



SWAN
Vancouver

2020–2021
Annual Report



Board Chair's Message

It's been a year of massive change. When I think back to the first meeting of the new SWAN Vancouver board in August 2020, it feels like a long time ago. SWAN has moved through so much in the year since, most notably an ongoing, evolving global pandemic that has emphasized the connections between health and social justice. These are intersections that SWAN's long-standing former board chair, Dr. Julie Ham, has been highlighting in her work with the organization for years, and we carry that today.

The Atlanta murders in March 2021 stopped us in our tracks. The rise of anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic had already been a storm brewing in the year preceding this tragedy. The urgent precariousness with which sex workers have been living through the pandemic alongside a heightening climate of violence against racialized people can be, for individuals, deeply isolating. Atlanta was the site of a horrific tragedy in March 2021. The tragedy led to an unprecedented tidal wave of support and solidarity for Asian im/migrant sex workers. SWAN received a never-before-seen outpouring of community support, public attention, and donations, exceeding anything SWAN had seen since it became a non-profit society in 2002.

I spent many late nights that spring sitting at my kitchen table signing boxes of thank-you cards addressed to hundreds of new donors. It was moving to write to people in my neighbourhood, in communities across B.C., in cities across Canada, the United States, and beyond. How amazing to connect with people across great distances in care and gratitude.

Things are still intense. The challenges and longstanding inequities surfaced by the global pandemic continue. How special, then, to know that alongside great struggle, there is remarkable solidarity in places we might not always expect.

Thank you to everyone, near and far, who has walked alongside SWAN this year. Your presence in this work is felt deeply. It continues to be a source of great light and inspiration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jackie Wong', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Jackie Wong | *Board Chair*

Executive Director's Message

The past year will be remembered not just as the year of COVID-19, but also the year of the Atlanta tragedy and the local spike in Anti-Asian racism. All had a significant impact on the women who access SWAN's services and our organization.

But during these challenging times, I was heartened by the outpouring of community support. So many new community members learned of SWAN's work and became supporters in a myriad of ways. At the time of writing (September 2021), I am pleased to report that SWAN just reached \$50,000 in Covid Relief distribution. On behalf of everyone at SWAN, we are so very appreciative of the messages, fundraisers and all the other ways individuals and businesses supported the women we serve over the past year.

I am inspired by SWAN staff, board and volunteers who day in, day out addressed the challenges that came our way. I feel so proud and appreciative of how professionally you responded and all that you accomplished. Through adversity comes strength. As a result, SWAN is a much stronger organization moving into 2021-2022.

And finally, SWAN said good-bye to its long-serving operational board this past year. I am so very appreciative for your contributions to the organization over the years. It was a pleasure to learn from you. Your input and presence will be greatly missed.



Alancey

Alison Clancey
Executive Director



The Year in Review

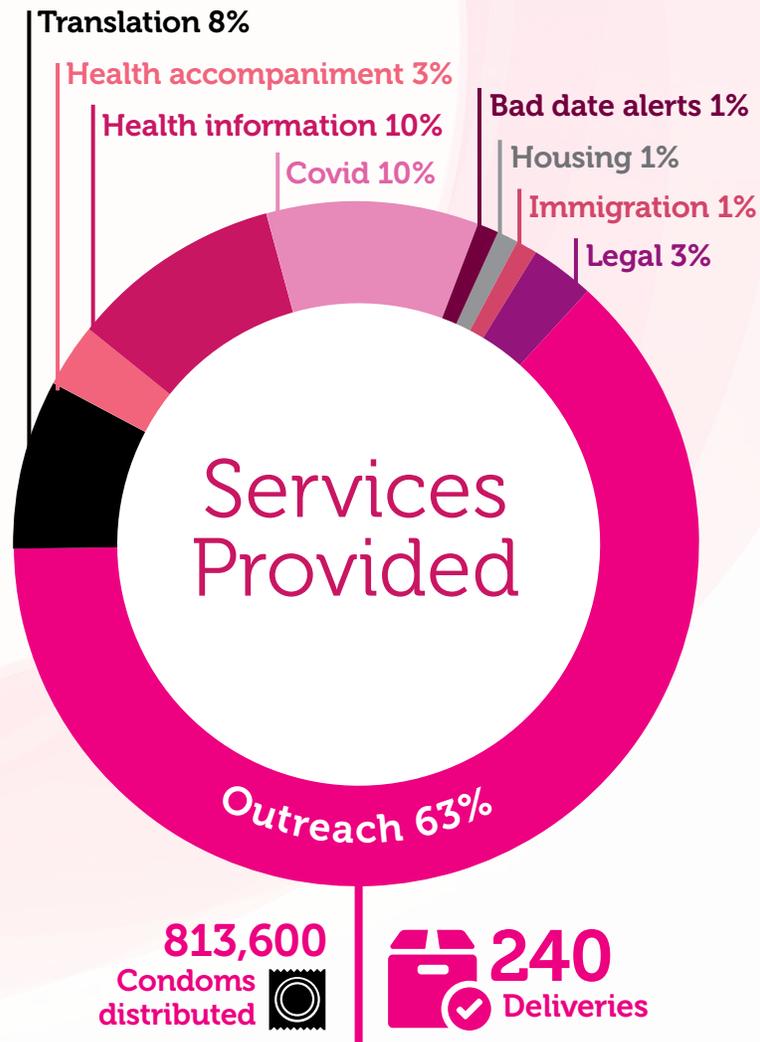
SWAN's 2020-2021 Highlights

- April** • COVID-19 frontline service adaptation
• Covid Relief Fund (round one)
- June** • Support provided for massage parlour reopenings
- July** • Governance board transition
- August** • SWAN participates in Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women's participatory action research examining barriers to labour and economic (re)integration for women in international migration corridors
• Gender equity roundtable with Mayor Stewart
- September** • 1st Condom Packing Party
• Journal article (Anti-Trafficking Review)
• Federal lobbying to repeal immigration prohibition on sex work
- October** • City of Richmond policy advocacy
• Peer Program launch
• Anti-Trafficking: Harming While Trying to Help project launch
• Media Training
- November** • New office relocation
- December** • Multilingual legal rights webinar
• Free clinical counseling provided to women
- January** • Covid Relief Fund (round two)
• Community presentation (SUCCESS)
- February** • June 21 National Indigenous Peoples Day declared organizational stat holiday
- March** • Along with PACE, Peers Victoria, WISH and Living in Community, SWAN secured funding for a provincial bad date reporting system
• Multilingual COVID-19 mental health webinar
• For two weeks, SWAN is one of the top three charities receiving donations on CanadaHelps
• SWAN Advisory Board Member Dr. Menaka Raguparan joins international panel, 'Gender, migration and work: Lived experiences of migrant and trafficked women in South America and Canada'

Our Response

413 Women served

139 New women



Requests for human trafficking support: 0

Soon Chung Park 박순정, age 74
Hyun Jung Grant [김]현정, age 51
Sun Cha Kim 김선자, age 69
Yong Ae Yue 유영애, age 63
Delaina Ashley Yaun, age 33
Paul Andre Michels, age 54
Xiaojie Tan 谭小洁, age 49
Daoyou Feng 冯道友, age 44

SWAN's Response

In addition to providing front-line supports, SWAN launched a seven-day call-to-action highlighting Canada's criminalization of massage workers—criminalization that fuels systemic violence. Canada's immigration prohibition on sex work, combined with prostitution and anti-trafficking laws, result in violence perpetrated by predators who act with impunity, and law enforcement initiatives that seek to "protect" women through "forced rescue", i.e. raids that often result in arrest, detention and deportation.

SWAN also joined with six other Canadian organizations in signing a [community statement](#) highlighting the racist, anti-migrant and anti-sex worker policies that reduce the rights and safety of Asian women and communities, making horrific events like the shootings in Atlanta possible.

SWAN continues its public education and awareness-raising efforts in the aftermath of Atlanta. SWAN staff did an overwhelming amount of media in regard to the issues the women who work in massage businesses face. Links to all media can be viewed [here](#).

We also continue to advocate for the decriminalization of sex work and the repeal of the immigration prohibition on sex work so that labour and legal protections can become a reality for im/migrant women who do sex work.

Atlanta 16 March 2021 We Remember

The Atlanta massacre exemplified the worst culmination of stigma, misogyny, and anti-Asian racism among other factors. Mass protests against anti-Asian racism swept across the world. SWAN immediately made support available to the women who access our services.

As one of the very few organizations in North America serving Asian women who work in massage businesses, SWAN was cast under a bittersweet, unprecedented spotlight. In the week following the shootings, SWAN received more public interest, media requests and donations than we had received in the organization's entire 19-year history. Our social media audience more than doubled overnight. Between April and June, we experienced an extraordinary 15-fold increase in monthly donors and nearly 1,200 other new donors.

One hundred percent of funds donated to the COVID-19 Relief Fund went directly to women. Other donations are being used to amplify women's voices. To this end, SWAN is creating an online version of its photovoice art exhibition wherein women photographed aspects of their lives including their families, homes, hobbies, dreams, and travels to counter the one-dimensional stereotypes that are the basis for so much public discourse around human trafficking. SWAN is also developing a community-based zine wherein women can express their lived realities through various artistic means. Other donations will support peer-led programs such as English classes.

We are humbled by the outpouring of community support. We are grateful to everyone who organized and participated in local fundraisers for SWAN and other Asian-serving organizations. From bake sales to craft fairs, tattoo raffles, art and music events, local businesses and individuals shared so generously. We are inspired by the creativity, innovation and solidarity that brought so many people and communities together in connection to SWAN.

COVID-19 Response

Many im/migrant sex workers experienced a sudden loss of income at the outset of the pandemic all the while grappling with Vancouver's 717% increase in anti-Asian hate crimes. With women's lives upended, SWAN experienced a 490% increase in demand for services in March 2020.

Fortunately, SWAN's online outreach program (Netreach) predated the pandemic. SWAN was well-positioned to address the challenges many non-profits experienced in providing virtual services for the first time.

To inform our COVID response, SWAN carried out peer-led community consultations in June. Women overwhelmingly requested accessible, up-to-date information. To address this self-identified need, SWAN translated public health orders, COVID FAQs, information about employer's responsibilities, information about authorities and women's rights, and SWAN's COVID-specific services in order to support informed decision-making among the women we serve.

SWAN adapted our outreach services to include no-contact deliveries of personal protective equipment.

Later in the year as COVID-related mental health impacts came to the fore, SWAN hosted a webinar that discussed strategies for managing work and life pandemic stressors. A Chinese counsellor answered attendees' questions in a live Q&A.

"This webinar was really helpful and helped me understand the idea of self-care, which I never really thought of before and how important it is no matter how busy life is."

~ SWAN Participant

Additionally, with funding provided by the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund administered by the United Way, SWAN made free clinical counselling available. SWAN would like to thank clinical counselors Michelle Wing (Pamati Counselling), Nadine Tilma (Live on Point Counselling) and Sharon Kwok (One Mindfully Counselling), who specialize in BIPOC counselling and provided multilingual options.

Due to the overwhelming generosity of donors, SWAN distributed \$31,000 to 122 women who lost income because of COVID-19 and were struggling. We really can't thank those who contributed enough.

In meeting women's self-identified needs, SWAN always prioritizes safe accessibility, and we were already providing remote outreach through our Netreach program. The pandemic did at times limit our outreach program, and that made for some difficulty in sustaining connections and finding non-judgemental, accessible and safe housing options for women - particularly as hidden homelessness numbers increased significantly. COVID increased women's social isolation and it's been much harder to maintain health, safety and well-being."

**~ Alice Xiao,
Senior Outreach Worker**

We delivered


**13,091
masks**


**403
bottles
of hand
sanitizer**


**3,362
pairs of
gloves**



"SWAN is like my family."

**"I'm so grateful
SWAN is here."**

**"Thank you for your
company along the way...
You're like a lighthouse;
you make me feel safe
and hopeful."**

~ SWAN Participant



FEATURED PROGRAM

Peer Program

Offering peer services has been a complex service area for SWAN since its inception. Canada's immigration, sex work and trafficking laws result in multi-layered criminalization and stigmatization, which create significant barriers for many im/migrant sex workers in accessing community services, including SWAN. The laws also create formidable grey legal areas with respect to working with and hiring im/migrant sex workers.

At SWAN, peers are defined as any individuals with lived experience, including but not limited to sex work; many women who access SWAN's services do not self-identify as 'sex workers'. In being as inclusive as possible, SWAN's conception of 'peer' is rooted in the identities articulated by the women themselves, as well as learnings from the global community of peer service providers.

Thanks to City of Vancouver funding, SWAN engaged in an extensive environmental scan in the development of our peer program. The findings highlighted that 'by, with and for' services are not always the preferred service model by the communities of im/migrant women SWAN serves. After two years of painstaking research, a legal opinion and community consultations, SWAN exercised exhaustive diligence in creating a peer program that is culturally appropriate, inclusive and genuinely representative of the women we serve. The Canadian Women's Foundation has generously funded the program for the years 2021, 2022, and 2023.

SWAN's Peer Program provides opportunities for im/migrant women to lead and participate in the cultural, social and educational activities they collectively determined and prioritized themselves. We are proud to offer low-barrier, peer-led activities, which take into consideration a complex intersection of race, sexuality, gender, class, occupation, immigration status and language accessibility.

FEATURED PROJECT

Harms of Anti-Trafficking

In October, SWAN launched **Anti-Trafficking: Harming While Trying to Help**, a multimedia project. The global launch event included a screening of the project's video and a moderated panel discussion featuring four leaders in anti-trafficking discourse and policy.

SWAN felt this project was necessary since more and more people are learning about human trafficking and feel compelled to do something about it. Unfortunately, this desire to take action is not always expressed in productive ways. Some campaigns are ineffective. Some campaigns are harmful and actually increase vulnerability to human trafficking. By raising awareness about the negative consequences of mainstream anti-trafficking campaigns, SWAN works with community to address the harms.

Through a video, guidebook, reading list and monthly action group, the project aims to raise awareness about the harmful social and political impacts of mainstream anti-trafficking campaigns.

SWAN would like to thank LUSH Cosmetics for funding this project.



A new community group that will raise awareness about the negative consequences of anti-trafficking campaigns

MAKING IT ALL POSSIBLE

Staff & Board

2020 was a year of extraordinary growth for SWAN. As we expanded services through multiple short- and long-term projects over the course of the pandemic, our team also expanded in rapid measure. Our heartfelt thanks to the many folks who joined our team this year! Regardless of the length of time our collaborations entailed, your contributions to women the SWAN serves and to our organization's evolution have been invaluable. Our **core team** continues to work tirelessly to provide frontline services and systemic advocacy.

We are incredibly grateful to our **Board of Directors**, whose commitment to SWAN's governance continues to sustain the work our

mission requires: Jackie Wong, Board Chair; Jane Li, Vice-Chair; Mindy Abramowitz, Treasurer; Kim Mackenzie, Secretary; Jenny Zhang, Director and Menaka Raguparan, Advisory Board Member.

Unfortunately, SWAN lost most of its volunteers during the pandemic. In 2021, SWAN will focus on rebuilding its volunteer program.

Decision-making at SWAN is based not on job titles, but rather ethical, inclusive, and collaborative processes amongst everyone involved in driving SWAN's mission forward. Through ongoing community consultations that prioritize safety and anonymity, im/migrant women who do sex work are at the core of all aspects of decision-making at SWAN. We are grateful to these women for their trust and direction until it is safe for more of them to publicly do so without risk of immediate arrest, detention and deportation.

The Year Ahead: 2021-2022

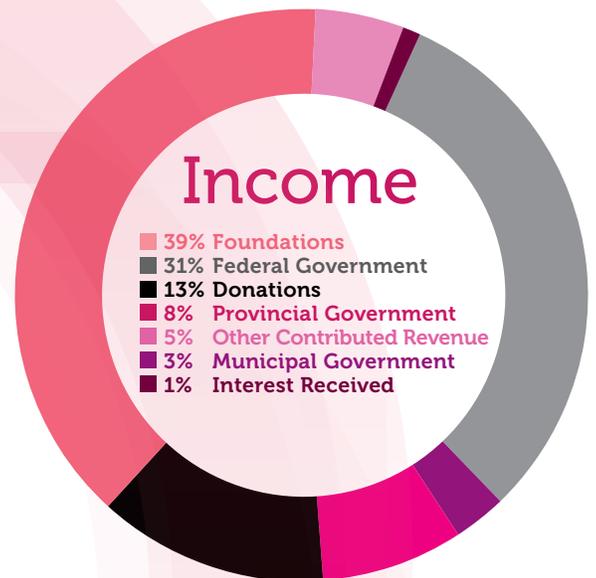
- The year ahead is bright with SWAN having secured new multi-year funding to expand our services.
- We will work with community agencies in the Yukon and BC to increase accessibility for im/migrant sex workers, a need that was identified during the pandemic.
- We will extend our outreach services to include the new detention centre in Surrey.
- Our new Outreach and Volunteer Coordinator will engage new volunteers through several exciting volunteer opportunities.
- Internally, we will continue to build infrastructure in the areas of human resources, communications, fundraising and community engagement to ensure we can carry out our rapidly expanding scope of frontline services and systemic advocacy.
- A new project will address media misrepresentations of im/migrant sex workers, which has (mis)informed public perception and criminalization via laws, policy, and policing.
- The Peer Program will continue to grow and offer various social, legal, health and other activities.
- SWAN will provide opportunities for im/migrant sex workers to participate in the community consultations that will inform the provincial bad date reporting system.

Financials

April 2020–March 2021

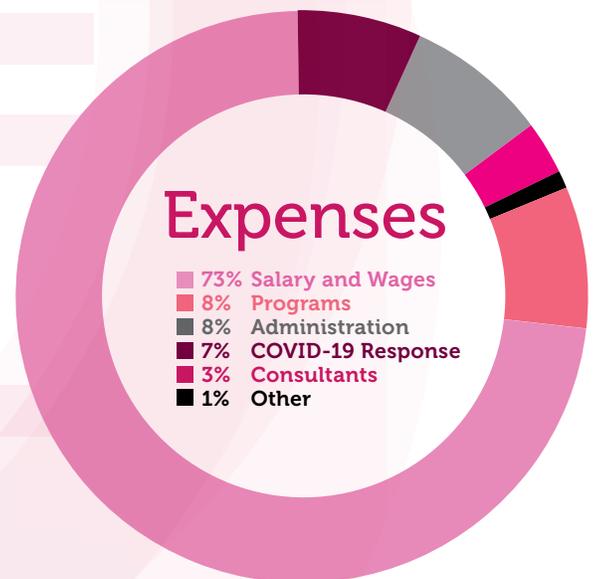
INCOME

Government Revenue	
Federal	132,023.00
Provincial	30,000.00
Municipal	10,000.00
Total government revenue	\$ 172,023.00
Other revenue	
Foundations	152,403.00
Donations	52,836.63
Other Contributed Revenue	17,877.16
Interest Received	127.81
Total Other Revenue	\$ 223,244.60
Total Income	\$ 395,267.60



EXPENSES

Salary and Wages	266,903.91
Programs	30,474.11
Administration	27,299.72
COVID-19 Response	24,786.36
Consultants	12,484.19
Other	4,746.48
Total Expenses	\$ 366,694.77
Excess of Revenues Over Expenses	\$ 28,572.83



Funders

SWAN acknowledges the invaluable support of our funders





#325 - 1101 Seymour Street,
Vancouver BC, V6B 0R1

604-719-6343 (English)
778-865-6343 (Cantonese & Mandarin)

Charitable Registration Number: 853176295RR0001

Get Involved

To learn of current volunteer opportunities, contact **Judy Lee** at **604 719 6343** or outreach@swanvancouver.ca

Support our Work

To learn more about how you can give, check out our **donations options**. Tax receipts are issued for contributions over \$20.

Stay Informed

Stay informed about SWAN's work, in addition to news from across Canada and around the world related to sex work and critical anti-trafficking discourse. Like, share, and join a conversation to strengthen community.



With gratitude for the wisdom of all First Peoples, we acknowledge that we live and work on the stolen ancestral lands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.