

Latinas in Bristol
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Annual Report 2023-2024

Community - Identity - Representation

Staff

Laila Garzon Deguer - Founder and Director

Vanesa Ayelen Maidana - Director

Valentina Isadora Moya Espinoza - Director

Yanet Ramirez - Advocacy and Support

Our Latin Ambassadors, to whom we are deeply grateful for the support they have offered from the very beginning:

Silvia, Petra, Silvana, Isabel, Erika, Gi, Karen, Mafer, Vir, Andrea, Lore, Karla y more!





LIB

Latinas in Bristol

We support Latin American women facing challenges like isolation, discrimination, and mental health issues since May 2023.

The organization fosters cultural pride, community integration, and resilience through workshops, peer support, and women-led initiatives. A key focus is reducing loneliness and empowering women by connecting them with their roots and each other.

The WhatsApp group of 280+ members facilitates advice, connection, and shared experiences, making Latinas in Bristol a vital space for cultural celebration and support.

Since we began in 2023, this year has been filled with art, community, and tremendous learning!

Thank you for being part of this journey!



2024 Survey

How do we live? What do we need to improve our quality of life as migrants in Bristol?

This survey marked the beginning of our community. It provided real data about our needs and aspirations. We launched the first survey in November 2022, and thanks to those initial responses, we formed our first group and created Latinas in Bristol!

Given the lack of official data about Latin American migration here in Bristol, this survey helps us gain a more accurate understanding of our needs.

If you haven't yet completed this year's survey, there's still time until **30th December!**

Testimonials

"LIB is a great opportunity to bring together the women of the Latin community with their cultural richness, gastronomy, artistic creativity, and music, which bring joy and colour to Bristol."

"Latinas had a hugely positive impact on my life. It brings me joy with its gatherings, art, market, and all the different activities it offers. At the same time, it's a community that supports and empowers women to share what they do. Seeing the community grow is beautiful!"

"Thank you for all your hard work—this group is the best thing that ever happened to me!"



Advocacy for our community

Our work with refugees and asylum seekers in Bristol is multifaceted and community-oriented. We reach people in several ways: many women connect with us directly through word of mouth, email, social media, or WhatsApp groups.

Health centers like Montpelier Health Center and the South Gloucestershire Center, also play a significant role in connecting us with Latin American families new to the city, who may be isolated, face language barriers, and feel alone.

We collaborate with numerous organizations, including Borderlands, St Mungo's, Refugee Women of Bristol (RWoB), Bridges for Communities, Citizens Advice Bristol, and others. These partnerships help us address a range of needs:

- Basic Necessities: Referring families in hotels to food banks, especially for asylum seekers.**
- Medical Support and Mental Health: Assisting in urgent medical cases, including heart conditions and emergency care, as well as providing follow-up and translation support.**
- Emotional and Spiritual Support: Helping connect people with Spanish-speaking religious services and community support.**
- Housing and Preventive Services: Collaborating on homeless prevention, especially for vulnerable elderly individuals.**
- Discrimination and Racism: Connecting our community with support organizations like SARI and Mental Health organizations.**
- Education and Skill-Building: Referring people to English classes (RWoB, BHN), vocational skills training like sewing (Bridges for Communities), and voluntary work through organizations like ACH Ashley Housing.**
- Cultural and Community Engagement: We support cultural integration through events like the Latin Market in St. Pauls, International Festival at Spark, and Refugee Festival, where we promote Latin American culture through art, dance, food, and local businesses.**

Over the past five months, we have supported more than 20 families in Bristol and surrounding areas. We aim to train additional people to expand our reach and support even more families in the future.

Our advocacy guidance comes from a highly experienced professional who has lived in the UK for over 40 years. Her background includes 4.5 years with SARI and anti-discrimination services, 6 years working with Bristol's resettlement and vulnerable persons schemes. Additionally, she mentors youth from minority communities—not just within the Latino community—which she's still actively involved in today.

Her extensive expertise is a huge asset to our work. And Her experience in life and generosity is the biggest support for all the women in our community. Additionally, She is part of our weekly meet-ups every Tuesday, creating a safe space that supports women's and LGBTQ+ wellbeing and mental health.

Overall, our organization is committed to not only meeting immediate needs but also fostering a supportive network for long-term integration and community building among refugees and asylum seekers in Bristol.



Getting to Know Bristol

Together with Bristol a Pie, we've organised walking tours to explore the city and its history. We've also learned about its graffiti culture, ghost stories, and pirate legends! Next year, we'll be back with more tours!



The Home Language Conversation Café

A wonderful initiative created by Silvana Ribeiro to welcome immigrants living in the UK who do NOT have English as their first language.

In this friendly and welcoming environment, immigrant speakers of the same language will have the opportunity to connect with their counterparts and find peer support through exchanging experiences about living in a country with a different language and cultural background.

Conversations involve shared experiences about living away from home, including the challenges and opportunities in the (re)settlement process, the impact of cultural differences, types of support available and also funny stories about moving abroad.

The monthly meetings involve several groups/tables. Each group/table speaks in a different language. At the moment we have meetings in Portuguese, Spanish and Italian.



The Batook Pandya Inclusion Award

We had been nominated for “The Batook Pandya Inclusion Award”!

Thank you Voscur and the City of Bristol for embracing our community and becoming our beautiful home!



Shaking the Ivory Tower: a summer course introducing decolonial community-based research in Psychology

Isabella Macedo De Lucas, a Brazilian student in Bristol, invited us to be part of her project, funded by the Faculty of Life Sciences Education Innovation fund 2023-2024.

The aim of the study was to test an intervention with psychology students, focusing on teaching community-based research methods through a decolonial lens.

This effort builds upon two previous studies conducted as part of Isabella’s PhD.

It was amazing to talk about our experience as migrants in England.

Representation Matters!

International Women's Day

In 2023, we organised the first Latina Representation Panel, as part of the annual event hosted by Bristol Women's Voice, which has been running for over a decade.

In 2024, we participated again, not only with the Latina Representation Panel but also by showcasing our culture through a food stall and a Peruvian dance performance!

Additionally, we joined an open discussion about feminism and struggles in Latin America, particularly focusing on movements like "Ni Una Menos" in Chile and Argentina, which fight against gender-based violence.



The First Latin Market in Bristol

Together with **LACS (Latin American Community Support CIC)**, we organised Bristol's first Latin Market in September 2023.

Thanks to the support of **St. Paul's Learning Centre** and **Better Events**, we successfully secured a market licence.

In 2024, the market ran from April to September, featuring 13+ stalls offering diverse Latin American cuisine, crafts, and live performances showcasing traditional dances and vibrant Latin music.

A heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers and the incredible Latin community who made the first year of the Latin Market an outstanding success!



Mujer with a Movie Camera

It was an honour to support Lorena Pino Montilla in curating the **Latin American Film Festival**, held in November 2023 at the **Watershed**. Through her exceptional collection, we proudly represented Latin America's rich artistic heritage.

The film season was part of Lorena's final project as a student of the **MA in Curating** at the University of the West of England, during her placement at Watershed.



Inspiring Women Series

We proudly participated in the Inspiring Women Series, organised by **Bristol Women's Voice**.

Laila Garzón Deguer and **Valentina Moya Espinoza** delivered a powerful talk on feminist movements in Latin America, focusing on the "**Ni Una Menos**" movement, which began in Argentina and Chile in 2015 and later spread across the region.



Building Community

We've grown so much this year and have been part of many activities!

Cultural Picnics

We organised picnics to connect with one another and share our cultures through traditions, food, and dance!



Latin Library and Book Club

This year, we launched Bristol's first **Latin Library**, now home to over 40 physical books, with the collection growing every day. You can browse our catalogue online to explore the works we have!

We also introduced a **Book Club**, creating a space to discuss works by Latin American authors.

It's an opportunity to dive into stories set in our landscapes, journeying across Latin America through literature.

www.latinasinbristol.librarika.com

Workshops and More!

This year, we organised several workshops celebrating our art, dances, and even food! Sharing our customs and traditions has been a joy.

We also participated in various festivals and events within the Bristol community, including the Refugee Festival and the World in Bristol Festival at the Bristol Museum.



Tuesdays: Art, Craft, and Gossip!

Our weekly meetings have been a beautiful way to strengthen bonds among Latinas, through art, support, and companionship.

We've laughed, cried, learned, and created together!

Our gatherings began at St. Paul's Learning Centre and St. Werburgh's Community Centre, two spaces we love and cherish.

Today, we are thrilled to have a wonderful partnership with the **Arnolfini Centre**, Bristol's International Centre for Contemporary Arts, located by the harbour in the heart of the city.

Every week, we work with Arnolfini, where we feel heard and welcomed—they've even adapted their quality form based on our suggestions!

Together, we're working on exciting projects for 2025.
Stay tuned!



ARNOLFINI
EST. 1961

Quartet Community Foundation

We received our first grant!

Thanks to the **Express Grants Programme** and the **Sherwood Family Grassroots Fund**, we secured funding to cover organisational expenses, prepare our annual report, and continue building our community work.

We are deeply grateful, not only for this grant but for every Latina who has been part of this wonderful beginning:

- Those who contribute whenever they can,
- Those who are always present,
- Those who wish they could be involved, and
- Everyone who supports us in any way.

A heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers, members, supporters, donors, sponsors, and funders!

Our work wouldn't be possible without your incredible contributions.

Thank you so much!

We look forward to an amazing new year ahead.

We hope to see you soon!



Quartet
Community
Foundation



Latinas in Bristol

Thank you all!

To our volunteers, members, donors, and sponsors.

Next year will be amazing!

We can't wait to see you!

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