



# INDO CANADIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

*Serving immigrants since 1984*

Annual Report 2011



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# Highlights of 2011

1. A volunteer board has run the Indo Canadian Women's Association since its establishment. There are 9 elected Board members and 4 members at large.
2. ICWA aims to help immigrant women and men to integrate into Canadian society. Our outreach workers have a vital role to play in this service of the association. These workers saw about 100 clients in 2011-2012.
3. ICWA conducts computer literacy classes, ESL classes, and senior's conversational English class and Citizenship exam preparation classes. In 2011 we taught 248 students and 689 instructional hours were spent.
4. Number of clients served under Integration and Settlement Assistance Program (ISAP) program increased by 98%. The number of clients projected to CIC for the fiscal year 2011-2012 was 360, while the actual number of clients served by ICWA Settlement staff is 716 for the year 2011-2012. ICWA staff serving ISAP clients can speak 16 different languages.
5. The youth program at ICWA provides young immigrants who are trying to integrate in to Canadian society and yet maintain their traditional values, a platform where they can discuss their problems, look for solutions and engage in various activities.
6. ICWA's Women's resiliency program aims to help newly arrived women to settle down in a new country and provide social and cultural support to ease their transition. The group meets once every month.
7. Indo Canadian Women's Association (ICWA) has been helping ethnic and new immigrant seniors for last 25 years to build a new life in Canada. The goal of the senior's program is to make seniors self-reliant, healthy and secure.
8. The Breast Health education project funded by Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation is targeting hard to reach south Asian women to create awareness about early detection methods of breast cancer.
9. Elimination of harmful cultural practices project is successfully in its second year. 10 focus group discussions, community consultations with faith leaders, engaging police and presenting to social workers and front line workers have been some highlights of the project. *In the name of Honor* conference is coming up on June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
10. In collaboration with The International Association of Citizens for a Civil Society, ICWA raised approximately \$5,000. These funds are being used for Daughter's Day initiative that aims to raise the status of the girl child.
11. A new one-year initiative funded by new Horizons Program has begun to promote inclusion of seniors and promote volunteerism.

# About ICWA

*The Indo Canadian Women's Association is a not-for-profit organization committed to full participation of immigrant and visible minority women and men in economic, social and political life of Canada. Established 28 years ago, ICWA is amongst the few organizations in Edmonton, Canada advocating for the protection of the rights of immigrants-women, men and youth alike. Through our settlement assistance, advocacy activities and skill building training we ensure immigrants will be able to feel at home in Canada.*

## VISION

*“All new Canadians will achieve a sense of fulfillment and integrate into Canadian culture and society. Everyone will have equal opportunity to participate fully in Canadian society.”*

## MISSION

*“Indo Canadian Women’s Association works to encourage and promote participation by the new Canadians in social, economic and political life in Canada.”*

## VALUES

*“Indo Canadian Women’s Association is dedicated to having equality, opportunity and protection of rights for everyone.”*

## Structure and Governance

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**Above: Board of Directors 2011-2012**  
Photo Credits: Poushali Mitra

Indo Canadian Women's Association has been run by a volunteer board since its establishment. There are 9 elected Board members and 4 members at large. The Board works in three standing committees: Personnel Committee, Finance Committee and Program & Project committee.

These committees' members brief and orient new committee members review the policy and action plans and carry on the current committee work as need arises. The Board holds 6-8 meetings in a year and

spend approximately 300 hours on administrative issues. The organization has no Executive Director.

The Standing committees are:

Personnel: Avau Fast, Miriam Thomas, Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Navneet Kiran

Finance Committee: Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Netta Phillet, Sherry Ahmad

Program and Planning : Zohra Husaini, Miriam Thomas, Rashmi Jyoti

# Community Development

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## Settlement and Outreach for Newcomers

ICWA aims to help immigrant women and men to integrate into Canadian society. Our outreach workers play a vital role in helping immigrant women and men to integrate into the Canadian society. They assist newcomers in connecting them with educational, legal, health and social services through appropriate referral and counselling. Outreach workers help seniors overcome the language barriers by providing support during difficult times. The outreach worker saw about 100 clients in 2011-2012.

## Skill Building and Adult Education

### ESL Functional Literacy

The purpose of our ESL Functional Literacy Class is to introduce English to non-English speaking immigrants and bring them to a level where they can understand and communicate at a basic level. The class identifies the literary barriers that newcomers face because of language in Canada. The class is in high demand because of the accessible location and the practical teaching method used to teach the course. Additional 6 hours were taught by the teacher and ICWA paid for the additional time.

Students learn:

- Grammar
- Introduction with different Canadian festivals and holidays
- Handling phone calls
- Asking for directions from an unknown person or bus driver
- Opening an account at the bank
- Main body parts
- Addressing a receptionist at an office, ordering food at a restaurant
- Introducing self in class: talking about education, country of origin, family structure etc.
- Name of items in the kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living room etc.
- Visiting a doctor
- Reading notices and warning signs

**248 students**

**689 instructional  
hours**

## Conversational English and Resiliency Skills for seniors

The class was specially designed keeping in mind the needs of seniors. Due to the language barrier, seniors often feel lonely, bored and depressed as they cannot involve themselves in social activities on their own. In this class, seniors learn how to access various services, how to speak to people at these service provider locations and how to communicate what they need. It also helps seniors build strong language skills that they can use in their daily activities. The instructor put in 5 extra hours which were compensated by ICWA.

Students Learn:

- Learning to introduce oneself
- Greeting and addressing people
- Common day items
- Grammar
- Canadian celebration and Holidays
- Enquiring route or timing of a bus, opening an account at the bank,

grocery shopping and other everyday communication

- Building vocabulary

Learner Story:

One of the students in the seniors' class was a 78 year old man, who had never had any formal education in Canada or in his source country. He was persuaded by his friends to attend the senior's conversation class because he depended on his family members for everything. As a result he felt very lonely at home. His friends who were already attending this class convinced him to learn English. Although his vocabulary was very limited in the beginning, he gained confidence in speaking the language and over time improved remarkably. He says he feels much more confident interacting with others now as he understands what they are saying.

## Citizenship preparation for new Canadians

Citizenship preparation class prepares newcomers who do not have strong English language skills, for their citizenship exam. It is essential for newcomers to fully understand their rights, responsibilities and values of being a Canadian.

Right: Instructor, Paul Kalsi with Citizenship Class students



This class remains in high demand and has students from various communities. The instructor

spends considerable time preparing study packages which include questions and important dates. With this study material, students have found it much easier to prepare for the exam.

- Canada's Economy
- Canada's regions
- Modern Canada
- Government system in Canada: Federal elections, Justice system in Canada
- Rights and Responsibilities of Canadian Citizens
- Canadian History

Students Learn:

The Citizenship class has 94 % success rate. Many students who succeeded in their citizenship exam after the preparation class came to ICWA office to thank the instructor for all the hard work he put in. These students then referred more newcomers to our classes because they were highly satisfied with the instructor and his teaching methodology.

Learner Story:

A woman especially came to see the board of directors and praise them for setting up this class. She had a language barrier and said she had problem understanding the material. But after the classes she was more confident and passed her citizenship exam.

## Computer Literacy



Above: Jaya Saxena, Computer class instructor with her class

The classes are offered in two parts: Basic and Intermediate. The computer classes are very popular among adult immigrants because they realize having computer skills enhances their employability. With computer skills the mature learners have the confidence to apply for higher positions and advance their career. These skills enable them to integrate into the Canadian work place with more ease and can raise their economic status. The adult or seniors who take this class feel less dependent on their children as they can access information or communicate with their friends via email on their own.

Students learn:

- 1) Typing a word document: a letter, a report, their Resume.
- 2) Microsoft Excel to do day to day calculations and projections graphs.
- 3) Send and receive emails, send and receive attachments.
- 4) Browse internet to look for information, jobs, houses, cars, etc.
- 5) Search for jobs.

Below: Comments from Computer Class Student during class evaluation

**Comments:**

Please write below any comments you have about the course and/ or the instructor, and anything you would like to see changed

I like to have an intermediate course in future. The course is very good for beginners like me. I learned lots of things about microsoft word and excel. Thank you very much

# Integration and Settlement Assistance Program (ISAP)

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## Highlights of ISAP program

The ISAP fiscal year has been a very busy year for the Welcome Centre for Immigrants with 98% increase in the number of new immigrants visiting the WCI to receive services. The number of clients projected to CIC for the fiscal year 2011-2012 was 360, while the actual number of clients served by ICWA Settlement staff is 716 for the year 2011-2012. ICWA staff serving ISAP clients can speak 16 different languages.

Settlement Counselor, Farah Fatima, conducts workshops for new immigrants. The workshops introduce new immigrants to Canada, its systems, geography, weather, provincial information, Permanent Resident Card, Alberta Personal Health Card, information on Canada revenue Agency for Tax purposes, Immunization, Medical centers and Alberta registries / driver license and much more. As required at a second meeting with the settlement counsellor, clients receive personalized attention and specific information according to their situations. These workshops bring people together and give a bird's eye view of the Canadian social setup. Feedback is taken from the clients regarding quality of services they received and their suggestions are taken to improve the program.

Two outreach workers provide support to new hard to reach immigrants. These clients have severe language barriers that make it difficult for them to access services. As ICWA outreach workers work in the community and speak their language so it is ensured that the client's needs are met.

Shazia Ambreen, one of the outreach workers, works in collaboration with the Pakistani Community Centre in Millwoods, IFFSA (an Islamic Food Bank), and Duggan Community. A majority of these women come from eastern part of India and Pakistan. She provides them information/orientation and refers them to appropriate services. Her work extends to working with women in neighbouring communities to share basic settlement information, to motivate them to plan their careers by learning English and Computer skills for a better future and even to support their children's education. She also educates women on vaccination for children, its benefits and to be vigilant and aware of allergies if they should happen.

Rajbir Kharod, the second outreach worker mainly serves the new senior immigrants to Canada. He assists seniors by assisting to show them government offices and other places that serve their need. Rajbir organizes a senior's group session every week where they can share information with each other and find solutions to problems that they face.

98% increase in the  
number of immigrants  
served

## Partnerships and working together

In collaboration with the John Humphrey Centre a workshop on Human Rights education was presented to newcomers on October 24, 2011. The purpose of the workshop was to engage individuals on issues of common interest based on developing culture of inclusion, to celebrate diversity and the beauty of human dignity. It gave newcomers an opportunity to understand the Declaration of Human Rights and hands on approach to explore connections between the family and community.

The Welcome Centre has partnerships with many different community organizations. Millwood Library and White mud Library staffs are invited during the settlement workshops to provide information to new immigrants of the resources available in the community.

Family Resource Centre is another vital partner of WCI. Every week staff from the centre attends a settlement orientation where they inform clients about the services they provide. Through the support of the Family Resource Centre ISAP staff can support many of the clientele who need this assistance.

United Way is another one of our partners. They support welcome centre for immigrants by providing “Tools for Schools” for newly arrived families as well as for low income households. Welcome Centre staff volunteers for one full day at the united way in support of the cause.

City of Edmonton south west division works together with ICWA staff on issues of family violence. ICWA staff provides support to generate

awareness campaigns against domestic violence. It also provides information sessions to new immigrants on cultural conflicts in immigrant families and resolving issues.

Settlement Counselor continues to work on domestic violence issues. The counselor mitigates between parties for solutions and provides options leading to safe environments for families. The counselor works in collaboration with Social Worker Veena Khatri from city of Edmonton, Harpreet Jhinjhar from Edmonton Police Services, Changing Together, Emergency Shelters, Child and Family Services and other provincial government and non-governmental agencies. They meet once a month and organize awareness campaigns choosing one location at a time. Information material is displayed under the banner of “Safe Communities and Healthy Families” to support families facing crisis. Talk shows have been organized on ethnic radio programs to talk about family violence and senior members/leaders/religious heads from the ethnic communities participate in this discussion.

The growth in the number of new immigrants is expected to continue in 2012-2013. This past year was a learning experience as the volume of work and services provided, increased with the increasing number of clients.

**ICWA settlement staff  
served 716 clients in  
2011-2012**

# Programs for Youth, Women and Seniors

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**Above: ICWA's youth group after one of the Community theatre performances**



**Right: Members of youth group volunteering at Mustard Seed**

## Youth Program

Youth from immigrant families often feel they are *'living in two different worlds'*. Many of them are trying to integrate into Canadian society and also maintain their traditional values and cultures as expected by the parents. At the same time they are transitioning from childhood to adulthood and struggle with identity, gender roles and personal issues. The purpose of the youth program at ICWA is to provide these young immigrants a platform where they can discuss

their problems, look for solutions and engage in various activities.

The youth group has been involved with Mustard seed and volunteered at the centre. They have also been engaged in community theatre to raise awareness of girl's rights abuses. Community theatre has been a very interesting activity for the youth. They had many suggestions about the script, acting and presenting the script and were very enthusiastic about raising awareness on social issues.

## Women's Program

The Women's resiliency program aims to help newly arrived women to settle down in a new country and provide social and cultural support to ease their transition. The group facilitated by Shazia Ambreen meets once every month to attend workshops on various topics like financial planning, running a small business from home, finding employment, and understanding of their rights in Canada.

This provides the women with an opportunity to meet other immigrants who may be going through a similar situation or others who have been successfully dealt with them. Through workshops and activities of the group the women are encouraged, hopeful and determined to integrate well into the new country.

The facilitator also brings special guests for presentations. The past year women's group was given an information session on breast Health and early detection methods for breast cancer. The women were encouraged to go for early screening. Public Education specialist from the City of Edmonton briefed the women about better managing their waste at home.

## Senior's Program

The goal of the senior's program is to make seniors self-reliant, healthy and secure. Indo Canadian Women's Association (ICWA) has been helping ethnic and new immigrant seniors for last 28 years to build a new life in Canada. Seniors are often house bound due to language barriers and inability to move about on their own. Consequently majority of them remain isolated in long winter period and feel bored, sad and depressed. They never learn any winter sports and have little desire to go for a walk or any exercise. Community based supportive counselling helps to alleviate these problems.

Senior's group is facilitated by Rajbir Kharod remains a renowned gathering for the seniors. Each meeting is attended by 15-20 men who discuss various issues. Attendee are informed about such times as the recreational activities in which they can engage, Alberta Seniors Benefit that they can access. Often the participants want to talk about other topics and the facilitators arrange for these sessions accordingly.



**Left: Seniors group at the Alberta Legislature with ex MLA Carl Benito**

# Breast Cancer Awareness Project

 <p>INDO CANADIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION</p> <p>9342 34 Ave, Edmonton, AB, T6E 5X8 Tel: (780) 490 – 0477 Fax: (780)490-0478</p> <p><b>FUNDED BY / FINANÇÉ PAR LA</b> <b>CANADIAN</b> <b>BREAST CANCER</b> <b>FOUNDATION™</b></p>  <p><b>FONDATION</b> <b>CANADIENNE DU</b> <b>CANCER DU SEIN™</b> <small>Prairies • NWT/TNO</small></p> <p>This project has been made possible through A grant from the <b>Canadian Breast Cancer</b> <b>Foundation Prairies/NWT Region</b></p> <p><b>This pamphlet “Four Steps To Breast Cancer” is</b> <b>translated in Hindi by Indo Canadian Women Association</b></p>	<p>छाती के कैंसर की और चार कदम</p> 
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The ICWA has received funding from the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation to educate hard to reach South Asian immigrant women on breast health issues and early detection methods of breast cancer. The Association partners with the following organizations for this initiative:

- Pakistan Canada Association of Edmonton Women group
- Multicultural senior's and women's Association
- Sahara Community Services Association
- Edmonton Multilingual Library

The women are contacted at community functions, private gatherings, festivals celebrations, religious gatherings, shopping malls and are educated on breast health issues in their ethnic languages. A variety of strategies are used to encourage women in south Asian community to participate in our breast health educational activities. Among these activities are:

- One-on-one conversations with women in various settings such as home, personal phone calls, Temples, Mosques, Gurdwaras and community centers.
- Holding workshops or informal gatherings in the home or community centers
- Approaching different associations and organizations in the community and doing displays and presentations
- Use of ethnic media to educate women on breast health issues, such as ethnic radio,

community newspapers, flyers and posters in Urdu Hindi, Punjabi, Gujrati and other South Asian languages

- Use of internet for those who can access websites and email

The breast health education team encourages South Asian women for breast screening. The women are made aware of mammography through workshops, displays, informal gatherings, and translated material in south Asian languages, radio and television talks..

A support group of breast cancer survivors was created to help newly diagnosed breast cancer patients in south Asian community. Primary breast health educator and support group members provided physical and moral support to newly diagnosed patients. This support group is helping new patients to keep their morale high and have courage to fight the cancer.

Volunteers and assistants of the program are trained for leadership skills so they can further create awareness on breast health detection methods. The participants of the workshops share information about breast cancer and early detection methods with their families and friends. The support group members are playing a key leadership role by using their own breast cancer experience to help newly diagnosed cancer patients.

Health professionals and staff of health related organizations are invited in our workshops to share their knowledge on breast health issues. The professionals are also made aware of South Asian immigrant women's breast health issues so that this information is passed on to policy makers. This will help policy makers design health and wellness policies according to cultural beliefs, sensitivity and religious back ground.

Language plays a significant role in gaining trust of South Asian women. Primary breast health educator and volunteers deliver breast health information in South Asian languages such as Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujrati etc during workshops, informal gatherings, displays and other breast health educational activities. Also the breast health resource material has been created in south Asian languages for the clients.



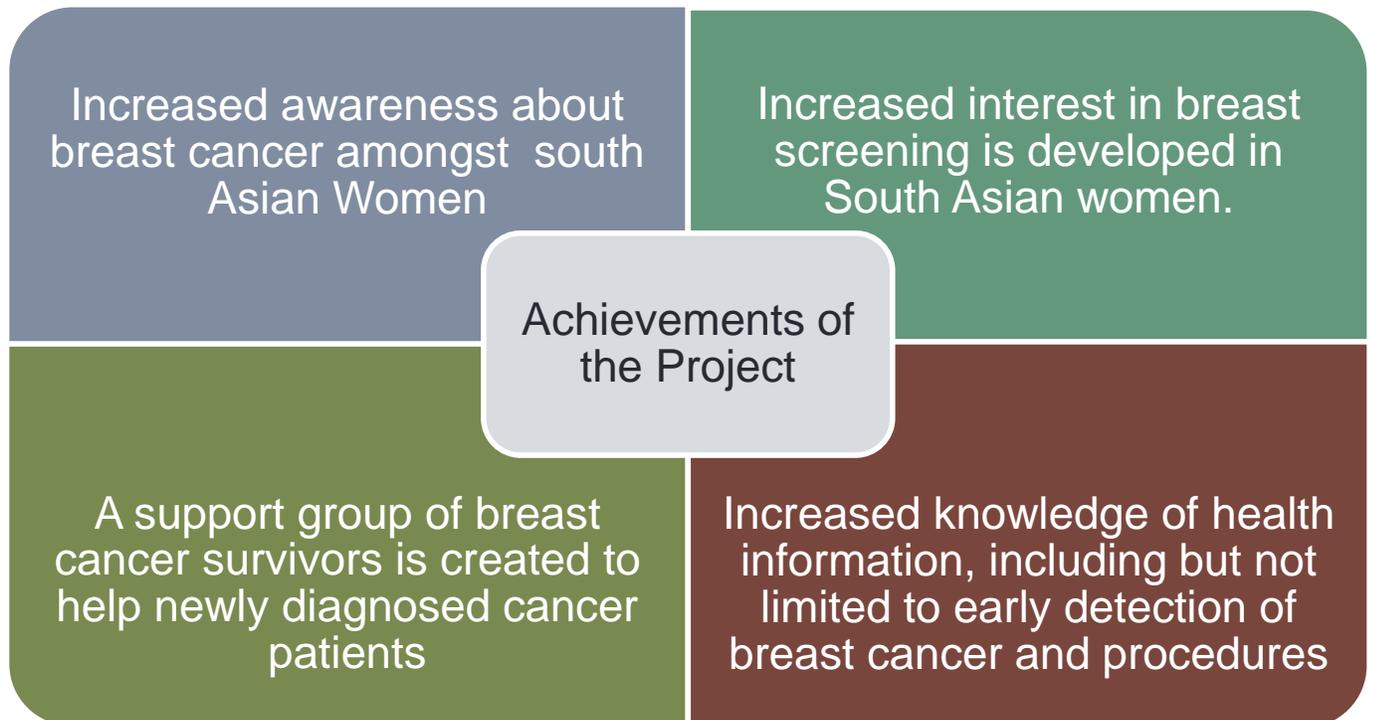
**Above: Breast health Educator conducting a workshop with clients**

## Creating awareness about the project:

- To increase outreach, different activities were arranged and breast health education was made part of it. For example Jewelry shows, women's fashion show, Beauty shows, cooking shows and arts and crafts shows were arranged to make the workshops more interactive and interesting.
- We have developed linguistically appropriate learning material which makes

it easy for them to understand breast health information was advertised through ethnic radio programs, community newspapers, flyers and posters to inform South Asian hard to reach women

- Flyers and promotional materials were distributed in community functions
- Radio and Television talks were delivered on Breast health issues



# Violence Prevention Project

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Indo Canadian Women's Association  
**STOP HARMFUL CULTURAL PRACTICES**  
all women deserve to live freely without harm

ICWA is working on a two year initiative titled, 'Elimination of Harmful Cultural Practices: A community centered approach to education and action.' The project aims to reduce violence against women and girls by mobilizing communities to have zero tolerance for harmful cultural practices. This will be achieved by developing effective intervention programs, providing skills training as well as engaging community organizations, the legal community and law enforcement agencies to address the issue through dialogue and consultation. It is hoped that this will result in attitudinal shifts and enhanced capacity to deal with the issue.

## Focus group discussions

At the start of the project we needed to overcome the major obstacle of the *culture of silence*. Often people are not compelled to intervene because of the idea that activities that happen in the home are private and not of public concern. One way to overcome the silence and start a process of change is to initiate community dialogue. We were able to organize 10 focus groups to speak to approximately 100 stakeholders/ community members which consisted of men, women and youth. Since May 2011, we have conducted focus groups with the following communities: Pakistani, Indian, Bengali, Afghani, Arab and Iranian.

The focus groups were organized informally through grassroots community links, word of mouth and through partnerships with organizations such as Changing Together, Sahaara, Punjabi Women's Association and The Community Network group. Focus group participants were asked to identify harmful cultural practices, how the attitudes are formed and why they still persist in our society. The participants were also asked to comment on project action plan and we learned how to approach the issue in a culturally appropriate manner.

Focus group participants not only identified gaps in information, but also lack of knowledge about women's rights in Canada and Canadian cultural values. Out of this we compiled a brief for CIC about identifying this information gap and gave recommendations on how to close the gap. We had a meeting with MP Mike Lake who gave us feedback and suggestions on our brief. It has now been sent to Mr. Randy Gurlock, Area Director, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It has recommendations that came out of meetings with police officials, frontline workers, and community members who all pointed out the information barrier for newcomers. It has been emphasized in the brief that we need more outreach in minority communities from CIC and that cultural practices are subordinate to Canadian Law.

The data from focus groups was analysed and the findings were presented to a conference in Vancouver. The analysis was done in collaboration with Janki Shankar, Professor of Social Work, U of C. The cultural discourses and beliefs specific to South Asian communities were examined that are commonly used by families to perpetuate practices that lead to domestic violence.

### **Community Consultations**

ICWA, in partnership with the Interfaith Centre of Edmonton (IFC) organized a multi-faith dialogue aimed at eliminating traditional practices and attitudes which harm women. The project was a great success as 35 faith leaders were in attendance and committed to preventing Gender based violence (GBV) in their faith communities.

Often victims of abuse turn to religious and spiritual leaders of their faith for guidance. However partial view of religion has been used to justify violence and abuse towards women. ICWA felt it was essential that religious leaders from all faiths work with social service agencies to ensure that victims of abuse get the assistance they need. Faith leaders were asked to suggest concrete steps that faith based organizations and community agencies could take to prevent violence against women. Please see our information pamphlet distributed at this event: <http://stopharmfulpractices.com/wpcontent/uploads/2011/10/final-pamphlet-strengthening-faith-based.pdf>



### **Community Theatre for education and awareness**

Performing arts have been used as a tool for social awareness and change. ICWA decided to spread the awareness regarding women's rights abuses through community theatre. We partnered with Global Education program at the University of Alberta to raise awareness on son preference, human trafficking and women's rights. ICWA youth group presented a skit at this event that was used to initiate a discussion. Youth group provided its ideas and suggestions about presenting the skit, delivery of the dialogues and their attire. The skit presented some cultural practices that harm women especially in south Asian communities.

Please see the published article on this event: <http://stopharmfulpractices.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/millwood-mosaic-article-october-15-2011.jpg>

**Below: Youth group after community performance**



## Women's Tea Party

*“We restrict them because we don't want them to adopt western values.”- comment from mothers during a discussion.*

Immigrant parents often think that their children will lose their traditional values because they are born and brought up in the Canadian society. First generation parents fear their children will become too *westernized*. Children on the other hand think the parents are too controlling and they have very little freedom.

There is no denying that parents have the children's best interest at heart and children also do not purposely wish to upset the parents. Though what is lacking is the ability to see each other's point of view. To address this growing conflict of opinion, we felt it was more imperative than ever to bring the parents and children on to one platform and discuss matters openly. We were curious to understand what '*western values*' meant to these women; what did they fear will happen if their children integrated more into Canadian society.

We invited mothers for an informal tea party gathering. To initiate discussion we showed them clips from popular movies and television soaps where ethnic families were going through conflict because different pace of integration into a westernized society.



**Above: Women watching a video clip at the tea party gathering.** We had presented those questions to the parents in an effort to bridge the communication gap and make the parents aware of the sentiments of the youth.

## Engaging men for community education

From our conversations with community members, we observed that violence against women stirred up from smaller conflicts with in families. Not everyone within an immigrant family will adopt the new culture at the same pace. Father, mother, brother, sister, husband and wife will have their own ability to adaptation. Due to this difference in integrating to a new society, conflicts arise within immigrant families.

We decided to hire a young male as Community Educator who will mobilise young men to devise concrete steps to reduce violence against women. The educator provides different scenarios within the household when there can be a conflict of opinion resulting in rift and unrest with in the family. The purpose is to initiate dialogue on these family issues and come up with solutions to avoid extreme situations. This activity is targeted for men from age group 20-35

## Engaging Police

On December 2, 2011 we met with Inspector Dave Kotowski and Constable Charnajit Mehru and other constables from their unit. They are working on the issue of culturally driven violence and we wanted to build links with them because we have the same objective: to increase awareness of honor crimes within law enforcement agencies. In our discussion, we learned that Calgary Police Service is struggling to deal with the increasing cases of violence against women in the South Asian community. Though we were disappointed to hear all of their first hand cases, we were also inspired to see that a whole unit of the Calgary police was making it their mission to learn more and train their officers. In the upcoming year we will be collaborating further with Inspector Kotowski's unit.

## Conference

As part of the project, ICWA is organizing a conference titled, *'In the Name of Honour'* that will be held on June 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2012. The purpose of the conference is to engage the legal community, the justice system, enforcement and other associated professions and practitioners on issues of honour crimes, honour based violence and abuse in Canada and the Western World.

The program is designed to be educational and interactive in nature. ICWA is hoping to build solid recommendations, strategies and commitment at all levels of the justice system and associated professions with the purpose of building a collaborative effort for early detection and prevention of honour crimes in our community.



## Daughter's Day Initiative

Violence against women often persists because of traditional concepts of manhood and gender roles within the society. ICWA felt it was important that supportive men must be engaged in such initiatives to reduce harm to women.

The Daughters Day initiative is a result of a community consultation with prominent male community leaders from the South Asian community. We invited them to discuss what steps they can take to publically acknowledge the importance of women's rights. They were willing to assist and were very supportive of our project. Shortly after our initial meeting, the Daughters Day public awareness campaign took off. A meeting of 47 representatives from various community services organizations was held on September 21, 2011 at City Hall to plan the event.

It was decided to have an annual celebration of Daughter's Day on a Saturday in the first week of September. The inaugural Daughter's Day will be held on September 1, 2012. Three community engagements have been conducted to mobilise the community and raise the status of the girl child.

# Special Events and Fundraiser

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## Daughter's Day Fundraising

In collaboration with The International Association of Citizens for a Civil Society, ICWA raised approximately \$5,000 to raise awareness about mistreatment, discrimination and undesirability of girl child in many regions of the world. These funds have been raised for 'Daughter's Day' initiative to eliminate gender inequality, violence, and discrimination against girls and women at home, at school, in the workplace, and on the street. We will also be celebrating achievements and successes of girls and women on *Daughter's Day*.



Above: Audience at a Daughter's day event



Above: Panelists Mona Ismaeil, Primrose Igonor, and Cst. Mona Gill with host Lesley MacDonald at event *'Rebuilding Lives: Stories*

## International Women's Day Celebration

Indo Canadian Women's Association celebrated International Women's Day on March 30, 2012.

Ms. Almas Jiwani, President of UN Women Canada was the keynote speaker at the celebration.

Miriam Thomas, President of ICWA welcomed the guests and gave the opening remarks. She commended the achievements of women around the world. However she reminded that women in different parts of the world and even here at home, are marginalized, abused and discriminated against because of gender and culture. 'We, as an association have worked hard in building what we believe to be the ethos of women's solidarity – the rights of women as human beings within the Canadian society,' said Miriam.

Keynote speaker, Ms. Jiwani has made significant contributions towards social sector. She accomplished the position of the President of the United Nations Development Fund for Women



**Above: Keynote speaker, Ms. Almas Jiwani at ICWA's International Women's Day Celebration**

(UNIFEM) Canada – Part of the UN Women, where she has been actively involved with the Board of Directors for UNIFEM Canada over the last seven years.

Also present at the celebration was City Mayor, Mr. Stephen Mandel and former MLA Mr. Naresh Bhardwaj. The two made brief comments about the celebration and ICWA's work.

A skit was performed by the youth group of ICWA. The performance revolved around an old man who is remembering some critical moments of his life, when his decisions changed his family's life forever. The skit touched on some harmful cultural practices such as sex selective abortions, forced marriages and honour killings that are wide spread in south Asian communities. The script was written by Mahvish Parvez and directed by Sabrina Atwal.



**Above: Gathering at the celebration.**

# New Initiative for Seniors

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## New Horizons for seniors

Indo Canadian Women's Association (ICWA) has been helping ethnic and new immigrant seniors to build a new life in Canada for last 28 years. ICWA at present provides settlement counselling, seniors weekly get together, English language classes and basic computer skills to stay connected with faraway friends and relatives and to move towards advanced computer literacy if they want. Among senior immigrants there are two distinct groups. One group came to Canada as young immigrants and now are becoming seniors. The other group are the sponsored seniors who are joining their adult working children under family reunification program.

New Horizons for Seniors Program has given funding for a one-year initiative, which has begun on April 25, 2012. This project targets the second group of immigrants who are coming to Canada as elderly and leave behind their friends, relatives and familiar surroundings. ICWA took initiative to understand the complex needs of this particular group of seniors. From an informal survey of seniors, seniors conference and client file several unmet needs have been compiled. The project aims to increase engagement of seniors in social activities and promote volunteerism amongst them in an effort to decrease isolation

# Media Appearances

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ICWA's project and programs have been covered in various media outlets. The Association has been contacted on various occasions to comment on social issues. ICWA has been on the following media:



# Supporters and Funders

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ICWA wants to especially thank the following agencies and organizations for their continuous support for our projects and programs.

## Citizenship and Immigration Canada



Status of Women Canada



Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission



Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association



Human Resources and Skills development Canada-  
New Horizons for Seniors Program



Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation

# Special Thank you

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Indo Canadian Women's Association would like to express its gratitude to the following sponsors for their generous donations.

- V.K (Mel) Bhatia Professional Corporation
- Dr. Saroj Singh Mar
- Servus credit Union
- James Brown
- Allan Brackett
- Jim O' Neil
- Avau and Malcolm Fast
- Vinay Bhardwaj

# Board of Directors

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Miriam Thomas	President
Anjali Agarwal	Past President
Gita Das	Vice President
Jagjeet Bhardwaj	Treasurer
Netta Phillet	Secretary
Dr. Zohra Husaini	Director
Ratna Basappa	Director
NAVneet Kiran	Director
Avau Fast	Director
Judy Axelson	Director
Sherry Ahmad	Member at large
Betty Marlin	Member at large
Saadat Chaudary	Member at large
Krishna Gupta	Member at large
Nisha Bhatia	Member at large
Rashmi Jyoti	Member at large

## Volunteer hours contributed by Board

### **Board meetings: 288 hours**

8 Board meetings, 10-12 members in attendance, each meeting 3 hour long

### **Executive Committee work: 300**

Executive committee spends 25 hours a month.

### **Standing committee hours: 600 hours**

**Program and Project work: 1110 hours**

Canadian Council of Muslim Women: 2 meetings every month= 96 hours

Welcome Centre for Immigrants: 1 meeting every month= 36 hours

Edmonton Police Service 2 meetings= 6 hours

Status of Women Canada: 3 meetings= 12 hours

Meeting with MP Mike Lake: 1 meeting= 2 hours

CIC Consultations: 1 meeting =3 hours

Integration and Settlement Assistance Program-ISAP: 5 meetings= 15hours

Newsletter: 6 meetings=100 hours

Daughter's Day Initiative planning meeting: 8 meetings= 24 hours

Special Events: 200 hours for 4 events

Informal Counselling: 600 hours

Community Consultations: 4 meetings= 16 hours

**Total volunteers hours contributed by board: 2298 hours**

# Staff

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Sabrina Atwal	Project Director
Mahvish Parvez	Project & Program Coordinator
Farah Fatima	Settlement Counselor ESL Instructor
Poushali Mitra	Settlement Counselor
Kishwar Ghani	Breast Health Educator
Jaya Saxena	Computer Instructor
Shazia Ambreen	Outreach Worker
Rajbir Khraod	Outreach worker
Rajinder Paul Kalsi	Outreach Worker Citizenship Exam preparation Instructor
Chouaib El Bouhali	Seniors Conversational English Instructor