



COUNCIL OF
AGENCIES SERVING
SOUTH ASIANS

2026

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT



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

Tuesday, October 20th, 2026
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

705 Progress Avenue Units 101 & 106
Scarborough, Ontario M1H 2X1
Email: cassa@cassa.ca
Website: www.cassa.ca
Tel. No: 647-932-1001 ext. 114

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4** 2026 AGM Agenda
- 5** 2025 AGM Meeting Minutes
- 7** Message from the Chair of the Board
- 9** CASSA 2025 Project Updates
- 26** CASSA 2026 Project Updates
- 42** 205 Audited Financial Statements
- 56** CASSA Board of Directors
- 60** Strategic Framework
- 61** Strategic Plan 2021-2026
- 64** CASSA Staff 2025-2026
- 66** CASSA Volunteers 2025-2026
- 67** CASSA Organizational Members (Agencies) 2025-2026
- 69** CASSA Honorary Members (Individuals) 2025-2026
- 70** Acknowledgement of Our Funders for 2025

2026 AGM AGENDA



6:00 - 6:30 P.M.

Registration and Dinner

6:30 - 6:05 P.M.

Business Segment

6:05 - 6:25 P.M.

**Launch of Report: Inclusion or
Exploitation of South Asian
International Students in
Canada**

7:25 - 7:30 P.M.

Closing Remarks

2025 AGM MEETING MINUTES

Date: October 15, 2025

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Welcome and Call to Order:

Ridah Asghar, Director of Development, CASSA, called the meeting to order.

Land Acknowledgement: Ridah Asghar delivered the Land Acknowledgement before the business segment began.

Ridah introduced Bharat Saini, Chair of the CASSA Board, to the meeting. Bharat welcomed

everyone and expressed gratitude to the CASSA team and Board members for organizing the AGM.

Approval of Draft Agenda:

Tanzina Islam, CASSA's Board member, made the motion to approve the agenda.

Syma Nehal, Program Director of Nisa Homes, seconded the motion.

Approval of 2024 AGM Minutes:

Tanzin Islam made the motion to approve, and Thanuya Mohanathan, CASSA's Board member, seconded the motion.

Chair's Report:

Bharat Saini, the Chair of the CASSA Board, presented his report. Bharat mentioned that 2024 was a year of significant growth for CASSA, where many exciting initiatives and projects such as the Health Equity Summit, the South Asian Heritage Month, Social Justice Summit, The Coalition of Racial Equity in Education, Honour-based Violence, etc were undertaken. He thanked the collaborators, members, partners and funders for their contribution. Bharat expressed the increasingly greater need to advocate for social justice and work together to protect human rights in the light of current national and international conflicts where communities are experiencing too much violence.

CASSA continued with the implementation of its 2022-26 strategic plan. made progress towards the necessary policy and governance steps connected to our charitable status, and continued our work on national expansion. Additionally, we continued developing our space in Scarborough, Ontario, and launched the Centre of Excellence for South Asians. Bharat ended his report by expressing his sincere gratitude to all of our funders, partners, friends, and members.

Auditor's Report:

Zeeshan Sumrani, Treasurer of CASSA, summarized the Auditor's report, mentioning that the financial statements are presented fairly, as remarked by Rashidi LLP. The motion to approve the 2024 audited statements was made by Ayesha Chughtai, CASSA's Board member. It was seconded by Bharat Saini. The motion to reappoint Rashidi LLP as the auditor was moved by Aisha Chughtai and seconded by Thanuya Mohanathan.

Bharat acknowledged the work of Samir Parmar, who resigned as a Board member due to work obligations.

The 2025-26 slate is as under:

Bharat Saini: Chair

Tanzina Islam: Secretary

Zeeshan Sumrani: Treasurer

Jessica Singh: Member

Thanuya Mohanathan: Member

Ayesha Chughtai: Member

Jessica Devi Chandrashekar: Member

The motion to approve the 2025-26 slate as the board of directors was made by Tricia Wilson UNIFOR and seconded by Khadija Ismail

Meeting Adjournment:

The motion to adjourn the business segment of the meeting was made by Ayesha Chughtai and seconded by Tricia Wilson. The business segment was adjourned.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Dear friends, members, funders, and partners,

We are delighted to share that 2025 was another year of tremendous growth and achievement for the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA). At the same time, we must acknowledge the rise in hate, racism and discrimination impacting South Asian and other racialized communities locally, nationally, and internationally, alongside the ongoing systemic barriers our communities continue to experience in accessing healthcare, settlement services, housing, and employment.

In 2025, CASSA continued taking on new projects and initiatives to address these challenges. We are grateful to all of our funders and collaborators, including our new funders and partners, who have been instrumental in working alongside us to support the ongoing and new projects addressing social justice issues impacting South Asian communities. The list of projects and initiatives is quite long. We encourage you to take time and read the 2025 Project Highlights and 2026 Project Updates sections to learn more about our projects and the impact they are having on South Asian communities. Our 3rd Annual Social Justice Summit, in February 2025, brought together member agencies, service providers, community leaders, researchers and students under the theme Solidarity over Saviorism: Feminism Centering Racialized and Indigenous Women. The event brought together feminist leaders and created a sense of sisterhood and solidarity with a commitment to support one another. We were also proud to launch our Data for Change initiative alongside Findhelp | 211, LogicalOutcomes and Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP), which engaged more than 150 participants from community-serving organizations across four provinces. With funding from United Way Greater Toronto, we expanded our anti-hate education and community engagement work, and our national expansion took an important step forward with hiring CASSA staff to oversee the South Asian Social Justice Networks in British Columbia, Quebec, and Alberta through the support of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Much of the energy and impact of the activities of 2025 continued into 2026 for CASSA. Our research on 'honour-based violence' came to fruition with the release of our report, Reframing Honour and Violence: From Theory to Practice, along with a training module

that has been delivered to law enforcement, social service agencies, and healthcare providers! Our national presence grew stronger than ever this spring as we hosted Alberta's first South Asian Social Justice Summit and the BC South Asian Social Justice Network held its first in-person Summit in Port Coquitlam. In Quebec, our South Asian Social Justice Network established a dedicated regional presence in Montreal with its Beyond the Mosaic Social Justice Summit provincial launch. Closer to home, we celebrated South Asian Heritage Month under the theme Collective Care, Collective Power, Collective Impact, culminating in a reception at Toronto City Hall in partnership with Councillor Neethan Shan and United Way Greater Toronto.

We are also very excited to have launched two new research initiatives this year: a national study funded by Health Canada on the sexual and reproductive health experiences of LGBTQIA+ South Asians across Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec, and the South Asian Community Brief, funded by United Way Greater Toronto, which is building a community-informed evidence base on the needs, barriers and strengths of South Asian communities across Toronto, Peel and York Region. Our anti-hate workshops have reached youth, women, seniors and frontline staff, and the demand for this work continues to grow. Looking ahead to the rest of 2026, we look forward to welcoming you to our 15th Annual Health Equity Summit, Growing Up Online: AI & Digital Technology in Shaping Child Health, Learning, and Development, on November 17th at Humber Polytechnic. On November 26th, we will host our Digital Storytelling Festival in partnership with Indigenous, Black, and Muslim community partners: Toronto Council Fire Native Culture Centre and the Wind in the Leaves Collective! Finally, our charitable donation policies are currently undergoing legal review and are expected to be finalized by the end of the year, which will allow CASSA to begin accepting private donations in support of our work.

As we look to the future, CASSA remains committed to strengthening our national networks, building a sustainable base of community support through private giving, and ensuring that South Asian voices and lived experiences remain central to conversations about equity, inclusion, and social justice across Canada. A heartfelt thank you to the CASSA team, our Board of Directors, volunteers and interns for their unwavering commitment, dedication, and courage to advance this important work. Our deepest gratitude to all of our funders, partners, friends, and members for your ongoing trust, collaboration, and support. We hope that with your continued support, we can continue building a more just and equitable future for South Asian and all racialized communities in Canada.

In solidarity,

Samya Hasan, Executive Director

Bharat Saini, Chair, Board of Directors

CASSA 2025 PROJECT UPDATES

14 Annual Health Equity Summit

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

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. The 14th Annual Health Equity Summit, titled *Equity in Focus: Sexual and Reproductive Health for South Asian Newcomer Women*, was held virtually on Zoom on Tuesday, November 18, 2025, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

The Summit examined the social, cultural, and systemic factors that shape sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes among South Asian newcomer women, with an emphasis on overcoming barriers to access and promoting culturally safe, inclusive care. Bringing together healthcare providers, policy professionals, researchers, and community leaders, the event featured a keynote presentation, a policy and practice panel discussion, and service-focused breakout sessions.

The keynote shared findings from a community-led research initiative on SRH education, identifying gaps in mainstream services and outlining strategies for developing accessible, community-informed resources. A cross-sector panel followed, exploring current policies, programs, and interventions in Ontario and across Canada. Panelists discussed successes, challenges, and opportunities to strengthen and scale efforts that support the SRH of South Asian newcomer women. The breakout sessions focused on maternal and perinatal care, gynecological services, and sexual health education, giving participants practical guidance to support women throughout their reproductive health journeys.

To read the full proceedings report, including details of the sessions and speakers, please visit www.cassa.ca/annual-health-equity-summit/.

14TH ANNUAL HEALTH EQUITY SUMMIT

Equity in Focus: Sexual and Reproductive Health for South Asian Newcomer Women

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.

The Summit will examine the social, cultural, and systemic factors influencing sexual and reproductive health outcomes among South Asian newcomer women, with an emphasis on overcoming barriers to access, promoting culturally responsive care, and reducing stigma. The sessions will offer practical strategies to enhance maternal and perinatal care, gynecological services, and sexual health education—equipping participants with actionable insights to ensure that South Asian newcomer women receive culturally sensitive, timely, and comprehensive support throughout every stage of their reproductive health journey.



Tuesday, November 18, 2025



10:00 AM - 2:00 PM



Zoom (Virtual)



COUNCIL OF
AGENCIES SERVING
SOUTH ASIANS



DR. HARINI AIYER

Director, Research and Education – Canadian Advisory of Women Immigrants (CAWI)



DR. UNJALI MALHOTRA

Physician (CCFP, FCFP, MSCP)



DR. ROULA KTEILY-HAWA

Associate Professor – Faculty of Health Sciences, Western University



INSIYA MANKANI

Policy and Advocacy Officer – Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights



DR. FARAH M. SHROFF

Public Health Educator and Researcher; Founder and Lead – Health Together



DR. ANNE HUSSAIN

Naturopathic Doctor (ND)



SRUTIKA SABU

IDEA Manager – Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)



ALISHA ALI

Project Coordinator, Trans Power Project – ASAAP

3rd Annual Social Justice Summit

Project Managers: Yomna Omar, Samaha Kureshi, and Nayani Nandakumar

CASSA's 3rd Annual Social Justice Summit convened in person at the Centennial College Event Centre on Monday, February 24th, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The powerful theme, *Solidarity over Saviorism: Feminism Centering Racialized and Indigenous Women*, addressed urgent and complex issues facing marginalized communities today, emphasizing the need to shift narratives, build genuine alliances, and amplify the voices of racialized and Indigenous women in feminist movements.

The Summit was designed to tackle a wide range of pressing social justice topics, including the decolonization of feminist narratives that often center whiteness and Western perspectives, the role of allyship in times of political unrest, and the importance of bridging generational and international perspectives within feminist activism. A central focus was on the resilience and strength of Black, Brown, and Indigenous women, who continue to lead and inspire movements for equity despite systemic barriers.

Over the course of the day, participants engaged in four deeply insightful sessions and two panel discussions, all led by a distinguished roster of speakers whose expertise and lived experiences enriched the conversations:

1. **Taking the Honour Out of 'Honour-Based Violence':** Farheen Khan — Muslim Chaplain, Trent University; Author; Former Television Host, The Azeeza Show
2. **Unlearning Harm: Understanding Toxic Masculinity Within the South Asian Community [Panel]:** Dinoba Kirupa — GBV Project Manager, CASSA; Baldev Mutta — Founder and Former CEO, Punjabi Community Health Services; Jeff Perera — Community Organizer and Social Justice Advocate; Sharifa Patel — Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute of Islamic Studies' Structural Islamophobia Research Lab, University of Toronto
3. **Bridging Generational and International Perspectives in Feminist Activism:** Ketty Nivyabandi — Secretary General, Amnesty International Canada
4. **Decolonizing Feminist Narratives and Challenging the Limits of White and Western Feminism:** Dr. Wafaa Hasan — Assistant Professor, Women and Gender Studies Institute, University of Toronto
5. **Allyship in the Face of Political Unrest:** Riley Yesno — Scholar, Writer, and Commentator; Anishinaabe
6. **Her Experience: Challenges of Female South Asian Students [Panel]:** Tanzina Tahereen — Post-Doctoral Researcher, CASSA; Jobanjeet Kaur — Member, Naujawan Support Network; Prabhjot Kaur — Program Manager, Laadliyan

The Summit gathered a diverse audience, including personnel from CASSA's member agencies, social service providers, community leaders, researchers, academics, students, and policymakers. This inclusive environment fostered dynamic exchanges of knowledge, critical reflection, and collaborative strategizing. Attendees engaged deeply with the themes, raising challenging questions and sharing practical solutions to advance social justice for racialized and Indigenous women.



COUNCIL OF
AGENCIES SERVING
SOUTH ASIANS

3RD ANNUAL SOCIAL JUSTICE SUMMIT

SOLIDARITY OVER SAVIORISM: FEMINISM CENTERING RACIALIZED AND INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Date: February 24, 2025

Time: 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Location: Centennial College Progress Campus
Event Centre: 937 Progress Ave. Scarborough,
ON M1G 3T8

MASTER OF CEREMONY



FRANCE STOHNER

Mental Health Counsellor &
Community organizer

TAKING THE HONOUR OUT OF 'HONOUR- BASED VIOLENCE'



FARHEEN KHAN

Chair, South Asian Advisory Council
United Way Greater Toronto

HER EXPERIENCE: CHALLENGES OF FEMALE SOUTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS



JOBANJEET KAUR

Member & Advocate
Naujwaan Support Network



PRABHJOT KAUR

Program Manager
Laadliyan



MODERATOR

TANZINA TAHEREEN

Post-Doctoral Researcher
CASSA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
BRIDGING GENERATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL
PERSPECTIVES IN FEMINIST ACTIVISM



KETTY NIVYABANDI

Secretary General
Amnesty International Canada

DECOLONIZING FEMINIST NARRATIVES AND CHALLENGING THE LIMITS OF WHITE AND WESTERN FEMINISM



DR. WAFAA HASAN

Assistant Professor
University of Toronto

ALLYSHIP IN THE FACE OF POLITICAL UNREST



RILEY YESNO

Indigenous Scholar, Writer, and
Commentator

UNLEARNING HARM: UNDERSTANDING TOXIC MASCULINITY WITHIN SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITIES



BALDEV MUTTA

Founder & Former CEO
Punjabi Community Health Services



JEFF PERERA

Speaker and Writer



SHARIFA PATEL

Post-Doctoral Fellow
University of Toronto



MODERATOR

DINOBA KIRUPA

GBV Project Manager
CASSA

South Asian Heritage Month 2025

Project Managers: Yomna Omar and Nayani Nandakumar

Every May, CASSA proudly celebrates South Asian Heritage Month (SAHM), a month-long tribute to the rich cultural diversity, history, and heritage of South Asians in Canada. The 2025 theme, *Celebrating Migrant and Refugee Justice Champions*, was especially timely, as support for migrant and refugee communities had become more critical than ever across the West, particularly in North America.

The campaign kicked off in the first week of May with a series of dedicated posts, each spotlighting remarkable South Asian Canadians who tirelessly advocate for migrant and refugee justice—both professionally and personally. Their work spans activism, legal support, community organizing, and more, illustrating the diverse ways South Asians contribute to social justice.

The celebration culminated on May 19th with the unveiling of CASSA's 2025 SAHM poster, featuring six inspiring champions:

- **Harsha Walia:** Author and Community Organizer
- **Shalini Konanur:** Executive Director and Senior Lawyer, South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)
- **Syed Hussan:** Executive Director, Migrant Workers Alliance for Change
- **Chris Ramsaroop:** Organizer, Justicia for Migrant Workers; Assistant Professor, University of Toronto; Co-Director, Migrant Farm Worker Legal Clinic
- **Prasanna Balasundaram:** Advocate and Special Advocate
- **Naujawan Support Network (NSN):** Immigrant Worker and International Student Collective, Brampton

We are proud to honor these champions who continue to uplift, support, and shape the future of our vibrant community and beyond. Their dedication inspires us all to work towards a more just and equitable society.

2025 SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

CELEBRATING MIGRANT AND REFUGEE JUSTICE CHAMPIONS



HARSHA WALIA

Harsha Walia is the award-winning author of *Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism* (2021) and *Undoing Border Imperialism* (2013). She co-authored *Never Home: Legislating Discrimination in Canadian Immigration and Red Women Rising: Indigenous Women Survivors in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside*. A trained lawyer and community organizer, she has built migrant justice movements for two decades.



SHALINI KONANUR

Shalini Konanur is the Executive Director and Senior Lawyer at South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO), where she has spent 25 years advocating for migrants and refugees. She provides legal representation in immigration, gender-based violence, and human rights, and leads national and international advocacy, including at the UN. Shalini champions law reform and access to justice, and has received numerous awards for her work.



CHRIS RAMSAROOP

Chris Ramsaroop is completing his PhD at OISE, University of Toronto, focusing on migrant farm worker resistance in Canada. He is an organizer with Justicia for Migrant Workers, Assistant Professor at UoT, and Co-Director of the Migrant Farm Worker Legal Clinic at the University of Windsor. Chris has written extensively on migrant labor, contributed to numerous media outlets, and is involved in various advocacy groups, including the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance.



SYED HUSSAN

Syed Hussan is the Executive Director of the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change and a member of the Migrant Rights Network Secretariat. The Migrant Workers Alliance for Change is Canada's largest membership-based, migrant-led organization bringing together international students, farmworkers, fishery workers, domestic workers and undocumented people to fight for their rights.



PRASANNA BALASUNDARAM

Prasanna Balasundaram advocates for marginalized communities, including refugees, immigrants, women facing gender-based persecution, and LGBTQIA2S+ individuals. He specializes in immigration and refugee litigation, constitutional challenges, and national security matters. As a Special Advocate, Prasanna protects individuals' interests in confidential proceedings and drives policy reforms through research and community leadership.



NAUJAWAN SUPPORT NETWORK (NSN)

NSN, based in Brampton, is an organization of immigrant workers and international students formed in June 2021. Through collective direct action, including protests and campaigns to stop deportations, NSN confronts exploitation by employers, landlords, colleges, immigration agents, and governments. Their efforts empower non-unionized immigrant workers to organize and secure their rights.

Official 2025 South Asian Heritage Month Poster by the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA).

This initiative is part of CASSA's ongoing work to recognize and appreciate South Asian leaders. This year's leaders are champions of migrant and refugee justice, leading with compassion and courage in both their professional and personal lives. Through advocacy, outreach, education, and frontline support, they are shaping a more inclusive and just society for all.

CASSA
www.cassa.ca

The Coalition for Racial Equity in Education Project

Project Manager: Samaha Kureshi

Intern: Maryam Wartan

Partners:

- Urban Alliance on Race Relations (UARR)
- Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action (TCCCA)
- Chinese Canadian National Council – Toronto Chapter (CCNC-TO)

The Equity in Education project worked to empower Muslim-identifying high school students, parents, and educators with the knowledge and advocacy skills needed to participate meaningfully in school board decision-making. Through community capacity building, consultations, and advocacy for systemic policy change, the project aimed to address and counter racism and Islamophobia within Ontario's education system.

One of the project's major milestones was the first-ever "Affirming Muslim Identities" Conference, which brought together students from 21 high schools across the Durham region. The conference created an important space for Muslim students to share their experiences, engage in meaningful conversations, and discuss how schools could better support Muslim students, families, and staff.

A significant achievement of this work was contributing to the successful adoption of anti-Islamophobia strategies across the Peel District School Board (PDSB), Toronto District School Board (TDSB), and Durham District School Board (DDSB). These milestones reflected years of engagement, advocacy, consultation, and collaboration across the three school boards.

In collaboration with the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), findings from consultations and student engagement were also used to help inform the development of the anti-Islamophobia strategy across the different school boards. The data and feedback collected throughout the project were consolidated and shared with NCCM to support the strategy's drafting and development.

The project also explored opportunities to advance anti-Islamophobia efforts beyond individual school boards, including conversations with trustees and community members about the need for broader action across Ontario's education system.

The Equity in Education project officially concluded in September 2025, marking the completion of an important period of community engagement, advocacy, and collaboration.

CASSA extends its sincere gratitude to every student, parent, educator, community member, partner, advocate, and organization who contributed to this work. The progress achieved across PDSB, TDSB, and DDSB would not have been possible without the collective efforts, voices, experiences, and dedication of everyone involved. We deeply appreciate everyone who supported the project and helped advocate for safer, more equitable, and more inclusive educational spaces for Muslim students and families.

While the project has concluded, the work toward addressing Islamophobia and ensuring Muslim students and families feel safe, seen, heard, and supported continues.

Data for Change Project

Project Manager: Ridah Asghar [Past: Nayani Nandakumar]

Project Assistant: Qurat Al Ain

Intern: Parnika Saxena

Partners:

- Services & Housing In the Province (SHIP)
- LogicalOutcomes (LO)
- Findhelp| 211

The Data for Change initiative is a national capacity-building initiative focused on advancing equitable social identity data (SID) collection and use across the community social services sector. In 2025, this initiative was relaunched in partnership with Findhelp | 211, CASSA, Logical Outcomes (LO), and Services and Housing In the Province (SHIP), the project supports organizations in using data responsibly to better understand community needs, address systemic barriers, and improve access to services.

The objectives of this project were implemented in four stages through targeted workshops and Community of Practice (CoP) sessions. The 4 CoP sessions which were hosted by CASSA engaged over 150 participants from diverse community-serving organizations across four provinces. Each session combined expert-led presentations, peer learning, and reflective activities to strengthen organizational capacity, surface shared challenges, and identify promising practices. These virtual and in-person sessions allowed participants to explore practical strategies for implementing equity-informed data collection, integrating trauma- and user-centered approaches, and applying insights to drive meaningful organizational and sector-wide change. CASSA developed a comprehensive final report following the conclusion of the series that captured key findings, insights, and lessons from the CoP sessions.

The project's workshops and Community of Practice (CoP) sessions were organized into four stages:

1. PLAN & BUILD

- **Workshop 1- Organizational Readiness:** Introduced data equity and helped organizations assess readiness, identify gaps, and plan for equitable data practices.
- **Workshop 2- Planning for Data Equity:** Covered Social Identity Data (SID) and steps for developing ethical, inclusive, and actionable data practices.
- **CoP 1- Get Ready, Get Set, Practice Together:** Focused on SID collection and featured sector experts, equity tools, and updates on nonprofit AI resources.

2. COLLECT & STORE

- **Workshop 4- Data Equity: Building Impact:** Explored inclusive data collection and equity-focused data practices.
- **Workshop 5- Survey Design for Everyone:** Covered equitable survey design, ethical data collection, privacy, and secure data management.

- **CoP 2- From Collection to Care: Shared tools and organizational examples for applying equity-informed data practices.**

3. ANALYZE & INTERPRET

- **Workshop 7- Trauma-Informed Practice:** Explored trauma-informed approaches to equitable data collection and reducing potential harm.
- **Workshop 8- User-Centered Analysis:** Covered accessible data analysis, visualization, sample sizes, and responsible disaggregation.
- **CoP 3- Designing with Care:** Examined user-centered and trauma-informed approaches to social demographic data collection.

4. SHARE & USE

- **Workshop 10- Equitable Use of Data:** Focused on using data to inform organizational decisions, advance equity, and demonstrate impact.
- **Workshop 11- Learning in Community:** Explored continuous learning, integrating findings into organizational workflows, and sharing results with communities.
- **CoP 4- Data for Change:** Hosted by CASSA on December 3, 2025, this final session brought participants together to reflect on their learning, celebrate the project journey, and identify opportunities for future collaboration.

Recordings and materials from the sessions can be found through the [Data for Change Knowledge Hub](#). This hub is a centralized resource for community-based organizations across the Greater Toronto Area who are working to collect and use social identity data responsibly, thoughtfully, and effectively.



Racialized Health Working Group Initiative

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

Intern: Mayeesha Helali

Volunteer: Juwairia Razvi

Partners:

- Roots Community Services (RootsCS)
- Hispanic Development Council (HDC)
- Chinese Canadian National Council – Toronto Chapter (CCNC-TO)
- Canadian Arab Institute (CAI)
- Black Health Alliance (BHA)

Racialized populations in Ontario continue to face significant health inequities, which the COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted and exacerbated. The Racialized Health Working Group (RHWG), funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, remains committed to addressing these disparities and advancing systemic reforms to build a more equitable healthcare system.

In 2025, RHWG completed all phases of its research examining barriers to healthcare access and systemic inequities affecting five key racialized populations in Ontario: South Asian, Black-African-Caribbean, Latinx Hispanic, Middle Eastern & North African, and East Asian communities. The research involved multiple completed phases:

- **Conduct a Scoping Review:** Carried out a comprehensive review of existing race-based data from Ontario's public health units, government publications, academic literature, and reports from health and social service agencies. This included examining health outcomes, vaccination statistics, and healthcare access pre, during, and post-pandemic to identify systemic inequities and gaps in service for racialized populations.
- **Conduct Community Surveys:** Distributed structured surveys to individuals from racialized communities to assess their healthcare experiences, including barriers, perceived discrimination, and overall satisfaction. Surveys collected key demographic data, such as age, gender, ethnicity, language, income, and immigration status.
- **Facilitate Community Focus Group Discussions:** Organized focus group discussion with members of racialized communities to discuss shared healthcare experiences, challenges, and collectively identify potential solutions. Focus groups were conducted in multiple languages, including Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, Spanish, and Chinese.
- **Consult with Subject Matter Experts:** Conducted semi-structured interviews with healthcare providers, researchers, policy experts, and community leaders. These interviews explored systemic barriers, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and opportunities for healthcare reform.

- **Release Comprehensive Report:** Published a report in April 2025 synthesizing findings from the scoping review, community surveys, community focus group discussions, and subject matter expert interviews. The report highlights systemic barriers, documents lived experiences, and provides actionable recommendations across healthcare systems and policy, community-based interventions, and future research priorities.
- **Launch Social Media Campaign:** Launched a targeted, multilingual campaign in April 2025 to raise awareness of healthcare inequities, highlight key findings from the study, and promote the study's recommendations to relevant stakeholders.

To access the full research report, please visit <https://www.cassa.ca/racialized-health-working-group-initiative/>.

BRIDGING HEALTH DIVIDES

A COLLABORATIVE STUDY ON ADDRESSING HEALTHCARE
DISPARITIES IN RACIALIZED COMMUNITIES



Taking the Honour Out of 'Honour-Based Violence'

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

Partners:

- United Way Greater Toronto – South Asian Community Advisory Council (UWGT's SACAC)
- Women's Mosque of Canada
- Leading Social Justice Collective (LSJC)

The *Taking the Honour Out of 'Honour-Based Violence'* (HBV) project was a collaborative research initiative focused on addressing the health and well-being of South Asian women affected by HBV in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and across Canada. This project was a partnership between CASSA, with UWGT's SACAC, and Women's Mosque of Canada. This project was funded by the LSJC, in partnership with the University of Toronto's School of Cities and UWGT.

In 2025, the project continued laying the research foundation for understanding how HBV affects South Asian communities in Canada, completing the following phases:

- **Conduct a Scoping Review:** Carried out a comprehensive review of academic literature, grey literature, books, public data repositories, and media sources. This examined the nature and cultural and social roots of HBV, its prevalence and patterns in Canada and globally, and current intervention efforts, drawing lessons from national and international approaches to identify gaps in culturally appropriate services and guide the development of consultation questions.
- **Develop Case Studies:** Selected a small number of in-depth case studies to humanize the data and illustrate the real-life impacts of HBV on individuals and families. These cases highlighted the complex dynamics of control, honour, and violence, showed how reported numbers underestimate the reality of HBV, and gave service providers concrete examples of what HBV looks like in practice.
- **Consult with Subject Matter Experts:** Conducted individual interviews and group consultations with 20 professionals working across healthcare, social services, legal services, policing, community and non-profit organizations, education, and policy advocacy, several of whom also identified as survivors. These discussions explored terminology, professional challenges, systemic gaps, and practical recommendations to strengthen prevention, intervention, and survivor support.
- **Engage Women with Lived Experience:** Held individual interviews and focus groups with 13 South Asian women with lived experience of HBV, including first- and second-generation immigrants who arrived through refugee claims, family sponsorship, student visas, and work permits. Participants shared reflections on the influence of culture and community, impacts on well-being, access to support, and resilience.
- **Engage LGBTQIA2S+ Individuals and Allied Professionals:** Consulted with 6 South Asian LGBTQIA2S+ individuals with lived experience of HBV and professionals who support these communities. Discussions focused on unique challenges, perspectives on "honour" terminology, service gaps, and recommendations for culturally sensitive prevention and support. All consultations were trauma-informed, with community-identified facilitators and mental health support available.

Building on these phases, the project team began analyzing consultation findings and developing a culturally informed, trauma- and survivor-centred training module for frontline workers, with a final report planned for 2026.

Breaking Barriers: Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for South Asian Newcomer Women

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

Project Coordinator: Samaha Kureshi

Intern: Aleena Rakkar

Volunteer: Juwairia Razvi

Partners:

- Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS)
- South Asian Women's Collective (SAWC)
- Laadliyan

CASSA is leading a three-year community-based research project titled *Breaking Barriers: Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for South Asian Newcomer Women*, focused primarily on Ontario, with an emphasis on the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The project was funded by United Way Greater Toronto, in partnership with PCHS, SAWC, and Laadliyan.

The purpose of this research is to examine how South Asian newcomer women, particularly immigrants and refugees who arrived in Canada within the past five years, experience access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, including prenatal and postnatal care. This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers this population faces in navigating Canada's healthcare system, and to generate evidence that informs the development of, and advocacy for, more culturally safe, trauma-informed, and equitable SRH services.

In 2025, the project focused on building a strong foundation for the research, completing the following phases:

- **Initiate a Literature Review:** Reviewed the federal and provincial policies, publicly funded services, and community-based supports that shape SRH access in Canada, with a focus on Ontario. The review also examined the structural and systemic barriers South Asian newcomer women face, including cultural stigma, health literacy, language, cost, immigration status, racism in healthcare, and gaps in culturally safe and trauma-informed care.
- **Develop Research Questions, Methodology, and Tools:** Drawing on insights from the literature review, developed the study's research questions and a mixed-methods approach combining community surveys, focus groups, and subject matter expert consultations. The team designed data collection tools to centre lived experience, reflect cultural nuance, and be accessible to women across languages and backgrounds.
- **Obtain Ethics Approval:** Received ethics approval from the Community Research Ethics Office (CREO), ensuring the study met rigorous standards for participant safety, informed consent, confidentiality, and trauma-informed engagement.

With the literature review underway, research tools finalized, and ethics approval secured, the project is well positioned to begin data collection with South Asian newcomer women and subject matter experts in 2026.

Exploitation of South Asian International Students in Ontario

Project Lead & Researcher: Tanzina Tahereen

Volunteer: Maryam Wartan & Karishma Patel

Partner: University of Toronto

This project, funded by Mitacs and CASSA, investigates the experiences of South Asian international students in Ontario's colleges and universities. It examines the policies, structures, and practices related to the internationalization of higher education, evaluating whether these processes foster an inclusive academic environment or contribute to exploitation and exclusion.

Phase one, which began in May 2023, focused on bibliographical research and obtaining ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board at the University of Toronto. Phase two of the project is divided into three key components: participant recruitment and data collection, data analysis and report writing, and ongoing community outreach and awareness.

1. **Participant Recruitment and Data Collection (July 2024 – June 2025):** The project focused on recruiting participants and collecting data through surveys and interviews. While the target was to interview 30 South Asian international students, 22 participants had completed interviews by July 2025. CASSA played a pivotal role in raising awareness, both within the South Asian community and among the broader Canadian public. Their efforts included sharing news articles and blog posts via social media and the CASSA website, collaborating with partner organizations, and launching targeted outreach initiatives. A notable milestone during this phase was the release of the short film *Listen* in June 2024, highlighting the experiences of female international students in Canada. CASSA also hosted multiple panel discussions and awareness campaigns, while the researcher actively participated in external panels to share insights gathered from the interviews.
2. **Data Analysis and Report Writing (July 2025 – Ongoing):** The collected data, including 22 completed surveys, is being analyzed, and comprehensive reports are being prepared. The researcher is concurrently working on academic papers based on the findings and developing additional resources to support community awareness.
3. **Community Outreach and Awareness (Ongoing):** Community engagement remains a central component throughout this phase. Efforts continue to ensure that the voices of South Asian international students are amplified and that their experiences inform broader conversations around equity, inclusion, and support in Canadian academic and social contexts.

Alberta South Asian Social Justice Network

Project Lead: Amber Qureshi

Over the past two years, CASSA has been leading a national expansion initiative to build a connected and representative network of South Asian organizations across Canada. This work has unfolded through consultations and roundtables in Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec, bringing together service providers, advocacy groups, academics, and community leaders.

In Alberta, this national vision has been brought to life through the leadership of our local lead, Amber Qureshi, and the active participation of community partners. Efforts have focused on understanding the barriers and opportunities unique to South Asian communities while fostering collaboration among nonprofit organizations, grassroots groups, and community leaders.

With nearly 17 active members, the South Asian Social Justice Network in Alberta has grown into a strong collective driving equity-focused initiatives and community advocacy on issues such as racism in schools and workplaces, barriers to representation in politics and media, and the intersections of race, gender, and religion within the diaspora. Looking ahead, the third stage of this initiative will focus on strengthening partnerships and building capacity across Alberta. A key upcoming milestone is the Calgary Resource Fair, designed to connect South Asian families with free government programs and culturally grounded supports. Representing nearly every South Asian language group, this event will ensure that diverse voices are recognized and celebrated as we work toward a stronger, more inclusive, and empowered South Asian community across Canada.



Quebec South Asian Social Justice Network

Project Lead: Abdul Majeed [Past]

The Quebec South Asian Social Justice Network (SASJN Quebec) officially launched in April 2025 and has since been actively working to build strong relationships with nonprofit organizations and South Asian communities across the province. Our focus is to create a collaborative platform where community voices can shape advocacy efforts, address systemic challenges, and promote equity for South Asians in Quebec.

Since its inception, SASJN Quebec has been engaging with key organizations such as the South Asian Women's Community Center, Kabir Center for Arts & Culture, and the Indian Student Association at Concordia University. Outreach is ongoing with additional organizations to discuss the social justice issues faced by South Asians in Quebec, including discrimination, housing barriers, language access, and economic inequities.

Several organizations have expressed interest in collaborating with SASJN Quebec, including TALQ (Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes de la région de Québec). TALQ's willingness to share its experience and research on language barriers faced by English-speaking communities in Quebec represents a valuable opportunity to strengthen advocacy on this important issue.

Based on consultations and discussions held by SASJN Quebec with various organizations in Quebec in 2024, three priority issues were identified:

1. Anti-Palestinian Racism and Islamophobia
2. Lack of funding for community organizations
3. Language barriers

In the coming months, SASJN Quebec will continue to expand outreach, connect with more community partners, and bring together diverse voices to identify shared priorities. This will culminate in the development of regional policy recommendations to be shared with government officials and relevant institutions. Through these efforts, we aim to contribute to a stronger, more united national network advocating for social justice for South Asian communities across Canada.

We deeply value the contributions of the community leaders, organizations, and volunteers who have already joined this initiative, and we look forward to expanding our reach and impact in the months ahead.



**QUEBEC SOUTH ASIAN
SOCIAL JUSTICE NETWORK**

British Columbia South Asian Social Justice Network

Project Lead: Noor Fadel [Past]

Over the past 2 years, CASSA has been developing a regional South Asian Social Justice Network (SASJN) in British Columbia to bring together nonprofit organizations, community groups, and leaders who share the goal of advancing social justice and equity for racialized and South Asian communities across the province. The Network was created as part of CASSA's national expansion to create stronger connections among South Asian-serving organizations and develop a coordinated, community-led approach to addressing issues affecting South Asian communities in British Columbia.

During 2025, the network focused on establishing connections, participating in community events, and creating a foundation for ongoing collaboration in BC. CASSA has collaborated and engaged with organizations including Sher Pride, the South Asian Legal Clinic, Mothers Matter, Moving Forward, and Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS), among many others. This work has centered on issues such as the experiences of international students, the rise of racism and discrimination against marginalized communities, and barriers to accessing essential services.

In the coming year, the BC SASJN will continue to grow its membership for organizations, community leaders, activists, and community members who are interested in advancing social justice and equity for South Asian communities across British Columbia and continue to conduct regular network meetings and strengthen engagement with BC-based organizations and community partners.



Anti-Hate initiatives

Project Manager: Noor Fadel [Past]

In 2025, CASSA received funding from United Way Greater Toronto to advance its anti-hate education and community engagement work to support communities impacted by hate and discrimination. CASSA's Anti-Hate Coordinator participated in numerous collaborative initiatives including workshops and panel discussions on Anti-Palestinian hate, Islamophobia, and the rise of hate incidents targeting international students.

CASSA also promoted its hate-crime reporting resources among South Asian, Arab, Black, and other equity-deserving communities that experience disproportionate impacts from hate incidents and systemic discrimination. The Eradicate Hate app and its resources were shared with youth, educators and parents through schools, community programs, and targeted workshops, helping to build early awareness and understanding of how hate is perpetuated and how to respond safely and effectively.

Going in the next year, CASSA will continue to strengthen and update its anti-hate resources based on community feedback and emerging needs and engage with community members, anti-hate committees and leaders to coordinate trainings and presentations focused on building awareness of how hate is perpetuated, its impacts, and how victims can be supported. CASSA will continue facilitating ongoing solidarity dialogues and capacity-building among communities and partners.



**ANTI-HATE
COMMUNITY
LEADERS' GROUP**

CASSA 2026 PROJECT UPDATES

15 Annual Health Equity Summit

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

Project Assistant: Simran Mann

Intern: Sureka Rajmohan

Volunteer: Anum Jafri

For over a decade, CASSA's Annual Health Equity Summit has brought together community organizations, healthcare professionals, researchers, policymakers, advocates, and leaders from diverse sectors to engage in meaningful dialogue on critical health issues affecting marginalized communities, with a particular focus on South Asian and other racialized communities. The Summit has explored a diverse range of topics such as chronic diseases, mental health & addiction, sexual & reproductive health, infectious/communicable disease health, policy-making, advocacy, and best practices.

The year's 15th Annual Health Equity Summit, titled *"Growing Up Online: AI & Digital Technology in Shaping Child Health, Learning, and Development,"* will take place on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM at Humber Polytechnic (North Campus) – Barrett Centre for Technology Innovation (BCTI).

The summit will examine how digital environments are shaping children's physical health, mental health, cognitive development, and social well-being. Discussions will explore the influence of digital technologies on learning, emotional regulation, physical activity, sleep, and social connection, while considering how these impacts may differ across populations, including children with neurodevelopmental differences. Through keynote, plenary, and breakout sessions, the summit will bring together perspectives from health, education, policy, and technology sectors to explore emerging evidence, equity considerations, and opportunities to create healthier, safer, and more equitable digital environments for children and families.

Agenda

- **9:30 - 10:00 AM:** Registration
- **10:00 – 10:20 AM:** Welcome & Opening Remarks
- **10:20 – 11:00 AM:** Keynote Presentation
- **11:00 AM – 12:00 PM:** Panel Discussion
- **12:00 – 12:45 PM:** Lunch
- **12:45 – 2:00 PM:** Breakout Sessions (3 concurrent)
- **2:00 – 2:20 PM:** Mindfulness Break
- **2:20 – 2:50 PM:** Breakout Debriefing Session
- **2:50 – 2:50 PM:** Closing Remarks

Register now: hesummit2026.eventbrite.com

South Asian Heritage Month 2026

Project Managers: Ridah Asghar and Samaha Kureshi

Every May, CASSA proudly celebrates South Asian Heritage Month (SAHM), a month-long tribute to the rich cultural diversity, history, and heritage of South Asians in Canada. This year's celebration centered around the theme of "Collective Care, Collective Power, Collective Impact" and celebrated the diversity, resilience, and contributions of South Asian communities across Canada while creating space for important conversations about racism, discrimination, hate, and exclusion.

The SAHM campaign kicked off in May with a series of dedicated posts, each spotlighting organizations across Canada that have worked to address hate and discrimination through gender equity, education, advocacy and community care.

CASSA spotlighted the following 6 organizations in its 2026 SAHM Poster:

- **Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)**
- **Laadliyan**
- **Poetic Justice Foundation**
- **StopHateAB**
- **South Asian Dalit Adivasi Network (SADAN)**
- **World Sikh of Organization (WSO)**

The celebration culminated in an in-person reception hosted by CASSA in partnership with Councillor Neethan Shan and United Way Greater Toronto. Held at Toronto City Hall on Friday, May 29, 2026, the South Asian Heritage Month Reception brought together community leaders, organizations, partners, and residents for an evening of celebration, reflection, and solidarity.

The event featured cultural performances that showcased the diversity of South Asian cultures and traditions. ABC Bhangra energized the audience with a dynamic Bhangra performance, Nepalese Canadian Community Services showcased Nepalese culture through a traditional cultural dance performance, and Akhenam Arts skillfully performed with the Parai, one of the oldest Indigenous drums originating from South India.

The highlight of the event was a panel discussion on addressing hate and discrimination through collective action which was brought together by the following speakers:

- **Nuzhat Jafri:** Executive Director, The Canadian Council of Muslim Women
- **Parminder Singh:** Regional Officer, World Sikh Organization of Canada
- **Deepa Mattoo:** Chief Executive Officer, YWCA Toronto.

The evening concluded with dinner, networking opportunities, and a community recognition ceremony celebrating individuals and organizations contributing to the strength and well-being of South Asian communities.

2026 SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

COLLECTIVE CARE.
COLLECTIVE POWER.
COLLECTIVE IMPACT.



CANADIAN COUNCIL OF MUSLIM WOMEN (CCMW)

A charitable organization dedicated to the equality, equity, and empowerment of Muslim women in Canada. Our mission is to affirm their identities and lived experiences through community and stakeholder engagement and raising awareness of social injustices faced by Muslim women and girls. We advocate for diverse needs, support local chapters with resources, and mobilize communities for collective national action and change.



LAADLIYAN

A Canada-wide non-profit supporting South Asian daughters and daughters of the diaspora of all ages to become empowered individuals through engagement, education, and awareness. We encourage our community to celebrate daughters in all aspects of their lives and to openly have conversations on topics such as son preference, gender based violence, sexism, gender roles, sex selective abortions, menstrual hygiene, healthy relationships, and more.



POETIC JUSTICE FOUNDATION

A charitable organization focused on collective liberation, grounded in the belief that while individual oppressors may differ, the systems of oppression are deeply interconnected. In working towards a better world, we confront systemic injustices, amplify marginalized voices, and fight for equity. Our mission is to create lasting change through advocacy, education, and community mobilization.

Educate. Agitate. Organize. ~ Dr. BR Ambedkar



STOPHATEAB

A nonprofit organization bringing together community groups, government, law enforcement, justice, and human rights partners to address hate crimes and incidents across Alberta. Through education, advocacy, community engagement, and a province-wide reporting platform, StopHateAB empowers Albertans to recognize, report, and respond to hate while supporting victims and fostering safer, more inclusive communities grounded in justice, dignity, and respect for all.



SOUTH ASIAN DALIT ADIVASI NETWORK (SADAN)

A registered non-profit founded in 2019, SADAN advocates for the rights of Dalit, Adivasi, and caste-oppressed communities in Canada. Through education, advocacy, and community engagement, the organization fosters caste literacy and addresses caste-based discrimination. SADAN collaborates with community groups, institutions, labour organizations, and service providers to advance equity and systemic change nationwide.



WORLD SIKH ORGANIZATION OF CANADA (WSO)

A national, non-profit, non-partisan organization mandated to promote and protect human rights, advance social justice, and build community capacity. We advocate for Sikh rights in Canada and globally, defend religious freedom and civil liberties, engage government and media, and empower youth through leadership, mentorship, and community development initiatives.

Official 2026 South Asian Heritage Month Poster by the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA).

South Asian communities in Canada are diverse but increasingly facing shared and interconnected forms of hate and exclusion. From Islamophobia and anti-Sikh hate to broader anti-South Asian racism and discrimination impacting Hindu communities, these realities are urgent and deeply felt. This year's poster celebrates organizations addressing these realities through collective care, collective power, and collective impact!

CASSA
www.cassa.ca

Digital Storytelling Project

Project Managers: Ridah Asghar and Samaha Kureshi

Intern: Gurleen Kaur

Partners:

- Canadian Race Relations Foundation
- Wind in the Leaves Collective
- Toronto Council Fire

The Digital Storytelling Campaign is funded by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) and aims to amplify the voices and lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and Muslim communities across Canada. Through storytelling, the project explores shared and intersecting experiences of colonialism, systemic racism, hate, microaggressions, and intergenerational trauma.

This year, CASSA completed the graphic storytelling component of the campaign, using visual storytelling to highlight community experiences and perspectives.

As part of the Muslim community storytelling component, CASSA had the opportunity to work with Canada's former Special Representative on Combating Islamophobia, Amira Elghawaby, to create a podcast exploring the long history of Islamophobia in Canada, how Islamophobia has evolved over time, and the work being done to address it.

CASSA is also working closely with Toronto Council Fire, representing the Indigenous community, and Wind in the Leaves Collective, representing the Black community. Through these partnerships, we are creating opportunities for the three communities to share their stories, learn from one another, and build greater understanding, solidarity, and allyship.

Another major highlight of the project is the Reconciliation Through Arts Festival and Digital Storytelling Showcase, taking place on November 26, 2026. CASSA, Toronto Council Fire, and Wind in the Leaves Collective will bring Black, Indigenous, and Muslim communities together to reflect on shared and unique experiences and strengthen relationships across communities. Through storytelling, the arts, and community conversations, the event will create a space for learning from one another while addressing racism, discrimination, and hate.

Through the Digital Storytelling Campaign, CASSA hopes to ensure that community members have the opportunity to take ownership of their narratives and have their voices heard. As the project continues toward its conclusion, we look forward to sharing the stories, podcasts, videos, and other work created through these important collaborations.

South Asian Community Brief

Project Manager: Shahbaz Mamdani

Project Assistant: Mikael Shaikh

Partners:

- United Way Greater Toronto – South Asian Advisory Council (SACAC)

South Asian communities across the Greater Toronto Area continue to navigate systemic barriers in healthcare, housing, education, employment, and community life - barriers that are often obscured when South Asian populations are treated as a single, undifferentiated group in existing data and services. The South Asian Community Brief, funded by United Way Greater Toronto with its South Asian Advisory Council as strategic partner, is building a community-informed evidence base on the priority needs, systemic barriers, and strengths of South Asian communities across Toronto, Peel, and York Region.

In 2026, the project completed the following phases:

- **Conduct a Scoping Review:** Carried out a targeted review of 67 sources - government and administrative data, regional and municipal reports, community and social sector reports, academic literature, and grey literature - mapping existing evidence across five domains: demographics and immigration, employment and economic inclusion, housing and household conditions, healthcare access and mental health, and social capital, discrimination, and community wellbeing. The review identified where existing evidence is strong (employment barriers, housing affordability, culturally responsive healthcare models) and where it is thin or absent (education, arts and culture, disability, 2SLGBTQIA+ experience, and entrepreneurship), directly shaping where primary research effort is focused.
- **Develop the Research Design Framework:** Built a governance and research design framework spanning five priority domains - healthcare, housing, education, employment, and arts & culture - with demographics and immigration treated as a cross-cutting lens throughout, alongside a purposive sampling strategy and subgroup considerations covering sub-ethnicity, immigration pathway, generation, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and religion.
- **Build Research Instruments:** Developed the community survey, focus group discussion guide, stakeholder consultation guide, letters of information and consent forms, and a data management plan governing storage, retention, and confidentiality, alongside a referral and support list covering crisis, mental health, legal, settlement, housing, and employment resources across Toronto, Peel, and York. Most instruments have completed CASSA's internal review and approval process, with final sign-off and translation underway.

Looking ahead, the project is preparing to translate and pilot its research instruments before launching data collection later in 2026 - a community survey (target: 50 participants), focus group discussions (target: 25 participants across Toronto, Peel, and York), and consultations with 5 sector and systemic experts. Findings from this research phase (Part A) will directly inform the development of strategic priorities and recommendations for South Asian communities across the region (Part B).

Sexual and Reproductive Health for Queer South Asians

Project Manager: Shahbaz Mamdani

Project Assistant: Mikael Shaikh



Core Delivery Partners:

- Sher Vancouver – British Columbia
- Moyo Health & Community Services – Ontario
- Project 10 – Quebec

CASSA launched a national research initiative in 2026 examining the experiences of LGBTQIA+ South Asians when accessing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services in Canada. Funded by Health Canada, the project focuses on Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec and seeks to better understand experiences of discrimination, systemic barriers, gaps in culturally responsive care, and opportunities to strengthen equitable access to sexual and reproductive healthcare.

The research centres the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ South Asian communities while also engaging healthcare providers, subject matter experts, community organizations, and service providers. Findings will inform recommendations for healthcare practice, community-based service delivery, knowledge mobilization, and culturally responsive approaches to SRH care.

In 2026, the project moved from research planning into provincial partnership development, research design, recruitment, and early implementation. Key areas of progress included:

- **Develop a National Research Design and Delivery Framework:** Established the project's research framework, including research objectives, research questions, methodology, sampling approach, recruitment strategy, data collection methods, analysis plan, and knowledge mobilization strategy. The project uses a community-based participatory research approach to ensure that community and partner perspectives inform the research throughout its lifecycle.
- **Establish Core Delivery Partnerships Across Provinces:** Developed partnerships with community organizations in Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec to provide regional expertise, contribute to research design, support participant outreach and recruitment, contextualize findings, and participate in knowledge mobilization. Core Delivery Partners also contribute to a Research Advisory structure that supports collaborative decision-making throughout the project.
- **Build Provincial Recruitment and Community Networks:** Engaged LGBTQIA+ organizations, sexual health services, newcomer-serving organizations, healthcare networks, and community partners across the four provinces to strengthen recruitment pathways for LGBTQIA+ South Asian community members and healthcare professionals. These partnerships are particularly important for reaching populations that may be underrepresented in conventional health research.
- **Engage Healthcare Providers and Subject Matter Experts:** Began developing a national network of healthcare providers, nurses, sexual health professionals, researchers, and other subject matter experts to contribute to the healthcare provider component of the study. In Alberta, collaborations with sexual health and public health professionals have supported outreach through clinical settings and generated interest from healthcare providers in participating in consultations.

- **Develop Community and Healthcare Provider Recruitment Materials:** Created recruitment posters, digital materials, project overviews, and outreach resources to support recruitment across community organizations, healthcare environments, and partner networks. Recruitment strategies are being adapted to reflect the distinct community and healthcare landscapes within each province.
- **Strengthen Research Governance and Participant Privacy:** Developed a project-specific **Data Governance & Privacy Framework** to guide informed consent, confidentiality, participant privacy, data collection, data access, storage, sharing, retention, breach response, and partner responsibilities. The framework supports consistent research practices across participating provinces and partner organizations.
- **Advance Culturally Responsive Healthcare Education:** Began developing a healthcare provider training approach focused on culturally responsive sexual and reproductive healthcare for LGBTQIA+ South Asian communities. The training explores how culture, migration, family dynamics, religion, language, race, sexuality, gender identity, and systemic inequities can shape healthcare access, trust, disclosure, and patient experiences. Interest in future training has already been expressed by healthcare teams in Alberta.
- **Prepare for Community Consultations and Data Collection:** Progressed the development and refinement of community surveys, focus group guides, healthcare provider consultations, and subject matter expert engagement tools. These instruments are being reviewed through CASSA's research and partnership structures to ensure they are culturally responsive, trauma-informed, accessible, and appropriate for the communities participating in the research.
- **Lay the Foundation for National Knowledge Mobilization:** Established relationships with community, healthcare, research, and knowledge mobilization partners who will support dissemination of research findings and recommendations. The project aims to translate findings into practical resources and recommendations for healthcare providers, community organizations, and decision-makers.

Building on the research and partnership infrastructure established in 2026, the project will continue community and healthcare provider recruitment, data collection, consultations, analysis, and knowledge mobilization into early 2027. The final phase will synthesize findings across provinces and develop recommendations to strengthen culturally responsive, inclusive, and equitable sexual and reproductive healthcare for LGBTQIA+ South Asian communities in Canada.



Taking the Honour Out of 'Honour-Based Violence'

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury



Partners:

- United Way Greater Toronto – South Asian Community Advisory Council (UWGT's SACAC)
- Women's Mosque of Canada
- Leading Social Justice Collective (LSJC)

The *Taking the Honour Out of 'Honour-Based Violence'* project was a collaborative research initiative focused on addressing the health and well-being of South Asian women affected by HBV in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and across Canada. This project was a partnership between CASSA, with United Way Greater Toronto's South Asian Community Advisory Council (UWGT's SACAC), and Women's Mosque of Canada. This project was funded by the Leading Social Justice Collective (LSJC), in partnership with the University of Toronto's School of Cities and UWGT.

In 2026, the project turned its 2025 research into action, translating findings from the scoping review, case studies, and consultations into a comprehensive report, practical training tools, and recommendations for change through the following phases:

- **Analyze and Synthesize Findings:** Analyzed insights from consultations with subject matter experts, women with lived experience, and LGBTQIA2S+ community members alongside the scoping review to identify key themes, service gaps, and opportunities for intervention.
- **Develop and Deliver a Training Module:** Created a trauma- and survivor-centred train-the-trainer module that equips frontline workers and service providers with culturally competent, evidence-based tools to recognize, prevent, and respond to HBV effectively. Building on the work of the Women's Mosque of Canada, the module was delivered to law enforcement, social service agencies, and healthcare providers.
- **Release Final & Abridged Report:** Published *Reframing Honour and Violence: From Theory to Practice* in February 2026, synthesizing findings from the scoping review, case studies, and consultations. The report documents survivor experiences, highlights systemic and service gaps, and provides actionable recommendations for governments, policymakers, law enforcement, service providers, and community organizations. An abridged version of the findings was also produced to raise public awareness and reduce stigma without reinforcing harmful stereotypes.
- **Launch Social Media Campaign:** Launched a targeted campaign in May 2026 to share the study's key findings and recommendations, raise awareness of HBV in South Asian communities, and promote survivor-centred, culturally informed responses among service providers, policymakers, and community members.

To access the full research and abridged report, please visit <https://www.cassa.ca/taking-the-honour-out-of-honour-based-violence/>.

Breaking Barriers: Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for South Asian Newcomer Women

Project Manager: Mahdiba Chowdhury

Project Coordinator: Samaha Kureshi

Project Assistant: Simran Mann

Intern: Sureka Rajmohan

Volunteer: Juwairia Razvi & Anum Jafri



Partners:

- Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS)
- South Asian Women's Collective (SAWC)
- Laadliyan

CASSA is leading a three-year community-based research project titled *Breaking Barriers: Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for South Asian Newcomer Women*, focused primarily on Ontario, with an emphasis on the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The project was funded by United Way Greater Toronto, in partnership with PCHS, SAWC, and Laadliyan.

The purpose of this research is to examine how South Asian newcomer women, particularly immigrants and refugees who arrived in Canada within the past five years, experience access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, including prenatal and postnatal care. This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the barriers this population faces in navigating Canada's healthcare system, and to generate evidence that informs the development of, and advocacy for, more culturally safe, trauma-informed, and equitable SRH services.

In 2026, the project moved from planning into data collection, completing the following phases:

- **Conduct Data Collection:** Surveyed and held focus groups with South Asian newcomer women to explore their experiences accessing SRH services, the barriers they face, and whether care felt culturally safe and trauma-informed. The team also consulted subject matter experts to examine systemic barriers and identify strategies for improving access.
- **Release Community Resource Guide:** Published *Her Well-Being, Her Way: Supporting Sexual, Reproductive, and Holistic Health for South Asian Newcomer Women* in Ontario in March 2026. The guide compiles accessible information on health, settlement, mental health, and SRH services, including gender-affirming and LGBTQIA2S+-specific care, to help newcomer women navigate services with confidence.
- **Analyze and Synthesize Findings (In Progress):** The project team is currently analyzing data from the surveys, focus groups, and consultations to identify key themes, service gaps, and evidence-informed recommendations for the policy, health and research, and community sectors.

Looking ahead, the project's final year will focus on disseminating findings and recommendations to key stakeholders, and on developing and delivering training for healthcare and service providers on cultural competency and anti-oppressive, trauma-informed care.

Anti-Hate Initiative

Project Manager: Lakhdeep Singh Dhaliwal



Partners:

- Immigrant Women's Network
- My Women Support
- Peace Builders
- Laadliyan
- Community Development Council of Durham (CDCD)
- Ajax & Oshawa Welcome Centres
- Harmony Movement
- Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre
- City of Toronto – Youth Future Leadership

Over the 2025 and 2026 fiscal periods, our organization successfully executed a series of Anti-Hate workshops designed to foster inclusivity, build community resilience, and empower vulnerable populations across Ontario and beyond.

Spearheaded by Lead Facilitator Lakhdeep Dhaliwal, these sessions directly engaged critical community intersections, including youth, women, seniors, and frontline social service staff. By partnering with grassroots organizations, municipal initiatives, and established regional service networks, the initiative provided participants with practical frameworks to identify, challenge, and dismantle systemic hate. This report highlights our completed workshops, celebrates our core partner agencies, and reflects on the measurable, positive impacts achieved during this cycle.

Youth Workshops:

- **Gibraltar Leadership Academy:** Focused on youth leadership development, providing young changemakers with the dialogue tools necessary to combat Islamophobia, racism, and xenophobia within educational spaces.
- **Harmony Movement:** Delivered in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual), this workshop bridged youth and staff perspectives, creating safer educational and recreational environments.
- **City of Toronto – Youth Future Leadership:** Conducted at Arthur Avenue, this municipal collaboration equipped marginalized youth leaders with systemic advocacy tools to foster intersectional solidarity.

Women Workshops:

- **Immigrant Women's Network (July 20):** A vital virtual session addressing the unique, gendered Islamophobia and racism faced by newcomer and racialized women. The workshop built peer-support networks and increased systemic navigating confidence.

- **My Women Support:** Focused on mental wellness and safety, offering culturally specific strategies to handle community-based hate and domestic microaggressions.
- **Laadliyan:** Tailored specifically for staff members of this key South Asian women's organization. This capacity-building workshop deepened staff understanding of equity, ensuring trauma-informed care for their client base.

Staff Workshops:

- **Peace Builders:** Hosted at the Daniels Spectrum Building, this session brought youth and organizational staff together. It successfully integrated anti-hate frameworks into restorative justice practices.
- **Ajax & Oshawa Welcome Centres (CDCCD):** Two intensive sessions for frontline immigration and settlement staff. These workshops sharpened organizational capability to identify hate incidents and support racialized newcomers experiencing transit or workplace discrimination.

Community Workshops

- **Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre:** Held in person in Mississauga, these highly successful workshops engaged senior cohorts. They addressed senior-focused isolation, language-barrier discrimination, and provided practical safety tips for public spaces.
- **Quebec South Asian Social Justice Network & SASJN BC:** Expanded our geographic footprint through dedicated community-wide virtual forums, uniting grassroots activists and residents from Quebec to British Columbia to counter localized hate.

Building on this momentum, pipeline consultations are already underway to scale our impact. Key community staples including *Costi*, *Time's Change*, *Khalsa School*, *Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS)*, and the *South Asian and Tamil Women's Collective* have engaged in scheduling future sessions, proving that the demand for anti-hate intervention remains a critical regional priority.



**ANTI-HATE
COMMUNITY
LEADERS' GROUP**

BC South Asian Social Justice Network

Project Lead: Mithila Karnik [Past: Noor Fadel]



Current Network Partners:

- BC APNI CRN (Community Response Network)
- City of Coquitlam EDI Manager
- Culture Chats BC
- DIVERSEcity
- Farhat Shah
- Gujarati Society of BC
- Immigrant Women's Initiative
- India Cultural Association / ATI Vancouver
- Kaur Collective
- Meena Dhillon
- Mothers Matter
- Moving Forward
- Parisa Kabir
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS)
- SACH
- Shanzae Sarwar
- Sher Pride
- South Asian Community Hub
- South Asian Health Institute
- South Asian Legal Clinic of BC
- South Asian Mental Health Alliance
- South Asian Youth Mental Health Project
- World Sikh Organization
- Youth Leadership Society of BC

The South Asian Social Justice Network (SASJN) in British Columbia was established by CASSA in 2025 as part of its national expansion to strengthen connections among South Asian-serving organizations, community groups, and leaders across the province.

The Network provides a space for organizations and community leaders working across areas such as settlement and newcomer services, gender-based violence, LGBTQIA+ inclusion, youth and seniors, health, education, human rights, and social justice to connect, share knowledge, and identify issues affecting South Asian communities.

In 2026, CASSA continued to support the development of the BC Network through network engagement, community discussions, and opportunities for members to connect around shared social justice priorities. The Network also created opportunities for community members, service providers, advocates, and leaders to come together through its first in-person summit.

On May 15, 2026, The BC SASJN hosted its first in-person South Asian Social Justice Summit at the Port Coquitlam Community Centre, titled *Breaking The Silence - A Blueprint for Challenging South Asian Diasporic Stigma*. The event provided an opportunity to connect organizations and community members, exchange perspectives, and discuss opportunities for greater collaboration and community action. The panel brought together voices from federal policy, provincial and community advocacy, healthcare, frontline services, and faith-based community work, including MP Zoe Royer, Jessie Kaur Lehal, Dr. Arun Garg, Madhavee Inamdar, and Gurjeet Singh from the World Sikh Organization.

In the coming year, CASSA will continue to convene regular SASJN network meetings and create opportunities for members to connect, share information, and identify emerging issues affecting South Asian communities across British Columbia. The Network will continue to provide a space for knowledge exchange, relationship building, and collaboration among South Asian-serving organizations, community leaders, and grassroots groups. CASSA will also explore opportunities for members to participate in community education workshops, anti-hate initiatives and training, and coordinated advocacy where appropriate.



Quebec South Asian Social Justice Network

Project Lead: Zahra Haider [Past: Abdul Majeed]



Current Network Partners:

- South Asian Women's Community Centre (SAWCC)
- Amal Centre for Women
- Afghan Women's Centre of Montreal
- Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW) Quebec Chapter
- Brique par Brique / Brick-by-Brick
- Member/representative from the office of MP Sameer Zuberi
- South Asian Film Festival of Montreal (SAFFM @ Kabir Centre)
- South Asian Health Research Hub
- Teesri Duniya Theatre
- The Refugee Centre (Le Centre de Réfugiés)
- Abdul Raziq Khan (Founder of Mama Khan restaurant)
- Academic and institutional collaborators:
 - Dolores Chew (Concordia University / Marianopolis College)
 - Muhammad Arslan Hanif (McGill Institute of Islamic Studies)
 - Syeda Nayab Bukhari (Professor of Women's Studies, Concordia)

South Asian Social Justice Network (SASJN) Quebec Expansion - 2026

Over the course of the project (January to June 2026), CASSA's South Asian Social Justice Network (SASJN) successfully established a dedicated regional footprint in Quebec, building a stronger platform for South Asian communities to identify concerns, share lived experiences, and participate in advocacy and community-led solutions. Through extensive grassroots outreach across localized hubs like Parc-Extension and LaSalle, stakeholder engagement, and localized coordination, the project focused heavily on addressing systemic barriers within the unique Quebec context—including regional language dynamics, newcomer and immigration settlement, housing and health equity, and legislative advocacy regarding Bill 21. This initiative successfully transitioned CASSA's previously distributed presence in the province into a centralized regional directory with dedicated local leadership, strengthening connections among grassroots organizers, academics, and service providers across Montreal.

Key Achievements and Impact

A primary milestone of the expansion was the Beyond the Mosaic provincial launch and stakeholder summit hosted at Maison durable. Operating as a focused, high-impact roundtable with 12 dedicated local advocates, organizers, and community members, the intimate format allowed every participant to actively share their local work and directly inform a long-term sustainability work plan.

SASJN also actively expanded its community presence throughout the season by representing the network at the annual Monsoon Festival hosted by network partner Brique x Brique on Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day (June 24). To support public advocacy and resource navigation, the project designed and distributed structural regional resources, including bilingual English and French folders and informational flyers.

In addition, vital outreach was initiated with Member of Parliament Sameer Zuberi's office to lay the groundwork for legislative alignment and collaboration as policy-drafting phases commence. Building on this momentum, the network is scheduled to convene in person again this October at network partner Teesri Duniya Theatre's space to advance ongoing working group initiatives, which will include dedicated discussions on addressing and combating Islamophobia alongside ongoing pushback against legislative inequities like Bill 21.

Furthermore, as a recognized network partner, SASJN has received an official invitation to attend the upcoming anniversary celebration hosted by the South Asian Women's Community Centre (SAWCC), ensuring direct representation at the milestone event. Moving forward, SASJN Quebec will continue to leverage these newly formed partnerships, working groups, and community-sourced data to challenge systemic exclusion and ensure South Asian voices remain central to social justice conversations in the province.



**QUEBEC
SOUTH
ASIAN
SOCIAL
JUSTICE
NETWORK**

**RÉSEAU DE
JUSTICE
SOCIALE
SUD-
ASIATIQUE
DU QUÉBEC**

Alberta South Asian Social Justice Network

Project Lead: Amber Qureshi

Current Network Partners:

- Immigrant Services Calgary
- The Immigrant Education Society
- Canadian Immigrant Women Association
- Calgary Single Mothers Society
- Calgary Johan Haward Society
- First Step Together
- Calgary Catholic Immigrant society
- Whitejet law Firm
- Falcon Law
- The Trellis society
- Calgary Bridge Foundation for youth
- NDP party
- UOC student Club
- Cultural Tapestry
- Centre for New Comers



SASJN Alberta's most significant milestone this year was organizing Alberta's first-ever South Asian Social Justice Summit on May 24, 2026, which brought together community members, organizations, service providers, advocates, and leaders to discuss social justice issues affecting South Asian communities. We also continued to strengthen the Network by connecting nonprofits, grassroots groups, service providers, and community leaders across Alberta.

Amplifying community voices remained central to our work. We created spaces for community members and organizations to share experiences, identify barriers, and contribute to conversations on equity, inclusion, racism, mental health, immigration, workers' rights, and belonging, all key themes at the 2026 Summit. We also strengthened relationships between grassroots organizations and larger settlement and community-serving agencies, supporting collaboration, resource sharing, and referral pathways.

Our advocacy continued to raise awareness of systemic barriers facing South Asian communities, building on priorities from earlier Alberta consultations such as capacity building, funding barriers, coordination, and access to services. We created opportunities for leaders, volunteers, service providers, and advocates to take part in planning, outreach, dialogue, and social justice activities. Two dedicated volunteers, Umme Habiba Qureshi and Ibadat Warring, contributed a combined 66 hours to the Network's activities, and our ongoing outreach welcomed new organizations and groups interested in joining.

Looking ahead, we have begun planning the Network's next phase, including community dialogues, leadership opportunities, digital storytelling, resource sharing, and collaborative initiatives to further amplify South Asian voices across Alberta.

2025 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

DECEMBER 31, 2025

Rashidi LLP

CHARTERED
PROFESSIONAL
ACCOUNTANTS

9140 Leslie Street, Suite 305
Richmond Hill, Ontario L4B 0A9
Tel: (905)762-1900
Fax: (905)762-1909
[Email: info@rashidi.ca](mailto:info@rashidi.ca)

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

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, 2025, 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, 2025, 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 31, 2026

Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2025

ASSETS

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Current		
Cash	\$ 302,914	\$ 149,983
Investments (Note 4)	56,881	54,691
Accounts receivable	4,035	2,510
Grants receivable	-	8,763
HST recoverable	7,715	13,398
Prepaid expenses	2,393	2,392
	<u>373,938</u>	<u>231,737</u>
Capital assets (Note 3)	<u>694</u>	<u>953</u>
	<u>\$ 374,632</u>	<u>\$ 232,690</u>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 10,646	\$ 36,490
Deferred contributions (Note 5)	217,492	69,970
Deferred revenue	17,150	2,150
	<u>245,288</u>	<u>108,610</u>
Net assets	<u>129,344</u>	<u>124,080</u>
	<u>\$ 374,632</u>	<u>\$ 232,690</u>

Approved on behalf of the Board:

*Bharat Saini*Director*Z. Sumrani*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, 2025

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 124,080	\$ 120,452
Excess of revenue over expenses	5,264	3,628
Balance, end of year	<u>\$ 129,344</u>	<u>\$ 124,080</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, 2025

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Revenue		
Grants (Note 7)	\$ 385,884	\$ 752,484
Partnerships, expense recoveries and other income	86,203	169,917
Fees for service	13,961	29,285
Membership fees	1,900	1,970
Interest income	2,191	2,196
	<u>490,139</u>	<u>955,852</u>
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits (Note 6)	316,463	556,385
Program - project expenses (Note 6)	55,008	127,995
Rent and utilities	53,481	50,602
Office and general (Note 6)	40,391	47,552
Professional services	6,534	7,768
Program - purchased services	5,406	131,640
Travel and transportation	4,299	27,065
Insurance	3,034	2,856
Amortization	259	361
	<u>484,875</u>	<u>952,224</u>
Excess of revenue over expenses	<u>\$ 5,264</u>	<u>\$ 3,628</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, 2025

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Cash provided by (used in)		
Operating activities		
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 5,264	\$ 3,628
Amortization	259	361
	<u>5,523</u>	<u>3,989</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital items		
Accounts receivable	(1,525)	75
Grants receivable	8,763	17,826
HST recoverable	5,683	(646)
Prepaid expenses	(1)	(176)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(25,844)	14,612
Deferred contributions (Note 5)	147,522	(78,106)
Deferred revenue	15,000	(72,016)
	<u>149,598</u>	<u>(118,431)</u>
Increase (decrease) in cash during the year	155,121	(114,442)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	<u>204,674</u>	<u>319,116</u>
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	<u>\$ 359,795</u>	<u>\$ 204,674</u>
Cash and cash equivalents represented by:		
Cash	\$ 302,914	\$ 149,983
Investments	56,881	54,691
	<u>\$ 359,795</u>	<u>\$ 204,674</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, 2025

INCORPORATION AND PURPOSE OF ORGANIZATION:

The Council of Agencies Serving South Asians ("the Organization") 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.

The Organization incorporated as a not-for-profit organization without share capital in the Province of Ontario on July 29, 1991. The Organization became a registered charity on January 1, 2024 and the charity registration number is 135875599RR0001.

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, and expense recoveries 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, 2025

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, 2025

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:

	2025			2024
	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Accumulated Amortization</u>	<u>Net Book Value</u>	<u>Net Book Value</u>
Office equipment	\$ 15,307	\$ 15,092	\$ 215	\$ 269
Computers	13,800	13,321	479	684
	<u>\$ 29,107</u>	<u>\$ 28,413</u>	<u>\$ 694</u>	<u>\$ 953</u>

4. INVESTMENTS:

Investments consist of a guaranteed investment certificate (GIC) with an annual interest rate of 3.00% (2024 - 4.15%) and a maturity date of January 6, 2026.

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

5. DEFERRED GRANTS:

Deferred grants are summarized as follows:

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Canadian Heritage	\$ 62,890	\$ -
United Way - Anti-Hate Training Program	50,000	-
United Way - Community Services Anchor Funding	46,432	-
Canadian Race Relations Foundation	23,100	-
United Way - Research Grant	20,070	-
United Way - Gender Based Violence	-	17,016
United Way - Partnership and Systems Initiatives	15,000	-
Public Health Agency	-	48,584
Employment and Social Development Canada	-	2,851
United Way - Community Services Anchor Funding	-	1,519
	<u>\$ 217,492</u>	<u>\$ 69,970</u>

Continuity of deferred grants for the year is as follows:

Deferred grants, beginning of year	\$ 69,970	\$ 148,076
Add – received/receivable during the year	533,406	674,378
Less - grant revenue recognized in the year	<u>(385,884)</u>	<u>(752,484)</u>
Deferred grants, end of year	<u>\$ 217,492</u>	<u>\$ 69,970</u>

6. 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>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Program - project expenses	\$ 4,011	\$ 18,700
Office and general	<u>16,325</u>	<u>11,799</u>
	<u>\$ 20,336</u>	<u>\$ 30,499</u>

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

7. GRANT REVENUE RECOGNIZED IN THE YEAR:

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Canadian Heritage	\$ 91,373	\$ 25,841
City of Toronto	73,005	86,921
United Way - Community Services Anchor Funding	55,090	73,478
Public Health Agency of Canada	48,584	199,698
United Way - Research Grant	45,368	-
United Way - Gender Based Violence	38,826	85,295
Canadian Race Relations Foundation	16,137	33,763
Urban Alliance of Race Relations	14,650	30,521
ESDC - New Horizons	2,851	15,749
Canadian Red Cross	-	172,721
United Way - Partnership and Systems Initiatives	-	15,000
United Way - Capacity Building	-	13,497
	<u>\$ 385,884</u>	<u>\$ 752,484</u>

8. 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.

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.

COUNCIL OF AGENCIES SERVING SOUTH ASIANS

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2025

8. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS: (Continued)

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 2025.

9. COMMITMENTS:

The Organization is committed to a lease for its head office premises at Unit 101 - 705 Progress Avenue located in Toronto, Ontario, which requires the following annual minimum payments:

2026	\$	15,873
2027	\$	15,873
2028	\$	5,291

The term of this lease commitment expires on May 31, 2028. In addition to the above minimum lease payments, the Organization is responsible for its portion of occupancy cost and utilities which is estimated at \$33,000 annually.

CASSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SLATE 2025-2026

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, human rights, equity, diversity, inclusion, freedom of speech and freedom of expression. Bharat has been working in the post-secondary sector for more than 15 years. 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. Additionally, 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 mentorship along with community work and engagement. For over a decade he 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, 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 protecting human rights and transformational systemic change to advance anti-racism, equity and inclusion and foster belonging for all.

Zeeshan Sumrani – Treasurer

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.

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.

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.

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 is also an adjunct instructor at Queen's University and is a research Doctoral student at Osgoode Hall Law School. 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. Jessica also completed a Juris Doctor at Osgoode Hall Law School where she focused on immigration, refugee, and administrative law. Her current doctoral work at Osgoode Hall Law School examines the immigration detention regime in Canada. 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 is currently Research Legal Counsel (Corporate Projects) 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.

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, service delivery coordination and leadership on social justice issues affecting our communities. We aim to 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, racism, and hate; 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 toward 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

2025-2026

2025 Staff

Executive Director – Samya Hasan [Maternity Leave]

Interim Executive Director - Jessica Singh [Past]

Director of Development – Ridah Asghar

Manager, Community Development – Nayani Nandakumar [Past]

Executive Assistant & Membership Coordinator – Qurat Al Ain

Finance Manager – Farhat Hasan

Projects Manager – Yomna Omar

Human Resources Generalist – Gurbinder Jaspal Kaur

Communications and Equity in Education Coordinator – Samaha Kureshi

IT Specialist – Faizan Zubair

Calgary Lead, South Asian Social Justice Network – Amber Qureshi

Edmonton Lead, South Asian Social Justice Network – Harnoor Kochar [Past]

Quebec Lead, South Asian Social Justice Network – Abdul Majeed

Project Manager, Gender-Based Violence and GTA GBV Study – Dinoba Kirupa [Past]

Project Manager, Health Promotion & Equity – Mahdiba Chowdhury

Manager, Anti Hate- Initiative, and BC Outreach Coordinator – Noor Fadel [Past]

Project Lead, The International Students Project – Tanzina Tahereen

Co-op Students/Interns – Parnika Saxena, Ozair Asmal, Aeshah Doorani, Ameen Chaudhry, Hiba Syed, Humza Qureshi, Noorah Umar, Nurefsan Yigit, Nusaybah Akbar, Ruqayya Mulla, Sarah Popal, Zahra Ali, Mayeesha Helali, Bengisu Onkal, Deepak Thapa, Karishma Patel, Aleena Rakkar, Maryam Wartan and Charito Grafilo

2026 Staff

Executive Director – Samya Hasan

Director of Development – Ridah Asghar

Executive Assistant & Membership Coordinator – Qurat Al Ain

Finance Manager – Farhat Hasan

Projects Manager – Yomna Omar (Maternity leave)

Human Resources Generalist – Gurbinder Jaspal Kaur

Communications Coordinator & Project Lead Digital Storytelling – Samaha Kureshi

IT Specialist – Faizan Zubair

BC Lead, South Asian Social Justice Network – Mithila Karnik (Past), Ridah Asghar

Alberta Lead, South Asian Social Justice Network – Amber Qureshi

Quebec Lead, South Asian Social Justice Network – Zahra Haider

Project Manager, Health Promotion & Equity – Mahdiba Chowdhury

Research Lead – Shahbaz Mamdani

Project Lead, The International Students Project – Tanzina Tahereen

Co-op Students/Interns – Maryam Wartan, Parnika Saxena, Mayeesha Helali, Juwairia Razvi, Aleena Rakkar, Juwairia Razvi, Maryam Wartan; Karishma Patel, Simran Mann, Sureka Rajmohan, Gurleen Kaur, Mikael Shaikh, Umme Habiba Qureshi and Ibadat Warring.

CASSA VOLUNTEERS 2025-2026

Maryam Wartan	Simran Mann
Parnika Saxena	Sureka Rajmohan
Mayeesha Helali	Gurleen Kaur
Juwairia Razvi	Mikael Shaikh
Aleena Rakkar	Umme Habiba Qureshi
Anum Jafri	Ibadat Warring
Karishma Patel	

CASSA ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS (AGENCIES) 2025-2026

1. Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP)
2. Afghan Women's Organization (AWO)
3. Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS)
4. Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS)
5. Breast Cancer Canada
6. Canadian Council for Muslim Women (CCMW)
7. Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre (CanTYD)
8. CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses
9. Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association
10. Centennial College
11. COSTI
12. Eco Vibes
13. Epilepsy Toronto
14. Evergreen Hospice
15. Family Service Toronto
16. Findhelp Information Services
17. Family Services York Region (FSYR)
18. Frontline Community Services
19. Gerrard India Bazaar
20. Humber College, Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion
21. Harbhajan Ranauta Legacy Foundation
22. Indo-Canadian Women's Association (ICWA)
23. Legal Aid Ontario
24. Markham South Asian Seniors Centre
25. Markham Tamil Organization
26. Markham Tamil Seniors Association
27. METRAC
28. Newcomer Women's Services
29. Nepalese Canadian Community Services
30. Ontario Caregiver Organization
31. Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services
32. Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS)
33. Reh'ma Community Services
34. Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
35. SAAAC Autism Centre
36. Settlement Assistance & Family Support Services (SAFSS)

37. Scadding Court Community Centre
38. Scarborough Arts
39. Senior Tamils Centre of Ontario
40. Sherbourne Health
41. Skills for Change
42. Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO)
43. Social Planning Toronto
44. Social Services Network
45. South Asian Heart Health Group (SAHHG)
46. South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario (SALCO)
47. South Asian Network Supporting Awareness & Research (SANSAR)
48. South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC)
49. South Asian Women's Centre (SAWC)
50. South Asian Centre of Windsor
51. South Asian Health Alliance
52. South Asian Canadian Access to Justice Association
53. South Asian and Tamil Women's Collective
54. South Asian Cultural Health Association for Youth & Seniors (SACHAYS)
55. Tamil Cultural & Academic Society of Durham
56. TESOC - Multicultural Settlement & Community Services
57. The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO)
58. Times Change Women's Employment Service
59. Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action (TCCCA)
60. Tropicana Community Services Organization
61. Unifor
62. Vasantham - Tamil Wellness Centre
63. We Can Win
64. Women's Health in Women's Hands
65. Women for Women Support Services
66. Workers' Action Centre

CASSA HONORARY MEMBERS (INDIVIDUALS) 2025-2026

1. Asim Hussain
2. Arun K Garg
3. Angie Grewal
4. Bob Sikand
5. Farhat Shah
6. Khadija Ismail
7. Khush Bakht Memon
8. Leah Sultan- Khan
9. Lubaina Fidaali
10. Lavina Gomes
11. Mohammed Abdul Khader
12. Rabin Kaini
13. Sridevi Veluganti Nagasai
14. Shreya Menon
15. Sunny Sikand
16. Sharon Sajan
17. Sonya Sachar.
18. Tarak Ahmed
19. Tanisha Acharya

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF OUR FUNDERS FOR 2025

We would like to appreciate and acknowledge the vital ongoing support for our activities by:

Canadian Race Relations Foundation
The Canadian Red Cross Society
City of Toronto: Community Services Partnership
Government of Canada: Department of Canadian Heritage
Government of Canada: Employment and Social Development Canada
Public Health Agency of Canada
Toronto Non-Profit Network
United Way of Greater Toronto
Urban Alliance of Race Relations

We extend our sincere gratitude to all our community partners, volunteers, and board members for their invaluable support throughout our projects. Their contributions have been essential to the achievements we have made in 2025. Without their dedicated assistance, our accomplishments would not have been possible.

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

**Thank you for attending
CASSA's 2026 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.

**705 Progress Avenue Units 101 & 106
Toronto, Ontario M1H 2X1
Website: www.cassa.ca
Email: cassa@cassa.ca
Tel. No: (647) 932 1001 ext. 114**