



kandelialia

REMOVING BARRIERS TO IMMIGRANT
AND REFUGEE SUCCESS

**Impact Report
2023**

A Message from Our Co-Executive Directors



Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

We are thrilled to introduce ourselves as Kandelia's new Co-Executive Directors – and yes, there are 3 of us! While a shared leadership model might be new to some, there are good reasons why this is becoming more common in the nonprofit sector.

If you know anyone who worked in nonprofit organizations through the Covid-19 pandemic, you've probably heard stories of exhaustion and burnout. Organizations working with vulnerable populations had to pivot almost overnight, finding new ways to deliver services and resources to those most impacted by the pandemic.

Kandelia's Board of Directors decided to bring on three Co-Executive Directors for several reasons. One obvious advantage of a shared leadership model is that there isn't one person carrying the burden of leading our organization, creating greater resilience and stability for Kandelia's future. We're able to lean on one another and provide support, whether it's different perspectives during a difficult decision or coverage during a vacation. Shared leadership also enables

us to live into our values of supporting staff wellbeing and mental health. Lastly, we each come to our current roles with very different backgrounds and areas of expertise. Our strengths complement each other, and give Kandelia a stronger foundation as we prepare to expand our services to reach more students and families.

Most importantly, we come to this work with a shared commitment to breaking down barriers to opportunities for immigrant and refugee communities. We hope you join us.

In community,

Tamthy Le

Executive Director, Programs

Julie MacDonald

Executive Director, Finance & Operations

Kristina Rallu

Executive Director, Development & Communications

MEET OUR CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



Tamthy Le, Executive Director of Programs, is the daughter of Vietnamese refugees and was born and raised in South Seattle. She holds a BA in Social Welfare with a minor in Diversity from University of Washington. Tamthy has been working in youth development since 2010 and joined Kandelia as a Youth Case Manager in 2014. Since then, she's held several leadership roles within the organization, including Program Director, Associate Director, and Interim Executive Director.



Julie MacDonald, Executive Director of Finance and Operations, holds a BA in Accounting from Seattle University. She has 20+ years of international experience in finance, operations, and strategic planning. During her tenure working at the United Nations in the World Food Programme, she led country-wide food assistance operations serving 1.5M refugees and nationals with a \$70M+ annual budget.



Kristina Rallu, Executive Director of Development and Communications, holds a BA in Psychology and MA in Education from Stanford University, and a MBA from ESSEC Business School. She has been working in education and nonprofit fundraising since 2007. Her career includes 6 years as an elementary school teacher in low-income schools in California and 7 years in fundraising, partnership management, and team leadership at Treehouse, a nonprofit serving youth in foster care across Washington State.



Big Picture: Our Focus Over the Past Year

INVESTING IN OUR STAFF

One of Kandelia's key strengths is that the majority of our staff come from the communities we serve, allowing us to lead programs with lived experience and careful intention. However, this means that our team is impacted by many of the same challenges facing the youth and families in our programs. The open xenophobia embraced by the previous administration specifically targeting our Muslim communities and communities south of the US border, acute racial tensions in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, and the anti-Asian hate fueled by the Covid-19 pandemic all landed heavily on Kandelia's staff. While our team was doing everything we could to take care of the communities

we serve, we realized we needed to do more at Kandelia to support rest, healing, and wellbeing for our staff.

Over the past year Kandelia expanded our staff benefits to include full insurance premium coverage, a wellness budget, Orca cards, and 403(b) retirement matching. We also added paid wellness days to our staff calendar, including a 2-week winter holiday break and paid Fridays off in July and August. These investments in our staff wellbeing help sustain our organization and ensure we can continue providing support to our community for years to come. We hope to see the practice of investing in staff wellness expand within and outside of the nonprofit field.

RESPONDING TO CHANGING IMMIGRATION TRENDS

Kandelias mission is to remove barriers to opportunities so immigrant and refugee communities can flourish without compromising values, heritage, or ethnicity. We can't achieve our mission unless we adapt to meet the needs of our region's ever-changing immigrant and refugee communities.

In recent years we've seen an increased number of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees and asylum seekers in our community and among our students. In response, Kandelias has expanded our Family Programs to include Afghan and Ukrainian Refugee Programs, and we've hired a Ukrainian-speaking Family Programs Coordinator. While most of Kandelias programs are

delivered in connection with Seattle World School, we've partnered with the Seattle Public Schools district to expand our refugee program recruitment across Seattle and King County.

Kandelias Refugee Program provides workshops to help newly arrived families navigate the school system and connect with local resources. We also provide tutoring for Afghan youth near the homes of students to help minimize transportation barriers. Kandelias contracts with community members to help lead and facilitate workshops in Dari and Pashto (the official languages of Afghanistan) and ensure we're responding to the nuanced needs of Afghan families.





Kandelia's Programs

Kandelia's programs fall into three main categories: Youth, Family, and Food Access. While each program has its own dedicated staff, services across programs are integrated and mutually reinforcing.

Participants in Kandelia's Family Programs learn (among other things) how to navigate the US education system and support their children in schools. Many of their children

are in our Youth Programs, and the majority also receive weekly food bags from our Food Access Program. This integrated programming allows us to build more robust relationships with our community, and, along with intentional data gathering such as phone calls, listening circles, and surveys, informs our ability to provide services that are responsive to ever-changing needs.





FAMILY PROGRAMS

Kandelias Family Programs help immigrant and refugee families access and navigate resources, build skills towards English proficiency, computer literacy, and self-sufficiency, and gain community connections and a sense of belonging. Our program includes a combination of ongoing classes and topic-specific workshops to address needs identified by families.

Our 2022-2023 Classes

- Digital Literacy
- English Conversation Classes
- English for Beginners
- English Literacy for Adults
- Social Hours (language-specific classes focused on community connections)



2022-2023 Workshops

- Financial Literacy & How to Set Up a Bank Account
- Guiding Good Choices (preventing youth substance abuse)
- High School & Beyond
- How to Get Your GED
- Navigating Health Systems
- Navigating the Seattle School System
- Seattle World School Safety Meeting
- Social & Emotional Learning Support for Children

FAMILY PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS

615 hours of English instruction

476 hours of digital literacy instruction

1300+ hours of classes and workshops provided in total!

132 active participants, providing services for 417 total household members

125 participants obtained Northstar Digital Literacy Certificates



STAFF SPOTLIGHT: GAUGDY & GUSTAVO

One of our Family Program Instructors, Gaugdy Morales, is an alumni of our programs herself. Gaugdy was first introduced to Kandelia when her son Gustavo attended Seattle World School and enrolled in our programs. A few years after attending our programs, she joined us as an instructor, committed to supporting families like her own. Gustavo also joined the team as Youth Program Coordinator in 2022, and his lived experience and connection to our youth has made him a great addition to our growing team.

WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

- Pre-pandemic Kandelia's family programs were delivered in person. Families have told us it's much easier to fit online classes into their schedules, so we're staying virtual.
- Our two English Conversation classes were so popular and well attended that we added a third weekly session to our class offerings!



YOUTH PROGRAMS

Kandelias Youth Programs help students build community, develop new skills and interests, improve their English, and access tutoring and academic support. Each year we develop our after-school programming based on student interests and needs. We’ve had huge, sustained interest in soccer over the past several years so soccer programming is now a regular part of our schedule.

Students have expressed a desire for more connection and community following the social isolation caused by the pandemic.

Kandelias staff collaborated with students to form Newcomer Club, an after-school program where students were empowered to plan their own curriculum and learning goals. Newcomer Club has become our most popular after-school program, where students can develop friendships, discuss challenges, and go on field trips around Seattle to explore their new home. Newcomer Club also planned our Culture Fair this past June, and did an amazing job of putting together multicultural games, food, and student performances for the entire school and broader community.

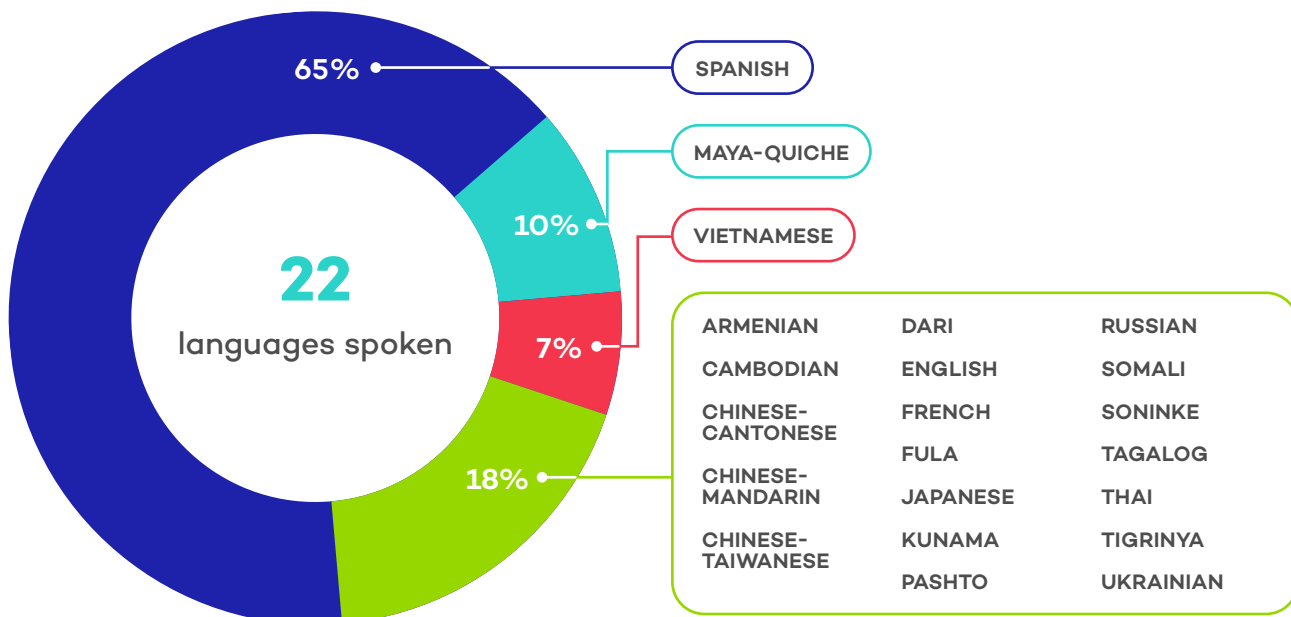
Youth Programs Offered in 2022-2023

- Badminton
- Boy’s Soccer
- Club Wellness
- Digital Storytelling
- Drama
- English Club
- Film Making
- Girl’s Sports
- Guitar - Beginner
- Guitar - Intermediate
- Homework Help
- Job Readiness Training with El Centro de la Raza
- Newcomer Club
- Rock Climbing
- Swimming

YOUTH PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS

131 active participants

24 countries represented



WHAT WE'RE LEARNING

- Youth engagement and interest in school dropped significantly during the pandemic, so we've increased our efforts to build relationships and design programming that interests our students. This year we conducted 5 student listening circles at Seattle World School and one at Garfield High School, reaching 72 students total.
- Many students contribute financially to help support their families here and in their home countries, and find it hard to balance school and work. In response to student feedback we've decided to not bring back Saturday School, which was offered pre-pandemic. We also offer students stipends for some key after-school programs and leadership activities.
- After a long school day students want to learn English through fun activities with peers rather than formal after-school instruction.



FOOD ACCESS PROGRAM

Kandelias Food Access Program was born out of need during the pandemic, and has become our most requested resource for students and families. By partnering with local food banks, including Rainier Valley Food Bank and St. Mary's, we provide food bags to over 80 families each week throughout the school year and during summer school. Food bags are distributed at the school, removing transportation

and logistical challenges to accessing resources. Groceries include fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, and pantry staples. We also supplement food bags with culturally relevant food items depending on each families' specific needs.

Our Food Access Program also provides snacks at school and basic need items throughout the school year, including winter accessories, diapers, toiletries, and grocery store gift cards for school breaks.

SOME OF THE FOOD WE PROVIDE:



FAMILIES LIKE

- Fruit, bananas
- Protein, meats, beans, beef, chicken
- Vegetables, onions, peppers
- Tomato paste
- Noodles

SUPPLEMENTED WITH

- Beans, lentils, fish
- Noodles, rice, maseca
- Herbs, cilantro, ginger, jalapenos, galangal, nuts
- Yams, green onions, mangos, limes,
- Fish sauce, sriracha, curry, East African spices, hoisin sauce, oil

FOOD ACCESS BY THE NUMBERS:

611

total household members supported across **124 families**

\$80k+

worth of food distributed, including **2,511 bags of groceries and 10,000+ snacks**

1149

touch points with families



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: RAINIER VALLEY FOOD BANK

When our Food Access Program began in 2020 in direct response to the economic impact of the pandemic, we worked with Rainier Valley Food Bank to provide groceries for our students each week. Over the last three years, RVFB has remained a key partner and supplies the majority of the food in our weekly food bags. Their partnership has helped to create necessary consistency and reliability within our food bag program.

Otis Pimpleton, Warehouse Manager at RVFB, shared that partnering with Kandelia has allowed them to access more people in need of food. Otis says, “We get to feed a lot of people that we wouldn’t - we’re reaching a lot more students and people in schools and their families. It’s been a really good thing for the community.”



WHAT WE’RE LEARNING

- Our families have a strong preference for fresh produce over canned food. We were able to work with our food bank partners to include more fresh produce in each week’s food bags.
- Each family has a unique situation in terms of household size, individual needs, and living situation. We tailor food bags to address not only cultural needs, but also things like family size and whether families are able to prepare food in a kitchen.

Huge thanks to Kandelia's Volunteers and Partners!

Our work would not be possible without the many dedicated volunteers who show up to assist with after school classes, tutor students, support Kandelia events, pack weekly food bags, and so much more. Our work also depends on a network of organizations that partner for enrichment activities, field trips, workshops, and more. Thank you for being part of the network of support for recently arrived immigrant and refugee students and families!



Asian Counseling Referral Services



Rainier Valley Food Bank



Byrd Barr Place



Refugee Women's Alliance



Cultures United



Seattle Bouldering Project



El Centro de la Raza



Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority



Food Bank at St Mary's



Seattle Parks and Rec



George Fleming Place



Seattle Public Schools



Jack Straw



Seattle World School



King County Metro



SG Education Consulting



Nature Conservancy



YMCA



Nuevo Foundation



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