

Introduction

In response to the April 26, 2025 Lapu-Lapu Day tragedy—which brought immense loss and grief with far-reaching emotional and social impacts across communities in Vancouver—United Way BC established the Kapwa Strong Fund to support community-led healing, recovery, and resilience-building efforts across British Columbia.

Latincover Cultural & Business Society was one of over 40 community organizations supported through United Way BC’s Kapwa Strong Fund. Through this fund, United Way BC has invested over \$1.5 million in community-led healing and recovery efforts across the province.

Latincover received two grants totaling \$55,000 through the Kapwa Strong Fund and the Kapwa Strong Recovery Fund to design and deliver community-based healing initiatives rooted in cultural care, dialogue, and collective resilience. In addition, Latincover received a separate \$20,000 grant specifically set aside to be used according to instructions by Filipino BC.

This report outlines the activities delivered under the two Latincover-led grants funded through the Kapwa Strong Fund and the Kapwa Strong Recovery Fund. It highlights the purpose, reach, and impact of these initiatives, as well as how funds were allocated to support trauma-informed, culturally grounded healing, safety, and community resilience in the wake of the April 26, 2025 tragedy.

Regarding the additional \$20,000 set aside to be used according to instructions by Filipino BC for Filipino BC, Latincover has been in communication with both United Way BC and Filipino BC. These funds are currently being held while partner organizations work together to determine the most appropriate and meaningful use of the grant, ensuring alignment with community needs and shared decision-making.



Kapwa & Comunidad: Rising Together Through Healing

Final Report

This initiative was funded by United Way BC through the Kapwa Strong Fund

1. Overview & Context

Kapwa & Comunidad: Rising Together Through Healing was designed as a culturally grounded, trauma-informed response to the April 26, 2025 tragedy. The incident brought immense loss and grief, with far-reaching emotional and social impacts felt across communities in Vancouver.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, many individuals across Vancouver experienced renewed fear, grief, and anxiety. A significant number of those affected were immigrants, refugees, and newcomers, people who had previously fled violence, political instability, or persecution, who reported feeling retraumatized and unsettled by the incident. For some members of Latin American and other racialized communities, the event resurfaced past experiences of insecurity and heightened concerns about personal safety, public gatherings, and a sense of belonging.

This initiative was intentionally developed in response to both the direct and indirect impacts of trauma, with the goal of bringing people together, alleviating fear, and supporting community-wide healing, trust, and collective resilience.

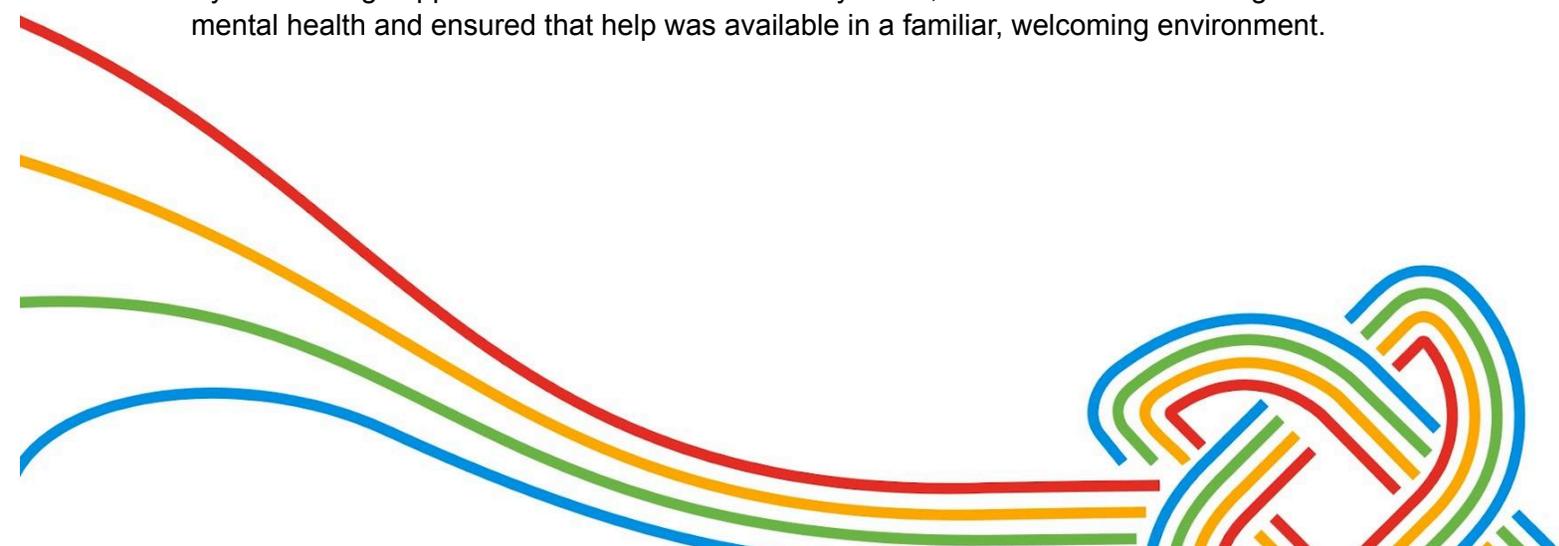
2. Program Purpose & Target Population

The purpose of Kapwa & Comunidad was to provide accessible, culturally relevant mental health and healing supports for community members who were directly or indirectly affected by the tragedy.

The program prioritized:

- Individuals experiencing grief, fear, anxiety, or retraumatization
- Community members facing cultural or linguistic barriers
- Elders, youth, vendors, and workers hesitant to return to public events
- Individuals seeking reassurance, safety, and collective healing rather than clinical intervention

By embedding supports within a trusted community event, the initiative reduced stigma around mental health and ensured that help was available in a familiar, welcoming environment.



3. Program Activities, Participation & Locations

Community Workshop / Healing & Safety Preparation Event

A pre-festival healing and resilience gathering bringing together community members, vendors, volunteers, and staff. The session included facilitated conversations around feeling safe in public spaces again, sharing coping strategies, and addressing concerns related to attending large community events. Participants were also provided with clear information on on-site supports at Carnaval del Sol, including safety and security measures, mental health resources, and guidance on what to do and where to seek help in the event of an emergency.

Representatives from the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) were present to help explain available supports and offer reassurance to individuals experiencing fear or anxiety about attending the festival.

- Dates: July 3, 2025
- Estimated reach: Approximately 100 participants
- Location: Jonathan Rogers Park, Vancouver
- Cost: \$6,250



Health & Wellness Booth – “Tahanan de Esperanza”

A two-day mental health and wellness booth offering culturally grounded resources, peer support, trauma-informed guidance, and multilingual materials (Tagalog, Spanish, Portuguese and English). The booth also included interactive components such as the Hope & Solidarity Message Wall, creating a visible space for reflection, remembrance, and community connection.

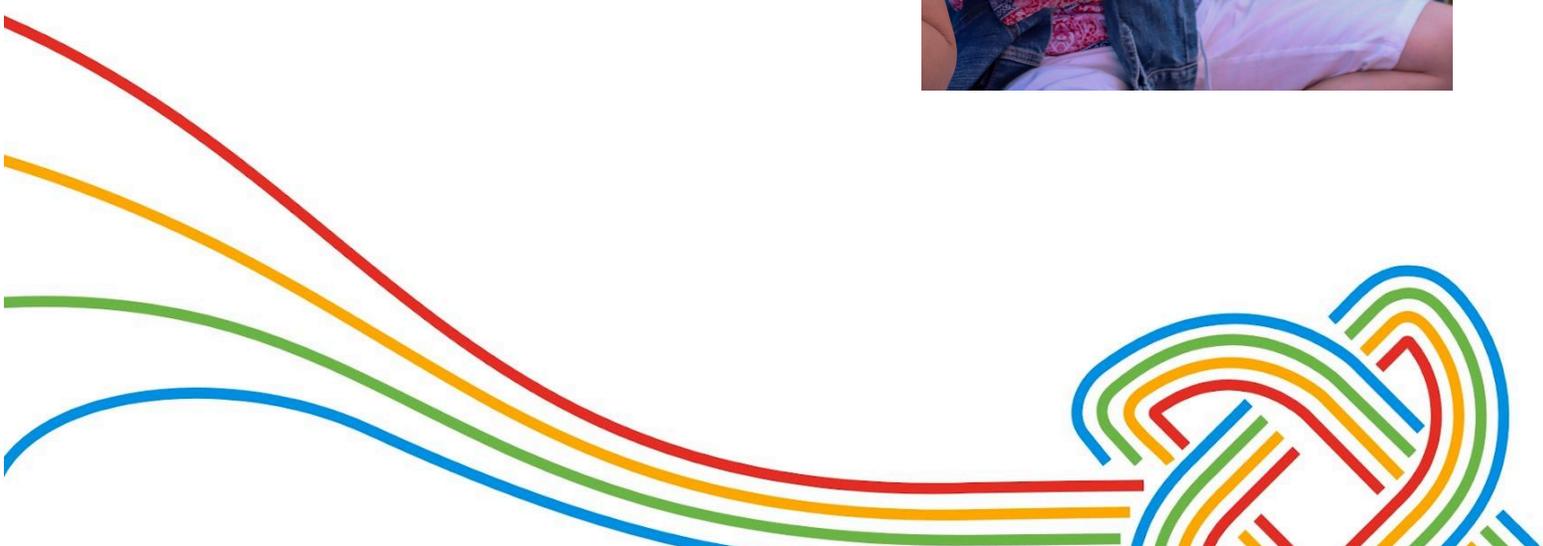
- Dates: July 12–13, 2025
- Estimated reach: Approximately 500 participants over two days
- Location: Jonathan Rogers Park, Vancouver
- Cost: \$14,750



Group Healing Sessions / Wellness Circles

Trauma-informed healing circles co-facilitated by wellness practitioners, incorporating grounding practices, somatic exercises, reflection activities, and culturally safe peer support. These sessions provided a structured space for emotional regulation, shared processing, and reconnection.

- Number of sessions: 4 sessions (2 per day)
- Dates: July 12–13, 2025
- Estimated reach: Approximately 40 participants
- Location: Jonathan Rogers Park, Vancouver
- Cost: \$4,000



Kapwa & Comunidad: Collective Healing Through Dialogue Interim Report

This initiative was funded by United Way BC through the Kapwa Strong Recovery Fund

Program Overview

Kapwa & Comunidad: *Collective Healing Through Dialogue* is a community-based initiative designed to create compassionate, culturally grounded spaces where participants can reflect, connect, and heal together. Through facilitated workshops and dialogue circles, the program supports emotional well-being, resilience, and community care by encouraging dialogue, shared experiences, and collective reflection.

To date, we have successfully delivered two staff training sessions, three workshops, and one community storytelling circle, each addressing different dimensions of healing, identity, and community connection.

1. Psychological First Aid (PFA) Training Sessions

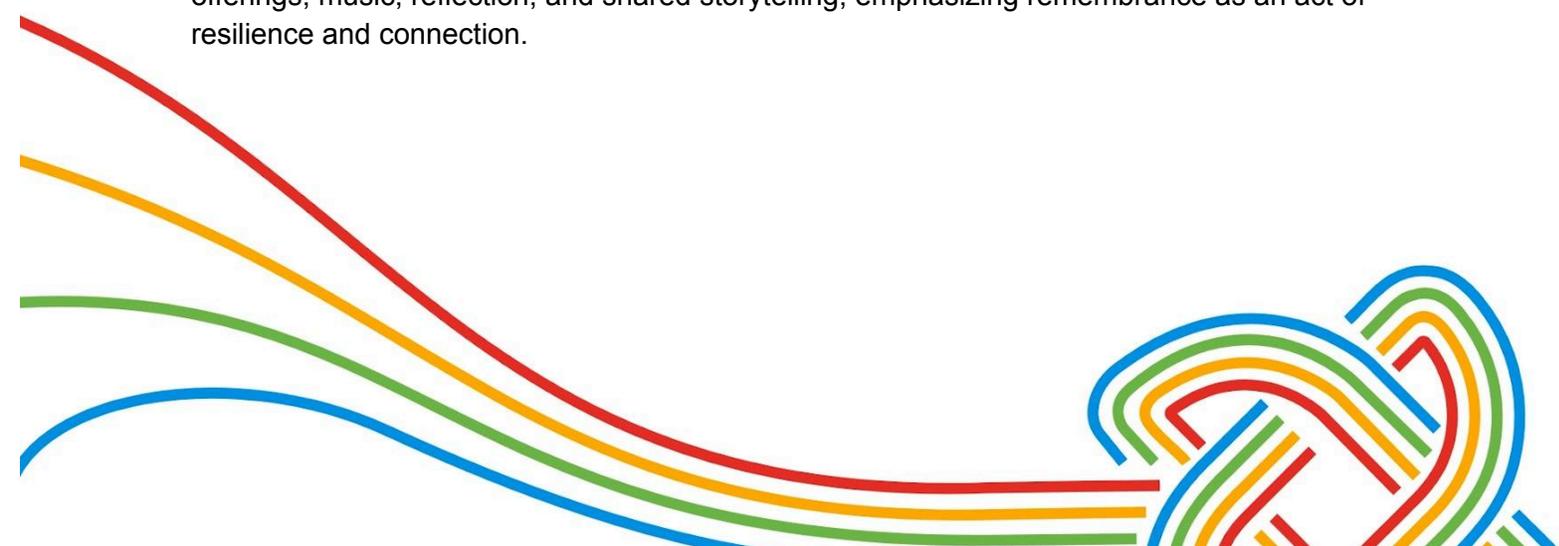
Two Psychological First Aid (PFA) training sessions were delivered for staff and volunteers to strengthen their ability to respond to emotional distress and crisis situations following the April 26, 2025 Lapu Lapu Day Festival tragedy. The sessions focused on building foundational skills to recognize signs of distress, provide immediate emotional support, and respond in a calm, trauma-informed manner during community programs and events.

By equipping frontline staff and volunteers with shared tools and approaches, the training helped ensure safer, more emotionally supportive environments for participants, while also strengthening team preparedness and community trust.

- Dates: September 29 and October 2, 2025
- Estimated reach: 20 people
- Location: 68 Water St Unit 301, Vancouver, BC V6B 1A4
- Cost: \$2,956

2. Collective Storytelling Circle – Stories at the Altar

Rooted in the Day of the Dead tradition and connected to Filipino practices of remembrance such as Undas, the event invited community members to honour loved ones through altar offerings, music, reflection, and shared storytelling, emphasizing remembrance as an act of resilience and connection.



The program included a musical tribute at the altar followed by a community storytelling circle, offering participants the option to share stories or be present in quiet remembrance. The Canadian Red Cross (CRC) were available on-site to provide emotional support, ensuring the space remained compassionate, inclusive, and responsive to individual needs..

- Dates: October 18, 2025
- Estimated reach: 15 people
- Location: Ocean Artworks Pavilion. 1531 Johnston St, Vancouver, BC V6H 3S6
- Cost: \$2,218

3. Mental Health Workshop: Migratory Grief (Luto Migratorio)

Recognizing that the incident triggered fear, grief, and retraumatization for many newcomers and migrants, particularly those with lived experiences of violence or displacement, the session focused on Migratory Grief (Luto Migratorio) as a lens for collective healing.

The workshop explored the emotional impacts of migration, including loss, separation, identity shifts, and forms of grief that often go unacknowledged, and how these experiences can be intensified by incidents of public violence. Through facilitated reflection, communal storytelling, and culturally grounded dialogue, participants were supported in naming their emotions, rebuilding a sense of safety, and reconnecting with the community after the tragedy.

- Dates: October 18, 2025
- Estimated reach: 30 people
- Location: 30 Royal Ave, New Westminster, BC V3L 1H8
- Cost: \$4,139

4. Mental Health Workshop: Food That Heals

This workshop explored the emotional, cultural, and healing role of food as a central way Latin American and other ethnic communities connect, care for one another, and process difficult experiences. In many ethnic and migrant communities, food is a primary means of expressing solidarity, comfort, and belonging, especially during moments of grief or uncertainty.

Participants reflected on traditional and ancestral foods as sources of memory, identity, and grounding, and shared stories connected to meals, family practices, and cultural rituals. By coming together around food-related traditions, the workshop created a familiar and accessible space where participants could reconnect with community, feel supported, and experience a sense of safety and togetherness.

- Dates: October 25, 2025
- Estimated reach: 15 people
- Location: 68 Water St Unit 301, Vancouver, BC V6B 1A4
- Cost: \$2,218



5. Mental Health Workshop: Youth Mental Health & Resilience

This workshop was designed for diverse youth from a range of backgrounds who play active roles as community leaders and changemakers. For many young people, particularly those from immigrant and racialized communities, violent events can intensify existing pressures related to identity, belonging, and navigating public spaces safely.

The session created a space for reflection and dialogue, allowing participants to process stress, uncertainty, and emotional fatigue while sharing experiences and insights with peers. Through facilitated discussion and grounding practices, youth explored ways to build emotional resilience, strengthen peer support networks, and contribute to collective healing within their communities. The workshop emphasized leadership through care, recognizing youth as key connectors and supporters during periods of community recovery.

- Dates: November 8 & 15, 2025
- Estimated reach: 25 people
- Location: 68 Water St Unit 301, Vancouver, BC V6B 1A4
- Cost: \$3,398

Project Status & Upcoming Activities

The Kapwa & Comunidad: Collective Healing Through Dialogue initiative is ongoing and has not yet concluded. The project is expected to wrap up by June 2026. We are currently in the planning and logistical coordination phase for the remaining activities, informed by participant feedback, community needs, and insights gathered from earlier program delivery.

The upcoming activities will continue to prioritize trauma-informed, culturally grounded supports:

- **Three (3) Mental Health Workshops (Upcoming):** To be delivered between February and May 2026, focusing on general mental health awareness, emotional well-being, and accessible coping strategies for individuals navigating grief, loss, and retraumatization. Budget per workshop: \$2,956
- **Two (2) Group Counselling Sessions (Upcoming):** To be delivered between March and May 2026, offering trauma-informed group counselling in a structured and supportive setting to address priority mental health needs, facilitate emotional processing, and strengthen peer support networks. Budget per session: \$3,102

Planning for these remaining activities is underway, with a continued emphasis on responsiveness, accessibility, and alignment with evolving community feedback to ensure the program's objectives are met thoughtfully and effectively.

