



Annual Report - September 10th 2020 to August 31th, 2021

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Indo-Canadian Women's Association - Changing attitudes since 1984

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ICWA's Vision, Mission and Values

Since its' inception 36 years ago, ICWA is amongst the few organizations in Edmonton, Canada, that advocates for the protection of the rights of immigrant women, men and youth alike. Through a holistic approach to service delivery, skill building, community activities and raising awareness about important topics, ICWA ensures that immigrants feel at home in Canada.

Our vision is that all new Canadians will achieve a sense of fulfillment and integration into the Canadian culture and society. Everyone will have an equal opportunity to fully participate in Canadian society.

Our mission is to encourage and promote participation by new Canadians in social, economic, and political life in Canada. We are dedicated to promoting equality, opportunity, and protection of rights for everyone.

Our values are equality, opportunity, and protection of rights for everyone.

Executive Summary:

This past year, the covid 19 pandemic continued to wreak havoc in our communities. Many precious lives succumbed to the pandemic; we offer our sincere condolences to the grieving families and wish the best of health and recovery to all those who were impacted.

In compliance with the provincial health and safety guidelines, ICWA continued to provide remote and online services to our community. All through the past year, our team continued to avail multiple exciting opportunities for initiating new programs and services to serve our communities, we also learnt the value of human resilience. Amidst these unprecedented times,

we take pride in the strength, kindness and generosity demonstrated by our communities. We are immensely grateful to our members, board members, clients, staff members, program funders and all our stake holders and community members, for rendering unrelenting support to ICWA.

“Wherever there is a human in need, there is an opportunity for kindness and to make a difference”.

Kevin Heath

Special Events:

- **International Day of the Girl Child**

October 11th is annually commemorated as the International day of the girl child. This year’s annual theme chosen by United Nations was “My voice; our equal future”. ICWA staff team collated a video featuring women’s reflections about the aforementioned theme. The video is on our Facebook and YouTube page.

- **Conference – Engaging Men to Stop Violence Against Women**

ICWA facilitated a virtual conference on October 19th, 2020. The purpose was to engage men in becoming effective allies in stopping violence against women. The conference brought together community leaders, practitioners and supportive allies, to examine practical ways of facilitating and encouraging men and boys to stop gender based violence towards women and girls.

Thoughtful discussions were facilitated to address the dynamics of gender-based violence We are

grateful to the “Edmonton Community Foundation” for graciously funding this conference. The link to the report is noted below:

[ICWA Engaging Men Conference Report](#)

- **Family Violence Prevention Month**

The month of November is commemorated as the “Family Violence Awareness Month” in Alberta. This year, ICWA focused on raising awareness about elder abuse. A series of 4 informative posters were released through the month, containing the definition of elder abuse, signs of abuse and helpful community resources for facilitating referrals.

Additionally, throughout November, ICWA team collected donated items for seniors residing at the “Sage Seniors Safe House”. We would like to extend our special gratitude to the “Drive Happiness” team, for delivering the hampers to the seniors free of charge.

ICWA Projects

- **Project CASA (Culturally appropriate & safe assistance through home visitation for survivors of violence)**

Project Casa (2019-2023; Funder: WAGE, Government of Canada). Province-Wide Training Efforts in a Family Violence Protocol and in Cultural Safety. Through April-August 2021, the Family Violence Protocol developed through Casa became the centerpiece of a massive province wide training effort: Five 2-day (in-person 4, virtual 1) workshops with a target of 125+ participants. In addition, there were 5 virtual workshops focused on ‘Cultural Safety’ to promote

the delivery of culturally safe home visitation and support of multicultural at-risk mothers. To understand ‘Cultural Safety’ please read this:

<https://workinginpartnership.wordpress.com/2020/07/31/cultural-safety/>

ICWA partnered with Alberta Home Visitation Network Association (AHVNA) and consultants from Centre for Race and Culture (CFRAC) and Multicultural Family Resource Society (MFRS) to organize and deliver training. To date, independent third-party evaluation of the Project has declared its progress to be outstanding, even amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic

- **Project GYAN – August 2020 – July 2021**

ICWA has initiated a one-year educational project for sharing information about a variety of legal topics (mostly pertinent to family law) through a bi-weekly show at Radio Desh Punjab Side Band 104.9 FM. The show was facilitated in Punjabi and Hindi by Barrister Harshdeep Jhakkar. A few of the popular topics discussed included:

- Wills estate and power of attorney
- Introduction to family law and issues
- Parenting and Custody
- Matrimonial Property
- Spousal Support
- Family law and immigration issues
- Elder abuse and issues
- Employment laws
- Guardianship

- Marriage and family law
- Real estate- buying/ selling
- Landlord and tenant rights
- Protection orders

We gratefully acknowledge our project funders, “ South Asian Bar Association of North America Foundation” for their generous support to ICWA.

- **Steps to Empowerment for Seniors – September 2020 – March 2021**

This short-term project (for the duration of September,2020 till March 2021) is funded by the “New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) – Ministry of Employment and Social Development, Canada.

The project provides support to isolated South -Asian and immigrant seniors by home visitation. The goal of the project is to empower seniors by reducing their isolation and connecting them with wellness and educational activities in the community. Clients are supported in learning how to use electronic devices and understanding the parameters of cyber security.

A total number of 130 clients were served through the project.

- **Financial and Resource Navigation Support Services for Seniors**

The main goal of this project is to provide system navigation assistance to South-Asian (Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi and Gujrati speaking) seniors living in Millwoods and surrounding areas. The program served 511 unique clients. Clients are assisted in connecting with appropriate financial

support resources, low- cost and cost-free services in the community. The duration of this project is from August, 2020 to March 2021. This project is generously funded by the United Way of Alberta region and Government of Canada.

- **Creating Safer Communities – Funded by Edmonton Community Foundation**

October 2020 to March 2021 – The project served 101 clients for individual appointments, 323 client related phone calls and emails and 88 attendees for informational workshops.

- **Family Law Pro-Bono Clinics**

The Canadian Women’s Foundation and its’ partners have generously funded this project from September, 2020 till March 2021. A lawyer will be available bi-weekly, for a one time, free and confidential consultation for women about matters related to gender-based violence and family law. Appointments can be made by calling : 780-490-0477

ICWA Programs:

- **ECALA (Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association) funded Program**

The ECALA program served a total of 77 clients last year, through the ESL Functional Literacy, Seniors Conversation Circles and Digital Skills Facilitation classes. In order to ensure seamless service delivery to our clients through the pandemic, all our classes are now facilitated remotely via zoom.

- **Service Canada Summer Students Program**

ICWA received funding from Service Canada to hire two summer students. We offered various virtual workshops on diverse topics, particularly through the youth leadership program.

Our workshops and info sessions covered financial awareness (taxes, pensions, contracts), job applications (creating resumes and cover letters), COVID immunization, understanding and fighting racism, caring for mental health, managing family relationships, and even Art instruction!

International Women's Day 2021

The Indo Canadian Women's Association celebrated our 37th anniversary and International Women's Day on March 20th, 2021. The virtual event was emceed by CBC host– Adrienne Lamb with greetings from the federal, provincial, Municipal government of Alberta and the MLAs. The event was attended by over 60 distinguished attendees, including MLA Christina Gray, MLA Janis Irwin, amongst others .

The lieutenant governor, Her honour, the Honorable Salma Lakhani was the guest of Honor, and Justice Ritu Khullar, Justice of the Court of Appeal of Alberta was the keynote speaker. She talked on the United Nation's theme "Women in Leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world."

Family Law Book for recent Immigrants- second edition

The publication was funded by a grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation. The second edition of the guidebook was updated by lawyers Shipal Jaswal and Harshdeep Jakhar, it was professionally edited, and fact checked in English and Hindi version. About 360 copies of the book were ordered by various RCMP units, DAHRT teams, city councillors, MLAs, MPs, women's shelters, and other non-profit organizations.

Governance:

The list of the 2020 to 2021 ICWA Board Members is noted below:

President – Miriam Thomas

Vice-President – Jagjeet Bhardwaj

Treasurer – Avau Fast

Secretary – Mita Das

Director- Dr. Janki Shankar

Director- Rashmi Jyoti

Director- Papiya Das

Acknowledgments:

ICWA sincerely acknowledges the generous support from our funders, donors, and volunteers for their continued support to our association.

ICWA programs and projects are funded by:

AGLC- Alberta gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission

Canadian Women’s Foundation

Government of Canada

New Horizon for Seniors

Service Canada

South Asian Bar Association of North America (SABA) Foundation

Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association (ECALA)

Edmonton Community Foundation

Women And Gender Equality (WAGE)

United Way of Alberta Region