/migrant women engaged in sex work, offer more programs and add new staff positions to support front-line services and develop our public education and advocacy. Thank you to everyone who donated funds or their volunteer time to support our services. For new supporters, there are three ways to give to SWAN:



Sign up to become a monthly donor or make a one-time donation via e-transfer or by mailing a cheque.



Create a legacy donation.

Contact us about how you'd like to set this up.



Volunteer for a Condom Packing Party, our Outreach Team or help with our advocacy.

Charitable tax receipts are available for contributions of \$20 or more.

- \$30 gives one woman the opportunity to participate in an English class.
- \$100 supports transportation costs for one outreach delivery.
- \$150 covers a lunch gathering to reduce isolation and increase access to services.
- \$500+ provides emergency funds for women fleeing violence or exploitation.



REVENUE

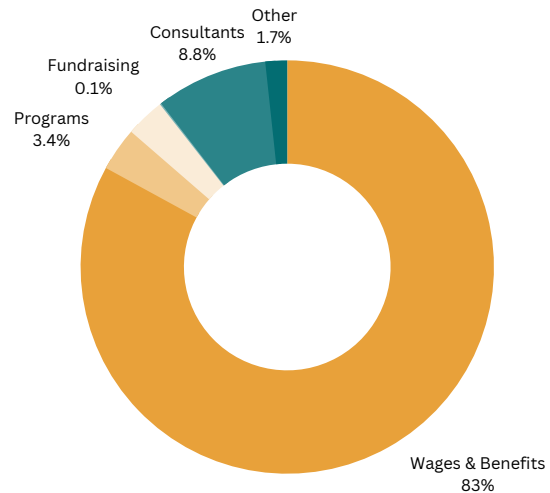
Government Revenue

Federal	554,826
Provincial	30,000
Municipal	32,000
Total Government Revenue	616,826

Other Revenue

Foundations	185,836
Donations	30,746
Service Fees	25,885
Other Contributed Revenue	5,076
Total Other Revenue	247,543

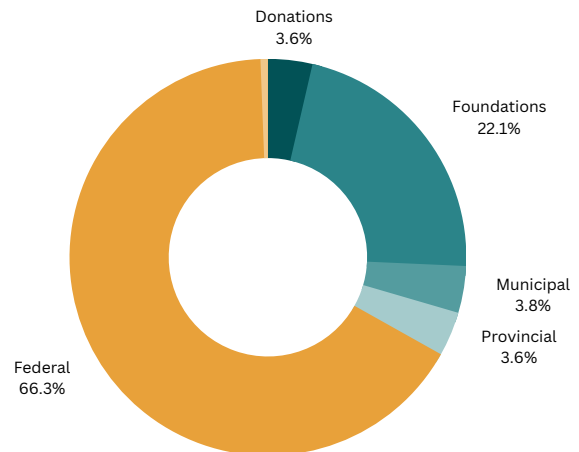
TOTAL REVENUE 864,369



EXPENSES

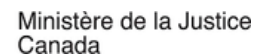
Wages & Benefits	598,340
Programs	24,534
Administration	26,563
Fundraising	1,143
Consultants	63,287
Projects	58,086
Operations	19,572
Publicity and Promotion	9,049
Professional fees	6,328
Other	13,154

TOTAL EXPENSES 820,056



FUNDERS

SWAN would like to thank all our funders for their generous support.





Volunteers have always been an integral part of our organization - they're the friendly faces walking into massage businesses as part of the Outreach Team, they're busy packing safer sex supplies at Condom Packing Parties and they're right beside SWAN staff and allies during marches and rallies to fight for the rights of the women we support.



Thank you for the time you commit to im/migrant women engaged in indoor sex work. We could not do our work without you!





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SWAN
VANCOUVER

