



COUNCIL OF
AGENCIES SERVING
SOUTH ASIANS

2023

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT



Annual General Meeting
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

Tuesday, November 28, 2023
5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

705 Progress Avenue Units 1, 101, 106
Toronto, Ontario M1H 2X1
Zoom Meeting

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2023 AGM AGENDA

5:30 - 6:00 P.M.

Welcome, Dinner, and Tours

6:00 - 6:45 P.M.

**Remarks by Mayor Olivia Chow
Panel: Creating Safe Spaces for
Service Delivery for South
Asian Communities**

6:45 - 7:00 P.M.

Staff Video Presentation

7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Business Segment

8:00 - 8:30 P.M.

**Additional Tours and
Feedback from Members
(optional)**

8:30 P.M.

End of AGM



2022 AGM MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 16, 2022

Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Welcome, and Call to Order:

Bharat Saini, Chair of the CASSA Board of Directors, called the meeting to order.

Land Acknowledgement:

Akhila Appadurai, Project Coordinator, CASSA delivered the Land Acknowledgement before the business segment began.

Approval of Draft Agenda:

Leanne Saldanha, Treasurer of CASSA, made the motion to approve the agenda. Nasima Akhter seconded the motion.

Approval of 2020 AGM Minutes:

Bharat announced that only the members who attended the 2021 AGM were allowed to approve the minutes. Leanne Saldanha Treasurer of CASSA, made the motion to approve and Jessica Singh seconded the motion.

Chair's Report:

Bharat presented the Chair's Report: CASSA aims to build the capacity for South Asian community with a strong focus to implement systemic level changes with the help of its member agencies. In 2021, Covid-19 presented a huge challenge but CASSA was able to make a tremendous impact by creating an action plan to address the ongoing inequities and provided support to the most marginalized and vulnerable members of the South Asian community who were facing barriers in accessing the vaccine. CASSA worked with all levels of government to ensure that there was vaccine equity. We continued to sit on advisory tables with Ontario health, Toronto Public Health and Health Canada to address these issues.

CASSA was able to secure more funding in 2021 and administered a number of new projects like Gender based violence research, South Asian Vaccine Engagement Collaborative (SAVEC), Employment Equity, Hate Crime reporting, Gender based violence and toxic masculinity, Collaborative to combat online hate to name a few. We also organized the Health Equity summit online successfully that was attended by a large

number of public health professionals and service providers. CASSA also celebrated the South Asian Heritage Month by releasing a poster that highlighted the Covid heroes who were individuals who worked tirelessly and made a meaningful impact in the community during the pandemic.

Director's Report:

Samya thanked the partners, funders, allies and collaborators and briefly spoke about the accomplishments in 2022 and also touched on the upcoming projects of CASSA. The Health Equity summit this year focused on the conversation about sharing and shifting power and the need to have a meaningful dialogue to address health inequity. The Toxic Masculinity in South Asian Communities and Gender based Violence project funded by the United Way of greater Toronto focused on the research on how we want to deliver gender-based violence services to the community. CASSA's Coalition for Racial Equity in Education made a tremendous impact when the Peel district board passed a motion to create an Anti-Islamophobia strategy across the school boards in Peel region. We hope that it will be adopted by other school boards as well. Samya also spoke about the two new projects that have started recently with the Anti Hate Community Leaders (AHCL) Group. One of them is funded by the Canadian Race relations Foundation to create awareness and advocacy around the policies that perpetuate systemic racism. The second project is funded by the Anti-Racism Directorate to adapt our #Eradicatehate toolkit using creative content to provide education to children and youth in Ontario on how to protect themselves online. Samya also mentioned that in the future, we aim to do a lot of capacity building and create a sustainability strategy for CASSA. We are also working on getting charitable status and re-prioritize what we want to do in the next five years. We are redesigning our website which will be more accessible and easy to navigate.

Auditor's report:

Leanne Saldanha, summarized the Auditor's report mentioning that the financial statements are presented fairly as remarked by Rashidi LLP. The motion to approve the financial statements was made by Jessica Singh. It was seconded by Nasima Akter. The motion to reappoint Rashidi LLP as the auditor was moved by Jessica Singh and seconded by Tanzina Islam.

Outgoing Members:

Bharat acknowledged the three outgoing board members Sanga Achakzai, Anjum Sultana and Anita Singh and expressed deepest gratitude for their valuable contribution to CASSA.

Nominations:

There were four new incoming board members.

Ayesha Chughtai

Samir Parmar

Jessica Devi Chandrashekar

Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan

Bharat Saini announced the names of the 2022-23 slate as under:

Bharat Saini: Chair
Tanzina Islam: Secretary
Leanne Saldanha: Treasurer
Jessica Singh: Member
Thanuya Mohanathan: Member
Ayesha Chughtai: Member
Samir Parmar: Member
Jessica Devi Chandrashekar: Member
Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan: Member

The motion to approve the 2022-23 slate as the board of directors was made by Nasima Akter from BCS and seconded by Dr. Reza from BCCS.

Strategic Priorities 2021-26:

CASSA will commit to the following six strategic priorities in the next five years:

1. Support Immigration and Settlement
2. Economic Empowerment
3. Enhance Health Equity
4. Advance Anti-racism and Anti-Oppression
5. Gender Equity and Empowerment
6. Combat online hate, hate crime and hate speech

The motion to approve the strategic priorities was put forward by Abdul Hamid of GTA Northwestern Community Services and seconded by Thanuya Mohanathan.

Meeting Adjournment:

The motion to adjourn the business segment of the meeting was made by Bharat Saini and seconded by Shumona Shafinaz of BCCS. The segment was adjourned.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Dear friends, members, funders, and partners,

As the world continues to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, the year 2022 was filled with planning and strategizing for the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians' (CASSA) ambitious future. One thing we knew for certain was that we cannot go back to the pre-pandemic "normal". Over the three years of the pandemic, CASSA wore many new hats and took on greater challenges to better support South Asian serving organizations in Ontario. We also continued to connect with South Asian focused agencies outside of the Greater Toronto Area and even outside of Ontario in advocacy with government and funders especially around the issues of housing, health, anti-racism, anti-hate, and equitable funding.

We found ourselves being invited increasingly to more decision-making tables and advisory bodies such as the Coalition Against Anti-Asian Racism Canada and the Ontario Provincial Police Hate Crime Advisory. We took on a significantly more active role with the Toronto Nonprofit Network (TNN) as we became the secretariat for TNN's work. Through the work with TNN, CASSA became involved in the Spatial Justice campaign with a deeper focus on racial equity and reconciliation. We continue to support academic and community-based research and ensure that diverse voices of South Asian communities are accurately reflected in research for and about our communities. CASSA has also been working with all levels of government on various policies and practices that impact South Asian communities as we advocate for access, equity, and inclusion.

In 2022, CASSA wrapped up our vaccine engagement campaign and now continues to work with South Asian health advocacy agencies and groups on larger health equity campaigns. We were also funded for the first time by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to create education and awareness about policies that perpetuate systemic racism in Canada in partnership with the Anti-Hate Community Leaders' Group. Throughout the year in 2022, CASSA also worked with social justice agencies on online hate and social media training. Due to the resounding success of this project, we were asked to adapt our training and toolkit for children and youth by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism. From this grant, this year we were able to launch our

very own mobile app for children and youth on online safety called EradicateHate 2.0. CASSA also completed and launched a well-researched toolkit for service providers to gender-based violence survivors. CASSA conducted training into 2023 with service agencies across Canada to help them better prepare for culturally appropriate service delivery during situations of emergency or crisis.

In addition to our ongoing projects on social justice issues impacting South Asian communities, we bravely continued our journey for internal capacity building. In 2022, we completed our strategic planning until 2026, finalized and started to implement our sustainability strategy for the next five years, started the process of applying for charitable status, and began the process of securing a space in Toronto to create a hub of services for South Asian communities in the Greater Toronto Area. This journey has resulted in many successes in 2023. We secured 5200+ square feet of space in Scarborough, Ontario to develop a one-stop shop for many social services for South Asian communities. We are nearing the final stages of the charitable status application. We have started the process of national expansion into Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec. We hope to continue these successes into 2024 with the generous support of our members, partners, and funders.

We would like to thank every agency, group and individual who has supported CASSA and have provided us guidance on how we can better serve our communities across the country. We have a long road ahead of us and we are looking forward to this continued journey with our members, partners, and funders.

In solidarity,
Samya Hasan, Executive Director, CASSA
Bharat Saini, Chair of the Board of Directors, CASSA

CASSA 2022 PROJECT UPDATES

The Coalition for Racial Equity in Education Project

Project Manager: Samaha Kureshi [Past: Eman Zahid and Mahdiba Chowdhury]

Project Associate: Ramsha Tariq

Partners:

- Urban Alliance on Race Relations (UARR)
- Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action (TCCCA)
- Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice (CCNC-SJ)
- Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators (ONABSE)

This project aims to empower Muslim-identifying high school students and their parents by equipping them with effective advocacy skills, enabling their active participation in decision-making processes within school boards. The overarching objective is to address and counteract racism and Islamophobia prevalent in Ontario's education system through community capacity building and the pursuit of systemic policy changes within school boards.

In the early months of 2022, Eman and Mahdiba spearheaded the project, collaborating closely with Muslim students and parents/guardians affiliated with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). The focal point of their efforts was the organization of a series of advocacy training workshops designed to support the implementation of an anti-Islamophobia strategy within the TDSB. Despite substantial dedication, the motion for the strategy's adoption did not succeed during the initial phase of the project.

Come September 2022, Samaha joined the endeavor, prompting a strategic shift towards the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) and Durham District School Board (DDSB). The team expanded its reach, engaging Muslim parents and high school students from both regions and initiating comprehensive training sessions. The primary goal of these sessions is to empower participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for the implementation of a holistic strategy to combat Islamophobia, thereby fostering a more inclusive educational environment.

South Asian Vaccine Engagement Collaborative (SAVEC)

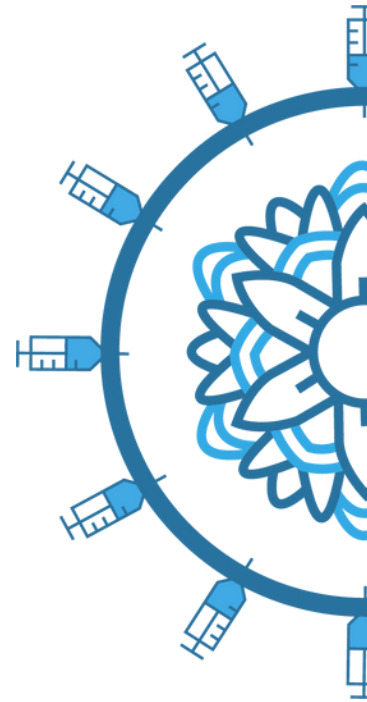
Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury [Past: Wardah Malik]

Project Associate: Tanvi Rathi

Interns: Jenane Jeyaseelan and Maham Malek

Collaborative Members:

- Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)
- Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS)
- Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS)
- Canadian Pakistani Association of Scarborough (CPAS)
- Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS)
- South Asian COVID Task Force (SACTF)
- South Asian Health Network (SAHN)
- South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)
- Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services (SAFSS)
- South Asian Womens' Rights Organization (SAWRO)
- Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action (TCCCA)



[SAVEC](#) is a community-driven initiative aimed at increasing COVID-19 testing, vaccine confidence, and access among South Asian communities in Toronto. To achieve this goal, SAVEC worked with South Asian agencies, community leaders, experts, and media outlets to develop agile, population-specific, and culturally responsive strategies. This initiative was funded by the City of Toronto and comprised 12 organizations.

SAVEC's team of 40+ Community Ambassadors employed a variety of diverse, creative, and hyperlocal outreach and engagement strategies that were response to community needs and the evolving pandemic conditions, as well as political and social contexts. SAVEC worked along two streams of engagement: in-person and online.

In-person engagements included supporting mobile/pop-up vaccine clinics and testing sites, conducting door-to-door/lobby outreaches, and hosting information booths in public spaces. During these engagements, our Community Ambassadors distributed personal protective equipment (PPE), rapid antigen test kits (RATs), and incentives such as pre-filled Presto cards and ridesharing vouchers.

Online engagements included illustrations, short animations, infographics, and virtual sessions such as webinars, workshops, town halls, podcasts, phone calls, Q&A drop-in sessions, and live broadcasts. Additionally, SAVEC provided peer-to-peer learning and training for all Vaccine Engagement Teams in Toronto, implementing culturally and linguistically responsive approaches to counter misinformation and address the barriers faced by South Asian communities. Furthermore, a workshop series was introduced to enhance the well-being of Community Ambassadors and celebrate their accomplishments. These workshops covered a variety of topics, including mental health, pandemic fatigue, managing work-related expectations, and de-escalation techniques.

11th Annual Health Equity Summit

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

Project Associates: Sundas Ramzan and Tanvi Rathi

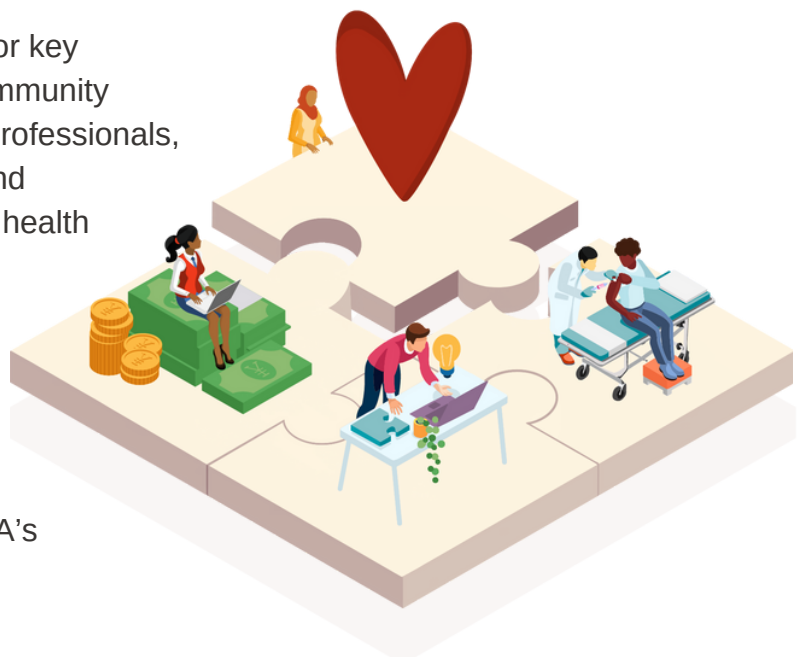
The Annual Health Equity Summit, hosted by CASSA, is dedicated to addressing health disparities that disproportionately affect marginalized communities, with a particular focus on South Asian and other racialized groups. This year's theme was 'Shifting and Sharing Power: Community Engagement for Reducing Health Inequities'.

We emphasized that community engagement is an important step towards understanding the unique circumstances faced by populations living with health inequities. This was especially true when considering the opportunities and obstacles these communities encounter to achieve health. Having authentic and ongoing relationships with communities that experience marginalization – beyond one-time engagement events or client satisfaction – requires eliminating processes and practices that make decisions for those communities without their direct and meaningful involvement.

The Summit featured a lineup of nine esteemed experts, each contributing their valuable insights and expertise. Dr. Farah Mawani delivered a compelling keynote address on 'Advancing Community Engagement Approaches to Dismantle Systemic Racism and Discrimination, and Reduce Mental Health Inequities.' In an engaging panel discussion focused on the 'Community Engagement Framework,' Camille Orridge, Dr. Jennifer Zelmer, Safia Ahmed, and Amy Go offered their valuable perspectives on co-developing the structure and expectations for engagement. Throughout the event's breakout sessions, attendees had the opportunity to delve into various critical topics. Anthony Gladue led 'Community Informed Healing & Learning,' while Andrew Pinto and Dorothy Mary Senior facilitated 'Community-Based Participatory Research & Anti-Oppressive Data Collection.' Fatah Awil guided participants in 'Centering Community Voices in Health Policy,' providing a well-rounded experience for all.

This Summit served as a platform for key stakeholders, including experts, community leaders, policymakers, healthcare professionals, and advocates, to come together and collectively work towards achieving health equity.

The Summit was held virtually through Zoom on Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. A recorded version of the Summit can be found on CASSA's YouTube channel: [CASSA Online](#).



South Asian Heritage Month 2022

Project Manager: Yomna Omar and Mahdiba Chowdhury

Communications Coordinator: Sakshi Mehta

SAHM is a month-long celebration in Canada that aims to recognize and highlight the contributions of South Asians to Canadian society. This celebration takes place during the month of May and is an opportunity to showcase the rich cultural diversity, history, and heritage of South Asians in Canada.

The 2022 SAHM initiative centered around the theme "Mental Health and Supports in South Asian Communities." Seven remarkable South Asian mental health practitioners and advocates were featured:

- Dr. Farah Islam – Advocate, Educator, and Researcher
- Dr. Farooq Naeem – Professor of Psychiatry at UofT and Psychiatrist at CAMH
- Dr. Parvathy Kandasamy – Counselor, Researcher, and Author
- Maneet Chahal – RN and Co-founder of SOCH Mental Health
- Jasmeet Chagger – RN and Co-founder of SOCH Mental Health
- Dr. Ripudaman Singh Minhas – Developmental Pediatrician and Associate Professor
- Rita Kohli – Registered Psychotherapist and Traumatologist

The virtual SAHM panel discussion took place on Wednesday, May 25, 2022, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. During this engaging discussion, these leaders offered their perspectives on mental health issues affecting the South Asian community. Drawing from their own lived experiences, they provided valuable insights and practical suggestions for addressing these challenges. A recorded version of the panel discussion can be found on CASSA's YouTube channel: [CASSA Online](#).

2022 SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Celebrating Mental Health Advocates



Dr. Farah Islam is a mental health advocate, educator, and researcher. She explores mental health and service access at the intersection of faith, migration, and racialization and works on eliminating the barriers of mental health stigma. She serves as the Director of the Psychospiritual Department at Yaqeen Institute for Islamic Research.



Dr. Farooq Naeem is a Professor of Psychiatry at UofT and a Psychiatrist at CAMH. He published nearly 200 peer-reviewed articles, 6 books, and numerous therapy manuals and chapters. Dr. Naeem pioneered techniques for culturally adapting cognitive behaviour therapy; now used in South Asia, North Africa, the Middle East, Kenya, and China.



Dr Parvathy Kandasamy engages in counselling activities to alleviate women's grievances. She has researched women, seniors, and people with mental illnesses, published articles in mental health books, and works with Vasantham to uplift the mental health of Tamil citizens, providing hope for victimized women and vulnerable seniors.



Maneet Chahal-Gill has over a decade of mental health nursing experience. A thesis Chahal-Gill completed for her MScN examined the experience of the Punjabi community in Peel in accessing mental health services. She co-founded Soch Mental Health, which provides culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health promotion for South Asians.



Jasmeet Chagger has over a decade of mental health nursing experience. A thesis Chagger completed for her MScN explored the perceptions and the impact of alcohol use on Punjabi families. She co-founded Soch Mental Health, which provides culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health promotion for South Asian.



Dr. Ripudaman Singh Minhas is a Developmental Pediatrician and an Assistant Professor. His research includes the development, behaviour, disability, and rehabilitation of children in urban settings and newcomer, immigrant and refugee families. He supports parenting in marginalized communities and develops child development interventions.



Rita Kohli is a Registered Psychotherapist and Traumatologist, who works with people of different race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation from a strength-based approach. Rita has over three decades of experience in the non-profit and post-secondary sector and her lived experiences as a survivor living in exile within exile.

Official 2022 South Asian Heritage Month Poster by the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA).

This initiative is part of CASSA's ongoing work to highlight and appreciate South Asian Canadian Trailblazers. This year's Trailblazers have made incredible contributions to the field of mental health by creating safe spaces for conversations, introducing innovative approaches, and advocating for better mental health supports.

CASSA

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Hate Crime Reporting Project

Project Coordinator: Maiura Muralitharan [Past: Lakhdeep Singh Dhaliwal]

Project Associate: Noor Imran [Past: Naima Raza]

Intern: Fahima Jogiat [Past: Rabia Wattoo]

Partners:

- [Anti-Hate Community Leaders' Group](#)
- Toronto Police
- York Regional Police
- Peel Regional Police
- Ottawa Police
- Dr. Wesley Crichlow

The Hate Crime Reporting Project aims to bring community voices together to inform hate crime reporting processes in Toronto, Peel, York, and Ottawa. Answers to questions like “what is a hate crime?”, “what is the ideal method for reporting?”, and even the likelihood of charges brought against a perpetrator of a hate-motivated crime, differ depending on the individual and community or communities with which they are associated.

In partnership with the Anti-Hate Community Leaders' Group, this project looks to bridge the gap between how the Toronto Police, York Regional Police, Peel Regional Police, and Ottawa Police Service, perceive hate-motivated crimes and what their local community understands about, and experiences with relation to, hate crimes and Reporting.

The project, now in its second year, has wrapped up community consultations in Peel, Toronto, York and Ottawa. Through online surveys, and online and in-person focus groups and interviews, we identified community perceptions about hate crimes, reporting processes, and ways to remove barriers to reporting for racialized and religious minority communities. Using this data, we are developing training materials for police services on safe and anti-oppressive engagement practices with these communities. The next stage involves sharing these materials to our partnered police services and collaborating with them towards a community-based approach to addressing hate-motivated crimes, improving reporting, and removing barriers to reporting.

The goal of the project is to increase community awareness about recognizing and safely reporting hate crimes, as well as to encourage systemic changes in police services through community feedback, which would increase public willingness to report and prevent future hate-motivated incidents.



National Gender-based Violence Study

Project Manager: Dinoba Kirupa

Partners and Affiliated Regional Coordinators:

- South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO) – Silmy Abdullah
- South Asian Women's Rights Organization (SAWRO) – Tasfia Hasan
- Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) – Tania Bhullar, Benny Rana
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS) – Akhila Appadurai

In 2021, CASSA was funded by the Canadian Women's Foundation to undertake a two-year research study on gender-based violence (GBV) in the South Asian community in Canada. The pandemic and lockdowns had exacerbated the presence of GBV in homes around the country with service delivery agencies seeing a rise in cases. Partnered with the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario and South Asian Women's Rights Organization in Ontario, Progressive Intercultural Community Services in British Columbia, and Punjabi Community Health Services Calgary in Alberta, the study covered three regions in Canada.

Overarching research questions looked into the specific ways in which GBV manifested in the South Asian community in Canada, the types of services required to support people in abusive situations, barriers to accessing support, legal rights covered in family law and immigration law, and how service delivery may be improved by support agencies to better meet the needs of clients facing GBV. Most of this will be studied through the lens of the pandemic.

Research and data collection took the forms of surveys, focus groups, and interviews of experts and executive directors. Data collection was supported by seven other organizations as well as the primary project partners.

We are happy to announce that the study was a success. CASSA and partners were able to publish an 80-page toolkit that dove into the research questions mentioned above. The toolkit and other materials may be found on cassa.ca/gbvstudy. The project also entailed a knowledge mobilization phase where we held national virtual training sessions for service providers. The training on family law and immigration law included a crucial legal component. You can access these informative videos, along with knowledge-testing videos, on the GBV website mentioned above. The sessions were divided into two types - those designed for mainstream service providers and those service providers who are specifically South Asian serving. We opened the training sessions at the end to the public to help members of the community who want to support their loved ones facing GBV. We are very happy with the successful data collection, dissemination and collaboration with our community. This project made way for the next study tied to GBV on toxic masculinity taking place now.



CASSA 2023 PROJECT UPDATES



12th Annual Health Equity Summit

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

Project Associate: Riya Shah

The Annual Health Equity Summit, hosted by CASSA, is dedicated to addressing health disparities that disproportionately affect marginalized communities, with a particular focus on South Asian and other racialized groups. This year's theme was 'South Asian Youth Perspective on Health Equity & Inclusion.'

In today's rapidly evolving world, ensuring health equity and fostering inclusivity have become paramount, particularly when it comes to addressing the needs of youth aged 16-30. It is essential to recognize the unique experiences, challenges, and perspectives of diverse youth populations, including youth with mental health and disabilities, youth experiencing homelessness, and international students. By engaging in open and inclusive discussions that amplify their voices, we can work towards addressing the existing disparities in health support, promoting overall well-being, and ultimately building a more equitable and compassionate society that uplifts all members of the youth population.

The Summit featured a lineup of eight esteemed experts, each contributing their valuable insights and expertise. Amrit Parhat took the stage as the keynote speaker, addressing the theme of 'Youth as Catalysts for Change: Amplifying South Asian Voices in Health Equity.' During the breakout sessions, Summayah Poonah guided participants through the transformative journey of 'Breaking Stigma and Building Resilience: Advancing Health Equity for Youth with Mental Health and Disabilities.' Meanwhile, the dynamic duo of Dr. Shivajan Sivapalan and Sejal Ketyal led a session titled 'Inclusion without Borders: Advancing Health Equity for International Students.' Dr. Naomi Thulien delved into a critical session titled 'Beyond the Streets: Advancing Health Equity for Youth Experiencing Homelessness'. The plenary session, 'Cultivating Youth Leadership: Empowering South Asian Youth for Health Equity Advocacy,' featured an impressive lineup of speakers including Almeera Khalid, Eraj Waqar, Fairuz Karim, and Manvir Bhangu.

The Summit provided an opportunity for public health professionals, community leaders, researchers, academics, social service providers, and decision-makers alike to demonstrate valuing engagement as a core public health practice.

The Summit was held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023 from 9:30 AM to 4:00 PM, and took place at the Centennial College Progress Campus Event Centre.

High Priority Communities Strategy (HPCS) Program

Project Managers: Mahdiba Chowdhury and Sonia Baweja

Intern: Archanaa Krisnagopal

Partners:

- Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association
- Social Services Network (SSN)

The HPCS program, established by the Ontario Government, is a community-driven initiative aimed at addressing health disparities experienced by marginalized communities, with a special focus on South Asian women. In collaboration with Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association and SSN, CASSA is actively delivering critical services and support to the neighborhoods most affected by these disparities, primarily in Southeast Markham.

The HPCS program is committed to providing equitable access to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services for South Asian women, effectively bridging gaps in public health. To achieve this, the program has identified three key priorities:

- **Ongoing COVID-19 Response and Recovery:** The program implements strategies to enhance testing and vaccination accessibility, particularly in the targeted communities. This includes facilitating convenient testing locations, mobile vaccination clinics, and providing community outreach to ensure all South Asian women can access crucial COVID-19 services. Additionally, it aims to promote vaccination education and combat vaccine hesitancy in these communities.
- **Women's Preventive & Primary Care:** The program is dedicated to minimizing barriers to women's preventive and primary care. It works towards making healthcare services more accessible by providing transportation assistance, facilitating mobile clinics, and offering multilingual support. This encompasses comprehensive women's health check-ups, preventative screenings, and health education workshops to empower South Asian women to take control of their health.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** The program provides a range of mental health services, including referrals to individual counseling and support groups, as well as connections with mental health professionals who understand the unique challenges faced by South Asian women. These services are complemented by awareness campaigns and workshops to foster mental health resilience and awareness in the communities.

CASSA implements a multifaceted approach to address these priorities, such as launching impactful social media campaigns to raise awareness about cancer prevention, screening, and mental health. These campaigns provide crucial information and encourage individuals to take proactive steps towards safeguarding their physical and mental well-being. Additionally, CASSA organized workshops within various South Asian communities, providing in-depth guidance and support on these crucial health topics. Following the workshop, we facilitated discussions and distributed a survey to gain a better understanding of health-related concerns of South Asian women and the challenges they face in accessing care.

Each campaign and workshop was available in English, Arabic, Bangla, Punjabi, Tamil, and Urdu, making it accessible to a diverse audience.

Social Justice Summit

Project Managers: Yomna Omar and Samaha Kureshi

Intern: Debankita Joardar

CASSA's Social Justice Summit was held virtually through Zoom across two days, Tuesday, February 7th, 2023, and Wednesday, February 8th, 2023, from 9 AM - 1:30 PM. It was a first-of-its-kind, free, and virtual learning and sharing experience. The inaugural summit's theme for this year was "Unlocking Your Social Justice Potential: Capacity Building 101."

The Summit aimed to provide an introductory understanding (a 101-type introduction) to various social justice issues, empowering attendees to take actionable steps on diverse social justice-related concerns. It sought to enhance participants' ability to offer anti-racist and anti-oppressive services and to effectively share this knowledge with both staff and clients.

Comprising 12 sessions, eight of which highlighted materials and resources developed in 2022 by CASSA-led projects, the Summit delved into a spectrum of social justice matters. Session topics included best practices for gender-based violence service delivery during the pandemic, community-based research processes for non-profits, facilitation of hate crime reporting, combating online hate, addressing Islamophobia with school boards, and more.

The Summit also featured four sessions led by experts in the field of social justice. Kelsey Ford from the Abilities Center in Durham presented "Accessibility 101 for Non-profits," focusing on inclusion, personal and unconscious biases related to disability, and best practices for breaking down stigma. Lindsay (Swooping Hawk) Kretschmer led a session on Indigenous Social Justice, exploring challenges and opportunities in this context. The Ombudsman of Toronto, Kwame Addo, clarified the complaints process in the city and the accountability office's oversight of equity in city services, programs, and policies. Lastly, Lilian Obeng from the CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals provided insights into Anti-Black Racism in service delivery, highlighting how anti-blackness manifests in the non-profit sector and offering suggestions for tailoring service delivery to the Black community.

Attended by staff from CASSA's member agencies, other service providers, and individuals not affiliated with any particular organization, the Summit served as a platform for professionals, community leaders, researchers, academics, students, social service providers, and decision-makers to convene, learn, unlearn, and engage in crucial conversations related to social justice matters. The overarching goal was to foster better and more equitable service delivery.

A summary of resources for the CASSA Staff-led sessions can be found [here](#) for reference.

South Asian Heritage Month 2023

Project Managers: Ridah Asghar, Yomna Omar, & Mahdiba Chowdhury

Intern: Debankita Joardar

SAHM is a month-long celebration in Canada that aims to recognize and highlight the contributions of South Asians to Canadian society. This celebration takes place during the month of May and is an opportunity to showcase the rich cultural diversity, history, and heritage of South Asians in Canada.

The 2023 SAHM initiative focused on the theme "South Asian-Canadian Systemic Changemakers," spotlighting seven exceptional individuals who have made a systemic impact on South Asian communities through their work in research, advocacy, activism, art, policy, outreach, and education:

1. Gurdeep Pandher – Bhangra Artist and Educator
2. Masuma Khan – Community Organizer and Artist
3. Dr. Nasima Akter – Executive Director of Bangladesh-Canadian Community Services
4. Dr. Satwinder Kaur Bains – Director and Associate Professor at University of the Fraser Valley
5. Seher Shafiq – Civic leader, Writer, Speaker, and Consultant
6. Sonali (Alyy) Patel – Writer, Activist, and Author
7. V.T. Nayani- Director, Producer, Actor, and Writer

The hybrid panel discussion took place on Tuesday, May 30, 2023, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Scarborough Civic Centre, simultaneously broadcasted on Zoom for remote participation. In this engaging discussion, panelists shared their experiences and challenges in achieving equity and justice, driving systemic change in the South Asian community. They also offered valuable recommendations for future generations to build upon the progress initiated by current South Asian changemakers.

2023 SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

SOUTH ASIAN-CANADIAN SYSTEMIC CHANGEMAKERS



GURDEEP PANDHER

Gurdeep Pandher is a Bhangra artist and educator based in Yukon who promotes intercultural understanding throughout Canada. His online dance classes, videos and uplifting messages brought joy and positivity during the pandemic. He was recognized by several international media organizations, including BBC News and CBC National. Gurdeep uses dance to break down barriers that BIPOC face and is a notable social media influencer.



MASUMA KHAN

Masuma Khan is a community organizer and artist born and raised in Nova Scotia. She is known for her overwhelming passion and commitment to dismantling systems of oppression. For Masuma poetry is an expression that is tied to her cultural practice as a Pashtun. Her art style is influenced by her lived experience with white supremacy, colonialism, displacement, racism, islamophobia, disability justice, and more.



DR. NASIMA AKTER

Dr. Nasima Akter has been the Executive Director of Bangladesh-Canadian Community Services (BCS) in Toronto since 2010. She focuses on community engagement projects related to combating Islamophobia & racism, mental health, and intergenerational initiatives. Dr. Akter has over 26 years of experience in community development and holds a PhD in Environmental Technology & Management.



DR. SATWINDER KAUR BAINS

Dr. Satwinder Kaur Bains is the Director of the South Asian Studies Institute at the University of the Fraser Valley and an Associate Professor in the School of Culture, Media and Society, College of Arts. Her research focuses on language, culture and identity in South Asian Canadian migration and settlement. She is also involved in various community organizations and has held positions in several government commissions and boards.



SEHER SHAFIQ

Seher Shafiq is a national civic leader with over 10 years of experience working on Canada's civic challenges. Seher is also an experienced writer, speaker, and consultant who's been featured in CBC, TVO, Global News and more. She works for the Mozilla Foundation and runs a global program on ethical and trustworthy AI. Seher led the first non-partisan voter engagement campaign, has worked in refugee resettlement, and with the United Nations.



SONALI (ALYY) PATEL

Sonali (Alyy) Patel is a trailblazing LGBTQ+ scholar, activist, and author, who has made monumental strides for Queer South Asian Women. Alyy pioneered Canadian research on Queer South Asian Women's issues, solely founded the Queer South Asian Women's Network—a thriving national non-profit—and recently published her first book, Don't Tell My Parents: Queer Diasporic Truths.



V.T. NAYANI

V.T. Nayani is a director, producer, actor and writer, who explores the theme of coming of age. She's been supported by various platforms including Telefilm Canada, the Canadian Film Centre, and the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television. Her work has been showcased at film festivals such as TIFF, Mardi Gras, and Outfest Fusion. Her debut feature, THIS PLACE, is set to release this summer.

Official 2023 South Asian Heritage Month Poster by the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA).

This initiative is part of CASSA's ongoing work to highlight and appreciate South Asian-Canadian Trailblazers. This year's Trailblazers have made a systemic impact in South Asian communities through research, advocacy, activism, art, policy, outreach, and education. They have been integral in paving the way for an equitable road for future generations.

CASSA
www.cassa.ca



The Coalition for Racial Equity in Education Project

Project Manager: Samaha Kureshi

Project Associate: Ramsha Tariq

Intern: Ozair Asmal

Partners:

- Urban Alliance on Race Relations (UARR)
- Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action (TCCCA)
- Canadian National Council for Social Justice (CCNC-SJ)

This project aims to empower Muslim-identifying high school students and their parents by equipping them with effective advocacy skills, enabling their active participation in decision-making processes within school boards. The overarching objective is to address and counteract racism and Islamophobia prevalent in Ontario's education system through community capacity building and the pursuit of systemic policy changes within school boards.

A pivotal milestone in this initiative was the unanimous vote in favor of implementing the strategy within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). This accomplishment stands as a testament to the unwavering dedication of the advocates and community leaders involved, showcasing broad acknowledgment of the imperative to address issues of equity and inclusivity, particularly for Muslim students and staff.

The TDSB's implementation led to notable achievements including the development of policies and guidelines aimed at combating Islamophobia and discrimination within the education system. The Peel District School Board (PDSB)'s successful adoption of similar policies set a precedent and provided a model for the TDSB and other school boards in the region.

Beyond policy changes, the initiative organized community forums to foster dialogue and raise awareness about equity and inclusivity issues. Volunteer training programs equipped individuals with the tools to become effective advocates for change.

Building on success in the TDSB, the initiative now targets the York Region District School Board and Durham District School Board, with an unwavering commitment to replicating Toronto's successes for the benefit of students and staff in these regions. Ongoing advocacy efforts aim to influence regional school boards and the provincial government, leveraging invaluable experience from collaborating with the TDSB and PDSB to navigate future challenges and opportunities.



Together We Rise Festival

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

[Together We Rise Arts Festival](#) was a celebration of Greater Toronto Area's Asian diaspora artists and cultural organizations, featuring multi-disciplinary arts programming on the weekend of June 2-3, 2023. This "festival of festivals" programming included a mix of live performing arts, film screenings, in-person workshops, and multimedia installations, all of which were accessible to family audiences, and highlighted the creativity, diversity, and innovation of Scarborough.

CASSA worked with Toronto-based community arts organizations to co-produce and co-present the Together We Rise Arts Festival to celebrate the Scarborough community's rich heritage and artistic talents. These partner organizations included the Nagata Shachu Japanese Taiko and Music Group, Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival, tiger princess dance projects (tpdp), Japan Foundation Toronto, Kapisanan Philippine Centre for Arts & Culture, and Empowered Phụ Nữ

CASSA's Intergenerational Storytelling event was held on June 3rd, both indoors and outdoors, at the Scarborough Civic Centre's Albert Campbell Square and in the Raymond Moriyama-designed building. The event featured a variety of engaging activities and performances centered around the theme of anti-racism, anti-oppression, discrimination, and the challenges faced during the settlement process. The aim was to explore and reflect upon the struggles experienced by individuals and communities, with the goal of fostering a deeper understanding and driving positive social change.

It featured storytelling led by Pirathajini Chandrakumar and Amal El Sadig, highlighting their immigration experiences and struggles. Noor Fadel delivered a powerful spoken word poetry piece titled '[Two Faces of War](#),' which reflected on her mother's harrowing experiences during the war and the sacrifices she made to protect her children. [Ahkenam Arts](#), a Toronto-based Tamil group, delivered an impressive performance with traditional Parai drums, reclaiming them as a symbol of cultural identity and social freedom. Additionally, we screened informative animated videos from our [Hate Crime Reporting Project](#) and [#EradicateHate 2.0](#) project, designed to educate and empower viewers to combat hate-motivated crimes in their communities and online spaces.

With COVID-19 having had a significant impact on the local art world and anti-Asian hate continuing to rise, this event fostered deeper engagement and collaboration between the participating organizations and artists and shared their work for free with the community.

A highlight video can be found on CASSA's YouTube Channel: [CASSA Online](#).



Policies that Perpetuate Systemic Racism

Project Manager: Sonia Baweja

Interns: Archanaa Krisnagopal, Sara Zabiullah, and Asha Selvakumar

Volunteer: Manum Shahid

Partners:

- Naseeha Mental Health
- World Sikh Organization
- South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)
- Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)
- Chinese Canadian National Council for Social Justice (CCNC-SJ)
- Canadian Council of Muslim Women
- National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM)
- Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims
- Migrant Workers Alliance for Change
- Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic
- York Region Muslims (YRM)
- Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic
- Critical South Asian Diasporic Feminisms
- Bangladesh Centre & Community Services (BCCS)

The "Policies that Perpetuate Systemic Racism" project, funded by the Canada Race Relations' Foundation, was a nine-month initiative by CASSA focused on highlighting the impacts of Quebec's Bill 21, the "Barbaric Cultural Practices Act", and the Canada Child Benefit's dependency on immigration status. This project was a key part of CASSA's commitment to addressing systemic racism.

The project unfolded in three phases: research, content creation, and a public awareness campaign. The research phase included interviews with individuals impacted by these policies, along with professionals working with affected clients, and comprehensive secondary research. The project's execution involved collaboration with over 10 diverse organizations, both new and existing partners, who provided a range of expertise, from advisory roles to content dissemination and knowledge sharing.

A variety of content was produced, including social media posts, animated videos, blog posts, illustrations, and podcasts. These materials, focusing on stories of individuals affected by the policies, aimed to foster understanding and empathy among audiences. The content played a significant role in enhancing knowledge, shifting attitudes, and sparking informed discussions and advocacy. The materials were disseminated through community networks and CASSA's social media channels.

Even though one political representative was directly engaged in the ongoing struggles of those without Canada child benefit, this aspect will be ongoing. The final phase of the project, which will be ongoing, involves engaging with political representatives. A call to action, backed by gathered data and stories, will be sent to political figures in the upcoming months as part of an advocacy strategy for policy change.

Toxic Masculinity and Gender-based Violence

Project Manager: [Past: Wardah Malik]

Project Associate: Neel Desai

Interns: Samson Mapile and Charito Grafilo



Partners:

- South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)
- Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS)
- South Asian and Tamil Women's Collective (SATWC)
- Nisa Homes
- Bangladesh Centre & Community Services (BCCS)
- Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)

In 2022, CASSA was funded by United Way Greater Toronto to take on a community-based research project. The study will be designed to understand toxic masculinity as it relates to and impacts gender-based violence (GBV) within the South Asian community in Canada. It will look into healthy and unhealthy established gender norms in the community, factors that cause toxic masculinity, and how to create culturally responsive intervention methods to combat it.

This study is important because toxic masculinity affects people of all genders and is associated with a greater risk of GBV in families or intimate relationships. Based on CASSA's previous GBV study, the study has critically identified how GBV is a "silent pandemic" within the South Asian community in Canada, particularly impacting South Asian women. CASSA aims to dive deeper into this research, by investigating how toxic masculinity contributes to this "silent pandemic" towards women and queer-individuals, as primary research that investigates this relationship within the community in Canada, is limited.

In order to conduct the study, CASSA will be joined by the abovementioned partners for data collection support. CASSA has also dedicated many months working on receiving an ethics approval from the Community Research Ethics Office (CREO) and is happy to announce that we have received the approval. Since receiving this from CREO, CASSA has designed and conducted training sessions for all partners to understand their obligations and the materials that have been distributed. At the moment, partners have begun participant recruitment within the South Asian community in Canada. CASSA will be there with partners every step of the way in order to ensure focus groups and surveys are conducted in an ethical and transparent manner. We look forward to receiving all the data and the analysis phase that will ensue in the coming year. The last year of the study, which will start from mid-2024 will entail knowledge mobilization and dissemination of results.

For more information, please visit cassa.ca/gtagbvstudy/.

Eradicate Hate 2.0: Combating Online Hate for Youth & Children Project

Project Manager: Noor Fadel [Past Co-Project Manager: Pirathajini Chandrakumar]

Partners:

- Early Learning & Literacy Alliance (ELLA)
- Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services
- Gibraltar Leadership Academy
- Neighbourhood Pods TO
- Mosaic Institute Youth Summit
- Naseeha Mental Health
- Canadian Council of Muslim Women
- YWCA Metro Vancouver
- YWCA Canada



In collaboration with the [Anti-hate Community Leaders Group](#), CASSA launched the EradicateHate 2.0 App, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism's Anti-Racism Directorate. This App features tutorials, reflection activities, and infographics, providing digital literacy tools to empower youth-focused organizations, educators, parents, and young victims of online hate. The content specifically tackles hateful attitudes and beliefs rooted in racist and xenophobic ideologies, addressing the creation and spread of online hate content.

A [recent study](#) by Concordia University found that online hate is growing in Canada and becoming normalized, especially among youth aged 18-25. Constant exposure to hate speech can make children and youth perceive it as the new "normal," leading to a decline in challenging online hate due to fear of scrutiny. CASSA's Executive Director, Samya Hasan, emphasized the need for the app, "We heard and witnessed what our young people are experiencing and responded with education and resources that can help them be safe online."

To engage children and youth effectively, the #EradicateHate App utilizes various communication modes such as storytelling, social media, animations, graphics, posters, cell phone apps, and games. The toolkit and app underwent multiple phases, including consultations from hundreds of youth, educators, parents, and community members.

"I was a target of a hate crime at the age of 18 years old as a visible Muslim woman. I thought the worst night of my life was the physical attack itself. Until I had the courage to speak out and share my experience online. I received hundreds and thousands of hate messages and threats. I can't even remember the physical pain of my attack, but I have struggled to forget and recover, reading all those messages I received. It's worse as once things go online they never disappear. It gives me hope to see organizations understanding the reality of how harmful online hate is, and we must do our best to bring awareness, support and create resources to allow children and youth to access when witnessing or experiencing online hate. I wish I had these resources available to me when I was experiencing online hate." says Noor Fadel co-Manager at CASSA for Combating Online Hate for Children and Youth.

All material will be available for public use in English and French. Parental content is translated in French, Arabic, simplified Chinese, Punjabi and Tamil. The App is free to download on [Apple Store](#) and [Google Play](#). All content can also be downloaded from the App or our [website](#).

2022 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DECEMBER 31, 2022

Rashidi LLP

CHARTERED
PROFESSIONAL
ACCOUNTANTS

9140 Leslie Street, Suite 305
Richmond Hill, Ontario L4B 0A9
Tel: (905)762-1900
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Email: info@rashidi.ca

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Unqualified Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Council of Agencies Serving South Asians ("the Organization"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2022, the statement of operations, the statement of changes in net assets, and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Council of Agencies Serving South Asians as at December 31, 2022, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing these financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT (Continued)

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Rashidi LLP

Richmond Hill, Ontario
May 2, 2023

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2022

ASSETS

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Current		
Cash	\$ 383,736	\$ 211,061
Investments (Note 4)	50,602	50,300
Grants receivable	21,546	19,628
HST recoverable	5,240	5,735
Prepaid expenses	3,541	3,632
Accounts receivable	2,397	10
	<u>467,062</u>	<u>290,366</u>
Capital assets (Note 3)	<u>1,818</u>	<u>2,522</u>
	<u>\$ 468,880</u>	<u>\$ 292,888</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 39,586	\$ 8,482
Deferred contributions (Note 7)	309,636	127,994
Loan payable (Note 6)	-	40,000
	<u>349,222</u>	<u>176,476</u>
Net assets	<u>119,658</u>	<u>116,412</u>
	<u>\$ 468,880</u>	<u>\$ 292,888</u>

Approved on behalf of the Board:

Bharat Saini

 Director

[Signature]

 Director

(The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements)

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 116,412	\$ 113,014
Excess of revenue over expenses	3,246	3,398
Balance, end of year	<u>\$ 119,658</u>	<u>\$ 116,412</u>

(The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements)

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Revenue		
Grants (Note 8)	\$ 979,259	\$ 759,466
Government assistance (Note 5)	10,000	-
Sponsorships, fundraising and workshops	8,595	9,827
Fees for service and rent	2,000	-
Membership fees	1,895	2,005
Interest income	302	300
	<u>1,002,051</u>	<u>771,598</u>
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits (Note 10)	421,330	378,476
Program - project expenses (Note 10)	376,928	220,498
Program - purchased services (Note 10)	127,847	99,418
Office and general (Note 10)	41,608	42,982
Rent and utilities	18,944	18,859
Professional services	6,200	3,565
Insurance	2,750	2,879
Travel and transportation	2,494	536
Amortization	704	987
	<u>998,805</u>	<u>768,200</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses	<u>\$ 3,246</u>	<u>\$ 3,398</u>

(The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements)

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Cash provided by (used in)		
Operating activities		
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 3,246	\$ 3,398
Amortization	704	987
	<u>3,950</u>	<u>4,385</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital items		
Accounts receivable	(2,387)	2,369
Grants receivable	(1,918)	12,196
Prepaid expenses	91	233
HST recoverable	495	-
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	31,104	2,612
Deferred contributions (Note 7)	181,642	(12,848)
	<u>209,027</u>	<u>4,562</u>
Financing activities		
Receipt of term loan funds	<u>(40,000)</u>	<u>-</u>
Increase in cash during the year	172,977	8,947
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	<u>261,361</u>	<u>252,414</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	<u>\$ 434,338</u>	<u>\$ 261,361</u>
Cash and cash equivalents represented by:		
Cash	\$ 383,736	\$ 211,061
Investments	<u>50,602</u>	<u>50,300</u>
	<u>\$ 434,338</u>	<u>\$ 261,361</u>

(The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements)

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

INCORPORATION AND PURPOSE OF ORGANIZATION:

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians ("the Organization") is a not-for-profit organization registered as a corporation without share capital in the Province of Ontario.

The Council was established to research, identify and analyze the needs of the South Asian communities, to act as a resource centre for government and policy making organizations and to promote understanding of the diverse nature of the said communities.

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations set out in Part III of the CPA Canada Handbook - Accounting. Outlined below are those policies considered particularly significant:

a) Revenue recognition

The Organization follows the deferral method of accounting for grants. Grants are recognized as revenue in the same period as the related expenditures. Grants received prior to the year to which they apply are deferred.

Donations and fundraising are recorded as revenue when received.

Other revenues such as programming, workshops, interest income and rentals are recognized as revenue in the period in which they are earned.

b) Expense recognition

Expenses are recognized on the accrual basis.

c) Financial instruments

The Organization initially records all financial instruments at fair market value, and subsequently records them at amortized cost.

The Organization's financial instruments consist of cash, investments, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

2. CAPITAL MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE:

The Organization includes cash, prepaid expenses, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, and net assets in its capital management consideration. The Organization's objectives when managing capital are to safeguard its ability to continue as a going concern and continue to execute its mandate within the restrictions that the organization is not in receipt of core funding.

The Organization monitors these items to assess its ability to fulfil its ongoing financial obligations. The Organization relies primarily on grants, fundraising and self-generated revenues to fund its operations and makes adjustments to its budgeted expenditures in light of changes. The Organization is not subject to externally imposed capital requirements.

The Organization is dependent on grants and self-generated revenues for continued operations.

3. CAPITAL ASSETS:

Capital assets consist of the following:

	2022		2021	
	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Accumulated Amortization</u>	<u>Net Book Value</u>	<u>Net Book Value</u>
Office equipment	\$ 15,307	\$ 14,887	\$ 420	\$ 525
Computers	13,800	12,402	1,398	1,997
	<u>\$ 29,107</u>	<u>\$ 27,289</u>	<u>\$ 1,818</u>	<u>\$ 2,522</u>

4. INVESTMENTS:

Investments consist of guaranteed investment certificates (GIC's) with an annual interest rate of 0.60% (2021 - 0.60%). As of December 31, 2022 the book value and market value of the funds was \$50,602 (2021 - \$50,300).

5. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE:

During 2020 the fiscal year, the Organization received the Canada Emergency Business Assistance ("CEBA") forgivable loan (Note 6) in the amount of \$40,000. As at December 31, 2022 management made the determination that the terms and conditions to exercise the forgiveness option would be met, and the non-forgivable portion of \$30,000 was repaid.

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

1. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES: (Continued)

d) Use of estimates

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosures of contingent liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenditures during the reported period. Significant items subject to such estimates and assumptions include the useful lives of capital assets, and year-end accrued liabilities. Actual results could differ from management's best estimates as additional information becomes available in the future.

e) Contributed services

Because of the difficulty of determining the fair value of services provided by volunteers, contributed services are not recognized in these financial statements.

f) Income taxes

The organization is a not-for-profit organization under the Income Tax Act (Canada) and, as such, is exempt from income taxes.

g) Capital assets

Capital assets are recorded at cost. Amortization is taken annually at rates calculated to write-off the assets over their estimated useful lives as follows:

Furniture and fixtures	20% declining balance
Equipment	20% declining balance
Computer equipment	30% declining balance

A capital asset is tested for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that its carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognized when the carrying amount of the asset exceeds the sum of the undiscounted cash flows resulting from its use and eventual disposition. The impairment loss is measured as the amount by which the carrying amount of the capital assets exceeds its fair value.

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

5. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE: (Continued)

Accordingly, the forgivable portion in the amount of \$10,000 (25% of the loan balance) was recognized as income in the 2022 fiscal year.

6. LOAN PAYABLE:

During the 2020 fiscal year, the Organization applied for and received the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) loan made available by the Federal government in response to COVID-19 in the amount of \$40,000. The purpose of the loan is to assist the Organization in financing its non-deferrable expenses with a forgiveness option available if 75% of the outstanding balance is repaid by December 31, 2022 with an annual interest rate of 0% and no terms of repayment. The loan was repaid in full during the 2022 fiscal year.

7. DEFERRED GRANTS:

Deferred grants are summarized as follows:

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
City of Toronto - Vaccine Engagement	\$ 110,000	\$ 35,214
United Way - Capacity Building	54,049	-
Canadian Race Relations Foundation	49,264	-
Minister of Solicitor General	28,131	22,893
Social Services Network	20,000	-
Toronto Non-profit Network	18,459	-
Urban Alliance of Race Relations	5,660	3,894
United Way - Gender Based Violence	4,467	
Canadian Women's Foundation	19,606	40,677
Canadian Heritage	-	24,916
	<u>\$ 309,636</u>	<u>\$ 127,594</u>

Continuity of deferred grants for the year is as follows:

Deferred grants, beginning of year	\$ 127,594	\$ 140,842
Add – received/receivable during the year	1,161,301	746,218
Less - grant revenue recognized in the year	<u>(979,259)</u>	<u>(759,466)</u>
Deferred grants, end of year	<u>\$ 309,636</u>	<u>\$ 127,594</u>

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

8. GRANT REVENUE RECOGNIZED IN THE YEAR:

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
City of Toronto	\$ 468,394	\$ 223,521
Canadian Women's Foundation	171,071	106,221
United Way - Capacity Building	70,951	-
United Way - Gender Based Violence	60,970	-
Canadian Heritage	56,951	111,564
ESDC - Canada Summer Jobs	52,556	35,349
Minister of Solicitor General	49,762	32,107
Urban Alliance of Race Relations	22,335	27,560
Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism	19,392	-
Canadian Race Relations Foundation	5,336	-
Toronto Non-profit Network	1,541	-
Indus Community Services	-	85,785
United Way - Employment Equity	-	47,340
Canadian Red Cross	-	33,045
ESDC - New Horizons for Seniors	-	24,239
United Way - Emergency Community Support Fund (Helpline)	-	17,024
Public Health Agency of Canada	-	10,000
Law Foundation	-	5,211
Scarborough Arts	-	500
	<u>\$ 979,259</u>	<u>\$ 759,466</u>

9. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS:

The Organization's financial investments are comprised of guaranteed investment certificates (GIC's). The main purpose of these investments is to provide financing for the organization's activities. The Organization has various other financial assets and liabilities such as accounts receivable and accounts payable, which arise directly from operations. The main risks arising from the Organization's financial instruments are interest risk, credit risk and liquidity risk.

a) Interest Rate Risk

Interest rate risk is the risk of potential financial loss caused by fluctuations in their fair value of future cash flow of financial instruments due to changes in market interest rates. The Organization is exposed to this risk through its interest bearing investments. The Organization manages this risk through investing in fixed-rate securities of short to medium term maturity and plans to hold the securities to maturity.

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2022

9. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS: (Continued)

b) Credit Risk

Credit risk is the potential for financial loss should a counter-party in a transaction fail to meet its obligations. The Organization places its operating and reserve cash and investments with high quality institutions and believes its exposure is not significant.

c) Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that an entity will encounter difficulty in meeting obligations associated with financial liabilities. The Organization manages this risk by preparing and monitoring detailed forecasts of cash flows from operations, anticipating investing and financing activities and holding assets that can be readily converted into cash.

The Organization's financial instruments consist of cash, investments, accounts receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities. Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the organization is not exposed to significant interest, credit or liquidity risks.

The extent of the Organization's exposure to the above risks did not change during 2022.

10. ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES - SALARIES AND BENEFITS:

Salaries and benefits expenses have been included in program and administration expenses proportionately on the basis of time spent, as follows:

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Program - project expenses	\$ 40,207	\$ 2,080
Program - purchased services	14,932	-
Office and general	<u>14,691</u>	<u>19,095</u>
	<u>\$ 69,830</u>	<u>\$ 21,175</u>

CASSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SLATE 2023-2024

Returning Directors:

Bharat Saini – Chair

Bharat Saini is the inaugural Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) with the Faculty of Arts & Science at the University of Toronto. Bharat is responsible for developing and implementing strategic initiatives aimed at advancing EDI within the learning and working environments across the Faculty of Arts & Science. He provides strategic guidance and advice to the Dean's Executive team on matters of policy interpretation and practice concerning a range of areas, including accessibility, diversity, equity, inclusion, freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

Bharat has been working in the post-secondary sector for more than a decade. Prior to joining UofT, he served as the Manager, Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion with the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion at Humber College. In this role, he managed the Human Rights Program and provided strategic guidance on Human Rights and EDI related matters. He led the College's Employment Equity Program and Co-Chaired the Equity & Inclusion Committee as well as the EDI Taskforce Access & Equity: Employees working group. Bharat continues in the role of Instructor with Humber's Faculty of Business. He has also held roles with Osgoode Professional Development at Osgoode Hall Law School, OCAD University and York University.

Bharat strongly believes in the importance of community work and engagement. Since 2008, he has had the privilege to serve on the Board of the Canadian Association for the Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment in Higher Education. In addition, since 2020, he has been serving as a Director on CASSA's Board, chair's the Human Resources Committee, and during Summer 2022 became the Chair of the Board. Bharat completed his Bachelors of Science Honours, Bachelors of Education and Masters of Education from York University. During his M.Ed., his key areas of focus included human rights, equity and inclusion, competing rights, disability and academic accommodations, policy development, inclusive pedagogy and universal instructional design. He is also an Ontario Certified Teacher. In addition, he has extensive training in Alternative Dispute Resolution as well as workplace investigations focused on human rights and workplace harassment. Bharat is committed to transformational systemic change to advance anti-racism, equity and inclusion and foster belonging for all.

Tanzina Islam – Secretary

Tanzina Islam is a public health planner specializing in health promotion strategies within the community health sector. She is currently the Manager of Health Promotion & Community Relations at the East Mississauga Community Health Centre. In her role, she oversees health interventions targeting priority populations, supports strategic planning, and monitors population needs and advocates for the good health of the Mississauga community. She was a former Project Coordinator at CASSA for the CapaCITY Creators Project and is a current member of CASSA's Health Equity Task Force.

Tanzina has worked in the areas of mental health, chronic health, gender-based violence, community engagement, social justice and health equity across institutions such as Humber College, Toronto Public Health, St Michael's Hospital and the Centre for Addiction & Mental Health (CAMH). Tanzina also leads two independent research projects focused on 'understanding honour killing as a form of gender-based violence' and 'identifying risk factors for global sex trafficking'. She is a University of Toronto Alumni and holds a Master of Public Health degree. Her expertise lies in applying evidence-based knowledge when developing, implementing and evaluating health interventions. Central to her focus is integrating equity-focused frameworks when planning health services for marginalized populations. She hopes to be a part of initiatives that empower communities, strengthen community action, and challenge sociopolitical structures that contribute to poor health and health disparities.

Leanne Saldanha – Treasurer

Leanne Saldanha brings a strong background in arts and cultural heritage to the board. Leanne has graduated from the University of Toronto with an HBA and an MA in Art History. Delighted by the beauty and proliferation of art production in Renaissance Italy and the Netherlands, Leanne was initially drawn to the study of religious and philosophical themes in early Renaissance visual art with a highly Eurocentric focus. It was only later, as a graduate student, that Leanne realized the necessity of exploring and celebrating the complicated and searching works of post-modern and contemporary South Asian diaspora artists and collectives.

She is currently pursuing graduate research in Immigration and Settlement Studies at Ryerson University, with a focus on supplementary art practices that can ease the strain of immigration and integration processes for recent immigrants and refugees. Her research focuses on issues of integration and belonging and the complexity of these social asks in Western societies, especially for diaspora individuals and communities who are subject to experiencing social inequities and injustices here in Canada.

Over the years, Leanne has worked with several equity-seeking groups and not-for-profit organizations with a focus on refugee integration, environmental issues, capacity building, racial equity, community engagement, and social justice. Leanne is highly attuned to the difficulties of social inclusion and equity-seeking in urban contexts and is committed to tackling social concerns for South Asian communities through CASSA. She is also an avid policy and political campaigns enthusiast with a passion for fostering thoughtful and informed civic participation especially in South Asian communities.

Jessica Singh – Director

Jessica is a change agent guided by empathic accuracy; internally driven to work for issues like gender equality, art therapy, access to quality education, and child protection. As a social development professional and research consultant, she offers strategic advice to social enterprises to enable meaningful contribution and provides tools to measure their impact effectively. She works with creativity, consideration and open-mindedness that allows seeing things from unconventional perspectives.

Jessica is a social worker and also holds a specialized degree in evidence-based research from the University of Oxford. She has 12+ years of experience impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation, multi-stakeholder relationships, qualitative research methodologies, strategic partnerships, capacity building and grant-writing both internationally and in Canada. She is currently serving on the board of North York Arts and has had the opportunity to work with organizations like the World Bank, Plan UK, Credit Suisse, GIZ, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, US Department of State, Centre for Social Innovation, Tedx Toronto and Plan Canada.

Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan – Director

Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan is an award-winning faculty member and an internationally recognized–academic/professional leader in global health training, research and education initiatives, with diverse experience in both developed and developing countries. In 2010, Dr. Bhuiyan emigrated to Canada where he began a new career focused on how equity informed approaches can improve both health services and health care training. Over the next several years Dr. Bhuiyan moved through successively more senior positions so that today he is a faculty member at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at UofT. Throughout his career focus has been on improving the way we deploy and refine global healthcare resources – whether guidelines or training programs – to improve health system performance and the equity of health system performance in local and global contexts. Dr. Bhuiyan a co-creator of innovative post graduate programs at UofT and Toronto Metropolitan Universities for immigrant healthcare professionals to integrate into the Canadian healthcare system.

Dr. Bhuiyan outgoing chair of the Canadian Coalition for Global Health & currently Board of Directors, Canadian Association for Global Health and also Chair, Board of Directors, Birchmount Bluffs Neighborhood Centre Scarborough South West, Toronto ON. He is serving Lions Clubs International District A711 ON as a Past Region Chair & Diabetes Chair, Past Youth Exchange & Campus Chair and Charter President of Toronto Global Doctors Lions Club. He is also Co-chair of the internationally trained physicians access coalition . Dr. Bhuiyan is an RBC Top 25 Canadian Immigrants award finalist, Immigrant's Master of Success Award winner, Hellen Keller Fellow & Melvin Jones Fellow for humanitarian services, Lions International President's Distinguished Leadership Award 2020 winner and a recipient of civic engagement & leadership award 2018, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians in Canada.

Ayesha Chughtai – Director

Ayesha Chughtai is a Pakistani-Canadian immigrant living and working in Ottawa. After earning her bachelor's degree from the University of Calgary in Political Science she moved to Ottawa in 2017 to pursue a career with the federal government. She served as a Regional Advisor, and later a Senior Policy Advisor for the Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development working on national housing policy, childcare, and service delivery in Canada. She then moved to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development serving as Director of Operations. In addition to managing a team of Regional Advisors, she worked on broadband policy and the development of new funding programs. Her last role in government was serving as a Regional Advisor to the Prime Minister focusing on the Prairies and North. In this role, she built relationships with provinces and territories, provided strategic advice, and managed the logistics of travel to the region. In July 2022, she left the federal government taking on a new role at Deloitte Canada as a Manager with the Future of Canada Centre (FCC). The FCC is Deloitte's premier thought leadership and public policy hub.

A proud Calgarian who lived her early years in Pickering, Ontario, Ayesha is passionate about the diversity of the South Asian community across the country.

Jessica Devi Chandrashekar – Director

Jessica Devi Chandrashekar works as a Staff Lawyer with the Refugee Law Office where she advocates for immigration detainees. She completed a B.Sc Honours degree at the University of Toronto, with minors in Women and Gender Studies, as well as South Asian Studies. There she went on to do her Masters in Women and Gender Studies, before pursuing a PhD at York University in Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies. Her doctoral work examines transitional justice and peacebuilding mechanisms in Sri Lanka, with a particular focus on how these processes are perceived and experienced by Tamil women from the Vanni region. Jessica also completed a Juris Doctor at Osgoode Hall Law School where she focused on immigration, refugee, and administrative law.

Previously, Jessica sat on the Board of Directors for Parkdale Community Legal Services. She holds professional memberships with several migrant advocacy organizations including the Canadian Council for Refugees, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers, and the Refugee Lawyers Association. Jessica has presented her work at several conferences and workshops, enjoys mentoring and teaching, and is passionate about serving and supporting community organizations.

Samir Parmar – Director

Samir Parmar holds a Juris Doctorate in Law from the University of Windsor Faculty of Law and holds a license to practice law in the Province of Ontario. His journey began at the University of Toronto where he completed an Honours Bachelors of Arts in English and Health Policy. During his time at the University of Toronto, he was offered co-op opportunities and worked alongside health professionals to advocate and conduct research on a variety of health and social issues in and around the GTA, including a placement at the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians. Through these experiences, he grew to appreciate the need to better understand the legal impact of health policies and how the intersectionality of factors such as race, socio-economic status and ethnicity created barriers to those accessing healthcare.

After graduating law school, Samir had the opportunity to work with a major hospital and was able to utilize his diverse background to assist researchers, physicians and key stakeholders in the negotiation, drafting and review of corporate and research contracts. Samir currently works as a Contract Reviewer at a healthcare system in the Discovery District in downtown Toronto. Outside of his professional career, Samir enjoys spending quality time with his family, friends and is an avid fan of Toronto sports teams.

Thanuya Mohanathas – Director

Thanuya is a Social Worker who has extensive experience in community and youth development. She attended York University for Human Rights & Equity Studies, Seneca College for Social Service Worker Diploma, and is currently pursuing a degree in Public Administration & Governance at Ryerson University. Thanuya is TESOL certified and teaches ESL. She has learned to combine her roots in Social Work with her passion for music, specifically the piano and teaches a unique curriculum to students through Ruby's School of Music. Thanuya has extensive experience in grant writing, development and facilitation of workshops, community asset building, capacity building, strategic planning, and program evaluation.

Thanuya has shared spaces with vulnerable residents and has sought community partners and stakeholders to take a more collaborative and communal approach in the drafting and implementation of meaningful and impactful programs and services to better suit the needs of the communities they serve. Her desire to improve quality of life and to create better and more meaningful human relations, bring forth a sense of connection and belonging has been the driving force that has propelled her unwavering commitment to social justice and to CASSA.

Proposed Slate of Director:**Zeeshan Sumrani – Chief Strategy, Innovation & Growth Officer, Skills for Change**

Zeeshan is an International Development expert with over 20 years' experience in community impact, evaluation, program design and implementation at scale. At Skills for Change, Zeeshan works as the Chief Strategy, Innovation & Growth officer leading work in the key organizational areas of Business Operations, Strategic Planning & Implementation, Organizational Growth and Social Enterprise Development.

Prior to SfC, he worked as the Director of Programs & Operations at The Mississauga Food Bank and led the programs and operations teams that are responsible for client and agency service, capacity building, warehouse and operations aspects of the organization. In his previous roles, he was the Head of Community Impact for United Way India and General Manager - Programs for the Educate Girls Foundation where he designed programs that impacted the lives of over 600,000 children and youth. He was also a part of the team that designed and implemented the World's first Development Impact Bond in education.

He has the experience of working in various non-profit sub-sectors, including education, livelihood support, sports for development and women's empowerment. Zeeshan was also a part of the Skoll and Mastercard Foundation's Emerging Leaders program in 2017. He is also a passionate public speaker who believes in constantly upgrading himself with knowledge and ideas that help the world become a happier place.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

CASSA's Mission:

To facilitate the economic, social, political, and cultural empowerment of South Asians by serving as a resource for information, research, mobilization, coordination, and leadership on social justice issues affecting our communities. Create social change by building alliances and working collaboratively with those who share a vision of empowering all communities to participate in defining Canada's future.

CASSA's Vision:

We envision and strive for a Canada free of all forms of discrimination in which all communities are free from marginalization and are fully empowered to participate in defining Canada's political, economic, social and cultural future.

CASSA's Values:

The following values serve as guidelines for our conduct as we implement our mission and work towards our vision:

- **Social Justice:** We are committed to working within a social justice framework, which promotes equity and empowerment for marginalized peoples and communities.
- **Anti-oppression, Anti-racism, Anti-homophobia:** We strive to incorporate anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-homophobic principles and practices in our work.
- **Responsiveness:** We strive to work through a variety of consultative and participatory structures and practices to ensure that our work is grounded in the realities and priorities of our communities.
- **Diversity:** We recognize and respect the diversity among and within South Asian communities and within Canadian society.
- **Collaboration and Solidarity:** We are committed to building alliances in order to work collectively towards common aims.
- **Accountability:** We are committed to maintaining effective governance, measurement and reporting practices.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CASSA's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan will allow for a renewed sense of purpose, provide clear and measurable goals, as well as a distinct future-focused strategy and implementation plan to facilitate sustainable organizational growth and development.

Pillars	Membership Engagement	Growth + Impact	Functional Priorities	Organizational Sustainability
Decision	Cultivate a thriving membership base	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Achieve charitable status 2. Expand geographic impact 	Strengthening policy advocacy and research capacity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diversifying revenue sources and strengthening financial position 2. Enhancing talent and development
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate trust and meaningful relationships. • Expand opportunities for member engagement and capacity building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and initiate the process for charity status. • Develop and implement a phased approach for regional and national growth. 	Strengthen collaborative partnerships with equity-focused agencies and allies.	<p>Assess opportunities for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable, year-over-year funding and • Increase staff complements and professional development
Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Membership-informed capacity building opportunities (training, education and professional development) 2. Stewardship with membership 3. Reciprocal relationship with membership on areas of advocacy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore legal framework, opportunities and risks for charity status. 2. Develop the infrastructure to become a charity. 3. Cultivate regional and national partners and membership in other jurisdictions within Canada. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy Advocacy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Participate in relevant advocacy tables. b. Foster and expand policy partnerships. 2. Research capacity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand research portfolio and strengthen community-based research b. Enhance research infrastructure 3. Design monitoring and evaluation framework for all projects and campaigns 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment of board members with experience in fundraising, finance, legal and human resources 2. Create an organizational financial sustainability plan 3. Build capacity to hire and retain permanent staff

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2021-2026



Support Immigration and settlement

Over the next five years, CASSA will commit to the following:

- facilitate processes that aim to build more inclusive and accessible communities in regions where immigrants settle across Canada
- develop tools and resources to support resettlement through community-based research
- advocate on behalf of newcomers collectively to eliminate barriers to decent work
- document and bring awareness to histories of South Asians in Canada
- advocate for elimination of systemic barriers to civic participation of immigrants, and create civic engagement capacity building tools for newcomers and immigrants
- engage newcomers and other South Asian communities in education about the true history of Canada as a settler colonial state and actions towards truth and reconciliation



Economic Empowerment

Over the next five years, CASSA will commit to the following:

- create awareness about the racialization of poverty and work with networks and coalitions to advocate for systemic changes to alleviate South Asians out of poverty
- advocate for accessible and affordable childcare for low and middle-income South Asians in Canada
- advocate for the right to adequate and safe housing for South Asians and to improve outcomes for those who are unhoused
- support campaigns and movements for workers' rights



Enhance Health Equity

Over the next five years, CASSA will commit to the following:

- build coalitions with South Asian and other racialized communities focused on health equity to advocate for policies that improve health outcomes
- advocate for the development and implementation of a South Asian Health Strategy for Ontario including culturally and linguistically accessible health services
- support the development of mental health tools, services and resources that are inclusive and tailored to South Asian communities
- advocate for, support, secure, and disseminate health equity focused research initiatives and race-based disaggregated data collection including data on the impact of COVID-19 on South Asian communities
- advocate for rights of South Asian seniors' health and culturally adapted long-term care
- advocate for the rights of South Asians with different abilities and disabilities



Advance Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

Over the next five years, CASSA will commit to the following:

- develop and deliver ongoing Anti-racism and Anti-oppression training for CASSA member agencies, partners, groups, government institutions, and private corporations
- create youth leadership training and opportunities grounded in anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks
- work with researchers and academics to ensure academic research and community-based research uses anti-oppressive and equity lens and use decolonial practices of consultation and data collection
- advocate for anti-racism, decolonial, and anti-oppressive policies and education at school boards across Canada
- create learning opportunities for South Asian communities on anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-South Asian and anti-Asian racism



Gender Equity and Empowerment

Over the next five years, CASSA will commit to the following:

- develop and implement race-based data collection based on leading practices in the fields of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence to support evidence-based service delivery
- build awareness about what gender-based violence and intimate partner violence looks in the South Asian communities and advocate for policy and program changes
- partner with organizations and groups to advocate for the rights of gender diverse individuals and communities
- build capacity of South Asian and other racialized women through training, networking, and resource development



Combat Online Hate, Hate Crimes, and Hate Speech

Over the next five years, CASSA will commit to the following:

- build and sustain collaborations with racialized communities and faith groups to combat hate in all forms
- advocate for legislation to combat the rise of online hate
- work with institutions collecting data to make processes of hate crime reporting accessible and trauma-informed
- build capacity of agencies and groups to combat online hate, hate crimes, and hate speech
- create opportunities for and support interfaith and interracial dialogue

CASSA STAFF 2022-2023

2022 Staff

Executive Director – Samya Hasan

Director of Development – Ridah Asghar

Administrative Assistant & Membership Coordinator – Qurat Al Ain

Finance Manager – Farhat Hasan

Project Manager – Yomna Omar

Project Manager, Toxic Masculinity & Anti-Hate Initiatives – Maryam Faisal

Project Manager, Toxic Masculinity & Vaccine Engagement – Wardah Malik

Project Manager, Gender-Based-Violence – Dinoba Kirupa

Project Manager, Vaccine Engagement & Health Equity – Mahdiba Chowdhury

Project Manager, Policies that Perpetuate Systemic Racism - Sonia Baweja

Human Resources Generalist – Gurbinder Jaspal Kaur

Project Coordinator, Anti-Hate & Equity in Education – Naima Raza

Project Coordinators, Hate Crime Reporting – Lakhdeep Singh Dhaliwal & Maiura Muralitharan

Project Coordinators, Equity in Education – Eman Zahid, Mahdiba Chowdhury & Samaha Kureshi

Communications Coordinators – Sakshi Mehta, Sughandha Suri, Nichte Arellano, Valerie Lin, & Samaha Kureshi

Outreach Coordinator, GBV Research, British Columbia – Akhila Appadurai

Project Associate, Vaccine Engagement – Nimra Aftab

Project Associate, Health Equity & Vaccine Engagement – Tanvi Rathi

Project Associate, GBV Research & Hate Crime Reporting – Noor Imran

IT Specialist – Faizan Zubair

Co-op Students/Interns – Jenane Jeyaseelan, Maham Malek, Fahima Jogiati, Sundas Ramzan, Alissa Latif, Maham Saleem, Suchismita Chakraborty

Sustainability Consultants at AdvanceU 1st – Pommasha Noel-Bentley and Scott Blythe

2023 Staff

Executive Director – Samya Hasan

Director of Development – Ridah Asghar

Director of Operations - Suhail Mubeen

Executive Assistant & Membership Coordinator – Qurat Al Ain

Administrative Assistant & Receptionist - Fahrina Junaid

Finance Manager – Farhat Hasan

Project Manager – Yomna Omar

Manager of Partnerships – Ria Arora

Programs Manager – Lakhdeep Singh Dhaliwal

Project Manager, Gender-Based Violence – Dinoba Kirupa

Project Manager, Health Promotion & Equity – Mahdiba Chowdhury

Project Manager, Policies that Perpetuate Systemic Racism – Sonia Baweja

Project Managers, High Priority Communities Strategy – Mahdiba Chowdhury and Sonia Baweja

Project Managers, Eradicatehate 2.0 – Noor Fadel & Pirathajini Chandrakumar

Human Resources Generalist – Gurbinder Jaspal Kaur

Project Coordinators, Equity in Education - Samaha Kureshi

Communications Coordinator – Samaha Kureshi

Communications Consultant – Marco Campana

IT Specialist – Faizan Zubair

Project Associate, Anti-hate Initiatives and Spatial Justice Campaign – Akhila Appadurai

Project Associate, Health Equity – Riya Shah

Project Associate, GBV Research – Charito Grafil and Neel Desai

Co-op Students/Interns – Archanaa Krisnagopal, Debankita Joardar, Sara Zabiullah, Manum Shahid, Asha Selvakumar, Samson Mapile & Ozair Asmal

CASSA VOLUNTEERS 2022-2023

Aaliyah Desai	Rifa
Aisha Kapa	Rishil Vijaykumar Patel
Alesha Khan	Ruqaiyah Chhiboo
Aliya Shaikh	Ruqayya Mulla
Christina Nikitha Stanley	Sabrina Karim
Faiz Qureshi	Sadia Khan
Farzana Mulla	Soha Qureshi
Fatimah Mulla	Wurood Almozan
Izdeyar Umar	Yousif Ahmed
Jasim Kapadia	Yousra Qureshi
Kulthum Ugharattar	Zaynab Hussain
Manal Badawi	
Manum Shahid	
Nariman Ansari	

CASSA PARTNER AGENCIES 2022- 2023

1. Alliance for South Asian Aids Prevention (ASAAP)
2. Anti-Hate Community Leaders' Group
3. Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS)
4. Bangladesh Centre & Community Services (BCCS)
5. Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic
6. Canadian Association of Jews and Muslims
7. Canadian Council of Muslim Women
8. Canadian Pakistani Association of Scarborough (CPAS)
9. Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association
10. Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic
11. Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNTO-SJ)
12. Critical South Asian Diasporic Feminisms
13. Early Learning & Literacy Alliance (ELLA)
14. Gibraltar Leadership Academy
15. Migrant Workers Alliance for Change
16. Mosaic Institute Youth Summit
17. Naseeha Mental Health
18. National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM)
19. Neighbourhood Pods TO
20. Nisa Homes
21. Ontario Alliance of Black School Educators (ONABSE)
22. Ottawa Police
23. Peel Regional Police
24. Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS)
25. Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS)
26. Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services (SAFSS)
27. Social Services Network (SSN)
28. South Asian and Tamil Women's Collective (SATWC)
29. South Asian COVID Task Force (SACTF)
30. South Asian Health Network (SAHN)
31. South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)
32. South Asian Women's Rights Organization (SAWRO)
33. Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action (TCCCA)
34. Toronto Police
35. World Sikh Organization
36. York Region Muslims (YRM)
37. York Regional Police
38. YWCA Canada
39. YWCA Metro Vancouver

CASSA MEMBER AGENCIES 2022-2023

1. Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)
2. Armada Older Adults Club (AOAC)
3. Abhinayakshetra Fine Arts Canada
4. Afghan Women's Organization (AWO)
5. Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS)
6. Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS)
7. Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre (BBNC)
8. Brampton Tamil Association
9. Brampton Tamil Seniors Association
10. Breast Cancer Society of Canada (BCSC)
11. Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture (CCVT)
12. Canadian Council for Muslim Women (CCMW)
13. Canadian Pakistani Support Group Association (CPSG)
14. Canada Sabarimalai Ayyappa Alayam
15. Canadian Tamil Congress
16. Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC)
17. Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre (CanTYD)
18. CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses
19. Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association
20. CATIE
21. Cedarwood Tamil Community Association
22. Centennial College
23. Centre for Immigrant and Community Services (CICS)
24. Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment (CAAT)
25. Community Legal Clinic Of York Region (CLCYR)
26. COSTI
27. Credit Canada Debt Solution
28. Crescent Village
29. Canada Foundation 12762862
30. Durham Tamil Association
31. Elizabeth Fry Toronto
32. Embrave Agency to End Violence (formerly known as Interim Place)
33. Epilepsy Toronto
34. Evergreen Hospice
35. Family Inter-Generation Link (FIG)
36. Family Service Toronto

37. [Findhelp Information Services](#)
38. [Frontline Community Services](#)
39. [Family Services York Region \(FSYR\)](#)
40. [Galaxy Tax](#)
41. [GTA North West Community Health Services](#)
42. Greensborough Tamil Seniors Wellness Club
43. [Human Endeavour](#)
44. [Humber College, Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion](#)
45. [Indo-Canadian Women's Association \(ICWA\)](#)
46. [Job Skills](#)
47. [JRS College](#)
48. [Kidney Health Education and Research Group \(KHERG\)](#)
49. [Labour Education Centre](#)
50. [Legal Aid Ontario, \(Vanathy Wimalaswaran \(SALCO\)\)](#)
51. [Mannar Friendship Association](#)
52. [Markham Arts Council](#)
53. [Markham Christian Worship Centre](#)
54. [Markham Cricket Academy](#)
55. Markham South Asian Seniors Centre
56. [Markham Tamil Organization](#)
57. Markham Tamil Seniors Association
58. [MCIS Language Solutions](#)
59. [Meadowvale Community Centre](#)
60. METRAC
61. [Middlefield Seniors Wellness Club](#)
62. [NeighbourLink North York](#)
63. [Nepalese Canadian Community Services \(NCCS\)](#)
64. [Newcomer Women's Services](#)
65. [Ontario Caregiver Organization](#)
66. [Ontario Bengali Cultural Society \(OBBS\)](#)
67. [PACE Community](#)
68. [People For Education](#)
69. PAK Seniors Forum
70. [Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services](#)
71. [Punjabi Community Health Services \(PCHS\)](#)
72. [Patron Career Staffing Inc.](#)
73. [Reh'ma Community Services](#)
74. [Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre](#)
75. [SAAAC Autism Centre](#)
76. [Settlement Assistance & Family Support Services \(SAFSS\)](#)
77. [Sandgate Women's Shelter](#)
78. [Scadding Court Community Centre](#)
79. [Scarborough Arts](#)
80. [Scarborough Women's Centre](#)
81. [SEIU Healthcare](#)
82. [Senior Tamils Centre of Ontario](#)
83. [Sherbourne Health](#)
84. [Skills for Change](#)

85. [Social Planning Network of Ontario \(SPNO\)](#)
86. [Social Planning Toronto](#)
87. [Social Services Network](#)
88. South Asian Heart Health Group (SAHHG)
89. [South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario \(SALCO\)](#)
90. [South Asian Network Supporting Awareness & Research \(SANSAR\)](#)
91. [South Asian Visual Arts Centre \(SAVAC\)](#)
92. [South Asian Women's Centre \(SAWC\)](#)
93. [South Riverdale Community Health Centre \(SRCHC\)](#)
94. [Schizophrenia Society of Ontario](#)
95. [South Asian Centre of Windsor](#)
96. [Sindhi Association of North America](#)
97. [South Asian Community Support Canada \(SACSC\)](#)
98. South Asian Legal History Association
99. South Asian Health Alliance
100. [South Asian Canadian Access to Justice Association](#)
101. [Tamil Cultural Academic Society of Durham](#)
102. [TESOC - Multicultural Settlement & Community Services](#)
103. [Thamil Poonka School & Daycare Centre](#)
104. [The Indo-Canadian Cultural Association of Durham \(ICCAD\)](#)
105. [The Neighbourhood Organization \(TNO\)](#)
106. [Times Change Women's Employment Service](#)
107. [Toronto Centre of Learning & Development](#)
108. [Toronto Criminal Defence Lawyers](#)
109. [Toronto North Support Services \(TNSS\)](#)
110. [Tropicana Community Services Organization](#)
111. [Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action \(TCCCA\)](#)
112. [TranslateKnowledge](#)
113. [United Food and Commercial Workers \(UFCW Canada\)](#)
114. [Unifor National](#)
115. [University of Toronto - Comparative Education Service](#)
116. [Vasantham - Tamil Wellness Centre](#)
117. [Villa Karuna Home For Seniors](#)
118. [We Can Win](#)
119. [WellFort Community Health Services](#)
120. [Women's Health in Women's Hands](#)
121. Women for Women Support Services
122. [Workers' Action Centre](#)

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**Thank you all for your dedication and
for believing in CASSA.**

**Thank you for attending
CASSA's 2023 AGM!**

We look forward to your continued support, guidance and involvement.

You or your organization can become a member of CASSA, if you wish to support our mission/mandate. Please visit our website www.cassa.on.ca for details on our mission, vision, values and strategic priorities. The members will receive regular updates on various happenings in the social services/social justice field that impact Ontario's South Asian communities.

Joining as a member will also keep you informed about job opportunities, volunteer opportunities and community events. Please visit our website for more information about becoming a member of CASSA and its benefits.

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