

Organization Name: [Para Los Niños](#)

Date of Interview: April 17, 2024

Organization Interviewees: Virginia Herrera-Paramo, Cynthia Catalan, Alondra Gonzalez

Impact 100 GRT Interviewers: Amy Shelton, Katrina Russell

Application: [Click here](#)

Organization Mission: To foster academic and life success for every Latino student through parent and community involvement.

What are the compelling reasons for Impact 100 to partner with this organization?

In 2003 a group of Latino parents identified significant barriers faced by their children in the local school system, thus Para Los Niños (PLN) was established to address these challenges. PLN believes that all Latino children are capable of excellence, and that goal is achieved by building culturally relevant programs upon a foundation of love and respect, supported by a community leadership model that recognizes the talents and skills of each person. Committed to responding to needs of the community, PLN has built deep relationships of trust with the Latino immigrant community in South King County by operating as a multilingual and multicultural organization that uplifts the community's language, culture, and heritage. PLN envisions a community and society that celebrates the beauty and brilliance of the Latino community and enables Latino children to truly thrive. As recently reported by Philanthropy Northwest, only 0.8% of philanthropic funding goes to Latinx organizations (Candid 2021).

Do you have any reservations about this organization as a potential grantee partner for Impact 100? None.

What does the organization do?

PLN was created by and for Latino immigrant families in King County as a positive response to problems they faced in the public education system. PLN holistically supports the whole family through the lens of Latino language, culture, and the immigrant experience to meet developmental, social, and learning goals. From birth to beyond, PLN offers multilingual, culturally relevant, relationship-based, and accessible support for Latino families. These include prenatal support, early childhood education, after-school programs, youth development, parent leadership training, health education, technology access, and workforce development. PLN aims to uplift young Latino learners and empower parents to advocate for their children's health and education, fostering family growth and cultural pride. (See application for program details)

Who does the organization serve?

PLN serves resilient low-income Latino immigrant and refugee families from Mexico and Central and South America who speak Spanish and other Indigenous Latin American languages. These families live in South King County, with concentrations in the Highline Public Schools area (Burien, SeaTac, Normandy Park, Des Moines). School districts are not equipped to outreach to and design culturally relevant programs for Latino children and families, and magnified barriers exist for undocumented families, and families from Indigenous communities, people with disabilities, and those from the LGBTQI community. Para Los Niños' solution has been to educate Latino families in their entirety so that together they support students' success from birth on. Since 2003 PLN has served over 20,000 Latino families, building enduring community connections and transforming the way the Highline School District works with Latino children and families.

How does the organization reflect, maintain proximity to and stay accountable to the community it serves?

In order to implement Para Los Niños' value of being a completely bilingual/bicultural organization that integrates Latin American culture throughout the organization, they intentionally recruit and develop leaders who are of, by and for their Latino immigrant community. PLN's service model compels them to foster deep relationships with and inspire ownership by the community they serve. They see respect for and maintenance of their language and culture as key to the healthy emotional and social development of Latino children. Celebration and preservation of Latin American culture are core values of PLN and woven with intention into all programs with the goal of positively impacting Latino children and youth's sense of cultural identity and pride. PLN programs reinforce a core value of the community: support the whole Latino family to grow together and don't leave anyone behind. From inception, PLN's programming has had feedback from the Latino immigrant community at its core. *"The families we work with have a hand in shaping our programming, keeping us relevant to community needs as they occur."* - Virginia Herrera-Paramo, Executive Director

What inequity is the organization addressing and what is the root cause of that inequity? How is the organization addressing this?

PLN's constituents are often underserved and overlooked by the systems our region has in place for struggling families. Many of their community members are undocumented, and many have an additional barrier: their primary languages are relatively-unknown indigenous Latin American languages such as Lenguaje de la Lluvia. This leaves them accessing services either through their second language (Spanish) or their third language (English). PLN understands this problem and sources trusted community members as translators from their network. PLN provides culturally-relevant childcare, parental support, health access, and adult education - but their work goes beyond meeting individual needs. Their ongoing partnerships with local systems of power such as the Highline School District (HSD) and the Department of Health (DOH) ensure that the community is included in decision-making. PLN parent leaders have become a powerful force, bringing community concerns directly to administrators in HSD and local government. Leaders participate on school committees and within PTAs to bring the concerns of the Latino community directly to decision-makers to better meet community needs.

How is the organization collaborating with other community-based organizations?

PLN works closely with both formal governmental organizations and local nonprofits. This diversity of partnerships helps their community members, who might be hesitant to access governmental services, feel comfortable accessing a broad range of services and simultaneously allows PLN to avoid duplicating services. PLN recently began partnering with Public Health Seattle and King County Access and Outreach to arrange for a mobile dental van to visit the PLN office quarterly to provide dental services for their communities. PLN is currently working to secure visits from a mobile mammogram van. PLN also worked with the DOH to offer and promote vaccine clinics. When the DOH informed PLN that they couldn't provide other resources at those events, PLN pushed back on this hardship that might require individuals to make multiple visits. DOH ultimately agreed with PLN and PLN moved forward with the vaccine clinics. PLN's developed partnerships in the programming for PLN's paid internship program for 11th and 12th graders. In that internship, students are exposed to partner organizations and learn about resources such as teen clinics, food banks, and legal services focused on immigration. Students often share what they've learned with their families, thereby increasing community awareness of resources.

What is the vision for the organization in 5 years?

PLN is moving from a childcare and parent education organization to one that tries to serve the Latino community more holistically. In response to the needs they see, they have added health services such as the mobile dental van, and more adult education such as technology classes. The leadership aspires to add a program focused on supporting the parents of LGBTQI children in order to reduce stigma in the Latino community. As Virginia Herrera-Paramo, PLN's Executive Director succinctly put it, "PFLAG is only in English."

PLN also wants to improve their programs with added staff training and development, and intends to undertake a strategic planning process to help guide them through the next five years.

What is the organization's area of greatest need?

PLN is determined to purchase their own space, to avoid wasting money on rent and to feel secure that they can continue to provide services for the foreseeable future. In addition, PLN is facing the end of several multi-year grants in the next year so are seeking additional sources of funding.

Highlight a story of impact.

A mother-daughter pair of community members came to PLN. The mother, R.R., came to learn basic computer skills and later attended workshops on how to interview for jobs. The daughter, L.R., attended Aprendemos Juntos, PLN's after-school program. The daughter was at the upper age limit for Aprendemos Juntos - meaning that the following year, she would "graduate" to PLN's program for high school students. L.R. was quite reserved and withdrawn at first, but as she witnessed her mother's growth in confidence, she came out of her shell. By the time she moved to the high school program, she had become a leader among the kids and was helping other students. Her mother was able to get a new job shortly after completing PLN's interview workshops. This two-generation impact demonstrates how PLN meets families where they are and achieves lasting change.