



# Provincial Filipino Cultural Centre

## What We Heard Report July 2025

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# Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all the Filipino Canadian organizations, community leaders, and advocates who contributed their time, thought and energy to the B.C. Government's provincial Filipino cultural centre survey. Your time, voices, and commitment have played a vital role in advancing a shared vision for a centre that is led by, supports and responds to the needs of the Filipino community in B.C.

We recognize that there may be groups or individuals that have unintentionally been missed in our acknowledgements. Please know that your efforts are appreciated. Whether you promoted the survey, encouraged others to complete it, or simply shared your story, your support has made a difference and we are deeply grateful.

Representatives from the following organizations participated in the community roundtables hosted by the Province:

Benguet Society of BC  
Fil-Can Cultural Heritage Society  
Filipino BC  
Grupo Ilocano Association of BC  
Kathara Society - Pilipino Indigenous Arts Collective  
Mabuhay House Society  
Migrante BC  
National Pilipino Canadian Cultural Centre (NPC3)  
One Filipino Co-operative of BC  
Philippine Bayanihan Community Centre  
Philippine Cultural Arts Society of BC (PhilCAS)  
Sliced Mango Collective  
United Filipino Canadian Associations in BC (UFCABC)  
Victoria Filipino-Canadian Association (VFCA)  
Victoria Filipino Canadian Caregivers Association (VFCCA)

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the late Alden E. Habacon (June 13, 1974 - December 2, 2024), Vice President of the National Pilipino Canadian Cultural Centre — a diversity and inclusion strategist, community advocate, and champion for arts, culture, and community.

# Message from the Minister:

## Anne Kang



On behalf of the Government of British Columbia, it is my honour to celebrate and acknowledge the vibrant and vital contributions of the Filipino Canadian community to the cultural, social and economic fabric of British Columbia.

Over the past year, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport has listened closely to the voices of Filipino Canadians throughout the province. We've heard your call for a dedicated space — a provincial Filipino cultural centre — where heritage is honoured, stories are shared and community connections are deepened.

This report captures the voices of more than 1,200 people who generously shared their hopes, ideas and priorities through a province-wide survey and roundtables. Through these forums people offered thoughtful and heartfelt responses about what this centre could be — not just for today's communities, but for future generations who will grow up prouder and more connected to their cultural roots.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who participated, whether by completing the survey, attending a roundtable, or spreading the word within your networks. Your time, stories and wisdom are deeply appreciated.

It is important to acknowledge the profound grief and lasting impact the Lapu Lapu Day tragedy has had on the Filipino community and honour the memories of those lost. It also reaffirms our commitment to ensuring that the proposed cultural centre is a space for the recognition and representation of Filipino culture for future generations.

This report will guide our next steps in exploring how we can support the development of a provincial Filipino cultural centre that is shaped by — and for — the community it will serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Kang".

Hon. Anne Kang

Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport

# Background

The Filipino-Canadian community is an integral part of British Columbia's cultural fabric and economic success. The first documented Filipinos arrived in Canada in the 1800s. Filipino men travelled as seafarers on the Spanish trading ships which made contact with the Indigenous people of Nootka Sound on Bowen Island. The Filipino community has grown to over 170,000 strong, making it the third-largest visible minority group in the province representing 3.5% of the province's total population (Stats Can, 2021). B.C.'s Filipino population is expected to more than double by 2041.

The majority of the Filipino Canadian population in B.C. live and work in the Lower Mainland, however the Filipino diaspora is found throughout the province. Metro Vancouver is home to the second largest Filipino population in Canada, which includes significant populations in Surrey, Vancouver, Richmond and Burnaby, second only to Metro Toronto.

Filipino British Columbians contribute significantly to our province through leadership in healthcare, business, education, the arts and more, enriching our shared identity and strengthening our social and economic systems.

In 2025, Filipino BC released *Weaving Our Voices, Our Story of Our Community: What We Heard Report*; the result of its own community engagement for the need for a Filipino Community Centre from May 2023 through August 2024. That report supports similar conclusions relating to community interests and needs, supported by results from surveys, town halls, community engagement and consultations.

This report, and the *Weaving Our Voices, Our Story of Our Community Report*, highlight the themes of building community, belonging, preserving the culture and having an accessible dedicated cultural space to celebrate the vibrancy of Filipino heritage. These reports also support and build on the work of Dr. Leonora (Nora) C. Angeles and The National Pilipino Canadian Cultural Centre Society, in *Keeping the Roots Alive: Building Community Through the National Pilipino Cultural Centre*.

Despite this longstanding presence and the existence of many active local Filipino associations, faith-based groups and nonprofit organizations, B.C. does not have a provincial cultural centre dedicated to Filipino heritage.

# Executive Summary

To inform the development of a centre, the Province of British Columbia launched a public engagement survey on May 31, 2024. This 10-question survey invited input from the public about its vision for a provincial Filipino cultural centre. The survey was made available in both English and Tagalog and gathered feedback about vision and community priorities. By the close of the survey on December 31, 2024, more than 1,200 completed responses had been received.

The input was rich in both quantitative and qualitative detail, offering a broad spectrum of perspectives. Participants provided thoughtful, heartfelt comments underscoring the cultural significance of such a centre and the role it could play in fostering connection, education and pride for future generations.

Three key themes emerged from the most popular responses to key survey questions, reflecting what mattered most to the community in a cultural centre. A full analysis of the survey data reinforced these themes. The following sections of this report further explores these key themes:

Theme 1: Bayanihan or community spirit

- A desire for an inclusive, accessible space supporting community connections.

Theme 2: Recognition and representation

- A cultural centre that recognizes the contributions of the Filipinos in British Columbia and physically represents Filipino arts, culture and heritage.

Theme 3: Learning and sharing

- Programming that supports all British Columbians to learn about Filipino culture and heritage. A space that provides an opportunity for Filipinos to share their culture with each other and the rest of the citizens of this province.

The input from this engagement will inform the next steps to recognize and celebrate Filipino heritage through the establishment of a dedicated cultural centre in British Columbia.



# Community Engagement

In March 2023, the Province awarded \$250,000 to the Mabuhay House Society to support government planning and public engagement for the development of a provincial cultural centre to celebrate the Filipino community in B.C.



Photo credit: Khim Mata Hipol

This preliminary work, completed in January 2024, laid an important foundation for broad-based community engagement. The Province is deeply appreciative of Mabuhay House Society leadership and commitment. Their ongoing advocacy and grassroots connections have been vital in ensuring this work remains community-centered and responsive.

Building on early momentum, the Province launched a comprehensive public engagement website and survey in 2024, developed in close partnership with Filipino community organizations. This collaboration was instrumental in ensuring that outreach efforts were culturally responsive, accessible and far-reaching.

The survey, which ran from May 31 to December 31, 2024, reflected a coordinated and deliberate effort to engage Filipino communities across the province in shaping the vision for a provincial cultural centre.

The survey was designed to balance quantitative and qualitative input, providing both measurable insights and space for deeper community reflections. It included three quantitative questions, asking respondents to rank various priorities, alongside three open-ended qualitative questions and four demographic questions. Over 1,200 surveys were completed.

Engagement levels were strong: nearly all respondents (99%) completed the quantitative portion, and approximately 900 individuals (70%) provided qualitative responses—an exceptionally high rate that reflects the community’s investment in shaping this initiative.

In preparation for the survey launch, the Province hosted three roundtable discussions with leaders from Filipino community organizations on August 10, 2023, September 28, 2023 and February 15, 2024. These roundtables created space for thoughtful dialogue, strengthened community relationships, and underscored a shared commitment to transparency, respect, and co-creation.

The engagement process was intentionally structured to be inclusive, reflective and forward-looking. Individuals and organizations were invited to contribute their perspectives on key themes such as vision, location needs, and overall scope.

The Province remains committed to a collaborative approach—one that centres community voices and ensures the cultural centre is rooted in shared values, aspirations, and lived experience.



Photo credit: Mabuhay House Society





***“People have a place to go and feels like home. A place where people can preserve Filipino culture and traditions and for the young to learn about their parents and ancestor's culture and tradition.”***

**-survey respondent**

Kathara Society  
Photo credit: Eric James, Vancouver Wedding Studios

# What We Heard

Survey responses consistently highlighted three key priorities for a provincial Filipino cultural centre: Bayanihan, the Filipino concept of community spirit, recognition and representation of Filipino culture, and learning about and sharing Filipino culture.



Pinoy Festival, 2024

Photo credit: Eric James, Vancouver Wedding Studios

The three key themes were identified by the top responses to key survey questions; those themes build out what is important to the community in this dedicated space. Full analysis of all questions and responses further supported those themes. The following sections of this report will explore these themes and the correlated survey responses:

## **Theme 1: Bayanihan or community spirit**

The Filipino expression Bayanihan, the importance and power of community spirit, emerged as a strong and recurring theme throughout the survey responses. Respondents emphasized a desire for a cultural centre based on these concepts and spoke to a vision for a space that is inclusive and accessible, welcoming to newcomers, provides social supports and embraces all Filipino identities and cultures. A centre that would support and empower three key goals and values: build community, be accessible and inclusive and create connection.



## **Theme 2: Recognition and representation**

Despite being the third largest visible minority in British Columbia, many survey respondents felt the important contributions of persons with Filipino heritage have been overlooked. Since the 1990s the Filipino community in B.C. has sought to have cultural space or place to share Filipino culture and for community members to come together. Comments throughout the survey expressed a desire to share the positive contributions of the Filipino community in B.C. with the wider population suggesting that a Filipino cultural centre designed to share Filipino Canadian heritage, history and culture with all residents and visitors to B.C. through arts, performances, and the sharing of culture and stories, would fill this gap.

## **Theme 3: Learning and sharing**

Supporting everyone including future generations of Filipino Canadians to learn about Filipino culture and heritage was a clear theme threaded throughout survey responses, specifically around sharing Filipino culture with current generations, newcomers, visitors, Canadian-born individuals of Filipino heritage, and all British Columbians. Respondents expressed concern that younger generation of Filipino Canadians lack a place to learn about and celebrate their heritage, including concerns for the loss of language and the limited opportunities currently available to learn the diversity of Filipino languages.

We also heard about the importance of the location and location-based needs. Respondents highlighted key considerations for the location of a provincial Filipino cultural centre, including accessibility by public transit, availability of parking, space for expansion, and access to green space.

Additionally, we heard about the need for a transparent, robust governance model for the cultural center and the importance of the involvement of the Filipino community. This was often mentioned in conjunction with the need for cultural programming that is accessible and barrier free to all members of the Filipino community.

Finally, many comments related to the importance of the design of the space, and the need to have a culturally safe, inclusive, welcoming space representative of Filipino heritage and culture.

***“I think just having a shared cultural space means a lot to me because we haven't ever had anything like this before in our community.”***

**-survey respondent**



Photo credit: Khim Mata Hipol



## Question 1:

### What is important to you in a provincial Filipino cultural centre?

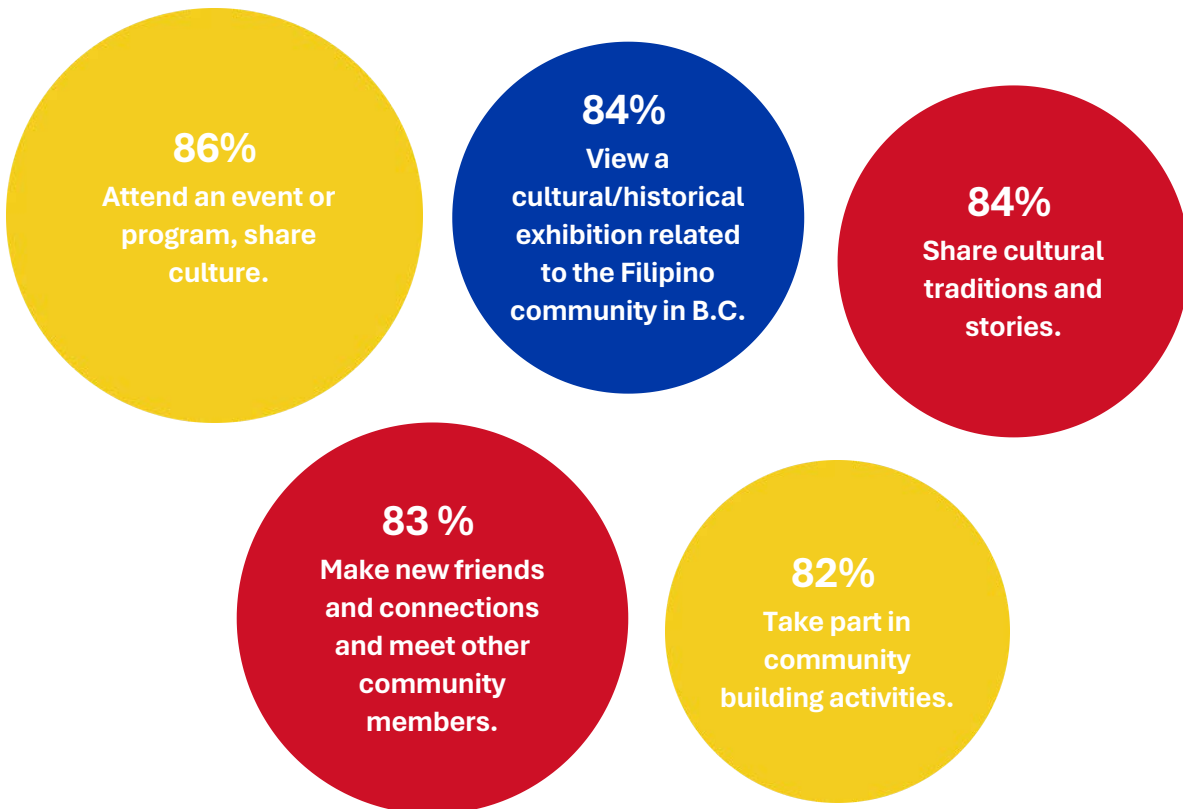


When asked “*What is important to you in a provincial Filipino cultural centre?*” the top survey responses clearly prioritize a space designed to accommodate a variety of social and cultural activities that build community. Respondents identified the following as important or very important:

- 96% of respondents prioritized: Space that allows sharing of the Filipino culture, art, history and community stories.
- 95% of respondents prioritized: Space that provides learning and educational opportunities (cultural practices, language classes, etc.)
- 92% of respondents prioritized: Space for social service supports
- 91% of respondents prioritized: Space for special events and social functions (festivals, celebrations, weddings, cultural gatherings, etc.)
- 90% of respondents prioritized: Meeting space for cultural and community groups
- 89% of respondents prioritized: Performing Arts space

## Question 2:

When you visit the centre what do you hope to see/do?



When asked “*When you visit the centre what do you hope to see/do?*” respondents indicated the need for programming to connect people to community and culture. Respondents identified the following top 5 priorities:

- 86% - Attend an event or program (workshop, film screening, dialogue, performance)
- 84% - View a cultural/historical exhibition related to the Filipino community in British Columbia.
- 84% - Share cultural traditions and stories
- 84% - Make new friends and connections and meet other community members
- 82% - Take part in community building activities

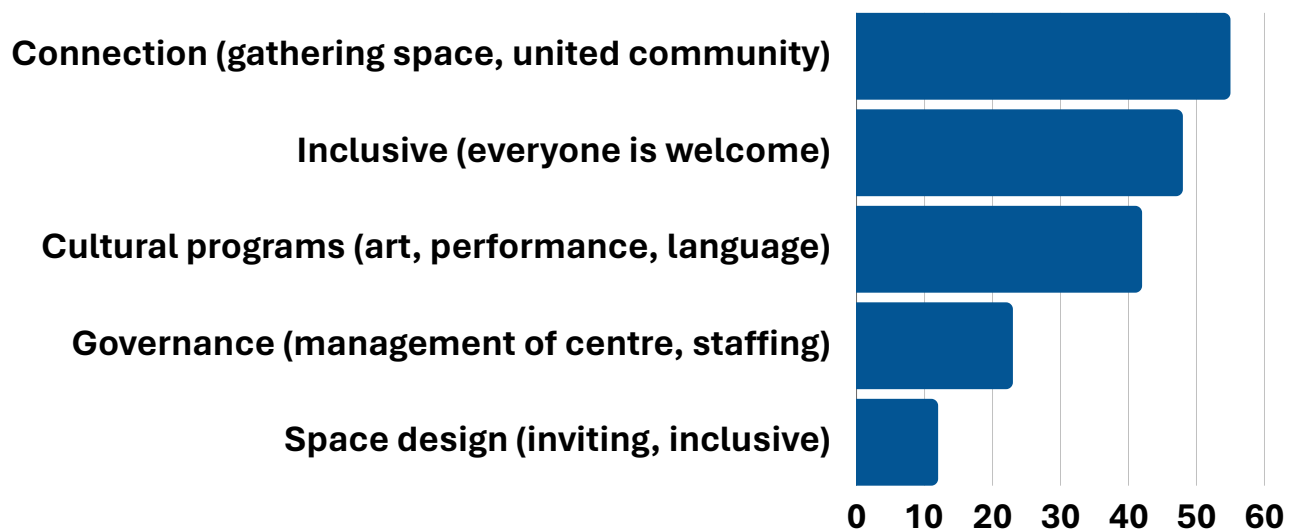
Ratio

7:2

### Question 3:

**What is important to create a sense of community and belonging in the centre?**

#### Top 5 priorities from short answer responses



When asked “*What is important to create a sense of community and belonging in the centre i.e.: what would make you feel comfortable and connected to the space?*” survey responses showed the importance of:

- Connection – a space that serves as a gathering place uniting the community through the formation of connections.
- Inclusive – a space that is inclusive, supports diversity within the community where everyone is welcome.
- Cultural Programming – a place to learn and share art, performances, language, culture and heritage.
- Governance – a space that is managed by the Filipino community with clear, transparent governance practices.
- Space Design – a space that is culturally safe, inclusive and representative of Filipino culture and heritage.

Ratio

7 : 2

## Theme 1 - Bayanihan: a spirit of community

The Filipino expression Bayanihan emerged as a strong and recurring theme throughout the survey responses. Many respondents used the term explicitly, emphasizing their desire for a cultural centre that embodies Bayanihan – envisioning a space that is inclusive and accessible, welcoming to newcomers, provides social supports and embraces all Filipino identities and cultures. Within the Bayanihan theme, three main considerations emerged:

- a) build community,
- b) be accessible and inclusive, and
- c) create connection



Mabuhay House Society

Photo credit: Eric James, Vancouver Wedding Studios



**Build community:** Survey respondents envisioned the centre as a place to unite people of Filipino heritage living in British Columbia, with a primary purpose of sharing Filipino culture, art, history, and community stories.

Survey responses show a clear vision for a cultural centre as a place to build and unite the Filipino community in British Columbia. Responses illustrated a desire for a flexible multifaceted centre designed to support multiple activity types including amenities for families, celebration and social connection, along with other top priorities that include: a space for learning, social service supports, meeting spaces and special events.

Survey participants expressed the importance of a cultural centre that would feel like home, was a place to belong, a place to unite the Filipino community, and would serve as a community hub.

**Be accessible and inclusive:** Survey responses indicate that the centre should be easily accessible and inclusive, representing and supporting all community members.

The top ranked priorities from Question 5, “What are your top three priorities for the location of the centre?” focused on access and were identified in the following order:

- 1) Access to transit
- 2) Within Metro Vancouver
- 3) Parking space

Survey responses emphasized that the site should be easily accessible by both public transit and private vehicle to serve the largest possible number of people of Filipino heritage across B.C., and that the site should have the potential to expand to meet the needs of a growing population and have access to green space.

Additional considerations for the location of the centre included: accessibility for persons with disabilities and seniors, safety, and proximity to an existing Filipino population hub. The survey, however, did not seek feedback on the best physical location.

Responses to the question, “What else should be considered when determining a location for the centre?” emphasized inclusivity as well. There is a desire for a space for everyone with a focus on accessibility expressed as both the physical accessibility of the site through choice of location and building design, as well as financial accessibility of programs.

Inclusiveness emerged as a primary consideration throughout the survey responses. This concept of inclusiveness was consistently highlighted in the qualitative responses, emphasizing unity among Filipino peoples; creating a cultural centre that not only celebrates Filipino heritage but also fosters unity, accessibility, and representation for all community members. This aligns with the broader goals identified in the survey responses, ensuring the centre serves as a welcoming and supportive space for the entire Filipino community in B.C. Respondents also indicated that space

space design reflective of Filipino culture was necessary to ensure that the space was culturally safe and inclusive.

**Create connection:** Creating connection was reflected broadly throughout the survey responses.

When asked, “What is important to you in a provincial Filipino cultural centre?” survey respondents all broadly spoke to the desire to have space that supports creating connection with others, the past, or to culture.

Survey respondents also identified interest in taking part in community building activities such as volunteering, mutual aid, access to community led services, fundraising, or building connection to culture and heritage by learning something new.

When asked, “What is important to create a sense of community and belonging in the centre i.e.: what would make you feel comfortable and connected to the space?” responses included the sharing of Filipino art, performances, language and cooking classes as well as space for sport.



***“We need to enshrine the space with core Filipino values of bayanihan, kawang-gawa (charity), pagmamalasakit (empathy).”***

**-survey respondent**

Mabuhay House Society staff helping people, showing malasakit (empathy) and kawang gawa (charity)  
Photo credit: Khim Mata Hipol



## Theme 2: Recognition & Representation

The Filipino community in British Columbia have been actively interested in having a cultural centre as a place to share Filipino culture as well as a place for community members to gather since the 1990s. While a provincial Filipino cultural centre would offer people with Filipino heritage connection it would also showcase the heritage, history and culture of the community to all people living in and visiting B.C.

Comments throughout the survey expressed a desire to share the positive contributions of the Filipino community in British Columbia with the wider community:

**“To promote and showcase Filipino Canadian culture and history more broadly, including achievements in Canada. “**

**“A space to pay tribute to successful Filipino Canadians and the contributions they have made.”**

**“Filipinos are hard working but unrecognized. They deserve to have a thriving cultural center and community.”**

**“We want to share our Filipino culture and traditions, arts and many more talents and blessings.”**

Despite being the third largest visible minority in British Columbia, many survey respondents felt the important contributions of persons with Filipino heritage have been overlooked. It was suggested that a Filipino cultural centre designed to share Filipino cultural heritage with all residents of B.C. through arts, performances, and as a place to share the culture and stories, would fill this void.





***“The impact I want for the community is for Filipino Canadians in B.C to create an identity for themselves . . . because the experience of living here is very different and not documented or covered enough in literature, arts or the media.”***

**-survey respondent**

Photo credit: Mabuhay House Society

## Theme 3: Learning & Sharing



Photo credit: Eric James, Vancouver Wedding Studios

The third identified theme focused on supporting future generations to learn about Filipino culture and heritage. When asked, “What is important to you in a provincial Filipino cultural centre?” 96% of respondents prioritized: Space that allows sharing of the Filipino culture, art, history and community stories, while 95% of respondents prioritized: Space that provides learning and educational opportunities (cultural practices, language classes, etc.).

These priorities embody threads seen throughout the responses around sharing Filipino culture with current generations, newcomers, Canadian-born individuals of Filipino heritage and all British Columbians.

Respondents expressed concern that younger generations, including second, third, or even fourth- generation Filipino Canadians, lack a place to learn about and celebrate their heritage. When asked about the impact they wanted the centre to have, respondents clearly identified its role as a place and space for future generations, that can help build a home here in B.C. while preserving Filipino culture, history, and traditions.

The loss of language and the limited opportunities to learn Filipino languages were significant concerns. Many respondents suggested enshrining Filipino language in signage around the centre. Additionally, respondents identified the need for language classes, especially for young people of Filipino descent, and that that programing be accessible and ideally barrier free.





***“There should be spaces where generations can come together and children who might be estranged from their heritage can reconnect and learn from elders who grew up back home.”***

***-survey respondent***

BIBAK (Kalinga) Pinoy Festival, 2024  
Photo credit: Eric James, Vancouver Wedding Studios

# Conclusion

Like other communities that make up the fabric of British Columbia, the Filipino community in B.C. is proud to share its traditions, culture and spirit. Survey responses show a desire to foster a sense of family and belonging, learn from elders, and create pride in heritage for the youth of the Filipino community in B.C.

The Province will continue to collaborate with and learn from local Filipino Canadian organizations and communities in B.C. and the next steps in the realization of a provincial Filipino cultural centre will be guided by these voices.

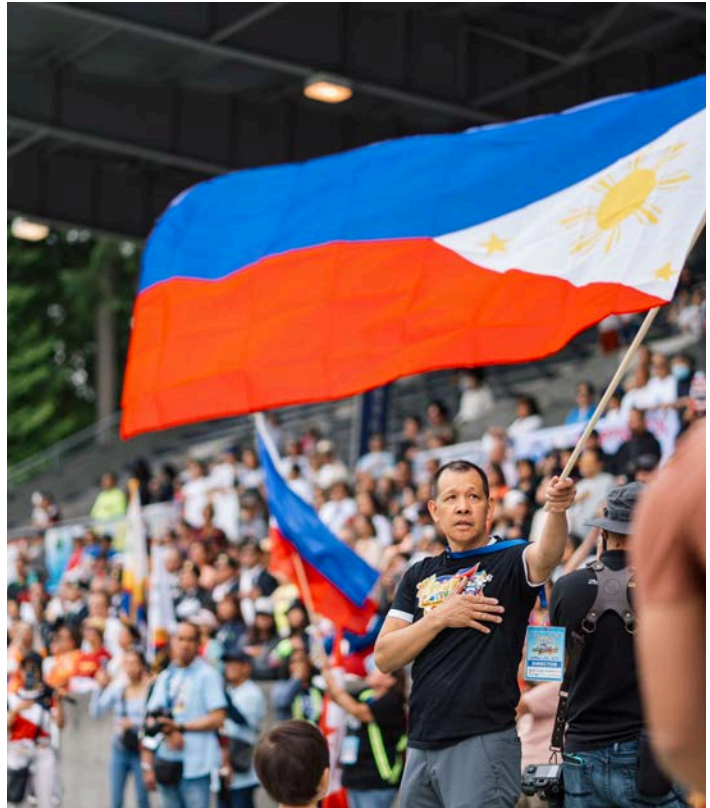


Photo credit: Eric James, Vancouver Wedding Studios





***“I want this space to be a place where Filipinos now and, in the future, can come and learn about our heritage and share their personal stories too.”***

**-survey respondent**

Photo Credit: Khim Mata Hipol

# Appendix 1: Survey Template

## **1. What is important to you in a provincial Filipino cultural centre?(ranked in order of importance)**

- a) Space that allows sharing of the Filipino culture, art, history and community stories
- b) Space that provides learning/educational opportunities (cultural practices, language classes)
- c) Space for special events (festivals, celebrations, weddings, cultural gatherings)
- d) Meeting space for cultural and community groups (clubs, nonprofits, collectives)
- e) Space for social service supports
- f) Performing arts space
- g) Exhibition space
- h) Space for recreation (martial and folk arts, dance, singing, Zumba)
- i) Creative production space/maker space
- j) Community kitchen/food production facilities
- k) Child focused/kid friendly play spaces
- l) Commercial space for community driven businesses (retail, café)
- m) Other (short answer)

## **2. When you visit the centre what do you hope to see/do? (check all that apply)**

- a) Share culture, traditions and stories
- b) Learn something new (language, history, culture)
- c) Attend an even tor program (workshop, film screening, dialogue, performance)
- d) Connect with friends and family
- e) Make new friends and connections and meet other community members
- f) Host/attend a private or community celebration or event
- g) View a cultural/historical exhibition related to the Filipino community in British Columbia.
- h) Create art or practice cultural activities
- i) Access community services and/or social supports
- j) Take part in community building activities (volunteer, mutual aid, access community led services, fundraise)
- k) Other (short answer)

## **3. What is important to create a sense of community and belonging in the centre i.e.: what would make you feel comfortable and connected to the space?**

(200-word short answer)

# Appendix 1: Survey Template

**4. What impact do you want a provincial Filipino cultural centre to have (i.e.: how will this space serve the community now, and into the future?)**

**5. What are your top three priorities for the location of the centre?**

(3 spaces ranked, short answer)

- Access to transit
- Parking space
- Within Metro Vancouver
- Access to green space
- Room for expansion
- Other (200-word short answer)

**6. What else should be considered when determining a location for the centre?**

(200-word short answer)

**7. Do you identify as a member of the Filipino community in B.C.?**

(3 options: yes/no/prefer not to answer)

**8. What is your age?**

- 17 or younger
- 18-24
- 25-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

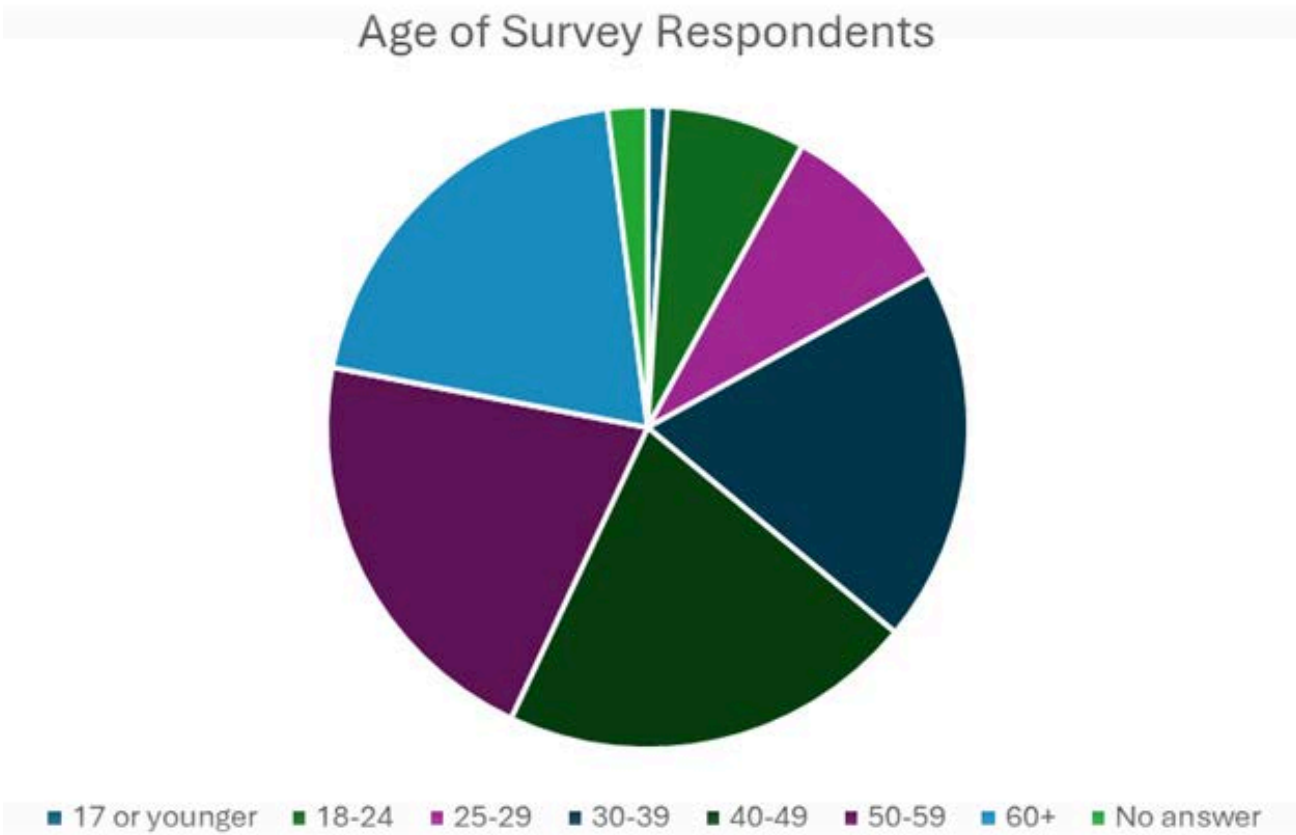
**9. What gender do you identify with?**

- Man
- Woman
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Other (text box)

**10. Please enter the first three digits of your postal code:**

# Demographics

Graph 1. Respondents' Ages

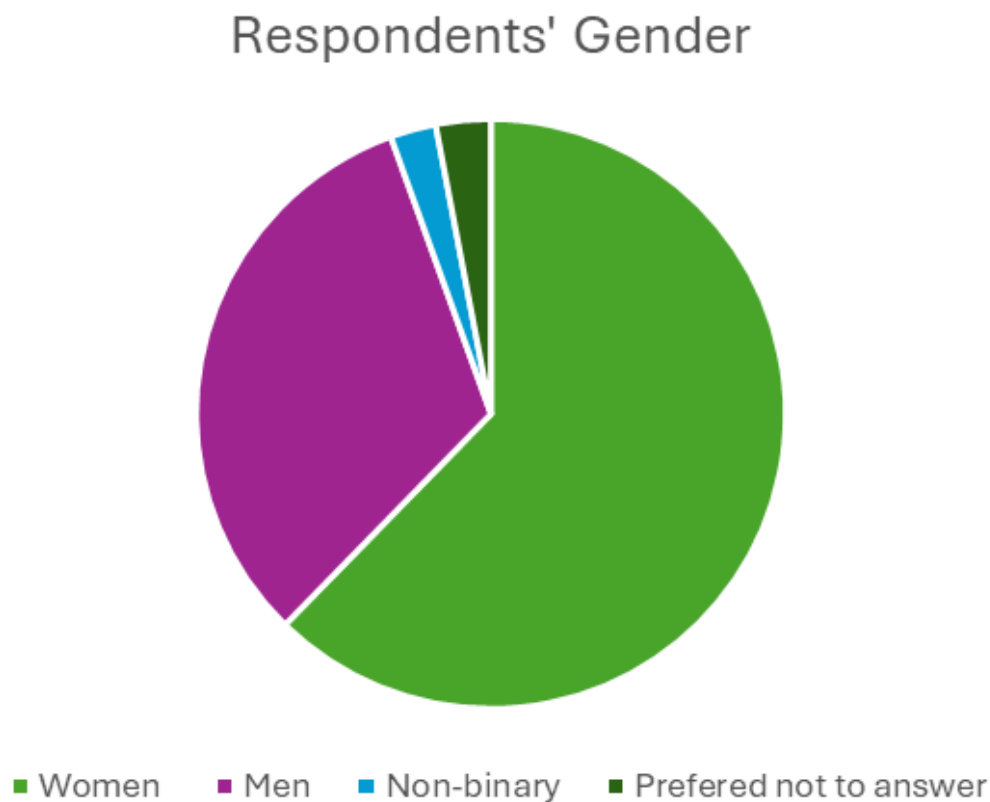


The ages of survey respondents skewed slightly higher than the general population of Filipino descent in B.C. Respondents 17 years of age or younger represented 1% of the survey sample. Those who preferred not to identify their age represented 2% of the sample.



# Demographics

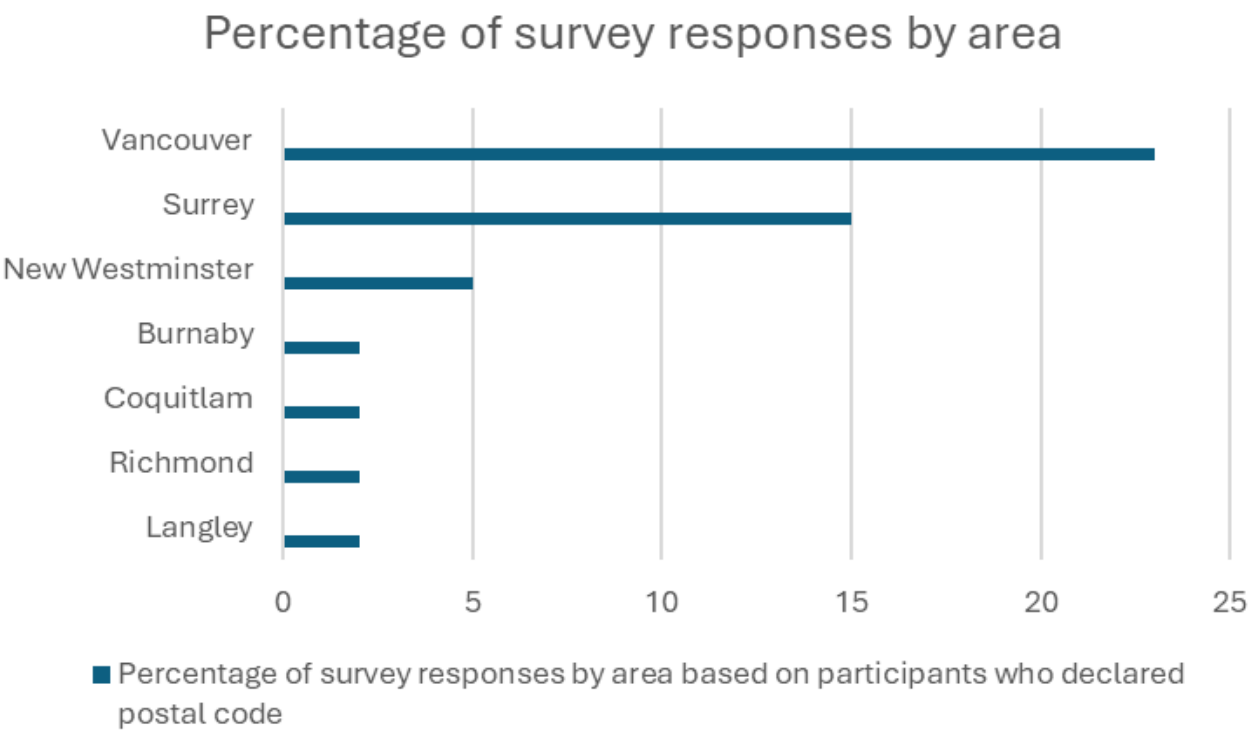
Graph 2. Respondents' Genders



More women than men (62% vs 32%) responded; 2.5% identifying as non-binary or another gender; 3% preferring not to answer

# Demographics

Graph 3. Respondents' Locations



Locations of survey respondents who declared their location by first three postal code digits.



**sa puso't diwa**  
**in the heart and soul**



Ministry of  
Tourism, Arts,  
Culture and Sport