



Annual Report – September 1st, 2021, to August 31st, 2022

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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 38 years ago, ICWA is amongst the few organizations in Edmonton, Canada, that advocate 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 have an impact on the organization and its members. We held many sessions via Zoom so that our clients, members, and supporters would stay safe. In June, we started a hybrid model whereby staff work from home and also come to the office on selected days. We also commenced in-person sessions and classes for our clients. Some of the workshops continued to use a virtual platform to make it easier for our clients to attend the sessions. We will continue this format for the next year as well, as we feel the hybrid model is flexible and we can prioritize what is best for all involved.

We thank our members, board members, clients, staff members, program funders, and all our stakeholders and community members for their continued support and flexibility during these challenging times.

ICWA hired a new Executive Director, Jodi Zabloudski, MBA, in September 2021. Her first year with the organization was filled with planning lots of activities, implementing programs, and learning about the wonderful connections this organization has had in the past and will forge in the future. Jodi Zabloudski is grateful for the support shown by the President, Miriam Thomas, Vice-President, Jagjeet Bhardwaj, Treasurer, Avau Fast, Secretary, Mita Das, and the rest of the Board. Having dedicated staff, the job of the Executive Director is made easier and the transition is faster. Thanks to all involved who made this happen.

In May 2022, ICWA said goodbye and thank you to a long-term employee, Amrita Mishra, Ph.D., who worked for the organization since 2015. She was Senior Program Manager for Social and Gender Equity. We miss her expertise as she was a professional in designing, leading, and supervising complex, multi-agency programs and services. The organization continues one of her main research projects called CASA – Culturally Appropriate and Safe Assistance through Home Visitation for Survivors of Violence. This project is funded by Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) and will be finalized by March 2023.



Staff and Board say “Thank-you” to Amrita Mishra in May of 2022.

In May, we employed a Community Engagement Specialist, Sonja Purcell. She is a professional communicator with a background in stakeholder and community engagement, strategic planning, communications, and more. A member of the board for Aspiring Women in Leadership and Legacy (AWILL), she believes in the strength of women supporting women. We look forward to working with Sonja in the coming year.

With the assistance of Canada Summer Jobs, ICWA employed two students: Lauren Holden and Claire In. Lauren Holden is the new summer Youth Development Coordinator, and Claire In is the Event and Outreach Program Coordinator. We enjoyed having their youthful enthusiasm and energy with us throughout the summer.

ICWA is proud to announce a new Operating Name to the organization: Edmonton Newcomers Settlement Services (ENSS). This will improve and expand its existing newcomers, going beyond the current population the organization serves. Plans will be in place in the near future for the effective implementation of this new operating name.



New Operating Name for ICWA – Edmonton Newcomers Settlement Services

Special Events:

- **International Day of the Girl Child**

October is annually commemorated as the International Day of the Girl Child. This year's annual event took place via Zoom on October 27th. The speaker was Theresa Stanley, and the theme of her presentation was "Building Confidence in Women". Theresa is Head Coach at Phoenix Taekwon-do Club. The holder of a 6th Degree black belt, herself, Theresa is fiercely passionate about mentoring young girls early on in life and she launched the innovative Girls on Fire Confidence Workshops and conferences, her signature program dedicated to their empowerment. Everyone in attendance appreciated Theresa's presentation, and we wish her success in her future endeavors working with young women and girls.



Theresa Stanley presented to ICWA in Honor of the International Day of the Girl Child

- **Family Violence Prevention Month**

The month of November is commemorated as "Family Violence Awareness Month" in Alberta. This year, on November 24th, 2021, ICWA, in partnership with the Edmonton Interfaith Centre, was honored to hear via Zoom from Harriet Tinka, a best-selling author and transformational speaker. Her

journey flows from being kidnapped, stabbed, and left for dead to being a successful entrepreneur. Her students know Harriet as a "Powerhouse Role Model who makes being genuine the most powerful thing of all." All those in attendance appreciated hearing from Harriet Tinka. There were lessons to be learned on resilience and how one can overcome obstacles in life.



Harriet Tinka presented to ICWA in November for Family Violence Prevention Month

Throughout November, the ICWA team collected donated items for a local second-stage Shelter for women and their children. Items collected included: towels, blankets, sheet sets, comforters, and feminine hygiene products. Thanks to all those who contributed to this worthwhile cause.



Donated items for a local Women's Shelter

- **Multicultural Day Celebration**

On December 15th, 2021, ICWA was proud to invite members and supporters to celebrate the multicultural holiday season at the ICWA office. Everyone enjoyed the delicious refreshments and light meal together. Thanks to all those in attendance, including MLA's Christina Gray, Rakhi Pancholi, Janis Irwin, Rod Loyola, and City Councillor Keren Tang. We hope to have many more in-person celebrations like this in the future.



MLA's Christina Gray, Rakhi Pancholi, and Janis Irwin attend Multicultural Day at ICWA

- **International Women's Day and ICWA's 38th Anniversary**

On March 26th, 2022, ICWA celebrated its 38th Anniversary and International Women's Day via Zoom. This virtual event was attended by over 50 attendees with greetings from the Federal Government, Mayor Amarjeet Sohi, MLAs Christina Gray, Rakhi Pancholi, and Roy Loyola, amongst others. We were very fortunate to have Adrienne Lamb, CBC Reporter, as the Masters of Ceremonies. She kept the program running smoothly and on time. The Lieutenant Governor, Honourable Salma Lakhani, was the guest of honor, and we had 3 engaging speakers: Councillor Keren Tang (Edmonton City Council Ward Karhiio), Dr. Bukola (Oladunni) Salami, RN, MN, Ph.D., and Marni Panas, CCIP. They all shared their knowledge on the UN Theme – "Gender Equality

Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow”. The attendees were entertained by Shoshana Telner-Pianist, Subash Giri-Musician, and Usha Gupta’s Dance School performance. The event can be found on YouTube for those who did not get an opportunity to attend. A special thank you to all the supporters and contributors without whom this event would not have happened. We are looking forward to celebrating International Women’s Day with an in-person event in 2023.



Keren Tang



Bukola Salami



Salma Lakhani



Marni Panas



Adrienne Lamb



Speakers at the 38th Anniversary and the International Women’s Day event – March 26, 2022

- **Strawberry Tea Open House – World Refugee Day**

By having the event on June 20th, the Indo-Canadian Women’s Association commemorated World Refugee Day, celebrating the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution. We also celebrated the arrival of the summer season as well as Indigenous Peoples Month. We had an excellent turn-out for the Open House, including the MLA’s Christina Gray and Rod Loyola, and City Councillor – Jo-Anne Wright. It was a pleasure to see our members come out and meet new people as well. The attendees had an opportunity to hear about our programs, especially those being planned by our summer students for the youth in the community.



Board and staff at the Strawberry Tea with Rod Loyola, MLA



Photos from the Strawberry Tea

ICWA Projects

- **Project CASA (Culturally Appropriate & Safe Assistance through Home Visitation for Survivors of Violence)**

Project Casa (2019-2023; Funder: Women and Gender Equality (WAGE), Government of Canada). Province-wide training took place focused on “Cultural Safety” to promote the delivery of culturally safe home visitation and support of multicultural at-risk mothers. Thanks to the many organizations that have been instrumental in proceeding with the project, especially the Alberta Home Visitation Network Association (AHVNA), the Centre for Race and Culture (CFRAC), and the Multicultural Family Resource Society (MFRS) who organized and delivered the training.

Interviews are still being conducted and they should be finalized by the end of September. An independent third-party evaluation of the Project has declared its progress to be outstanding, even amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. This project is expected to be concluded by the end of March 2023.

- **Food Hamper Project- Funded by HelpAge Canada**

ICWA distributed Hampers, consisting of culturally appropriate ethnic foods to 49 Seniors who self-identify as low-income earners from August 2021 to October 2021.

ICWA Programs:

- **Back Pack Program funded by the Edmonton South Rotary**

This summer, the students, together with the Program Coordinator, distributed back packs for children in need with a generous donation from Edmonton South Rotary. There were 48 children who received Back Packs and gift cards from this program. The pencils were supplied by Rod Loyola, MLA. Many of the recipients were newcomers to Edmonton from different countries, including the Ukraine.



Sample of families receiving Back Packs in August 2022

- **Creating Safer Communities – Funded by the Canadian Women’s Foundation**

Creating Safer Communities is an ongoing project funded until March 2023. The project will provide individualized support and appointment to the survivor of gender-based and family violence through phone calls, referrals, and informational workshops.

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

The ECALA program served a total of 121 clients last year, through the ESL Functional Literacy, Seniors Conversation Circles, and Digital Skills Facilitation classes. To ensure seamless service delivery to our clients through the pandemic, a lot of our classes were facilitated remotely via zoom. In 2022-2023 there will be a hybrid model of service delivery.

- **Family Law Guidebook for Recent Immigrants- second edition**

The publication of the Family Law Guidebook was funded by a grant from the Canadian Women’s Foundation. The second edition of the Guidebook was updated by lawyers Shilpa Jaswal and Harshdeep Jakhar, and it was professionally edited, and fact-checked in English and in Hindi. This past year we printed 100 copies in Hindi. If anyone would like an English or Hindi copy, please contact the ICWA office.



Students Distributing the Family Guidebook for Recent Immigrants

- **Family Law Pro-Bono Clinic – Funded by the Canadian Women’s Foundation and the Royal Alexandra Hospital Employees’ Charitable Assistance Fund**

The Canadian Women’s Foundation and its partners have generously funded this project. A lawyer is available bi-weekly, for a one-time, free, and confidential consultation for women about matters related to gender-based violence and family law.

- **Financial and Resource Navigation Support Services for Seniors – funded by the Edmonton Community Foundation**

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 436 unique clients. Clients were assisted in connecting with appropriate financial support resources, and low-cost and cost-free services in the community. The duration of this project was from June 2021 to March 2022.

- **Kitab Connections (Book Club) – Funded by the Edmonton Community Foundation**

A 6-month facilitated specialized book club called Kitab Connections (Kitab means book in Hindi/Urdu). Immigrant women in south Edmonton are engaged to read and discuss books on the immigrant experience with a facilitator’s guidance. This program runs from May 2022 – November 2022. The benefits of this Program includes creative engagement, connections, and recovery and respite from isolation and stress.

- **Service Canada Summer Jobs 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 information sessions were targeted to the youth and covered a variety of topics including a Wellness Workshop, job preparation skills, resume writing, budgeting and managing money, and pottery painting.

- **Steps to Empowerment for Seniors- funded by Help Age Canada**

ICWA implemented workshops and classes for Seniors in the community. The purpose is to empower clients by connecting them with appropriate community resources, facilitating participation in virtual and in-person wellness and educational activities, and supporting them in learning how to use electronic devices, such as smartphones, and computers to increase their level of community connection and to reduce isolation.

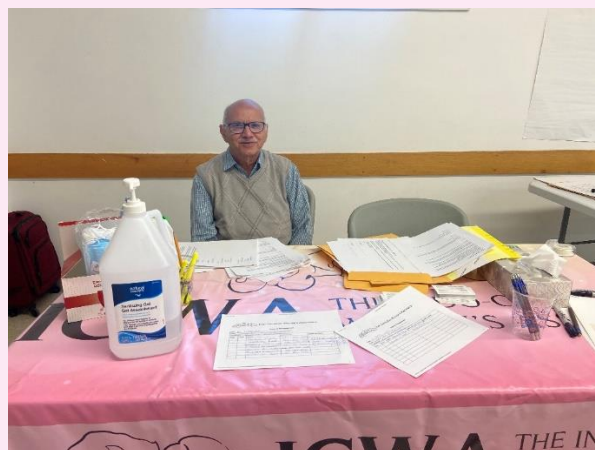
The Program Coordinator will engage subject matter experts to provide holistic support to foster independence and improve their quality of life. The “Steps to Empowerment” Program will comprise a weekly series of group discussions on health-related activities and information sessions about topics pertinent to health, lifestyle, and successful aging for seniors. These topics could potentially include, but are not limited to: • Yoga and exercise classes • Art, music, and cooking classes • Sleep disorder for seniors • Memory and aging; • Mental and Medication Awareness • Managing digital footprint and security • Healthy living habits • Boredom and depression in seniors.



Seniors participating in Chair Yoga at the Millhurst Community League

- **Support Group for Seniors – funded by the Edmonton Public Teachers Association**

With the funding received from the Edmonton Public Teachers Association, we provided a series of workshops for seniors from April 2022 to June 2022 on waste management, stress management, tips to sleep better, and anxiety, ETS, Canada Education Saving Program, Registered Education Saving programs (RESPs). In total, the short program served 39 unique clients.



Volunteer Helping out to Register Participants for In-Person Program

Governance:

The list of the 2021 to 2022 ICWA Board Members is noted below:

President – Miriam Thomas

Vice-President – Jagjeet Bhardwaj

Treasurer – Avau Fast

Secretary – Mita Das

Director – Anjali Agarwal

Director – Papiya Das

Director- Rashmi Jyoti

Director- Dr. Janki Shankar

Co-opted Member- Shivangi Sharma

Acknowledgments:

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

ICWA programs and projects are funded by:

AGLC- Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission

Canadian Women's Foundation

City of Edmonton

Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association (ECALA)

Edmonton Community Foundation

Edmonton Public Teachers

Edmonton Rotary South

Government of Canada

HelpAge Canada

New Horizon for Seniors

Royal Alexandra Hospital Employees' Charitable Donations Fund

Service Canada

Women And Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada