

Indo Canadian
Women's
Association

ANNUAL REPORT, APRIL 1ST 2018-MARCH 31ST 2019



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INDO CANADIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Changing attitudes since 1984!

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INDO-CANADIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Established 35 years ago, ICWA is amongst the few organizations in Edmonton, Canada advocating for the protection of the rights of immigrant women, men and youth alike. Through settlement assistance, skill building community activities and adult education we try to ensure that immigrants are able to feel at home in Canada.

Our approach to preventing violence against women is by raising the status of women through dialogue and community mobilization. An attitude shift about the way women are portrayed and treated is essential and we believe small shifts in attitudes about women can create a large overall impact and raise the status of women in our communities. That is why we are proud to say, ICWA has been changing attitudes since 1984!

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.

The Impact of the ICWA

The ICWA has served over 55,000 clients since its inception in 1984, and is one of the very few immigrant serving and social services organizations serving the Millwoods area.

ICWA is one of the very few immigrant serving and social services organizations serving the city's region with the largest immigrant and ethnic population. Fifteen full and part-time staff that speak 9 languages, 20 part time volunteers and 30 casual volunteers serve over 3000 clients annually, in two locations; one on 34th Avenue/95 St. and the other in the Millwoods Welcome Centre for Newcomers.

ICWA is also one of the few organizations in the city's region focused to preventing violence against women by raising the status of women through dialogue and community mobilization. Its aim has been is to shift attitudes about the way women are portrayed and treated in the Southeast Asian communities and other communities throughout the area. ICWA is proud to say that it has been changing attitudes since 1984!

Programs:

Integration & Settlement

- Needs Assessment & Referrals
- Information and Orientation
- Support Services - Translation

Education Program

- Computer Literacy
- ESL functional literacy
- Senior conversational English
- Citizenship exam preparation

Community Activities

- Youth program
- Women's Program
- Senior's Program

Projects:

- Working in Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls
- Senior Women's Assistance for Social Ties "SWAST"
- Stressors throughout Canada's History: A culture of Harmony and Peace
- Engaging Men For Building A Healthy Community
- Culturally appropriate and safe assistance through home visitation for survivors of violence "CASA"

Outreach

- Organizing community events, conferences and workshops to engage and change attitudes among community members, mainstream service providers, practitioners and professionals

Celebrations and Special Events



A) Annual General Meeting

On Saturday May 26th, 2018, the Indo-Canadian Women's Association hosted the 34th Annual General Meeting (AGM) attended by approximately 34 members, and guests.

Board President Ratna Basappa welcomed the guests with a cordial opening speech and introduced the guest speaker Linda Francis Duncan, Member of Parliament for Edmonton Strathcona. Linda elaborated on the fundamental elements of leadership, specifically outlining women's roles in our society.



Representing the electoral district of Edmonton-Mill Woods, Honorable Christina Gray, Minister of Labour and Minister for Democratic Renewal, presented ICWA with a 34 years' achievement certificate and expressed her great pleasure in continuing to work with the organization.

Following the inspiring addresses from guest speakers, Board Member Mita Das presented the 2017 AGM minutes for approval. The President, Ratna Basappa highlighted ICWA's key accomplishments in the fiscal year 2017-2018. ICWA Treasurer, Jagjeet Bhardwaj presented the organization's financial report. The meeting ended with elections and announcement of 2018-2019 Board Members.

B) Meditation Seminar



On June 26 2018, the Indo-Canadian Women's Association conducted a Meditation Seminar at Mill Woods Seniors Association. Sangeeta Mittal facilitated a Reiki and Meditation workshop on Spiritual Wellbeing for 30 community members. During the workshop, Sangeeta spoke about the seven Chakras (the Root Chakra, the Sacral Chakra, the Solar Plexus Chakra, the Heart Chakra, the Throat Chakra, the 3rd Eye Chakra, and the Crown Chakra), the relationship

between meditation and inner peace, and various meditation techniques.

C) Daughter's Day Celebration

On September 8, 2018 Indo Canadian Women's Association celebrated Daughter's Day in partnership with Canadian's for Civil Society.

This is a community initiative to highlight the importance of daughters in our lives and to recognize contributions from outstanding women working to end discrimination and human rights abuses against women. This year six women received the Daughter's Day award for exceptional work.



Daughter's Day 2018 celebrated the lives, contributions and achievements of all daughters; and served as a reminder that every daughter is entitled to opportunities without discrimination or abuse. It was a well attended, inspirational event attended by more than 130 community members. This year's theme was "Spectators No More", challenging everyone to firmly engage in building a civil society that embraces gender equality and dignity. The Keynote Speaker, Lesley MacDonald, creator of Global Television's Women of Vision, shared over 250 inspiring stories of women with an empowering vision of leadership.

D) Fundraising Concert



A Hindi Film Music concert with live orchestra produced by Image India was presented by the Indo-Canadian Women's Association on the 23rd of September 2018. This was a successful fundraising event for the organization, an evening of entertainment, attended by more than 200 community members, ICWA sponsors, friends, board and staff.

E) International Day of the Girl Child

On October 31, 2018, we celebrated International Day of the Girl Child. Screening of the movie -Nil Battey Sannata, a 2015 film directed by Ashwinlyer Tiwari, was organized in an attempt to promote awareness about gender equality. The movie highlights the importance of education for girls and revolves around the strong bond between a mother and daughter .



The program was held at the Welcome Center for Immigrants for 30 women from the community. It was followed by an open discussion about the film's theme and messages for the audience, moderated by ICWA Project Coordinator, Tripat Kaur. It was rewarding to see a highly engaged audience responding to events in the film, relating to it at various levels and motivated to initiate change in their personal capacity.

F) Family Violence Prevention



On Nov 6, 2018, to mark the Family Violence Prevention Month, we invited Dr. Jasneet Parmar to address the issue of abuse and violence among Seniors. Dr. Jasneet Parmar has served as a geriatric physician for 23 years, looking after the frail elderly and advocating for them at every opportunity.

Speaking to a group of 50 community members, Dr. Jasneet Parmar identified and

explained the different types of abuse that seniors experience in our community. She discussed the reasons why abusive situations arise and how they can be identified, prevented and dealt with. Participating seniors shared their personal experiences and expressed the need for more presentations on this related topics.

G) Grand Multicultural Celebration



We held our Annual Grand Multicultural Celebration on December 15, 2018 at the ICWA office for more than 40 guests, including members of Legislative Assembly, donors, Local Organizations, ICWA board, staff and members.

It was an evening of entertainment and festivity, with diverse songs, dance performances, poetry, conversations and interactive activities that highlighted the immense value of inter-cultural understanding in an inclusive and respectful society.

H) Senior Multicultural Seminar



On February 9, 2019, ICWA organized a Seminar for seniors to discuss the impacts of “Senior Women’s Assistance for Social Ties” (SWAST) project. This project was conducted by ICWA for 12 months in 2018-2019 and aimed to connect isolated senior women with the community and focused on networking, wellness, engagement and fun. Guest speakers appreciated the project and emphasized the need for collaborations to

support healthy aging by mobilizing support groups and communities. Approximately 65 senior participants and decision-makers from diverse levels of government attended the seminar. Decision-makers included the honourable Amarjeet Sohi, Member of Parliament for Edmonton Mill Woods and Federal Minister of Natural Resources; Filomena Tassi, PC, MP, Federal Minister of Seniors; Christina Gray, MLA for Edmonton-Mill Woods and Alberta's Minister of Labour & Responsible for Democratic Renewal.

A documentary film on the SWAST project was also screened at the event where some senior women shared their experiences, described how they were empowered and had better social connections after attending the SWAST program. Participants also highlighted that the activities of this program draw on their inner strengths and resilience. The film is available at this link: <https://youtu.be/W3GMeq467T8>

I) International Women's Day



We held our 35th annual International Women's Day celebration on March 22nd, 2019 at Meridian Banquet hall. More than 180 people attended the event. Attendees included community members, advocates, activists, MLAs, community leaders, professionals and academicians who support the work of the ICWA. Ratna Basappa, President of ICWA welcomed the participants

and thanked them for their continuous support for ICWA. Honourable Amarjeet Sohi brought greetings from the Federal Government. Honourable Christina Gray brought greetings from the Province and Councillor Banga brought greetings from the City of Edmonton. The keynote speaker for the evening was Miranda Jimmy. she is a development consultant for indigenous arts and member of thunder child first nations. She shared her life experience to encourage women to work towards improving the status of women

The evening also included buffet dinner and entertainment.

Projects

1) Working in Partnership to End Violence Against Girls and Women

The following section details the outcomes of the recently concluded successful SWC Funded Working in Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls (WIP hereafter; Funder: SWC; Period: July 2015-July 2018). WIP's mission was to strengthen interagency collaboration and build the capacity of service providers to provide coordinated, timely and culturally relevant service to women and girls at risk of familial violence, including violence motivated by retaliation for perceived slights to patriarchal authority and anchored to pretexts of so-called 'honor.' The evaluation report of 2018 was unequivocal in its assessment: WIP was an outstanding success that far exceeded originally agreed targets.

Through an in-depth needs assessment and the inputs of a task force, the project developed an inter-agency strategy to detect, intervene and assist rehabilitation in cases of gendered violence (Needs assessment: <https://tinyurl.com/ycbfxbdh>). A knowledge-sharing website www.workinginpartnership.wordpress.com was created as an instrument in policy formulation and task force deliberations. The website is cited by Edmonton agencies as a resource on varied topics related to the prevention of violence. E.g. The Volunteer Diversity Training manual of the Sexual Assault Center for Edmonton cites ICWA on cultural competency and cultural safety; <https://workinginpartnership.wordpress.com/2017/02/02/93/>) WIP year 3 (July 2017-July 2018) involved a successful pilot 'Bridge to Safety' to provide support to women and girls fleeing family violence (24 women supported). The pilot involved culturally competent intake and crisis support at ICWA to women and girls arriving with accounts of extended family and intimate partner violence. Intake was followed by a supported handover to ethnocultural family violence specialists of the Today Family Violence Help Centre (with ICWA remaining a supportive presence to provide language and other help as needed). ICWA and Today Centre finalized a protocol to enable supported referrals along with confidential information sharing between the two agencies.

The project enabled knowledge sharing and pooling of local knowhow. In partnership with City of Edmonton, ICWA organized a September 20-22, 2017 workshop on methods of risk assessment in multi-perpetrator gender violence and stalking attracted 38 agency representatives from across Alberta.

Through WIP, ICWA gained and strengthened ties with 35+ service providers in Edmonton and Calgary: ACT Alberta, AHVNA, ASSIST Community Services, Calgary Counselling Centre, Calgary Police Service, Canadian Council of Muslim Women, Candora Society, Catholic Social Services/Seniors Protection Partnership, Children's Services (Edmonton Region, Government of Alberta), City of Edmonton, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Edmonton Police Service, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women and Islamic Family and Social Services Association, ITRAC, John Howard Society of Edmonton (Family Violence Prevention Centre, FVPC), LaSalle Second Stage shelter (Catholic Social Services), Lurana Shelter

(Emergency), Pride Centre of Edmonton, RCMP, Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton, Strathcona Shelter Society (Safe Place), Terra Centre, Today Family Violence Help Centre, Wings of Providence (second stage shelter), WinHouse (First stage shelter), YWCA, and Youth Empowerment and Support Services (YESS).

2) Culturally appropriate and safe assistance through home visitation for survivors of violence (CASA)

Project in charge: Amrita Mishra, Indo-Canadian Women’s Association

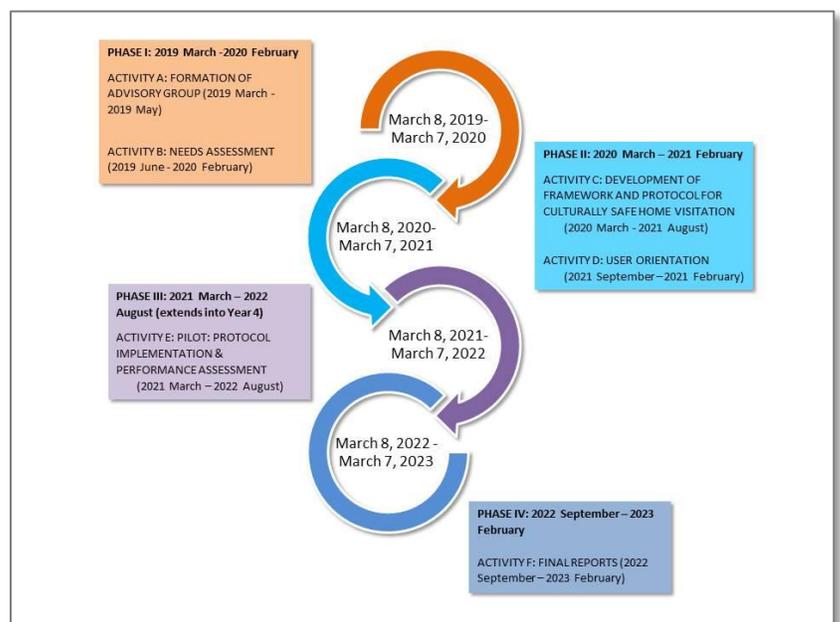
Partners: Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op, Alberta Home Visitation Network Association, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, Government of Alberta (Family Violence Unit, Children’s Services - Edmonton Region)

Scope: Provincial

Aim: In Project CASA, the aim is to create and pilot a home visitation protocol for diverse vulnerable parents and parents-to be coping with the effects of violence in the family. The protocol is to enable home visitors to understand patterns and signs of violence and connect survivors with supports. The project also involves training home visitors in protocol use and monitoring how useful the protocol is in the real world in practice. Locations are (1) URBAN: Edmonton, Calgary, Grande Prairie/Red Deer (2) RURAL: High Level (remote, low resource, rural Indigenous population).

Lloydminster/Camrose or Medicine Hat/Lethbridge

Project CASA Timeline: 2019-2023



Rationale: Mothers living in violence are often isolated, dependent and monitored by abusers, and unable to access supports at agency desks. Home visitation can bridge service-survivor gaps and holds promise as early-stage ‘preservation’ or later-stage intervention against escalation of harms from violence. Home visitors can start by linking with mothers to strengthen parenting skills and share information on topics like child development and healthy relationships. With rapport built, visitors can proceed to help women access supports against violence and for socio-economic empowerment.

3) Senior Women's Assistance for Social Ties (SWAST) (March 2018- Feb 2019)



Under the New Horizons for Seniors Program funded by Service Canada, ICWA initiated Senior Women's Assistance for Social Ties (SWAST) Project in April 2018. Over a span of twelve months, ending in Feb 2019, SWAST delivered a series of sessions for information sharing, socializing, and fun learning activities for a group of 30 senior women. These weekly sessions were mostly convened at the Welcome Centre for Immigrants and also included field trips to community resources and facilities such as the Edmonton Public Library in Mill Woods.

In addition, SWAST had a special component called Community Kitchen, organized once a month at the ICWA kitchen space. In this Kitchen activity, women took turns to prepare dishes from their cultures, to eat together and to share learning about healthy nutrition.

The SWAST sessions commenced with an ice breaker in April 2018 where the activities of the group were explained. Members of the group introduced themselves to each other and shared information about their home countries, families, and hobbies. Subsequent sessions included presentations on (i) stress and sleep management and bone and gynecological health (Dr. Navneet Chatrath) (ii) digital literacy session at ICWA and tour of Edmonton Public Library "EPL" Mill Woods (by EPL staff) (iii) healthy relationships in families (City of Edmonton) (iv) measures when there is experience of sexual violence by senior women (Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton) (v) English as a second language (Tulin Sadouzai; ESL instructor ICWA). Women participated in interactive games (musical chairs and antakshri), engaged in guided meditation with soothing music, and watched films relevant to their experiences and lives as immigrants.

4) Engaging Men for Healthier Community

In October 2017, ICWA conducted a forum for South Asian men, called ‘Engaging Men for Healthier Community’. The forum was funded by AABHAAR. The intent of this forum was to explore three topics:

- Men’s perception of what it means to “be a man” in the South Asian Community.
- How this perception of “being a man” relates to the goal of “Building a Healthy Community”.
- Understanding how to invite and support men and their cohorts as partners in building healthy communities in the current Canadian climate.



The forum was conducted on three consecutive Saturdays (October 13, 20 and 27) in the south east of Edmonton. The location was chosen for its demographics, since it caters to a higher population from South Asian backgrounds. Sessions ran in an interactive format including group facilitation, group discussions and moderator led break-out sessions . Professional interpretation support was also provided to participants. The sessions were led by Lahn Jones from “Roots Solutions” and Dr. Andrew Greenshaw from University of Alberta

There were a total of 33 participants over the three days. Majority of participants were over the age of 55 years with lesser representation from youth. Future sessions will focus on maintaining participation from seniors while also ensuring higher participation of youth and younger adults. The program was very successful with full engagement of the participants. ICWA plans to follow up in the manner proposed by the participants.

5) Stressors throughout Canada’s History: A Culture of Harmony and Peace

The seed for this Project was sown on September 28, 2015 at a program against family violence where ICWA, community members and the local MLA brainstormed to enhance the community’s understanding of violence and the need for increased efforts to combat related social issues. The group felt that most current programs including those of ICWA, cater to older population.

There is a need to involve younger generations. Children and youth must be involved in the conversation around impact of aggression and unrest on the society and the role they can play in promoting peace.

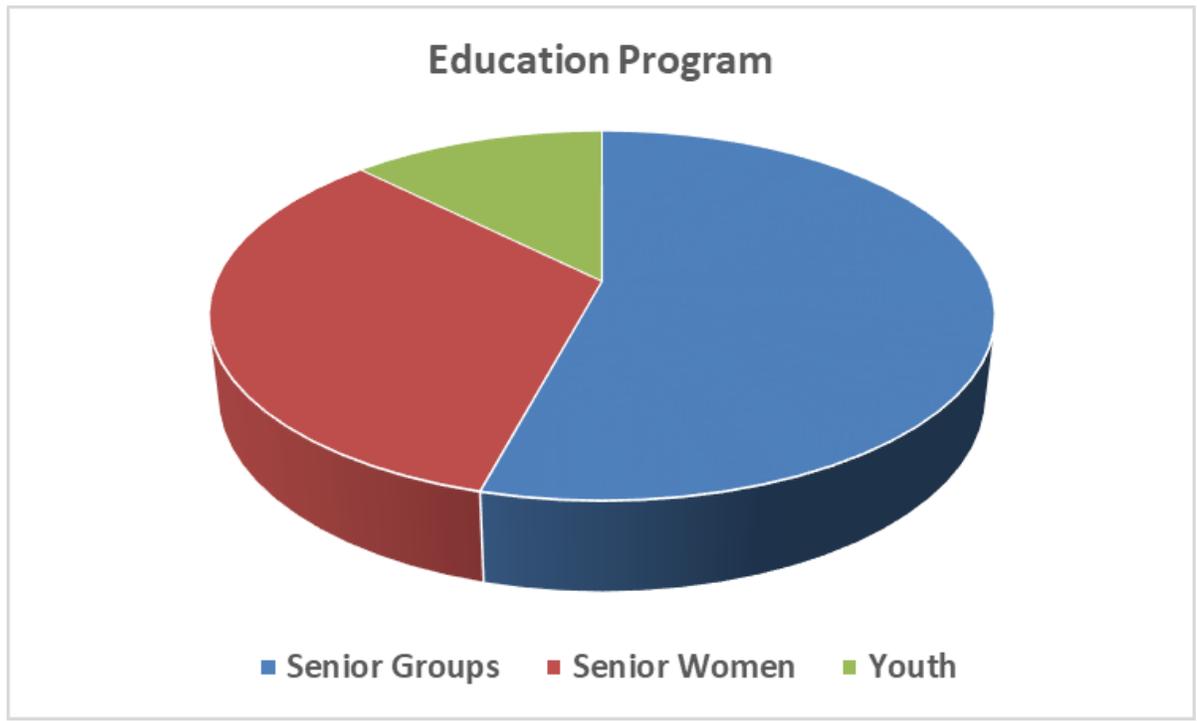


So, with the support of the local MLA, Rod Loyola, this project was developed

and delivered in collaboration with the Ekota school. The delivery of the project took place at Ekota school on June 5, 6 and 7, 2018. ICWA board members Anjali Agarwal and Suneeta Jobanputra, delivered three information sessions to grade 5 students. This was a pilot project with potential for further development and expansion in coming years.

Education and Community Programs

Clients Number	
Senior Groups	65
Senior Women	40
Youth	15
Family Violence	43
Citizenship	135
English Classes ESL	35
Conversation English Classes	30
Computer	80
Settlement and outreach	2316
Total	2759



A) ESL and Conversational Classes



Objective: ESL classes help students adjust to their new cultural setting and utilize their skills to function in the new environment. These classes provide students with English language skills to ensure smooth transition for newcomers to seek employment, remain social and become active members in their communities. Our Conversational Classes help students to develop the ability to use oral and written English for daily needs and acquire basic conversational skills and vocabulary. The ESL classes create opportunities for the students to interact and express their views about various topics in English. They are able to

connect with each other in order to share knowledge, boost their confidence and expand their social networking. Through these learning opportunities, students are able to make plans for their studies, careers and other future goals. The instructors, with the support of the ICWA management are able to create a positive learning environment where students feel at home and relaxed for better achievements. Our class is in high demand due to our teaching methods based on active learning as well as our accessible location at the Welcome Center for Immigrants. We elicit the feedback of our students in order to choose the times and content that work best for them. Our Adult Literacy class language Learners are funded by ECALA.

This year, a total of 35 students have attended our a total of 50 classes. A total of 30 students have attended a total of 130 conversational classes. We were able to support a highly diverse student body hailing from Middleeast, India, Pakistan, Colombia, Somalia, Burundi, Nepal, Korea, Chilly and China.

Success Story (ESL Program)

Shamso is a 53 years Somali mother who came to Canada with her family six years ago as a refugee. She never went to school in her country of origin, was illiterate and had zero proficiency in English. But she was a survivor!

Shamso knew that she needed language skills to survive in Canada, so she joined ICWA's ESL class to learn English. She was very silent in the classes but she kept coming. To support her, the ESL instructor Chouaib El Bouhali differentiated his instruction based on her level and her learning needs. He gave her one to one help whenever it was possible and included her in the classes with simple activities. Shamso was determined to learn, she worked hard, paid close attention and continue to use active listening skills in class. On her teacher's instructions, she watched TV at home to improve her comprehension skills. Slowly, she started sharing with her classmates what she used to watch on TV. Eventually she was able to build interactive relationships with other learners and participated more and more in class.

With consistent support, regular attendance and steady effort, Shamso is now in level three of the LINC program. She still comes to ICWA classes with confidence and a positive attitude for expanding her knowledge in the English language.

"Before I came to the class, I didn't understand a word of English. By attending more and more classes now I can understand. At home, I go to YouTube and watch TV news, and I read subtitles!"

B) Citizenship Preparation Class

Objective: to aid immigrants to successfully complete their Citizenship Exams. The program educates participants on the voting process, Canadian history, symbols and basic government processes and geography. We also educate students on duties of citizens, their constitutional rights.



Our Citizenship preparation Class is instructed by Paul Kalsi. The Class caters to people from multiple walks of life. The instructor spends considerable time ensuring that his students get the best possible experience with unique study material and efficient instruction. In total, this class served 135 students, 69% were women. This class had a 94% success rate. The

students were of diverse backgrounds - Argentinian, Portuguese, Indonesian, Cuban, Fijian, Moroccan, Sudanese, Egyptian, Finnish, Tanzanian, Chinese, Russian, Australian, Bolivian, Pakistani and Indian.

Success Story (Citizenship Preparation Program)

Disclaimer: Please note that the client's name has been changed to protect her confidentiality and privacy.

Kimo a 45 year young man from Mexico, with special needs and a mental disorder, came to Canada in 2007. He had a low attention span, found it hard to focus on any topic, forgot easily and could not sit more then 15-20 minutes. Though he spoke English, he was not able to read or write correctly.

Kimo was referred to us by our partner Edmonton Mennonite Centre for New Comers (EMCN). He registered in our citizenship test preparation class in Nov 2018, because he really needed help. He had written the Citizenship test twice, failed each time and now had a last chance to meet with a Citizenship Judge for an oral test.

ICWA Citizenship Instructor Paul Kalsi accepted the challenge and arranged the time with his family to give him special classes. Kimo's wife attended the classes to help in interpreting from English to Spanish when needed. The instructor used pictures, movie scripts, symbols and maps to keep Kimo engaged and let him learn at his own pace.

With some progress in learning, the instructor sent a request to the Citizenship Department to arrange for Kimo's oral test. Within 2 weeks days he got his test date. Three days before his test, the instructor spent three hours with him to refresh his information and prepared him for the interview.

Kimo passed the oral test! His family was very overjoyed and thanked ICWA and the funder ECALA for this great achievement.

Two month later Kimo's family referred another person called Kristiano with similar challenges and circumstances. Paul employed the same teaching methods that he had devised for Kimo, with such wonderful results. Kristiano also successfully passed his Citizenship interview with the Judge!

C) Computer Class

Objective: to aid students to advance their careers. Typing and basic computer skills help to ensure immigrants will receive higher positions and therefore achieve greater economic status. They also aid seniors to access information on their own and communicate via email.

Our Computer Literacy classes, instructed by Jaya Saxena, are offered at two levels: basic and intermediate. These classes are attractive to the adult population because they enhance employability. The classes equip our students with the confidence to apply to higher positions and advance in their careers. With the skills acquired from our classes, students are better able to integrate into the Canadian work environment. An improved socio-economic status gives our students independence. The ICWA gratefully acknowledges the funding of the ‘Edmonton Community Adult Learning Association’ for successfully running these classes.



There were 8 courses in total of which 5 were for Basic and 3 for Intermediate computer classes. The sessions included 49 adults who gained basic knowledge and 31 who opted for intermediate level. 90% of the students were women. Students hailed from India, Nepal, Philippines, Puerto Rico, China and Pakistan.

Settlement Services Program

Indo-Canadian Women's Association provides Settlement & Outreach Services at the Welcome Centre for Immigrants (WCI) in Edmonton. Funded by Immigrant Refugee and Citizenship Canada, WCI is a partnership between ICWA and EMCN, where clients can receive settlement, employment, mental health as well as other specialised services in a confidential setting.

These Settlement services are a demonstration of ICWA's vision 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 the Canadian society.

The ICWA Settlement and Outreach team is dedicated to promoting equality, opportunity and protection of rights for everyone and strives to meet the diverse settlement needs of newcomers in Edmonton. This is achieved by offering a wide spectrum of accessible, appropriate and culturally sensitive settlement services. The Team comprises of a Settlement Team Leader, a Project Coordinator, 3 full time Settlement Counselors and 2 Settlement Practitioners Outreach.

Settlement & Outreach Services Overview:

ICWA Settlement Services welcome and support newcomers to the community providing resources to settle and integrate into Canadian society. Clients take the lead in defining their settlement priorities and receive support to achieve these goals in an organized manner. They learn to identify relevant sources of information in the community, to extract this information in a timely manner and use it effectively to make informed decisions. They learn about their rights and responsibilities as new Canadian residents, learn to navigate the system and receive effective referrals for employment and career support and resources that would support them in their journey of settlement.

Settlement Practitioners Outreach, reach out to immigrants and community members and service providers in the Mill woods and vicinity, providing information about Settlement services and resources, developing connections and collaborations, spreading awareness, and advocating for immigrants.

In the last year, ICWA Outreach team maintained its unique partnerships with the Mill woods Town Centre, Service Canada and Edmonton Public Library, Jasper Place Health & Wellness Centre, Mill woods Health Centre and various faith groups and organizations.

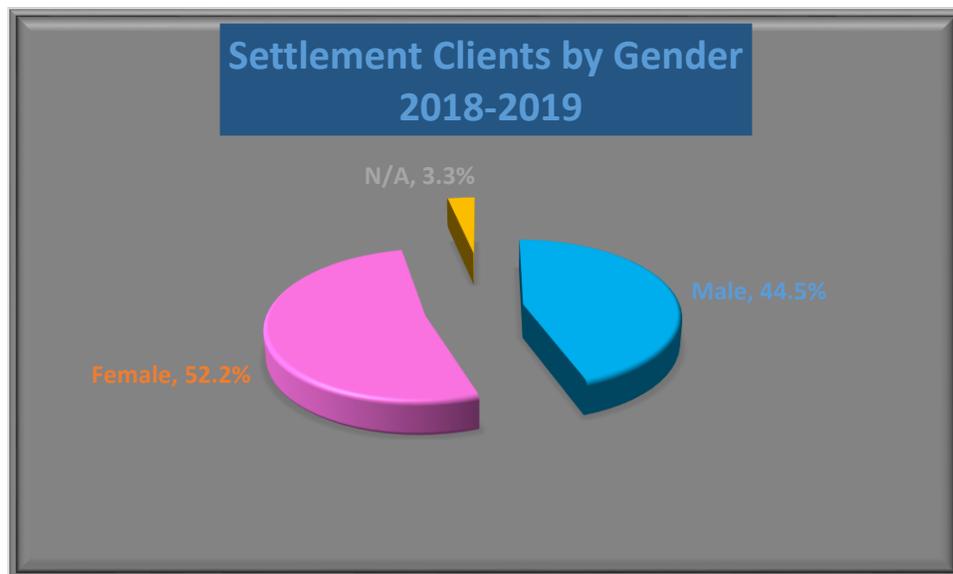
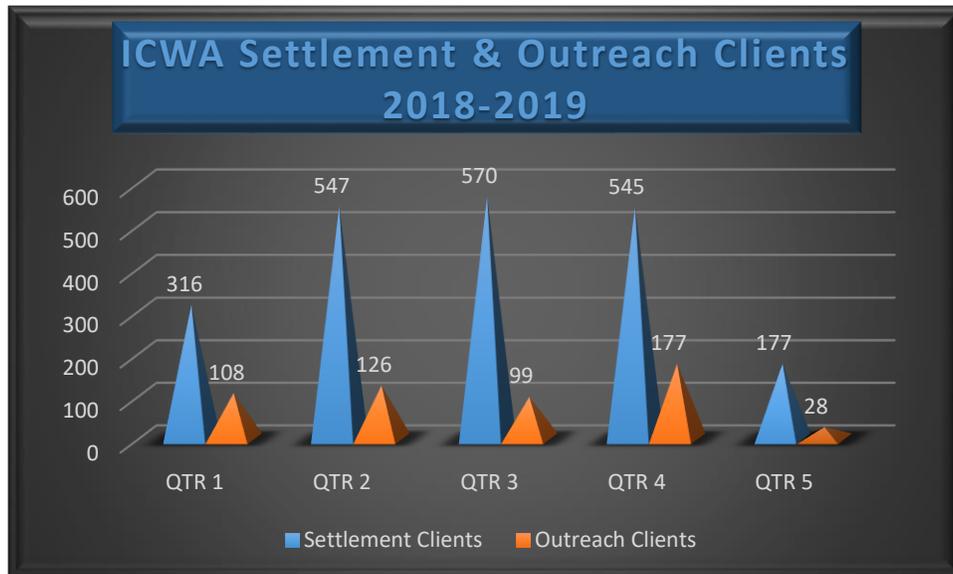
In the Mill Woods Town Centre Mall, our kiosk is successfully operating as an information unit for community members. The Settlement team celebrated the one-year anniversary of the kiosk, displaying a service model of WCI, elaborate ethno-cultural dance performances and refreshments were also organised for community members. The event was attended by over 200 people from the community and was hailed by two provincial ministers who joined in the festivities.

Regular information tables at Service Canada continued through 2018 as well and we were also able to extend this partnership to EMCN to support clients at the Service Canada office in Canada Place. Monthly information sessions in the Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre and Mill Woods Public Health Centre continued as well. The Outreach team continued to organise events for community members, a potluck in summer 2018 to welcome new immigrants and invite them to share their stories of settlement in Canada was very popular and received great community feedback.

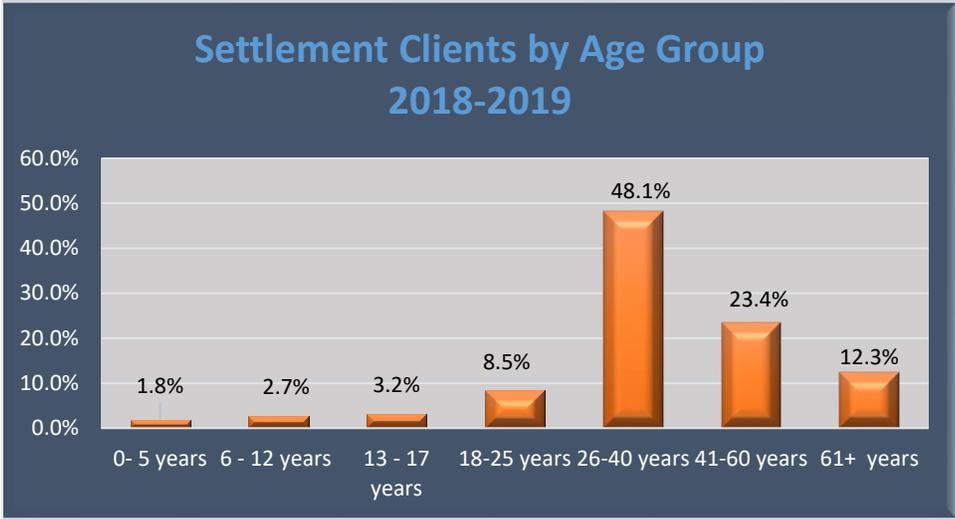
Program Highlights for 2018 – 2019:

2018-2019 was an extremely successful year for Settlement, where targets were exceeded by over 200% providing services to over 2,316 clients, of which 2,155 were IRCC eligible clients and 1,576 were new clients. A total of 2,317 referrals were provided to community resources. The Outreach team connected 538 new clients with Settlement Services and interacted with more than 2300 community members to inform them about settlement services and community resources.

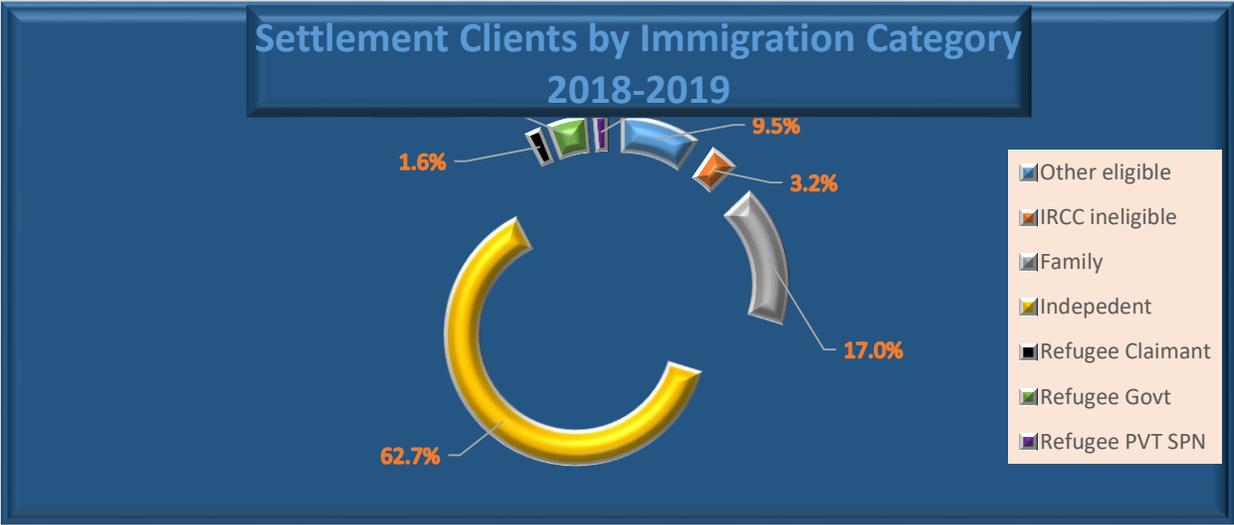
Highlights for 2018-2019 year have been tabulated for clearer illustration:



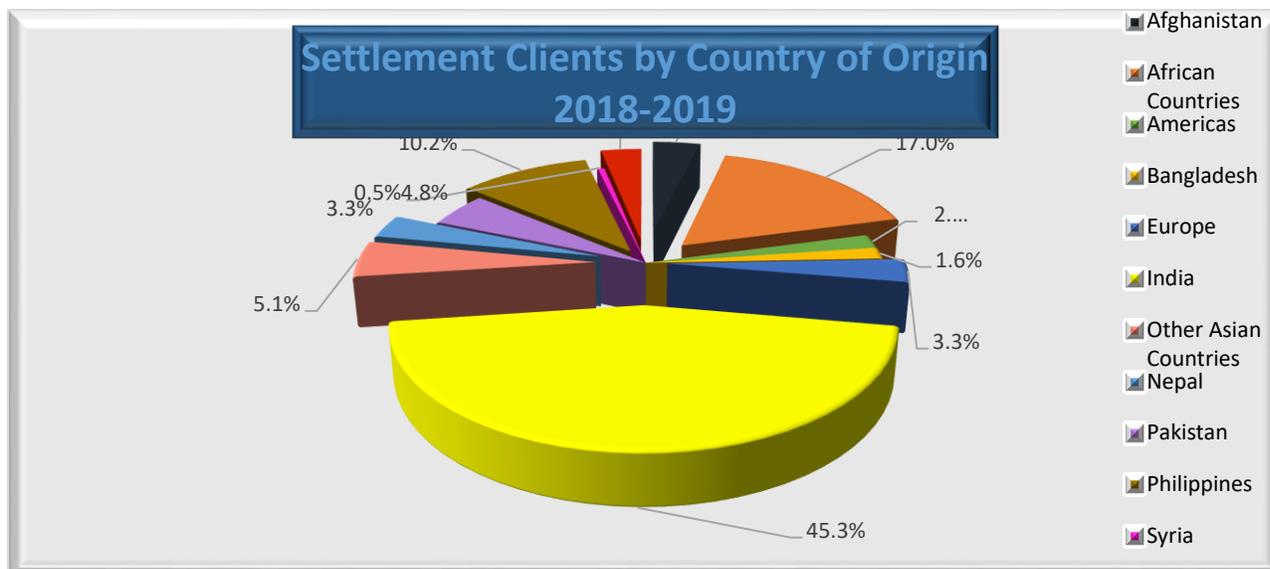
ICWA Settlement Services are designed to be inclusive of all genders and focus on promoting equal opportunities for all newcomers to Canada. Our statistics proudly display these values where services were provided to clients from all genders. With an added focus on supporting women and healthy relationships at home, we do see a slightly higher influx of clients that are women, but overall we have a great balance. Our staff also took several SOGIE trainings this year to ensure increased sensitivity and awareness.



2018-2019 saw a continuation of the trend where we see majority of clients between the 26-40 years of age bracket followed by 41-60 years and then seniors. This is also because the major chunk of our clients are highly skilled immigrants with younger or no children, looking to settle in Canada. While statistics show only 4 % minors receiving direct settlement services, a larger number of minors receive indirect support with families. However, we represent and support clients of all ages and are focused on catering to the settlement needs of the entire family unit.



The WCI location receives clients from the South of Edmonton, mainly Mill woods and it's interesting to note that the highest category of clients is independent, highly skilled immigrants, followed by family class immigrants. The refugees supported on this location are mostly those who have completed the first year of RAP support and are now seeking next level of Settlement and Integration support.



Clients from Asian backgrounds (mostly South Asian countries) constitute the largest segment of the Settlement clientele at the Welcome Centre for Immigrants, where 45.3% originate from India alone. This is also in congruence with the demographics of the Mill woods and expanding south side locations of Edmonton. A sizeable segment of 17% is also clients from various African countries, however majority of these are also highly skilled immigrants who do not have a language barrier and speak English well enough to communicate.

Community Volunteer Mentorship Program

Along with being committed to providing settlement resources and support to new immigrants, we truly believe in equipping them with tools to support the integration process of Settlement in Canada. This is the basis of our Community Volunteer Mentorship Program under which students and community members learn to support others with settlement related issues and endeavor to support the team in connecting other newcomers to community resources.

This is a two-pronged strategy under which new immigrants get to experience a Canadian workplace, learning with strong mentors from the Settlement Team and are equipped with tools to meet their own Settlement goals. They receive valuable knowledge, guidance and professional referrals and contribute their skills to support other newcomers to the community.

In 2018 – 2019, 6 practicum students completed their practicums with the Settlement team and went back to school to complete their Programs. A few plan to volunteer upon completion. 4 community members volunteered with ICWA settlement, supported the team and were mentored. Out of these, one went to pursue higher education while 3 found stable jobs. We are proud of our volunteers and mentors who strive to support their community with their skills, learning from each other and developing lasting connections.

Success Story – Settlement Program:

Disclaimer: Please note that the client's name has been changed to protect her confidentiality and privacy.

Sania is a Citizen of Pakistan with roots in rural and traditional upbringing. A high school graduate who was a bright student was married young and widowed with her first unborn child. This is where her journey to the unknown began.

The pressure to remarry wasn't going anywhere as the child had become the new challenge in her life. Then there was a breakthrough and on one of the better days a Canadian comes to her rescue, *Sania* marries this Canadian Citizen and travels to Canada through USA into Canada with a minor child from previous marriage.

Soon after her arrival in Canada as a refugee claimant she was soaked in personal, marital and immigration problems. She later came to know that there were other hidden facts that surrounded her life and that she had entered into a Fraudulent Marriage Contract with no legal/immigration status in Canada. She had no information where to seek support until she was connected to ICWA Outreach and came to WCI for Settlement support.

The needs assessments with the Settlement Counselor revealed multiple layers of issues engulfing the client. *Sania* did not seem to be in functional mental and emotional situation.

The client had another child during the time and again become subject of emotional and mental abuse, neglect and scathing experiences. The settlement counselors sorted her and her child's immigration matters, and other layers of issues and complex situations were dealt with professional guidance and directional support. Settlement Counselor guided her to become a Permanent Resident in Canada and assisted her in applying for the child's in Canada sponsorship as the child had no legal status. During the immigration process and for issues related to the child there was a lot of support and constant contact of Settlement counselors with the Edmonton School Board to support the child's education.

Meanwhile, *Sania* was also referred to English conversational classes, referred for employment services, and was referred to a Social worker to help her to manage the crisis. The wrap around settlement services helped navigate her way out of trap and stigma.

Soon we were beginning to see a confident and fresh *Sania*, full of promise and trust in herself and us. She gradually learnt to take control of her life, child, school, English language learning, developed computer skills, received training in being articulate during interviews and finally landed up in full time job making her financially independent. Currently she has a permanent full time position. The financial stability changed her life completely, she decided not to subjugate herself to the circumstances and with her two children decided to live a life free of abuse and neglect. With a lot of determination, devotion and working seven days a week she has built a life of her own where she has set priorities of her choice.

Recently I met her during an appointment to apply for citizenship for her son and herself. She seemed very confident and knew what she wanted from life going in the future. It was surprising to see a certificate of Proof of English Language from CELPIP with an achievement of LEVEL 6. From no conversational English Language to Level 6 is a tremendous success. She is now waiting to receive a letter from IRCC for the confirmation of test taking day.

It gave me a sense of satisfaction to see 'the once saved fish', who was struggling for 'oxygen' and that our services and programs became her source of success. She owes her trajectory of success to us and the support she received.

Success Story: Settlement Program

Sherin Jose migrated to Canada with his wife and a young child, from India in February 2018. He held a Masters of Engineering degree and had been successfully employed in India. In Canada the family was struggling to settle like every new immigrant, but they were finding it harder than most, to find a job. A stammer in speech was affecting Sherin's morale and self-confidence, he was worried, he might not find a job because of it.

The family met with ICWA Settlement Practitioner – Outreach Biya Babu, through a community reference. Needs assessment revealed Sherin and his wife had no information about community resources and benefits. They were referred to the Welcome Centre for Immigrants for Settlement and Employment support, attended Orientation sessions to Canada and were assisted with Canada Child benefit and other City of Edmonton benefits for newcomers.

After a while, Sherin found work in a 7 Eleven. Biya followed-up with the family regularly and soon learnt that Sherin was unhappy at his work. He expressed his discomfort working with the staff and supervisor as he didn't get any break during working hours and co-workers were rude to him, to the extent of calling inappropriate words. He was so worried and forced to work in that atmosphere for the wellbeing of his family. His wife was extremely concerned for his wellbeing.

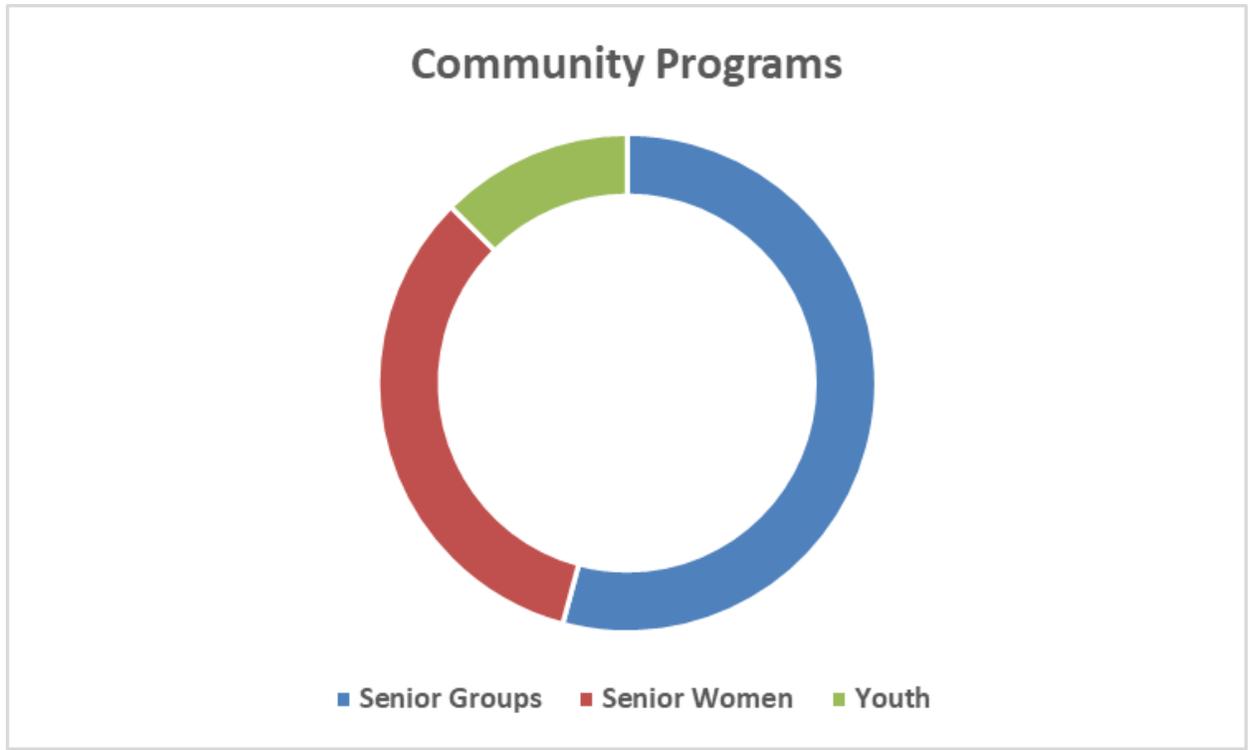
Biya immediately fixed an appointment to see the family at WCI, explained his rights and encouraged him to stand up to his coworkers to stop behaving inappropriately otherwise he would complain to the manager. The client didn't have the courage to respond or react towards them and he asked Biya not to involve his manager. Biya advised him to discontinue with the stressful job that was negatively affecting him and his family unless he was ready to react to the misbehavior of the coworker. Sherin wasn't willing to take up the matter but decided to quit.

Biya then referred him for employment support at WCI, (through partnership with EMCN) discussed his resume with the Job Developer from EMCN and explained his circumstances with his consent. As a result of the team work within a week Sherin was selected for a fulltime job at Ecopest with a good salary package. It was a new beginning for the family!

Sherin was very grateful to Biya for supporting him in decision making during his stressful time and for supporting him with job search, his wife also phoned and expressed her happiness and gratitude to the whole team at WCI for supporting their family.

We endeavor to support newcomers every day, but its these small success, the happiness of seeing families thrive which inspire us to excel and try harder!

Community Programs



A) Youth Development Program

Objective: to provide a platform to young immigrants where they can discuss their problems, look for solutions and engage in various activities.



We are running the Youth Development Program since 2006. This program was developed to integrate young people into the Multicultural communities of Canada. It assists young people by providing them with a platform to discuss their issues and concerns in regards to dislocation from their home country into Canadian society.

We aim to support these youth in becoming productive citizens of Canada. Most of our activities are designed to develop the role of youth in civic responsibility,

education, global citizenship and leadership.

In July 2018, the ICWA initiated the summer Youth Leadership Program, a safe space for youth to engage in an open conversation on important socio-cultural issues. The group met every Tuesday from 5:00 pm-7:00 pm and explored a wide range of topics, including self-esteem and body image, alcohol and substance use, sexual assault and family violence. The youth used their personal experiences to reflect on our community's cultural values and the gendered socialization of young girls and boys. Upon completion, participants received a certificate of completion and credit for volunteer hours.

B) Seniors Program

Objective: to make seniors self-reliant, healthy and secure.



Seniors are often house bound due to language and mobility challenges. They find it hard to learn winter sports and have little desire to go for a walk or any exercise. Consequently, most remain isolated, especially in the long winter months and feel bored, sad and depressed. Community based supportive counselling helps to alleviate these problems. Each meeting is attended by 25-30 men who discuss various issues and are informed about community resources and benefits such as seniors' financial benefits, free recreational facilities and discounted services by the City of Edmonton, etc.

In 2018, 65 seniors benefited from the Seniors' Group Session which covered following information sessions:

- Nutrition and exercise
- Long term care for seniors
- Stress management for seniors
- PR Card and citizenship information
- Survival benefits for seniors
- Banking special benefit for seniors
- Property management for senior in Canada and back home
- Information about airline tickets to travel out of Canada
- Elder abuse

- Entertainment for seniors
- Volunteer work for seniors
- Change and social behavior settlement in Canada
- Keeping Healthy relationship with your partner.

Domestic Violence Support

In 2018 ICWA has supported 43 female victims of domestic violence. Our team provided critical, informational, confidential and emotional support to women fleeing violence. These referral services help women to rebuild their lives after escaping violence. ICWA provides resources for women seeking safety from violence in the following ways:

- Conduct needs assessment / intake of the women fleeing domestic violence and perform ongoing periodic evaluation.
- Provide emotional support to women who are fleeing violence through active listening and respecting the women's choices and decisions.
- Refer them to Emergency Women shelters and other specialized agencies.
- Provide Housing support services.
- Assist women in getting Alberta Works financial benefits.
- Provide help in accessing additional support such as legal advice and counselling.
- Help them to improve their safety and build their confidence.
- Provide interpretation support in Punjabi, Hindi and Arabic languages.
- Provide information and referrals to relevant community resources.

Partnerships, Trainings, conferences and presentations

A) A Community Consultation Initiative on Mental Health and Addictions (A Summary)

ICWA recently completed a Community Consultation Initiative on behalf of Covenant Health. Covenant Health has been concerned for some time about the low use of Mental Health and Addiction Services among the South Asian community. ICWA was commissioned and funded by Covenant Health to determine the barriers, gaps and needs to improve the usage.

Almost 100 members of the community - experts, seniors, adult men and women and youth, shared their personal stories and experiences through face-to-face interviews on a one-on-one basis, or in one of the 4 Focus Groups.

The initiative was started in December 2018 and completed in April of 2019. ICWA made a presentation to Covenant Health on the findings of the report on May 1 and it was well received. At this time, we are unable to share the details of the report but will do so once the report is released to the public. The report made a number of recommendations, some for the long term, to help in removing the barriers and to make the services more accessible to the South Asian community.

At ICWA the initiative was led by a Steering Committee with Papiya Das as the Chair-person, Miriam Thomas (Co-chair), Ratna Basappa and Suneeta Jobanputra. ICWA staff, specifically Tripat and Salma, in the office helped with the logistics and other effort required for smooth completion of the project.

B) Diverse Voices for Change Initiative

On October 16, 2018, Manal Alnajjar, ICWA Executive Director, participated in a panel discussion about Migration and Women’s safety at the United Nations Safe City for Women and Girls. She presented the work of ICWA to ensure women and girls are safe in their communities and highlighted the challenges and solutions deployed during supporting immigrant women.



KIOSK Anniversary Celebrations - Millwood Towne Centre



In December 2018 Indo-Canadian Women’s Association celebrated the first anniversary of the Kiosk established at the Mill woods Town Centre Mall in September 2017, representing the Welcome Centre for Immigrants, a partnership with the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for

Newcomers. The kiosk is an information hub for community members where Outreach Practitioners provide information about Settlement resources and further referrals to WCI for in depth confidential support. On the occasion, a mini model of the WCI was displayed around the kiosk, setting up information tables for Settlement, Employment, Specialized and Support Services and representing both partner agencies.

The event was an afternoon of excitement and festivity marked by ethnic performances from various cultural groups in the Mill woods. Community members joined in the celebrations, enjoyed the performances and refreshments and shared excitement of various door prizes.

C) Minister Sarah Hoffman's Visit to ICWA Office

On December 10, 2018, ICWA was proud to host a round table meeting with the Honourable Sarah Hoffman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, and Honourable Christina Gray, Minister of Labour and the Minister Responsible for Democratic Renewal. Minister Gray highlighted the significance of ICWA's role in assisting newcomers with their integration into Canadian society and in enabling them to overcome diverse barriers in



that process. Minister Hoffman listened to the challenges and obstacles that new comers face in accessing health services. She explained the new steps and decisions that had been made by the Ministry of Health to improve the health services and fill the gaps in Alberta Health system. She explained the changes in the licencing processes for internationally trained medical professionals and the funds allocated for Alberta International Graduates Program. It was a very productive meeting where ICWA staff and partners had an opportunity to advocate for new immigrants and were able to ask questions and relay concerns directly to the Ministers.

D) Resource Fair



- On February 21, 2019, ICWA team including Project Coordinator Tripat Kaur, Settlement Practitioners Biya Babu and Salma Sultana participated in 'Putting Women Forward: Millwoods Resource Fair' at the Leefield Community League. The resource fair was organised by the Edmonton Millwoods Federal Liberal Association in which Honourable Maryam Monsef was a special guest. This was a great opportunity for community members to connect with resources and service provider organisations that focus on supporting women in Millwoods and across Edmonton.
- On Jan 12, 2019, ICWA participated in the Resource Fair hosted by MLA Christina Gray at Mill Woods Seniors and Multicultural Center. More than 30 organizations/ agencies got the opportunity to showcase their resources and services to the community members. More than 200 people came to learn about the services provided by Government of Alberta, non - profits and other community service agencies across Edmonton and specifically in Mill woods. The fair also included resource booths by Edmonton Police Service, Grey Nuns Hospital and Alberta Works.

E) Community Events and Training Workshops

- On March 20, 2019 Project Coordinator /Settlement Counselor Tripat Kaur attended training, “De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations” with Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute.
- On March 10 & 11, 2019 Settlement Practitioners Outreach Rajbir Kharod and Salma Sultana successfully completed a two-day course “Dealing with People in Difficult Situations & Dealing with Criticism” through the NAIT Continuing Education Program.

- On November 06, 2018 Settlement Practitioner Shazia Ambreen completed a training in “Assertive Communication” through ACHIEVE Centre for Leadership.
- On November 14 and 15, 2018, Manal Alnajjar Executive Director and Tripat Kaur, Project Coordinator attended 18th Annual Diverse Voices Family Violence Conference. The conference covered many aspects of family violence, including the sharing of personal stories.
- On November 22, 2018 the Settlement Team participated in an Anti-Racism Community Discussion organized by the City of Edmonton in partnership with ICWA at the WCI.
- Settlement Counselor Hari Rijal attended a series of Sessions on Anti-Racism organized by the Centre for Race and Culture in November 2018, including “Introduction to Unconscious Bias” on November 23rd and “Addressing the Unconscious Bias” on November 30th.
- From October 24, 2018 to January 24, 2019 Settlement Counselor Hari Rijal completed a series of 3 sessions under the training program “Presentation and Protocols for Adult Learning” organized the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium at the Elmwood School in West Edmonton.
- On November 21, 2018 Settlement Counselor Farah Fatima completed a training on “Time Management” through ACHIEVE Centre for Leadership and Workplace Performance at the Holiday Inn, Edmonton.
- ICWA hosted a free 3-day forum on "Engaging Men for Building a Healthy Community", in October 2018. The ICWA Settlement Team took turns to participate in and support these sessions as follows:
 - On October 23, 2018 the ICWA Settlement and Outreach Team attended a webinar on “Time Management” through ACHIEVE Centre for Leadership as part of an in-house Settlement Training session for the team, facilitated by the Settlement Team Leader Saima Tanwir at the WCI.
 - On October 18, 2018 Settlement Practitioner - Outreach Biya Babu completed a training on ‘Dealing with Difficult People’ organized by ACHIEVE Centre for Leadership at Holiday Inn, Edmonton.
 - September 25 & 26, Hari Rijal and Shazia Ambreen from the Settlement Team attended a ‘Financial Literacy’ Training organized by the Centre for Financial Literacy at the Action for Healthy Communities.
 - On September 25, 2018, the ICWA Settlement and Outreach Team attended a SOGIE Training at the Welcome Centre for Immigrants, organized as an in-house training for the WCI team.
 - September 19 - 21, 2018, ICWA Executive Director Manal Alnajjar, Team Leader Saima Tanwir and Settlement Counselor Hari Rijal participated in the 3 day AAISA Summit

organized by Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA) and IRCC at the Radisson South Edmonton.

- In 2018 In-House Computer Refresher Training sessions for Microsoft Office were organized for the ICWA Team by the Executive Director Manal Alnajjar. These trainings were conducted by the Computer Teacher Jaya Saxena at the ICWA office on August 15, September 13, October 24 and November 29, 2018 and were attended by the Settlement & Outreach Team.
- On July 14, 2018, the ICWA Settlement and Outreach Team attended a training on “Learning to work with LGBTQ Community members” organized by Pride Centre of Edmonton at the Welcome Centre for Immigrants.
- On June 29, 2018 Executive Director Manal Alnajjar and Team Leader Saima Tanwir organized an all-day Settlement Skills In-house Training session for the Settlement & Outreach Team which included a presentation from Project Coordinator Tripat Kaur on Family Violence Protocol.
- On May 23, 2018, the ICWA Settlement & Outreach Team attended a training on “Family Abuse and Parenting” organized by IRCC at the Coast Edmonton Plaza Hotel in Edmonton.

Publicity, Promotion, and Networking

- On April 19, 2018, Amrita Mishra, ICWA Project Director made a presentation at Canadian Mental Health Association. The theme was the link between family violence and mental health.
- On May 2, 2018, Amrita Mishra participated in a panel discussion, Women in International Security-Canada's 11th Annual Workshop, at the University of Alberta, May 2 - 4, 2018. The theme was entitled "Gender and Security, from the Bottom-Up," and aspired to foreground everyday experiences of insecurity, with a particular focus on gender and other intersecting identities.
- On July 12, 2018 Amrita Mishra gave a Lunch and Learn talk on extended family violence and the activities of Working in Partnership at LaSalle Shelter.
- On August 30, 2018, Amrita Mishra participated in a Podcast interview with the Edmonton Community Foundation. The topic was on linguistic isolation and discrimination experienced by 'Audible Minorities.' <https://www.thewellendowedpodcast.com/episodes/episode-26-investing-in-people/>



Administration and Governance

The Board of Directors

The Indo-Canadian Women’s Association is managed by a volunteer board that looks after its finance, governance and policy-making. All members of the Board and the invited members-at-large are dedicated women with expertise and distinction in various walks of life. They dedicate their valuable time and services in many different ways.

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Dr. Amrita Mishra	Project Director
Tripat Kaur	Office & Project Coordinator
Saima Tanwir	Settlement Team Leader
Farah Fatima	Settlement Counselor
Hari Rijal	Settlement Counselor
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Rajbir Kharod	Settlement Practitioner Outreach
Biya Babu	Settlement Practitioner Outreach
Salma Sultana	Settlement Practitioner Outreach
Paul Kalsi	Outreach Worker–Citizenship Instructor
Jaya Saxena	Computer Instructor
Chouaib El Bouhali	ESL Instructor
Ruchika Kupavat	Seniors English Conversational Instructor
Alka Thakur	Seniors Project Facilitator

Acknowledgement

Partners

- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (EMCN)
- City of Edmonton
- John Humphrey Centre For Peace & Human Rights Rotary Club of Edmonton South
- Today Family Violence Help Centre
- YWCA Edmonton
- Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW; Edmonton Chapter)
- Mill Woods Seniors Activity Center (MWSAC)
- SAHAARA- A Community Centre
- Institute for Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW)
- Alberta Home Visitors Network Association (AHVNA)
- Multicultural Health Brokers Coop (MCHB)
- Children Services Edmonton Region
- Covenant Health

Sponsors

- Dr Arun Kumar Mehta
- Heritage Lane Medical Clinic
- Jitendra Shah
- Naveen and Sneha Basappa
- Rohit Group of companies
- Rainbow Print and Sign
- Rotary Club of Edmonton- South
- Servus Credit Union

- Singhmar Family
- SAHAARA - A community Service Organization
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- Edmonton Community Foundation
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- Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- New Horizons for Seniors Program- Service Canada
- Status of Women Canada

