

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



BCS: Helping people help themselves since 2000.



Say **N to Tobacco**
আসুন ধূমপান সহ সকল তামাক প্রব্যকে "না" বলি

Table of Contents

Land Acknowledgement	4
MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR	5
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	7
YOUTH INITIATIVES	9
SENIOR INITIATIVE	10
INTERGEN INITIATIVE	12
WOMEN/GIRLS INITIATIVES	13
RESEARCH	13
SETTLEMENT SERVICES	14
SPECIAL INITIATIVES	14
BCS Programs 2023	19
Youth Initiatives:	19
Senior Programs/Initiatives	22
Women/Girls Initiatives	27
Initiatives completed in 2023:	28
2. Education and Allyship Program (EAP):	39
SETTLEMENT SERVICES	47
New initiatives in 2024	48
1.Preventing Ageism and Elder Abuse through senior's Digital Literacy	48
2. Addressing Food Insecurity in Taylor Massey Through nutrition Awareness and weekly Social Dining	49
3. Together End Racism in Toronto (TERT)	49
5. After School Dine-In for South Asian Youth	51
6. English Language Class for Newcomers/ refugees	51
7. Food voucher for refugee claimants/newcomers	52
8. Research project	52
Event calendar 2024	53
Announcement: Volunteer opportunity	54
Volunteer Opportunities	54
Donation link	54
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW:	55
OFFICE EXECUTIVES	58
SENIOR VOLUNTEERS	59

ADULT VOLUNTEERS	59
SENIOR AMBASSADORS	59
Vaccine Ambassadors	60
Youth Volunteer List	60
Inter-gen Youth Leaders	61
Senior member list:	61
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (AS of July 20, 2023)	63
LIFE MEMBERS:	64
FUNDING AGENCIES	66
PARTNER AGENCIES/AFFILIATIONS WITH OTHERS	67

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

July 26 , 2024

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour, on behalf of the Board of Directors, to welcome you all to the 23rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS). BCS is a non-profit, charitable organization that has been providing services to the Bangladeshi and other communities in the Victoria Park-Danforth areas since the early 2000s. BCS has been a beacon of support for thousands of youth, seniors, volunteers, and women, providing vital programs and services tailored to their specific needs. The 2023 Annual Report , meticulously crafted by our Executive Director, will present an overview of the programs and services offered by BCS and the successes it has achieved thus far.

BCS has passed through a difficult time in 2023 due primarily to the funding shortages and COVIDs. Being faced with such challenges and uncertainties, the organization, however, adapted to the new virtual world by using Zoom to stay connected with the community. A grant from the Government of Canada during this period have further enhanced the capacity of the organization to a significant level. The Board and staff have worked diligently during this period attending Zoom meetings and staying connected with each other. We now have been able to overcome many of these challenges and are delivering in-person services to most of our clients.

BCS is fueled by an exceptional team of volunteers who play a vital role in the day-to-day activities of the organization. Their dedication and support are invaluable, and we express our sincere gratitude for their contributions. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to strengthen our collaboration with them in the days/months ahead.

As we look into the future, we are confronted with the challenge of continuously improving our funding levels, improving volunteer base, and developing new programs so that we are able to meet the ever increasing needs of our clients. We have a dynamic Board that is dedicated to the continued success and growth of the organization. I thank each and every member of our volunteer Board of Directors for their commitment, dedication and contributions.

I am extremely thankful to our generous funders for their unwavering support and commitment to our mission. Our progress and success would not have been possible without their support.

Lastly, I extend my sincere appreciation to all of our staff, volunteers, and partner agencies for their unwavering support. Their seamless contributions and teamwork are truly commendable.

Thank you all for attending this meeting and for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Kazi Sadrul Hoque, Ph.D.

Chair, BCS Board of Directors



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 26 , 2024

Good evening, dear ladies and gentlemen, esteemed guests, partners, and community members, welcome to our 23rd Annual General Meeting. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the dedicated community service providers, frontline and community ambassadors, and volunteers for their selfless efforts to bring about positive change within our community. Your commitment and dedication is truly appreciated.

From 2020 to 2023, we addressed the health and wellness challenges, socio-economic impacts, and employment challenges resulting from COVID-19. Through partnerships, we offered services to ensure community health and safety, increase vaccine coverage, and reduce COVID-19 hospitalization rates during the peak of the pandemic. Now that we have overcome that critical situation, BCS is providing extensive in-person services to the community.

Recently, our organization has faced a significant challenge in assisting newcomers and refugees. When individuals arrive at our doorstep, we provide critical assistance such as information, assistance with paperwork, English classes, and access to food, all of which are offered without relying on external funding. To date, we have reached out more than 300 South Asian refugees with various support. We firmly believe that BCS is effectively managing these services.

BCS is committed to empowering the youth through various community projects. In a recent achievement, we successfully completed a major project funded by the Government of Canada that provided micro-grants to 60 young individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds. This initiative has empowered them to achieve self-sufficiency, enhance their skills, and pursue opportunities for implementation. We are extremely proud of this accomplishment.

In-addition, every Friday, we invite young people to our engaging drop-in program where they can freely express and exchange their knowledge and social ideas. Furthermore, our year-round Youth Mental Wellness program is designed to enhance overall well-being through a wide range of activities such as arts and crafts, coloring, meditation, and sports. Join us in supporting our youth and fostering a positive and inclusive community. Our UWGT-funded Youth Mental Well-Being Project aims to engage Bengali and Tamil youth in promoting mental health and overall well-being. In its second year, we have engaged with over 1000 youth through various outdoor and indoor activities.

Two significant projects involve approximately 100 youth ambassadors working within the community to conduct workshops, demonstrations, and activities aimed at addressing discrimination and racism. I am pleased to report that these efforts are having a positive impact on many community members and young people. In addition, these ambassadors are actively engaging community members through diverse blogs and discussions on various techniques, which I believe will greatly benefit many individuals.

Furthermore, our inter-gen group is organizing weekly Mental Health & inter-gen Engagement Sessions every Friday evening to create a safe space for seniors. Adults and youth who are facing mental health challenges during this COVID pandemic and to address long COVID effects.

Our inter-generational group organizes various community events throughout the year to promote social and emotional well-being. We have over 500 seniors participating in our health support services, recreational activities, weekly exercise, and educational programs. Our diverse inter-generational projects have created a platform for seniors and youth to come together in harmony, fostering empowerment, independence, and self-esteem while building a friendly environment for a safer

community. These projects enable seniors and youth to interact and engage in capacity building and recreational activities. In addition, we have established an inter-generational volunteer pool of over 50 seniors and 30 youth who volunteer for these initiatives, benefiting over 700 seniors and youth on a regular basis.

We successfully completed the impactful project in 2023, "Fighting Misogyny and Stereotypes against Racialized Women and Girls in Toronto." With the support of BCS, 28 feminist leaders were empowered to open doors of opportunity for vulnerable girls. Although the project has concluded, their ongoing support continues to positively impact the community. This project was generously funded by the Women & Gender Equity Canada.

"The Resilient Youth For Change Project" project provided micro-grants (\$2000 to \$5000) to 60 youth who successfully completed 60 individual projects. These youth also received capacity development training on anti-racism, stress management, financial literacy, and project management, professional writing and many more. This project was funded by the Canada Service Corps.

This year, we focus on empowering youth and building connections across generations. We have led initiatives in indoor and outdoor sports, wellness, girls' sports, and raising awareness of discrimination and racism. We also implemented programs to address food security, prevent elder abuse, and provide technology support for seniors. Our regular volunteer training, After School Tutoring Program (ASTP), and cultural events have all made a lasting impact over the past 24 years, with strong community support.

I just wanted to express my appreciation for all the amazing support and hard work from our staff, volunteers, placement students, and board members. We wouldn't have been able to accomplish so much without you.

I would like to acknowledge funders who have funded our activities in 2022 to 2024: Government of Canada namely WAGE, NH-ESDC, CSC, CSMARI; United Way Greater Toronto; City of Toronto, and WG.

The support from our partner organizations and funders has been crucial to our operations, and I am truly proud to be part of such an outstanding BCS team! I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to all our community members, including seniors, adults, and youth leaders. Your continued support has brought us to where we are today!

Thank you all for your incredible support.

Nasima Akter

Dr. Nasima Akter
Executive Director

Shaira & Arion will do youth, intergenerational, events & Sports.
Dr . Hasan will present all about RYC, WAGE, TERT & EAP
Turzo will do Seniors & Research



INTRODUCTION

THE BCS MISSION: **“HELPING PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES”**

BCS MANDATE:

The Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) is a non-profit organization that has been dedicated to serving the large Bangladeshi population in Toronto, specifically in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), since 2000. We provide vital information, referrals, skill development, and settlement services to diverse communities, with a strong focus on youth, seniors, and newcomers. Our services, delivered in partnership with other committees and service providers, are meticulously crafted to adapt to the ever-changing needs of the community. Currently, we proudly serve over 5000 beneficiaries, with the number increasing every year, and we operate in the Taylor-Massey, Crescent Town, and adjacent neighborhoods.

Mission: Helping People Help Themselves.

Vision: Creating a vibrant community and living in harmony.



YOUTH INITIATIVES

In 2023, BCS took charge in organizing numerous events and initiatives with a strong focus on engaging young individuals. Our dedicated youth workers and volunteers played a pivotal role in coordinating these events and hosting initiatives designed specifically for youth. The youth initiatives focused on marginalized and racialized young individuals, with the aim of promoting healthy lifestyles, positive habits, and stronger community connections. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we provided a safe environment for youth to develop critical interpersonal skills. By actively participating in and organizing these events, young individuals honed their leadership, management,

communication, and technological skills.. Our active youth programs and initiatives, including the After School Tutoring & Cultural Heritage Program (ASTP), Youth Eliminated Smoking (YES), Youth Wellness, and Summer Support Program, ensured that young individuals stay connected, received academic support, and maintained their well-being through engaging activities. In addition, we established weekly drop-in sessions to create a safe space for youth to share their current world experiences and interact meaningfully with their peers. We wholeheartedly welcome youth to our interactive drop-in program every Friday at 4 p.m., where they can openly express and share social ideas and skills. Over 700 young individuals actively participated in various activities at BCS throughout the year, providing them with opportunities for learning, networking, professional growth, mentorship, and volunteerism.



SENIOR INITIATIVE

Starting with just five seniors in April 2020, our virtual senior health and recreational activities have seen incredible growth. For the past four years, we have been running this virtual senior wellness program without any interruptions. We host activities for seniors both virtually and in person. In 2023, the number of participants has grown to over 400 seniors, demonstrating the significant impact of our virtual engagement platform on their health, wellness, and overall quality of life. These virtual sessions take place three days a week—specifically on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday—and bring together 300 seniors who actively participate in various activities and exercises. Currently, approximately 250 seniors participate in various diverse non-pharmacological interventions both in person and online on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday. We have expanded the senior programs to four days a week to meet the increasing demand. This virtual session initiative has facilitated improved social connections among seniors and promoted their mental and physical well-being.

In 2016, BCS established a senior cabinet with ten members, which has since grown to 30 seniors. The cabinet is instrumental in creating and organizing activities tailored to the needs of seniors and serves as a vital link between seniors and the services provided by BCS. Through this cabinet, BCS is able to offer enhanced programs that address gaps and adapt to the changing needs of our senior community. In these challenging times, BCS provides comprehensive support to seniors. Recognizing that many seniors are isolated and lack family support due to health issues, we consistently organize virtual and in-person sessions to ensure their inclusion and well-being. At BCS, we are committed to equity and fairness and strive to meet the specific needs of each and every senior through our programs. These programs include exercise, recreation, workshops, networking opportunities, technical and emotional support, peer engagement, intergenerational activities, and more.

Our initiative is wholeheartedly committed to the well-being of seniors, especially those who face discrimination in Canadian society. We actively work with individuals who face racism, sexism, ableism, and ageism. At BCS, we strive to challenge stereotypes about seniors and promote a culture of continuous learning and skill enhancement. Our program offerings for seniors include health and wellness sessions, weekly virtual drop-ins, Good Morning Calls, interpreter services, access to important health information and tips, and resource sharing. Each year, over 600 seniors benefit from the expertise of numerous professionals at our events. Through BCS, seniors have a safe space to address their daily challenges and make meaningful connections. Our ongoing virtual exercise sessions allow seniors to stay active and engaged in the comfort of their own homes. Although we initially offered virtual exercise sessions four times a week, we now offer them three times a week, ensuring flexibility and continuity in their support. In addition, seniors have the opportunity to improve their technical skills, such as computer literacy, and participate in sessions that provide guidance on technology navigation, online safety, fraud prevention, and elder abuse protection.



INTERGEN INITIATIVE

BCS has a rich history of implementing intergenerational activities in the Taylor Massey neighborhood. Last year, we successfully launched the "Unity is My Strength" intergenerational project, which has been a resounding success in keeping seniors and youth engaged and content. Every Thursday, seniors and youth meet at the BCS office and the Dentonia Clubhouse, with 20-25 participants at each session. These projects provide a vital platform for seniors and youth to share their experiences, support each other, and learn how to overcome challenges. Furthermore, in addition to the Senior Project, BCS consistently organizes a wide range of community events, cultural activities, picnics, and workshops centered around intergenerational connections.

Our intergenerational activities are designed to promote volunteerism among both seniors and youth, empowering them to be socially responsible in the Crescent Town Bengali community. These initiatives focus on actively bridging the intergenerational gap between seniors and youth by creating a safe and welcoming environment where people of different ages can come together. Our programs include a wide range of activities such as intergenerational dramas, tours, arts and crafts sessions, educational workshops, generational and cultural exchanges, and strengthening family relationships. These activities not only strengthen family bonds but also promote healthy cultural exchange and encourage meaningful conversations between individuals of all ages. Last year's intergenerational activities were a resounding success, as seniors, youth, and children enthusiastically participated in outdoor bonding activities. Participants had a great time, thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and prizes were rightfully awarded to the best team. Refreshments were enjoyed, and games were played, creating an environment of joy and camaraderie.



WOMEN/GIRLS INITIATIVES

In 2021, BCS embarked on two major projects focused on women and gender equity. The first project, Women And Gender Equity (WAGE), was funded by the Federal Government. The second project centered around women's and girls' circles and was supported by the Canadian Women's Foundation's Safer, Stronger Grant the, with Skills for Changes leading the initiative. Both projects were completed in early 2023. Although similar gender equity work continues due to demand.

BCS clearly mandates empowering immigrant and racialized women and girls, addressing their socio-economic, political, and economic needs. In Toronto, women and girls often face multiple forms of oppression, discrimination, and violence within their families, communities, and workplaces. Guided by an anti-oppressive and feminist framework, BCS actively works with women, girls, and their families through organized discussions, community events, employment and settlement counseling, and referrals tailored to their specific needs. BCS adopts a culturally sensitive approach to educate the community about the rights of women and girls. Through peer support and leadership training, women and girls at BCS are equipped to mobilize the community and challenge misogyny and gender stereotypes.

BCS offered a number of programs specifically designed for women and girls. These initiatives were designed to support and empower female community members. For example, "Women in Stem" (WIS) program encourages women to pursue careers in male-dominated fields.

RESEARCH

For several years, BCS has focused on community-based research in areas such as community health, food security, and public health. The aim of the research is to gather reliable, scientifically evidence based information on the impact of programs and social issues. This enables community members and partner organizations to rely on the research findings. BCS has a dedicated research unit to support programs and evaluate their progress. Research also plays a crucial role in addressing various social issues and assessing organized activities. It serves as a reliable source for identifying new issues and improving community service. BCS has expanded its collaboration with various organizations, including Access Alliance, Queen's University, and McMaster University, to undertake various research projects. BCS is



continuously seeking new research opportunities and partnerships with more institutions to conduct community-based research projects and assess the overall impact of activities on the South Asian Bangladeshi community. In the past year 2023, BCS has published **four research articles** and **two book chapters** in peer-reviewed journals, and has actively shared research findings with a wide audience, including policymakers and political leaders.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

BCS has always been an advocate for immigrants, whether it be equal rights or eliminating the discrimination they face. We provide information on how to survive and thrive in Canada, navigate the legal procedures and health care systems and offer translation services. We assist individuals and newcomers to find the right information. We help community people and newcomers to fill out essential government documents and forms. We also help community members apply for, and secure social benefits. Again, we work with the people, newcomers, to obtain ODSP, health cards, SIN numbers, and many more services that newcomers might need. Our services are aimed at newcomers who are having difficulty settling in Canada and navigating the Canadian system. BCS is proud to work with individuals who are brave enough to start a new life in Canada. Recently, we began offering information sessions for the newcomers and communication classes to improve language and communication skills on a regular basis. Although we do not receive any grants for these activities, we volunteer and work together to ensure that the needs of newcomers in the community are properly addressed. This year, we have expanded our services to include clothing distribution and food vouchers to support the newcomers' dire situation.

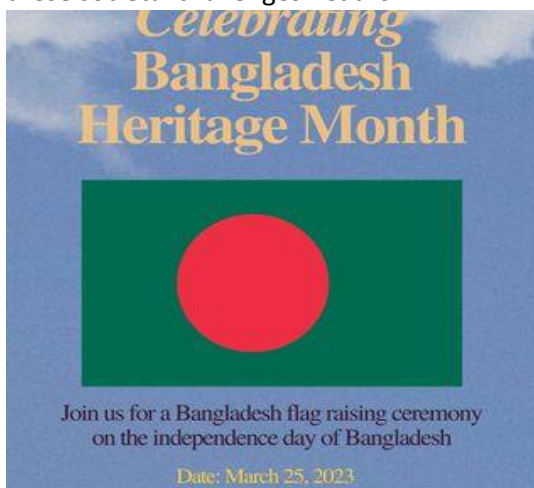


SPECIAL INITIATIVES

BCS is committed to providing services that respond to the current circumstances and needs of our community. Throughout 2022-2023, the impact of COVID-19 has been widespread, affecting various segments of our society. We have focused on addressing these impacts through the end of 2023. We have identified a particular need for assistance, especially among the elderly, in adapting to the technological aspects of life after COVID-19. We have approached this challenge with patience and openness, providing technical support and guidance to ensure that everyone feels comfortable with the technology. The safety and well-being of our community is always our top priority. As such, we place great emphasis on promoting vaccination not only for individual health but also for the collective

well-being of the entire community. We are committed to instilling a sense of civic pride in adhering to safety measures such as social distancing, wearing masks, and vaccination during the pandemic.

In response to pressing issues in our community, we have implemented special initiatives to address immediate needs related to hate crimes, racism, discrimination, the COVID-19 pandemic, and vaccine engagement. Canada has experienced disturbing hate crimes targeting marginalized communities, and we are actively working to combat these social issues. The year 2022 has highlighted the ongoing impact of the pandemic, particularly on marginalized groups, and our programs directly address these issues. BCS has launched several projects to address current social challenges head-on. In 2023, we provided immediate support to vulnerable South Asians immediately assisted through initiatives such as food assistance and established health and hygiene practices as the community moved into the neighborhood. Vaccine Engagement is one of our projects dedicated to ensuring vaccine awareness and engagement in early 2023. Our society is grappling with deep-seated issues such as racism and discrimination based on citizenship status and language, and we have actively confronted and addressed these issues. We strive to create a more inclusive and equitable community by addressing these societal challenges head-on.



SOCIOCULTURAL EVENTS

At BCS, we value human connections and community involvement. Despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, our social programs continued to play a vital role in fostering these connections and safeguarding the well-being of all involved. In 2023, we joyfully celebrated numerous special occasions

alongside our community, ensuring that meaningful connections and joyous moments remained a priority. Determined not to let the pandemic dampen our spirits, we upheld our traditions and found creative ways to celebrate various holidays and events, including Bangla New Year, Canada Day, the Taste of Taylor Massey food festival, and more. By embracing our cultural heritage and showcasing resilience, we exemplified the importance of thriving in the face of adversity.



2023 AT A GLANCE

BCS has leveraged its understanding of cultural norms and values to optimize its impact through tailored services for newcomers, youth, and seniors. With a growing number of beneficiaries, surpassing 5000 individuals, our organization has become increasingly relied upon for its valuable services. Here are some notable accomplishments we achieved in 2023.

Initiatives for Youth	
Youth Eliminates Smoking (YES)	
World No Tobacco Day Celebrations 2023	60+ Participants (as it was in-person with social distancing)
Anti-Tobacco Pledge Signing/drawings	~30 participants
2023 Summer Sports	
Track & Field Day	30 registered participants plus visitors
Practice Sessions	10-15 Youth

Soccer Tournament Weekend	80 registered participants plus visitors
BCS youth Leadership	
Monthly Leadership Meetings	15-20 Youth
Weekly Board Game Night/ Virtual drop-ins	15-25 Youth
Initiatives for Seniors	
Activity	# of participants per session
Weekly online exercise sessions (3 days a week)	152 sessions, 50/60 seniors per session
Technology supports	More than 50
Weekly emotional activities (music, adult colouring, art, stitching, cooking, etc)	More than 100 seniors
Weekly social activities (social chat, group interaction)	More than 100 seniors
Weekly cognitive activities (word games, table games, etc)	Around 50 seniors
Monthly inspirational documentary for seniors (travel shows, famous person talks, etc)	50/60 seniors per month
Senior Cabinet Meeting	11 meetings (30 members)
Monthly/ weekly issue based and health education workshops	24 issue based workshops like social disparity, seniors strategies, abuse, etc. (30 participants attended over 24 workshops). 24 Health workshops such as mental health, body ache, diabetes, hypertension, nutrition, etc. Average seniors were 20/session).
Home Support	Last year 400 senior received home support (like grocery help, light meal preparation, information, phone calls, computer assistance etc.) by senior volunteers and adult volunteers
International Mother Language Day	120 Seniors
Accompaniment Supports (<i>for interpreter, travel assistance, etc.</i>) by seniors	162

Senior Outdoor activities (<i>Park activities, summer picnic, beach visits, mall visits, etc</i>)	160 seniors
Tea and Chat sessions	10-15 per session, 46 session
Meditation for Seniors	20 sessions, 20-25 per session
Multicultural day celebration	45 seniors
Program Impact survey done by Queens University	52 seniors joined

After School Tutoring & Heritage Program (ASTP)

Activity	# of participants
Free weekly tutoring sessions on Zoom	10-15 students joined per session as well as 50 youth volunteers throughout the year (6-8 volunteers on average per session), one-in-one zoom room for student learning support
Weekly game/online entertainment	Youth & children Session which is half an hour of events such Ka hoot, trivia and half an hour discussion on their weekly activities & events

Settlement Services

Support Type	# of participants per session
Day-to-day settlement services	40-50 Individuals monthly (cumulative)

Field Trips, Celebrations and more

Event	# of participants
Bangladeshi New Year's Performance	100 participants joined
International Mother Language Day Performance	More than 150 participated in-person
Victory Day Cultural Show	100 participants attended

Canada Day event (Parade and activities)	60 Participants attended
Taste of Bangladesh/Taylor-Massey	150 Participants attended
Inter-gen outing	100 youth and seniors participated
Community walk, Vaccine Challenge walk/ truth and reconciliation demonstration and walk/ walk towards Shahid Minar monument in Denton park	100 participants attended

BCS Programs 2023

Youth Initiatives:

1. Youth Eliminates Smoking (YES)

Since 2009, BCS Youth Eliminates Smoking (YES) has been a dedicated youth group working towards raising awareness about tobacco use and prioritizing tobacco prevention through various strategies each year. After successfully completing Phase 11 with funding from the city, we have continued our activities even without ongoing financial support. Our ongoing initiatives have included engaging activities such as smoke-free movie nights, trivia, games, and the celebration of World No Tobacco Day (WNTD). This program has played a significant role in the youth understanding and development. Youth participants have gained a deeper perspective and appreciation for active and healthy lifestyles, and they have solidified their commitment to reject tobacco use by adding their signatures to the Say No to Tobacco pledge.

2. Summer Sports

The Annual Summer Sports and Youth Soccer Tournament is an immensely popular event organized by BCS, particularly among the youth. For nearly 19 years, this event has successfully motivated boys and girls in the community to embrace an active lifestyle while fostering camaraderie and sportsmanship among participants. Throughout July and August, practices were held every weekend in preparation for the main event, which took place on August 27th, 2023. Despite the challenges, more than 100 players enthusiastically participated in the soccer tournament.

As in previous years, the tournament was held at Dentonia Park, strategically located near the Victoria Park subway station for easy access to the local and extended community. In compliance with provincial health guidelines, we introduced a new event structure to ensure safety. Instead of the usual four large teams, we implemented a six-team tournament for the boys and three-team tournament for the girls, with games spread throughout the day to avoid large crowds. In addition to the soccer tournament, the event included track and field stations, obstacle courses, and a dedicated area for children with hula-hoops, jump ropes, and bubbles.

On the final day of the Crest and Awards Ceremony, a vibrant atmosphere filled the field as 9 teams with a total of 105 players, gathered alongside a diverse audience of over 300 people, including

participants, organizers, and enthusiastic spectators. There were booths set up for participants, such as the LGBTQ + group Access Alliance, which provided information about vaccines and hosted bracelet-making events. Among them were renowned personalities such as Gary Crawford, Doly Begum, the players, and Dr. Nasima Akter. All were eagerly awaiting the final match of the tournament. The event was filled with anticipation and unity, celebrating the conclusion of intense competition and the recognition of outstanding achievements in sportsmanship and skill.

BCS aspires to continue this initiative in future years, as it has proven to be an effective way to engage youth in sports, provide a positive environment for socialization, and contribute to the development of a healthier community. Notably, this year's summer sports event embraced the theme of "The Vaccine Challenge, highlighting the importance of immunizations.



3. After School Tutoring Program (ASTP)

To serve young children and newcomers, BCS offers the After School Tutoring Program (ASTP), a free educational support and extracurricular opportunity for families who may not have the means to afford paid services. During the pandemic time, the program was conducted online via Zoom. However, we started in-person activities in 2022 and continue till now.

ASTP's primary focus is on providing tutoring services and homework assistance, which are facilitated by dedicated youth volunteers. However, the program has expanded to include engaging extracurricular activities, such as the opportunity for the children to learn traditional and contemporary dances, as well as the South Asian Art Program, where children can explore South Asian arts and crafts. In addition, professional singers provide free Bengali singing lessons to students, enabling them to showcase their skills at various community cultural events hosted by BCS throughout the year. These

events include International Mother Language Day, Canada Day, Pohela Boishakh, CBON Mela, Bangladesh Independence Day Celebration, and more.

Since its inception in 2000, the ASTP has been one of BCS's most successful and enduring initiatives, providing not only an educational platform, but also a sense of cultural connection among students, allowing them to feel closer to their community. Through the ASTP program, BCS organizes art competitions, cultural festivals, and numerous events throughout the year through the ASTP program. This initiative allows youth to explore and develop their artistic skills and talents free of charge.



4. Youth Game Night / Youth Drop-In

The Youth Recreation Drop-In program offers a convenient and accessible weekly recreational drop-in for youth residing in the Taylor-Massey and Oakridge one of the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs). We used a virtual platform to continue these important services during the pandemic. However, we have been running the program in person since last year (2022) and have extended this program that includes nutrition. The program has expanded its reach by welcoming youth from other areas as well. Through preliminary research conducted within the community, it was discovered that local youth expressed a strong desire to engage in sports and recreational activities. However, they faced limitations such as lack of space, safety concerns, and rising costs.

Weekly drop-ins provided youth with the opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational and beneficial activities, including card games, computer games, board games, and table tennis. Special events such as bowling nights and skating nights were organized, attracting a significant number of youth participants. Dinner or light snacks were also provided during the sessions. By providing a safe and supportive environment, the program enabled youth to relieve stress, foster connections within the community, and serve as a positive deterrent from engaging in risky behaviors. The program's regular schedule made it particularly attractive to youth who wanted to connect with their peers while fulfilling their volunteer hours.

In 2023, an average of 10-15 youth participants, along with several volunteers, actively participated in the program in person. The program has also facilitated the formation of friendships among newcomers, helping them integrate into the community. Due to its success and the positive response, BCS is committed to continuing this project indefinitely, to ensure continued opportunities for youth to connect, have fun, and thrive in their community.

Recently, we have added skills development and mental health through arts and culture to this program so that youth not only feel engaged but also empowered for self-actualization and development.



Senior Programs/Initiatives

1. Weekly Exercise Sessions

Join us for the "Weekly Exercise Sessions on Zoom" designed to enhance the physical, social, and mental well-being of seniors. Led by BCS and led by a certified activationist, these sessions feature a range of exercises including aerobics, muscle strengthening, cardio and stretching. Held virtually on Zoom and other platforms, these sessions take place three times a week: Monday and Wednesday at 7 p.m., and Saturday at 10 a.m. Each 2-hour session provides ample time for seniors to actively participate. In 2023, BCS successfully conducted 160 sessions with an average of 60-70 seniors attending each session. Come and be a part of our vibrant and fulfilling exercise community!

Weekly exercise sessions are carefully designed to be engaging and enjoyable, with creative movements, fun activities, and exercises set to music. Seniors from a number of global regions, including North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, actively participate in these sessions, with an average of 60-80 seniors attending each session. It's important to note that these exercise sessions have been held continuously for over two years without interruption.

The impact of the Weekly Exercise Sessions on senior lifestyles and overall well-being has been truly remarkable. Through active participation, seniors have seen significant improvements in their health and well-being, including better management of diabetes and high blood pressure. The sessions have undeniably proven to be beneficial for seniors' physical fitness and have made a significant contribution to improving their overall quality of life.

Welcome to BCS's Therapeutic Exercise Session



Zoom Link For Seniors Exercise Program: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83515622543> **Time:** Every Monday, Wednesday at 7-9 p.m., and Saturday at 10 a.m. to 12p.m.

2. Weekly Technology Sessions

The primary goal of the “Weekly Technology Sessions” on Thursday is to actively engage seniors in workshops designed to enhance their technical knowledge and computer skills, especially in the area of online accessibility. These sessions help seniors learn and develop the skills necessary to effectively use computers for communication, searching for online information, and engaging with the digital world. When COVID-19 interrupted our weekly technology sessions, we provided technology assistance to the seniors in their homes (in person) and over the phone. We have now resumed the technology sessions for seniors at the BCS office. Therefore, BCS continues to support seniors by providing technical assistance through various methods, including home visits (in person), virtual sessions on platforms such as Zoom, telephone support, and in-person assistance at the BCS office.

Throughout the year, BCS provides technical assistance to more than 60 seniors, to help them access and navigate online programs. In addition, the organization organizes on-demand cybersecurity workshops to educate seniors on how to protect their personal information and guard against fraudulent activity. Last year (2023), the workshops were held on Zoom and were attended by more than 150 seniors, demonstrating BCS's commitment to promoting online safety and security within the senior community.

3. Senior Group and Intergenerational Meeting

BCS clearly maintains a senior cabinet of 20 men and 10 women. At its most recent meeting, 15 youth actively participated, making it an intergenerational powerhouse. This influential group takes the lead in identifying and addressing social issues affecting seniors, with a focus on elder abuse, chronic disease, health care concerns, and psychosocial impacts. They fearlessly pursue strategies to promote

wellness, address housing issues, combat hate crimes and discrimination, and advocate for age-friendly communities. Remarkably, they orchestrated 11 intergenerational meetings in 2023.

Meetings can be conducted in two ways: online via Zoom and in person. These meetings bring together people from different generations, facilitating the exchange of valuable information and ideas. The insights gained from these meetings play a critical role in shaping the organization's approach to addressing key issues. They are instrumental in developing funding proposals to secure resources to support senior-focused initiatives.. BCS fully recognizes the pivotal role of the Senior Group in amplifying the voice of seniors' and driving positive change within the community. By actively engaging with the concerns and perspectives of seniors, BCS is committed to creating an environment that fully supports the well-being and empowerment of this demographic.



4. A Series of Health Education Workshops

BCS regularly provides seniors with essential health information, focusing on important topics such as COVID-19, hygiene practices, nutrition, and effective management of chronic diseases including diabetes, high blood pressure, cholesterol, chronic pain, dementia, and mental health. These engaging and informative weekly health workshops, conducted via Zoom and in person, are expertly designed to enrich seniors' knowledge and empower them to effectively manage their health conditions. In 2023, there were 24 issue-based workshops, 24 health-related workshops, and 48 weekly workshops covering social and health issues. The workshops were successfully conducted and made a significant impact.

To ensure seniors receive the best advice , BCS partners with leading organizations such as South Riverdale, Alzheimer's Society, East End Community Health Centre, Flemingdon Health Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association, and Access Alliance. We also engage family physicians, nurse students from York University nursing students , epidemiologists, and other experts to lead our workshops and provide invaluable insight. Workshops are available both virtually and in person, making it convenient for seniors in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to participate. Workshop details will be shared on social media, and interested seniors can register by calling BCS. Don't miss out – secure your spot by pre-registering for the workshops today.



BCS is committed to promoting effective communication and inclusiveness. . Our workshops are equipped with certified interpreters to ensure that seniors can fully participate and understand the information being shared. We provide translated versions of vaccine-related updates from Toronto Public Health and the City of Toronto to ensure that seniors stay informed about immunization efforts.

We also provide transportation to make it easier for seniors to participate. Join us in our efforts to empower and support our senior community.

5. A Series of Elder Abuse Workshops

In 2023, BCS took the initiative to conduct elder abuse workshops with the support of New Horizon and WoodGreen Community Services. Even after the initial funding ended, BCS continued to organize these important workshops for seniors and their family members, despite the lack of funding. Fortunately, BCS received funding from New Horizon again this year to continue the Elder Abuse sessions. Throughout the year, we successfully conducted 24 seminars, workshops, and focus group discussions (FGDs) to address the pressing issue of elder abuse.

Each workshop has been well attended,, with an average of 30-40 seniors, mostly women, participating.. These workshops provide a platform to raise awareness about the various forms of abuse that seniors may come across. We aim to gather valuable insights from participants to compile a comprehensive report on the extent and nature of elder abuse. This report will be instrumental in advocating for change and ensuring that policymakers have a clear understanding of the issues. With the information and recommendations gathered, BCS plans to actively engage with policymakers to provide them with the insight necessary to develop effective policies to combat elder abuse and protect the well-being of seniors in our community. BCS is steadfast in its commitment to combating elder abuse and preserving the safety and dignity of seniors and their families.

6. Monthly Issue Based Workshops

BCS is dedicated to hosting impactful workshops and sessions that tackle pressing social issues. Our primary goal is to deepen understanding of current social issues and seek solutions that benefit seniors and the wider community. Each workshop typically attracts approximately 30 seniors, providing the perfect setting for meaningful discussions and engagement. These sessions also create an environment where seniors and youth both can benefit from shared knowledge and insights.

Workshops focus on key social issues that affect both seniors and youth. Topics include housing challenges, immigration issues, community safety, age-friendly communities, voting, civic engagement, family dynamics, bridging cultural gaps, addressing tutoring challenges, unemployment, and much more. These workshops are an ongoing project and are currently being conducted online through platforms such as Zoom to ensure accessibility. In 2023, we successfully completed 24 topic-based workshops. BCS is committed to providing a valuable forum for participants to explore and address critical social issues. Through these workshops, participants gain knowledge, share experiences, and work together to create positive change in our society.

7. Weekly Recreational Activities

BCS is pleased to offer a wide variety of engaging weekly recreational activities tailored for seniors. These carefully designed activities are aimed at foster connections, provide vital support, and reduce social isolation. The inclusion of six key areas —physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, and vocational—ensures a well-rounded experience for participating seniors. In 2023, BCS successfully completed 52 recreational sessions. These activities include a variety of enjoyable options, such as trivia games, interactive sing-alongs, art and colouring sessions, cooking, embroidery, quizzes, travel shows, documentaries, arts and crafts projects, and more. Held at two different locations : the BCS office and Dentonia Park Clubhouse. In response to current circumstances, all recreational activities are conducted virtually and in person. At BCS, our unwavering commitment is to create supportive

environment that fosters meaningful connections among seniors. Our diverse array of recreational activities strongly promote social engagement and contribute significantly to overall well-being and enjoyment. We remain committed to providing these valuable recreational opportunities. The well-being of seniors is our highest priority.

8. Home Support

Prior to COVID-19, BCS provided regular home support services, which continued during the pandemic under Toronto Public Health guidelines. Although COVID-19 is over, we continue to provide home support to vulnerable seniors. In 2023, BCS supported 400 seniors through our home support services, which included phone calls for information, technology support, emotional support, social chat, and surveys. Through our in-home support, many seniors



became independent and were able to participate in BCS wellness programs, went outdoors with senior volunteers to enjoy the summer environment, and accompanied volunteers to grocery stores. Typically, BCS sends volunteers to senior residences to engage in conversation, play board games, clean their homes, and prepare light meals such as soup. BCS also helps seniors with technology issues at home to connect with others online, shop for groceries, and access important information. In addition, we continue to call seniors to chat, discuss their emotional issues, and remind them to take their medications.

9. Accompaniment Supports (for the interpreter, travel assistance, etc.)

BCS provides escort services. The service helps seniors get to dental, physiotherapy, hospital, and other healthcare facilities. Volunteers schedule an appointment with the senior and choose a convenient location to meet them—usually the location closest to their home. The seniors sign a disclaimer form that is prepared by the volunteers. They then travel together to the health care facilities. In addition, the volunteers serve as translators between the seniors and the doctors. We also created a network of seniors who helped other seniors go to health facilities. (hence the name peer support). In this way, we reached 162 seniors to help them go to the health care system.

10. Senior Outdoor Visits

The Intergenerational Team organizes Senior Outdoor Visits throughout the year. The primary goal is to bring together each family member, including seniors and children from the community, to create memories that will last a lifetime and build relationships with others in the outdoors. People can meet new people and see new places during these outdoor trips. A trip to national parks, national libraries, museums, monuments, architectural structures, cinemas, shopping malls, restaurants, and beaches is planned by BCS. Seniors look forward to the next adventure and enjoy these. All trips are planned to follow strict safety protocols to ensure everyone's safety. In 2022, the seniors visited shopping malls, and parks. About 180 seniors participated in the mall and park visits.

11. Meditation for Seniors

BCS leads mindfulness meditation sessions specifically tailored to help seniors feel at ease, manage physical pain, and reduce emotional discomfort. These sessions are designed to combat internal emotional erosion that affects health and well-being and feature a blend of Tibetan mountain instrumental flute and nature music. The program has received positive feedback, with many seniors reporting significant improvements in their emotional well-being and reductions in stress, anxiety, and other mental health issues. In 2023, we successfully completed 36 meditation sessions. BCS is committed to continuing and expanding this program to promote the health and well-being of our community members.

12. Volunteer Opportunities for Seniors

BCS currently has 50 active senior volunteers dedicated to community outreach projects and events. These volunteers work as door-to-door workers for disease advocacy groups. In addition, 25 senior volunteers are involved in leading the Senior' Cabinet and developing policies and strategies based on grassroots feedback. BCS has a long history of providing hands-on training for seniors to be independent and active. This ongoing process aims to empower seniors to lead senior activities in the neighbourhood and community.

BCS offers rewarding volunteer opportunities for seniors. To get started, seniors must complete the standard volunteer and TOR forms. In 2020, 25 seniors volunteered; this number increased to over 40 in 2021, and continues to grow to over 60 in 2022, and 75 in 2023. If you are a senior interested in volunteering, please contact the BCS office to get involved and make a difference in our community.



Women/Girls Initiatives

Empowering women and promoting social equity is an integral part of BCS. We are mandated to support the empowerment of immigrant and racialized women and girls in terms of their socio-economic, political, and economic advancement. Based on anti-oppressive and feminist principles, BCS works with and supports racialized South Asian women and girls in Toronto who experience various forms of oppression, discrimination, and violence in their families, communities, and workplaces. BCS works with women, girls, and their families by facilitating discussions, organizing community events, providing tailored employment and settlement advice, and making appropriate referrals. BCS uses a cultural approach to educate the community about the rights of women and girls, provide peer support and leadership training to women and girls, and promote community mobilization to combat misogyny and gender stereotypes. BCS has implemented several initiatives to support and empower women and girls in our community. For example, our Peacemaker Initiative created a space to discuss the impact of Islamophobia on women, while our "Women in STEM" (WIS) program encouraged women to pursue careers in male-dominated fields. Our current EAP and TERT program focused on "Combating Islamophobia and Racism" brought together numerous participants, including guest speakers and hundreds of ambassadors to share their perspectives on Islamophobia within their communities. The Women in STEM program reached a broader audience by engaging participants from across the city and featuring professional speakers from diverse groups. This unexpected outcome was a positive development. In 2021, we launched the Women And Gender Equity (WAGE) project, which received

funding from the federal government. In addition , we initiated another project focused on women’s and girls circles as part of the Safer, Stronger Grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation, with Skills for Changes leading the effort. We have since continued this initiative due to the community demand even though the grant project has ended .

Initiatives completed in 2023:

1. Nourishing the souls of seniors

The BCS study unequivocally revealed that family members and caregivers are neglecting Bangladeshi seniors with cognitive impairment (Islam & Akter, 2021). During the pandemic, a staggering 63% of these seniors with mental health challenges were left feeling helpless, isolated, and inactive at home, leading to deep feelings of depression and a sense of being trapped. The effects of COVID-19 continued for over two years. In response, BCS conducted a workshop with 30 seniors and community members to identify and address the needs of seniors with mild cognitive impairment to improve their quality of life by reducing their social isolation and increasing their engagement. As a result, BCS boldly launched the "Nourishing the Souls of Seniors (NSS)" project in July 2022 and successfully completed it in March 2023. The NSS project empowered seniors by promoting active living and wellness through dynamic physical exercise and recreational activities such as singing , drama, and social chats. It also aimed to strengthen the connection between seniors and youth through community group walks and to create robust opportunities for social inclusion and engagement through program participation, outreach, and meeting engagement. The overarching objective of the project was to strengthen the capacity of seniors to engage in community activities in the post-pandemic environment. Specifically over 100 seniors actively participated in 42 physical activity and recreation sessions with an impressive average attendance of 50-60 seniors per session. In addition, dedicated staff methodically reached out to the seniors to reduce their isolation and connected them with other seniors to cultivate a robust social network. A dedicated intergenerational group, composed of ten seniors and five youths, drove the implementation of the project activities. This group met five times to rigorously evaluate the progress of the project activities. BCS persevered, achieved its goals, and completed the project on time, funded generously by WoodGreen Community Services.



2. My Home is my Peace during COVID-19 Pandemic

This project aimed to effectively address anxiety, depression, and dementia among seniors and help them manage these issues in their homes to create a peaceful living environment. It was initiated in April 2022 and successfully completed in March 2023, with approximately 67 seniors actively participating in the project activities. The project had several clear objectives, including engaging seniors in virtual activities for social inclusion, conducting workshops and demonstrations to educate them about anxiety, depression, and dementia, and teaching them effective coping strategies to maintain their overall well-being. The project was funded by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Senior program. It involved organizing engaging outdoor activities such as picnics and shopping mall visits for the seniors. To effectively implement these activities, an intergenerational group of ten

seniors and five youth was formed. Recreational activities were held regularly on Thursdays and Fridays at 9:15 a.m., with a total of 36 sessions successfully completed. During these sessions, seniors actively participated in fun activities such as Sina Along, dancing, storytelling, and social chats, with the youth also participating.. In addition , ten impactful mental health workshops focusing on dementia and psychological issues were conducted as an integral part of the project.

3. Fighting Misogyny and Stereotypes against Racialized Women and Girls in Toronto

A project implemented by Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services (BCS) and Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE).

Project Overview:

The 18-month project and campaign, conducted from October 2021 to March 2023, aimed to support a feminist response and recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 by fostering systemic change. The project focused on creating safe spaces in Toronto's east neighborhoods to empower 30 racialized women and girls affected by COVID-19. Additionally, the project aimed to guide and support these individuals in their journey towards becoming feminist leaders while raising public awareness about the impact of misogyny and gender stereotypes on women's rights. This was achieved through forum meetings with participants, community leaders, and policymakers, as well as a media and social media campaign. The project also facilitated dialogues with local Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament, City Councillors, and School Trustees.



Project Success:

The evaluation report highlights several key achievements of the project:

1. Empowerment and Support:
 - The project successfully created safe spaces where racialized women and girls impacted by COVID-19 could find empowerment and support.
 - Participants reported increased confidence, self-esteem, and leadership skills.
2. Meaningful Dialogues:
 - The project's forum meetings facilitated meaningful dialogues between participants, community leaders, and policymakers, fostering a deeper understanding of the impact of misogyny and gender stereotypes on women's rights.
3. Public Awareness:

The media and social media campaign effectively raised public awareness about issues related to misogyny and gender stereotypes, contributing to a broader societal understanding of these challenges.



Challenges and Recommendations:

Despite its successes, the project encountered some challenges:

- Resource Constraints:
 - Limited resources and funding constraints affected the scale and scope of the project's activities.
- Logistical Obstacles:
 - The COVID-19 pandemic presented logistical obstacles, such as limited in-person gatherings and reduced access to community spaces.
 - Some participants faced barriers to engagement due to language barriers, childcare responsibilities, or lack of digital literacy.

Based on these findings, the evaluation report provides several recommendations:

- Long-term Funding:
 - Secure long-term funding to sustain and expand the project's impact.
- Strengthening Partnerships:
 - Strengthen partnerships with local organizations and community leaders to enhance support systems and resources.
- Addressing Logistical Challenges:
 - Develop virtual engagement strategies and provide language support to ensure inclusivity.
- Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation:
 - Implement ongoing monitoring and evaluation to measure the long-term effects of the project.
- Sustained Advocacy:
 - Emphasize the need for sustained advocacy and engagement with policymakers at all levels of government.
- Building Alliances:

- Build alliances with other feminist organizations to amplify the project's impact and foster collective action.
- Continued Education and Awareness:
 - Continue education and awareness-raising initiatives to combat misogyny and promote gender equality in the long term.

This project has demonstrated the power of community-driven initiatives in creating lasting change and fostering empowerment among marginalized groups. By continuing to address the challenges and building on the successes, we can make significant strides toward gender equality and social justice.



4. Community Challenge : Cricket activities 2023

In collaboration with the Ontario School Counsellors Association (OSCA) and the ParticipACTION Community Challenge (PCC), this exciting initiative was launched to engage cricket enthusiasts in our community and to advocate for active living. This program aimed to unite youth, parents, and grandparents in participating in cricket and engaging in various enjoyable activities to promote an active and healthy lifestyle. The community challenge activities in June and July 2023 attracted the participation of approximately 2000 community members, reflecting the growing enthusiasm for this impactful initiative.



5. The Next Play : Canadian Women & Sport 2023:

The goals of this initiative were (a) to help South Asian girls explore recreational activities, have fun, and learn about their physical health, with the intention of integrating healthy recreational activities into their lives for the long term. (b) In addition, it aimed to educate girls and their families about the importance of recreational activities and to challenge the misogyny and stereotypes that discourage girls from participating in sports. This initiative was dedicated to empowering South Asian girls by actively encouraging them to explore recreational activities, have fun, and improve their physical health, with the ultimate goal of seamlessly integrating healthy recreational activities into their lives. It also aimed to educate girls and their families about the importance of recreational activities while challenging the misogyny and stereotypes associated with girls participating in sports. Our experience working with these groups has been remarkably successful. BCS consistently demonstrates creativity and inclusiveness. We actively seek commonalities to better connect with diverse communities while embracing and respecting all differences. Because of BCS's inclusive behaviour, we have consistently been successful in working with diverse communities. We are unwavering in our commitment to accommodate and respect all who participate in our programs and events.

6. Vaccine Community Innovative Challenge

After successfully completing the first round, we have received funding for the second round in 2022-2023. This round of the project aimed to inform the community about COVID booster shots and local vaccination programs. We created flyers with important vaccine information and emphasized the positive benefits of vaccination. Our campaign involved 25 ambassadors who created posters and flyers, organized events, and engaged various community groups. We used clear messages and various platforms to reach more than 28,000 individuals. Our efforts increased vaccination coverage above the city average and significantly reduced COVID-19 hospitalisation rates during the peak of pandemic.



Our achievements include:

1. Dissemination of COVID-19 and vaccine knowledge through engaging events in the South Asian community.
2. Provided extensive training to 25 ambassadors on COVID-19 outreach and communication.
3. Volunteers dedicated over 1600 hours to plan and organize events and create awareness materials.
4. Reached over 32,300 individuals through social media and in-person engagements.
5. Raised awareness in the community through a variety of indoor and outdoor activities.
6. Received Positive feedback from participants who enjoyed the events and learned about the vaccine.
7. Contributed to increased vaccination coverage and reduced COVID-19 hospitalization rates above the city average during the peak of pandemic .

However, In 2022-23, we completed our first round of vaccine challenge funding. Our "For You. For Them. Get Vaccinated" message reached more than 12,000 people through various outreach efforts. We also distributed PPE flyers to 1,920 people and hosted successful outdoor events for diverse audiences. These efforts helped increase vaccination coverage and reduce hesitancy in our area.

7. Vaccine Engagement Team (VET)

The project's objectives were to share the stories of the ambassadors, engage them in game activities, distribute certificates, invite community members (especially seniors) to participate, and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) to all participants. We have translated vaccine-related information into Bengali. We used various methods to reach out to the community with vaccine information, such as hyper-local Bangla Townhall, community events, sports, phone calls, emails, social media, virtual sessions, peer connections, snowballing technique of outreach, etc. We also offered help with making vaccine appointments, conducted weekly virtual sessions, and provided COVID and vaccine updates. Each week, an ambassador created new flyers with the latest vaccine information for the city and distributed them to the community. Another ambassador translated updated vaccine information on a weekly basis. Three ambassadors distributed 200 flyers door-to-door in apartment buildings (M4C, M1L, etc.) reaching 200 families, and 200 flyers in person in marketplaces, businesses,

and places of worship. There was also a monthly distribution of 200 flyers and outreach to parents and families in front of schools and daycares centres.



In February 2023, a community event was organized to provide vaccine information to the participants and their family members. The event was a meet and greet with vaccine ambassadors and community partners. The event successfully attracted seniors, adults, and youth, and the BCS effectively distributed certificates to ambassadors and community members who participated in vaccine activities. During the event, ambassadors shared stories about their involvement in vaccine activities and the challenges they faced.

A monthly virtual session was held to provide the latest vaccine information to the South Asian community. In addition, BCS continued to reach out to people through phone calls, text messages, and social media to provide vaccine information.

By the end of the project, we had engaged 8 ambassadors and 22 volunteers in vaccine activities, with over 200 people attending to receive masks and hand sanitizers. In addition, an information table was set up to provide vaccine information, and 8 ambassadors shared stories of vaccine challenges and successes.

8. Youth Vaccine Engagement Team- With WoodGreen Community Services

We have successfully launched a Youth Vaccine Engagement Initiative in partnership with WoodGreen Community Services. This is to raise awareness and engage South Asian youth to increase vaccine coverage among the youth. Our youth ambassadors spend 4 hours each week conducting outreach by distributing flyers, masks, hand sanitizers, and face shields. In total, we have distributed approximately 1040 flyers. This team of ambassadors also holds meetings to strategically plan events and brainstorm more ways to engage the community. We also organized many fun events in 2023, listed below with the community participation we were able to attract.



- February 7, 2023: Mental Health Wellness Workshop 1 (14 participants)
- February 21, 2023: Mental Health Workshop 2 (14 participants)
- February 25, 2023: International Mother Language Event and Vaccine Information Interaction
- March 18, 2023: Vaccine Engagement Team Appreciation and March Break Event (approximately 200 participants including Volunteers)
- May 13, 2023: Intergen Art Workshop (Vaccine Themed) (85 participants)
- January: 400 PPE kits distributed
- February: 500 PPE kits distributed 500 flyers distributed
- March: Over 500 PPE kits were distributed and approximately 500 flyers distributed.

The BCS Youth Ambassadors have been actively distributing masks, hand sanitizers, wipes, pop-up flyers, and vaccine challenge flyers on Danforth Ave at least 2-3 times per week for the last several months. Their goal is to increase vaccine coverage in our community. On most days, days, the Ambassadors are able to hand out 100 vaccine information flyers to people of all age groups, along

with some incentives. Many people have expressed their appreciation for their efforts and are grateful for the up-to-date information and assistance provided. In addition to distributing masks and hand sanitizers during the week, the Youth Ambassadors also provide incentives at our vaccine engagement events. We collected data to track the number of people served and the number of personal protective equipment kits provided.



9. Cultural Community Support Program (CCSP)

The pandemic particularly affected the daily lives of seniors and posed health risks to them. During the COVID crisis, we discovered that 95% of seniors are homebound and inactive. Due to their confinement at home, they have difficulty obtaining daily necessities, consumables, and physical activity. They also have uncontrolled chronic diseases. 76% of people do not have access to Bengali-language health information, and 80% of elders experience verbal and physical abuse, the latter of which is more common during COVID scenarios. In addition, there is still a great deal of stigma within the South Asian community about seeking help for mental health. Therefore, there is a need for mental health interventions that are inclusive and sensitive to cultural differences.

The goal of the project was to reduce the burden on our community caused by mental health issues, a lack of social interaction, food insecurity, and general support are all important in fostering a sense of community. The initiative has been supported by the United Way. The project includes bi-weekly virtual drop-ins for mental health and intergenerational engagement activities where young people and elders can interact and build relationships. It also provided low-income families in Crescent Town and the neighbourhood with a monthly food shopping delivery service, including culturally appropriate meals and consumables. More than 56 elderly were reached and provided with a month's worth of groceries (a basic necessity), 26 intergenerational drop-in sessions were completed, and a total of more

than 750 participants signed up. The seniors and young people talked about coping mechanisms for dealing with feelings of loneliness, isolation, mental anxiety, sadness, and mental deterioration.

Social Event 2023

1. BANGLA NEW YEAR (POHELA BOISHAK)

The Bangla New Year celebration in 2023 was a wonderful and entertaining event with fun activities and performances such as art competitions, dancing, singing, and drama. Over 100 visitors attended the event, and it was a great opportunity to share our culture with the community. The event included art competitions, cultural dances, and food to share with everyone. It aimed to showcase Bengali culture and heritage, make it more familiar to the wider community and help the Bengali group feel more accepted within their community.

2. CANADA DAY

BCS celebrates Canada Day every year in July to show our gratitude towards the country. This year, BCS celebrated Canada Day in solidarity with Indigenous people and communities. Canada was in mourning following the tragic discovery of the bodies of children buried in many residential schools. BCS decided to stand in solidarity with Indigenous People and discuss the micro and macro level issues and problems facing Indigenous communities. In response to this tragic event, BCS organized a Zoom meeting and encouraged people to learn about and support the lives of Indigenous People. This allowed BCS to raise awareness of these issues and the importance of understanding Indigenous history for those who attended the event.



3. WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY

World No Tobacco Day is an annual event coordinated by Youth Eliminates Smoking. The event aims to raise awareness about the dangers of tobacco use. Since 2019, it has been held in the community at Access Point Danforth. In 2023, the event was attended by over 60 community members, including our esteemed councillor. It also engaged youth and children, who participated in contest competitions and interactive activities. World No Tobacco Day served as a platform to educate people about the negative effects of tobacco and encourage them to support those struggling with tobacco use.



In May 2023, World No Tobacco Day was held at the BSC office at 2899 Danforth Avenue, Toronto M4C 1M2 . were invited to participate in all the fun activities and food.

4. IMLD (International Mothers Language Day)

International Mother Language Day events aim to celebrate the Bengali language movement. The event featured beautiful performances, including dances, poetry recitations, and songs for all community members to enjoy. There was also an art competition where many children created pieces representing the Bengali language. The event was fortunate to have over 300 attendees. International Mother Language Day encouraged others to be more confident about their culture and heritage, making individuals more comfortable with their unique differences in Western society.



5. The Taste of Taylor Massey – Multicultural Food Fest

Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services and Access Alliance
presents its 5th Annual:

TASTE OF TAYLOR MASSEY

"Multicultural Food Festival"
Inviting **newcomer, immigrants, refugees**
and **community members**

YOU WILL:

- Try **delicious food items** from **around the world**
- Watch and participate in **cultural performances**
- Win **prizes and giveaways** (must be registered)
- Participate in **fun activities**

REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY!
Use this link to register;
<https://forms.office.com/r/BP10MBivNv>
or Scan the QR Code to register

AccessPoint on Danforth
3079 Danforth Avenue
Scarborough, ON M1L 1A8

Saturday 24th June, 2023
2:00pm - 4:00pm

For more information please contact **Inaara** at:
416 693 8677 ext. 4229 or iqamber@accessalliance.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada / Agence de la santé publique du Canada
ACCESSPOINT FORTH / New Beginnings for newcomers
BCS / Access Alliance

The Taste of Taylor Massey, a vibrant multicultural food festival, is proudly hosted annually by BCS and Access Alliance. This exciting event is designed to introduce our community to a wide variety of international cuisines. Our team has curated engaging and creative activities that can be enjoyed through an online platform, ensuring a delightful experience for all, right from the comfort of your screen. With over 70 enthusiastic attendees at our Zoom events, The Taste of Taylor Massey truly promises to be a memorable and enriching experience. Let's embrace new taste, explore different cultures, and celebrate the diversity that exists within our community.

6. National Day for Truth & Reconciliation on 30th September 2023:

On September 30, 2023 we organized an after-school information session for youth to learn more about Indigenous people, their culture, the history of what they have gone through, and to discuss some ways they can work with Indigenous communities and include them as part of our communities and reconcile for things we have done knowingly and unknowingly as settlers. The youth sat down and discussed what they would like to do in the future in programs to make our programs more indigenous friendly.



7. Bangladesh Independence Day & Victory day of Bangladesh:

Every year BCS celebrates Bangladesh Independence Day and Victory Day with the community. We have discussions about the Liberation War, sharing memories of freedom fighters, feelings of new generations, cultural performances etc. to pay tribute to the freedom fighters and to show our respect and solidarity to our motherland Bangladesh. For the last 2 years we have been celebrating the day virtually.

8. International women's day celebration

Every year we celebrate International Women's Day with other community partners. 7 to 8 partner agencies organize this event with invited speakers, speeches and discussions by community leaders and performances. In 2022, on International Women's Day BSC was privileged to have Ms. Samya Hasan, Executive Director of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA), delivered a keynote address. Elected representatives, community leaders, educators, and women's rights activists also attended the event held on March 8, 2022.

9. Newcomer Day

Every year, Toronto Newcomers Day is celebrated and Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Service helps in welcoming the newcomers to Toronto. It is an event to allow them access to a wide range of services and to celebrate their contributions to the city. There will be family fun and entertainment, information fair, newcomer marketplace, newcomer food fair, and cultural performance.

Initiative continuing in 2024

1. Unity Is Our Strength: A Danforth Senior project

The program aims to improve the cognitive, emotional, and social well-being of South Asian Bangladeshi seniors. Its main objective is to help seniors lead active and healthy lives. The program aims to support seniors in participating in cognitive and emotional activities, building social networks, reducing social isolation, improving intergenerational connections, and promoting volunteerism among seniors. The Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) has targeted 40 seniors who are isolated and homebound, and who also have physical disabilities (mobility issues), low income, and language barriers. The program includes knitting and embroidery for cognitive activity, cooking sessions for emotional activity (Cook and Talk), outdoor activities in the summer for social activity (Seniors on the Go), and groups of seniors visiting other seniors' homes for social interaction and assistance with household activities (My Friends and Me).



2. Education and Allyship Program (EAP):

The Education and Allyship Program (EAP) is an 18-month, youth-led project that recruits youth ambassadors, and volunteers from diverse communities to educate, implement, and engage equitable communities to empower them to fight anti-racism and discrimination. The EA program focuses on education, action, and allyship through initiatives such as interactive workshops, a resource toolkit, and a guest speaker series. This project believed in building a strong diverse community partnership, creating awareness, education and resources to be empowered to fight anti-racism and discrimination.

The primary goal of the Education & Allyship Program (EAP) is to increase community awareness of the various forms of racism and discrimination that exist in Canada and to develop an understanding of how to be an ally to various marginalized communities. The program is designed for communities in the surrounding Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs), such as the Crescent Town and Oakridge communities.

EAP Kick-off:

Building Communities Together: BCS Launches Education and Allyship Program to Combat Racism and Discrimination

Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) organized a transformative event to address racism and discrimination, culminating in the launch of the Education and Allyship Program (EAP), generously funded by the Government of Canada. The event took place on December 09, 2023 at Access Point Danforth where 120 leaders, activists, and community members gathered for insightful discussions and impactful initiatives.

Expected outcomes of EAP include holistic understanding, addressing issues affecting marginalized communities, and increasing awareness of democratic institutions. EAP is a youth-led program that aims to increase community awareness of the various forms of racism and discrimination present in Canada as well as develop an understanding of how to be an ally to various marginalized communities. The EA program will have a focus on education, action, and allyship through initiatives such as interactive workshops, a resource toolkit, and a guest speaker series. Resource toolkits will be created based on the various workshops and be translated into different languages to make the topics more accessible and digestible for community members. This component will focus on providing community members with the tools they need to feel empowered to take action against any incidents of discrimination they may face within their communities or in a professional setting.



Speakers at the event advocated for policy action, collaborative toolkits, and knowledge dissemination to combat racism and discrimination and emphasized the need to share experiences, use individual roles to enact change, and raise awareness about implicit bias and emphases on social media bases.

The discussion concluded with examples on how communities can help create resilience, especially through children, by using holidays and discussion periods to address contentious issues. The leaders collectively emphasized the importance of individual and collective action in promote understanding and combat discrimination. The Education and Allyship Program (EAP) stand poised to make a significant impact in fostering resilient, empathetic communities united against racism and discrimination.

Expected results:

The outcomes of the projects component are that participants and communities gain knowledge, develop strategies and take action to: increase awareness and gain a holistic understanding of the different forms of racism and discrimination that exist in Canada; increase awareness of issues

affecting various marginalized communities in Canada related to culture, race, ethnicity, religion, and the intersection of these components; increase awareness of democratic institutions, systems, and legal frameworks, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; and increase capacity within communities to address racism and discrimination and promote allyship. In addition, the EAP will result in the creation of a digital toolkit to prevent racism and discrimination, which will provide additional resources for participants and community members to access at any time. All resources created will be translated into different languages to increase accessibility and broaden the reach and impact of the program.

The program design:

The program is designed to serve disadvantaged communities in need surrounding Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs), such as the Crescent Town and Oakridge communities. Because many members of the target communities are recent immigrants who come from homogeneous countries, they often lack a holistic understanding of what racism looks like in Canada and the different forms that discrimination takes. For example, the Crescent Town and Oakridge communities are composed largely of South Asian immigrants who may lack both a historical and contemporary understanding of anti-black and anti-indigenous racism due to a lack of interaction and experience with these communities in their home countries. A lack of knowledge and understanding of a different group of people can create a sense of fear and intolerance; sometimes leading to hate crimes.

The service needs:

In this era, the world has seen an increase in incidents of hate, racism, and discrimination. In Toronto alone, the number of reported hate crime incidents increased from 5.2% in 2016 to 7.2% in 2019. (X) Several recent incidents such as the Black Lives Matter movement, the attacks on the Mi'kmaq lobster facilities, the murder of Mohamed-Aslim Zafis outside of his mosque, and many more, have highlighted the urgent need for programs that address working to fight against racism and discrimination to create a more equitable Canada. In addition, there is a growing need for such programs to be delivered to communities of colour, who are often both victims and perpetrators of racism and discrimination. In the Crescent Town and Oakridge communities, there are no such programs available for community members, despite the fact that 84% being visible minorities and 57% are immigrants. (Rouf et al., 2020). While there are resources available online, they are often inaccessible due to language barriers that many community members may face, or the content is irrelevant due to a general lack of understanding of the topic. The Education & Allyship Program (EAP) will be the first of its kind for the two target communities and will provide education on the topics of racism, discrimination, and allyship in a way that is accessible and relevant to their members

Progress of the project implementation:

We have sent project information and activities to hundreds of people and reached thousands of people through social media. We are encouraging and training 20 ambassadors and volunteers how to create digital content for social media, blogs, etc. The development of toolkits to combat racism and discrimination is underway. Approximately 400 people have attended our planning meeting, orientation, trainings and workshops, , kickoff events and speaker series on education and allyship.



We have engaged more than 15,000 people through social media coverage and hundreds more through email, phone calls and Google Doc. We also partnered with community organizations, representatives from various agencies, community leaders and professionals. We have partnered with Access Alliance Danforth, HSDN International, Toronto Bangla School, Tamil Civic Action Group to conduct outreach and invited speakers from various non-profit organizations to share their experiences, perspectives and practices and created an avenue to ally. The EA program is conducting a survey entitled "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) towards Racism and Discrimination: A Community-Based Cross-Sectional Study. More than 400 people have already participated in the survey. So far, we have organized three ambassador workshops planned and implemented by EAP youth volunteers and completed two lecture series and one collaborative conference on combating racism and discrimination. The youth skills and experiences of the youth are being evaluated and improvements are being seen in the participants.

The evaluation and findings after the implementation of this project may create new insights, needs and opportunities that may require further attention to address. This program is open to the public joining from anywhere. However, the target audience is the Danforth communities living in the Taylor-Massey, Oakridge and Main Street areas.

3. Resilient Youth for Change Project

Resilient Youth For Change
SHOWCASING MICRO-GRANTS PROJECTS OF TORONTO YOUTHS
 A project implemented by BCS
 Funded by Canada Service Corps
 2023-2024

SPONSORED BY
CANADA SERVICE CORPS | **Canada** | **BCS**

The Resilient Youth for Change project, funded by the Canada Service Corps, aimed to empower racialized youth in Toronto, particularly within the South Asian and Black communities in Toronto East. Over an 8-month period, the project exceeded its initial goal, supporting 60 youths aged 15 to 30.

Objectives and Activities: This initiative focused on addressing the challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing equity, diversity, and inclusion. Key objectives included providing mental health support, cultivating entrepreneurial skills, and offering career counseling. Activities ranged from outreach and workshops to dialogue sessions that addressed mental health, career, and employment needs.



Project Successes:

- **Skill Development:** Participants gained valuable skills in advocacy, leadership, stress management, financial literacy, social entrepreneurship, and project management.
- **Community Engagement:** There was a significant increase in community organizing, campaigns, and dialogue sessions with government officials, fostering a sense of community involvement and collaboration.
- **Youth-Led Projects:** Sixty youth-led projects addressed social issues such as racism, discrimination, and mental health, amplifying their impact through micro-grants and community support.

Challenges: Youth leaders faced several challenges, including finding affordable venues for their workshops, participant recruitment from community and engaged them motivated. Despite these obstacles, the project succeeded in building connections, supporting newcomers, educating on violence, and addressing health-related issues.

Recommendations: Participants suggested future initiatives include more collaboration and networking, an online platform for youth interaction, enhanced outreach efforts, and mentorship opportunities. BCS recommends extending the project period to 12 months for each cohort to allow for more comprehensive development.

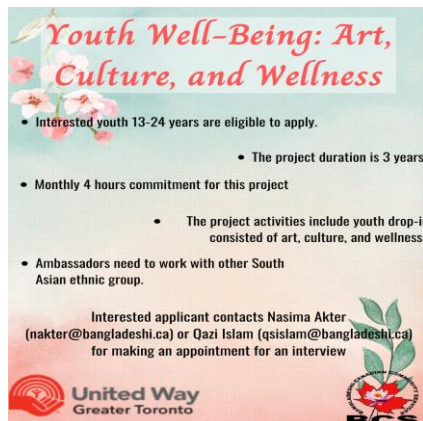


Conclusion: The Resilient Youth for Change project has successfully empowered youth, fostering community engagement and driving positive change in East Toronto. Despite challenges, the project's success in exceeding its goals underscores the resilience and dedication of Toronto's youth. We look forward to continuing this momentum and empowering marginalized communities with your ongoing support. For more information, please visit [review https://resilientyouth.ca/](https://resilientyouth.ca/)



4. Youth Well-Being: Art, Cultures, and Wellness

United Way Greater Toronto funded the three-year "Youth Well-Being: Arts, Cultures, and Wellness" project, which began in June 2022, and will continue into 2024. BCS and TCCCA offer weekly activities on Zoom and in person as part of the Youth Mental Wellness project. . The activities include art, games, educational discussions, cultures, parent interaction, recreational activities, cultural programs, community events, workshops, etc., that improve the social and emotional well-being of youth. The activities are mainly based on the South Asian arts, language, and culture. In addition, every month, Bangladeshi and Tamil youth meet every month on Zoom to exchange ideas and cultures and to build networks. The counseling social workers provide the youth with the resources to overcome mental health challenges. The program supports South Asian youth, primarily from the Tamil and Bangladeshi communities. We plan to support youth to help them build their self-esteem and confidence. It will help address intergenerational conflict by allowing both generations to come together to celebrate their roots. The program will increase access to mental health support for the youth as healing through art therapy will be part of the ongoing program. The project has recruited ten youth ambassadors from BCS and ten from the Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action (TCCCA). Weekly sessions will be held at t both BCS and TCCCA. Interested youth participants can contact the BCS office.



Youth Well-Being: Art, Culture, and Wellness

- Interested youth 13-24 years are eligible to apply.
- The project duration is 3 years.
- Monthly 4 hours commitment for this project
- The project activities include youth drop-in consisted of art, culture, and wellness.
- Ambassadors need to work with other South Asian ethnic group.

Interested applicant contacts Nasima Akter (nakter@bangladeshi.ca) or Qazi Islam (qsislam@bangladeshi.ca) for making an appointment for an interview

United Way Greater Toronto BCS



Youth Well-Being: Arts, Culture, and Wellness

Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) invites any interested youth to join the Youth Well-Being: Arts, Culture, and Wellness!

Join **every Friday @ 6 pm** for weekly drop-ins of fun activities like **arts, colouring, games, discussions, and more!**

If interested, please contact BCS: 416-699-4484 2899 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, M4C1M2 or email qsislam@bangladeshi.ca

United Way Greater Toronto BCS

5. Research

Our organization is dedicated to conducting extensive research to gather authentic and scientifically validated information that our community members can rely on. This research not only assists in finding solutions to various social issues but also plays a crucial role in evaluating the impact and effectiveness of our organized activities, providing assurance and confidence to our stakeholders. By relying on research, we can effectively identify new challenges and address them more efficiently, thereby serving our community more effectively. Given the significant impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, BCS has made significant efforts to access the most up-to-date and reliable information to provide comprehensive and accurate guidance to our community members. We actively share our research publications with stakeholders, partners, and the community to ensure that valuable knowledge is disseminated. In 2023 and 2024, we co-hosted a "Sustainable Public Health" conference with HSDN and four other organizations. BCS also presented three papers on food access challenges, refugee food challenges ,

and community members' awareness of racism and discrimination in the Taylor Massey neighbourhood.

KAP (Knowledge Attitudes and Practice) study: The BCS EAP program is currently conducting a survey titled "Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices (KAP) towards Racism and Discrimination: A Community-based Cross-sectional Study." The survey has interviewed 400 individuals, including South Asian Bangladeshi, Nigerian, Nepalese, Iranian, and other South Asian participants. The survey commenced in December 2023 and is still ongoing.

Long Term Care home study: The survey started in 2023 October and still it is continued. We surveyed seniors to assess their knowledge about long-term care homes, identify any knowledge gaps, and determine how to minimize them. We aim to help seniors develop a positive attitude towards long-term care to facilitate smooth integration into such facilities. We interviewed 30 seniors in Toronto who were over 65. The analysis is currently ongoing.

Domestic violence against women and children: A research project starting in 2022 focuses on domestic violence against Bangladeshi women and children. Titled "Gender-Based Violence on Bangladeshi Women and Girls During COVID-19 in Toronto," A manuscript was submitted in a peer review journal. It examines the increase in gender-based violence cases during the pandemic lockdown. The study reveals various forms of violence experienced by South Asian Bangladeshi women and girls, including physical, psychological, verbal, and financial abuse. The causes of violence during the lockdown include job loss, male power dominance, mental distress, fear of viruses, and financial issues. To address these issues, policymakers, governments, and ethnic organizations should collaborate on comprehensive plans to eliminate gender-based violence. Community organizations can provide resources and support for victims, while working with families and spouses to create a safer environment for those affected.

HEAL (Hubs for Expressive Arts for Life) Study: In 2022, BCS joined with Access Alliance as a community organization partner for research on "HEAL - Hubs for Expressive Arts for Life". Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services (Access Alliance) are working with peer researchers, community members as well as academic and community organization partners (project team) to implement HEAL, an inter-sectoral, creative, culturally safe, multi-pronged capacity enriching project. This co-design, mixed method, community based participation action research is focused on vulnerable newcomer populations who are survivors or at risk of domestic violence in the City of Toronto. BCS started Heal activities like training, meetings, discussions, and outreach in March 2023. In June, BCS began to collect information from the participants. Around 15 participants are attending 12 sessions from June to August 2023. The participants learn art techniques to improve their mental health and empower them to establish their rights. **The project activities still are going on in 2024.**

Few snaps of published journal papers:



Journal of Advances in Medicine and Medical Research

Volume 36, Issue 7, Page 307-319, 2024; Article no. JAMMR.119301
ISSN: 2456-8898, NLM ID: 101171724
(Fact name: British Journal of Medicine and Medical Research, Past ISSN: 2231-0614, NLM ID: 101570295)

Gender-based Violence (GBV) on Bangladeshi Women and Girls during COVID-19 in Toronto: Forms, Causes, and Mental Health Impacts

Qazi Shafayetul Islam ^{a1} and Nasima Akter ^a

^a Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS), 2899 Danforth Avenue, Toronto, Canada.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Authors QSI and NA developed the proposal and designed the study. Author NA facilitated the group discussion. Author QSI performed the thematic analysis, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author NA managed the literature search. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.9734/jammm/2024/v36i75505>

Open Peer Review History

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.scirp.org/journal/review-history/119301>

Received: 04/05/2024

Accepted: 06/07/2024

Published: 09/07/2024

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Aims: The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has led to a rise in the number of gender-based violence (GBV) cases within families. This increase is mainly due to patriarchal influence, prolonged stay at home, social isolation, and financial abuse. Women and girls, in particular, have been adversely affected by this phenomenon, experiencing significant mental health impacts. A study conducted in Toronto explored the various types and causes of violence against South Asian Bangladeshi women and girls and how it affects their mental health, too.
Methodology: Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS), an ethnic organization conducted a study on gender-based violence (GBV) from Sep to Dec 2021. Two extensive Zoom group discussions involved 55 females and six males, including social workers (n=3), community

*Corresponding author: E-mail: qsiislam@bangladeshi.ca.

Cite as: Islam, Qazi Shafayetul and Nasima Akter. 2024. "Gender-Based Violence (GBV) on Bangladeshi Women and Girls During COVID-19 in Toronto: Forms, Causes, and Mental Health Impacts." Journal of Advances in Medicine and Medical Research 36 (7): 307-319. <https://doi.org/10.9734/jammm/2024/v36i75505>.



European Journal of Nutrition & Food Safety

14(6): 11-21, 2022; Article no.EJNFS.88684
ISSN: 2347-5641

Barriers of Local Organizations for Providing Free Food Support in the Priority Neighborhood, Toronto: What We Need Further

Qazi Shafayetul Islam ^{a*} and Nasima Akter ^a

^a Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS), 2899 Danforth Avenue, MAC1M2, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Authors QSI and NA conceptualized and designed the study. Also, author QSI managed data collection and analysis and contributed substantially to preparing the final version of the manuscript. Author NA revised the manuscript to improve intellectual content and update references. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: [10.9734/EJNFS/2022/v14i688684](https://doi.org/10.9734/EJNFS/2022/v14i688684)

Open Peer Review History

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.scirp.org/journal/review-history/98864>

Received 11 April 2022

Accepted 02 June 2022

Published 22 June 2022

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The provincial and federal governments provided emergency funding to local community organizations for free food support to people affected by COVID-19. The study's goals were to explore the barriers of the people and the organizations while receiving and providing free food support and what further was needed to give the people food support in the priority neighborhood.
Methods: Nine representatives of the local community organizations and 15 volunteers participated in the community conversation or the extensive group discussion. They shared their experiences about barriers and what we further needed to provide food support for the priority neighborhood like Taylor Massey. Two note-takers obtained data from the community conversation. This is a qualitative study. It used a thematic approach to analyze the data and interpretation.
Results: Information lacking about free food, language barriers, the social stigma associated with free food support, and fear of COVID-19 were the barriers of community people to receiving food support. On the other hand, the community organizations lacked information about who needed real food support, lacked enough transportation support to distribute the food, enough empty

*Corresponding author: E-mail: qsiislam@bangladeshi.ca.



Journal of Pharmaceutical Research International

Volume 34, Issue 62, Page 24-35, 2022; Article no. JPRI.95732
ISSN: 2456-9119
(Fact name: British Journal of Pharmaceutical Research, Past ISSN: 2231-2919, NLM ID: 101631759)

Noncommunicable Disease Profiles of Bangladeshi Immigrants Aged >55 Years Living in Toronto: Access to Health Workshop and Needed Supports for Management

Qazi Shafayetul Islam ^{a1}, Nasima Akter ^a and Krishna Prasad Sharma ^a

^a Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS), 2899 Danforth Avenue, MAC1M2, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors QSI and NA designed the study. Author QSI performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors QSI and NA managed the analyses of the study. Author KPS checked the data outcomes, organized the outcomes in the tables, searched the literature. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: [10.9734/JPRI/2022/v34i62732](https://doi.org/10.9734/JPRI/2022/v34i62732)

Open Peer Review History

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.scirp.org/journal/review-history/95732>

Received: 27/10/2022

Accepted: 29/12/2022

Published: 30/12/2022

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Objectives: The study explored the profiles of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) of South Asian Bangladeshi immigrants aged > 55, access to health workshops about NCDs for self-care, and the types of support they needed to control and manage their NCDs.
Methods: The study was cross-sectional. The participants were Bangladeshi immigrants aged > 55 living in Toronto. They attended an ethnic community organization for services from January to

*Corresponding author: E-mail: qsiislam@bangladeshi.ca.

J. Pharm. Res. Int., vol. 34, no. 62, pp. 24-35, 2022



Asian Journal of Medicine and Health

19(12): 70-81, 2021; Article no.AJMAH.80882
ISSN: 2456-8414

Intervention is Urgently Needed to Address Poor Awareness of South Asian Family Caregivers for Dementia Care: A Qualitative Study

Qazi Shafayetul Islam ^{a*} and Nasima Akter ^a

^a Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS), 2899 Danforth Avenue, MAC1M2, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author QSI conceptualized and designed the study. Also, author QSI managed data collection and analysis and contributed substantially to preparing the final version of the manuscript. Author NA revised the manuscript for improving intellectual content and updating references. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: [10.9734/AJMAH/2021/v19i1230418](https://doi.org/10.9734/AJMAH/2021/v19i1230418)

Editor(s)

(1) Ashish Anand, GV Montgomery/Veteran Affairs Medical Center, USA

(2) Claudio Vioi, Azienda Ospedaliero Universitaria di Bologna, Italy

(3) Manjunath Sogalak, KLE Academy of higher education and research, India

(4) Yasmin Sophie Chen, Trinity College, Ireland

Complete Peer Review History, details of the editor(s), Reviewers and additional Reviewers are available here: <https://www.scirp.org/journal/review-history/93956>

Received 08 October 2021

Accepted 17 December 2021

Published 18 December 2021

Original Research Article

ABSTRACT

Introduction: "The National Dementia Strategies" in Canada emphasizes improving the knowledge of formal and informal caregivers for better care for the person living with dementia.
Aims: This study aimed at exploring awareness and the attitudes of South Asian Bangladeshi family caregivers towards dementia care.
Methods: It was purposive sampling and a qualitative study. The study included 45 family caregivers (>55 years) for the face-to-face interviews in Toronto, Ontario. The study used semi-structured questions. The duration of the data collection was between February and March 2020.
Results: The study included the three areas related to dementia, such as a) the awareness of dementia, b) awareness of prevention and treatment as well as the awareness of caregivers about what is needed for better dementia care, and c) attitudes of caregivers towards dementia care. Many caregivers described dementia as memory loss and forgetfulness. According to the

*Corresponding author: E-mail: qsiislam@bangladeshi.ca.

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

In 2024, BCS considers settlement services an essential part of community development and takes this aspect seriously. The organization is a staunch advocate for immigrants and refugees, striving to ensure equal rights and eliminate discrimination they may face. Collaboration is a key strength of the

organization, which partners with like-minded and expert organizations to provide information on how to thrive in Canada, navigate legal procedures and healthcare, and offer translation services to newcomers and community members. BCS has assisted thousands of individuals and newcomers with tasks such as filing forms, applying for social benefits, obtaining health cards and SIN numbers, and more to help them settle in Canada and navigate the Canadian systems. In addition to regular services, BCS now offers free communication and etiquette development classes every Thursday, open to all newcomers. The organization takes pride in working with individuals who are making a new life for themselves in Canada, and the services provided help them integrate into Canadian society. Last year, with its determination to address the unique issues faced by newcomers, BCS had to go beyond its regular services to provide grocery supplies, food coupons, recyclable materials, used and donated clothing, as well as organize several info sessions on settlement.

New initiatives in 2024

1.Preventing Ageism and Elder Abuse through senior's Digital Literacy

The Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) has observed that many Bangladeshi senior immigrants living in Bangla Town, Toronto, are facing stereotypes, discrimination, and abuse from family members. This has been documented in the Annual reports of 2019 and 2020. Unfortunately, these seniors often lack access to information about ageism and elder abuse, which makes it difficult for them to protect themselves from such situations. Increasing awareness of ageism and elder abuse among Bangladeshi seniors is crucial, especially as the government emphasizes the importance of seniors leading active, healthy, and engaged lives. In response to this, the BCS aims to raise awareness among Bangladeshi seniors to combat ageism and elder abuse through digital literacy knowledge. This project aligns with two objectives of the National Health Service Programme (NHSP): volunteerism, and social participation and inclusion, as well as with two national priorities - supporting healthy aging and preventing elder abuse. The project consists of three main interventions: 1. Engaging South Asian Bangladeshi seniors in training sessions to enhance digital literacy and search for reliable information about ageism and elder abuse on genuine websites (www.seniors.gc.ca). 2. Organizing senior peer discussion groups to share information about ageism and abuse, based on their learnings from website searches and their practical experiences, and to apply new knowledge to prevent ageism and elder abuse. 3. Developing information sheets and educational materials about ageism and elder abuse using digital platforms and other resources. The project will involve 40 vulnerable seniors in training sessions, conducted once a week over a total of 20 sessions. Additionally, it will include 20 group sharing sessions for seniors to discuss their real-life experiences of abuse. Every three months, the project will develop four information materials about ageism and elder abuse, which will be distributed in the community and posted on media platforms. The project will also create opportunities for seniors to be involved as volunteers, mentors, and participants, and will engage five young volunteers to work with ten seniors in an intergenerational capacity to run the training sessions, organize group sharing sessions, and develop information materials.

2. Addressing Food Insecurity in Taylor Massey Through nutrition Awareness and weekly Social Dining

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many Bangladeshi seniors in the Taylor Massey neighborhood faced food insecurity and lacked awareness of proper nutrition. This lack of knowledge contributed to food insecurity and impacted the health of the seniors even after the pandemic. Improving nutrition awareness is essential to address these issues. Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services will launch a project to enhance nutrition knowledge and alleviate food insecurity as a top priority for South Asian Bangladeshi seniors. The project will include activities such as four expressive art sessions, four nutrition workshops, and 16 social dining sessions, with a once-a-week social dining event every Thursday. These activities aim to engage the seniors and educate them about nutrition to promote an active and healthy lifestyle, ensuring their inclusion and participation.

3. Together End Racism in Toronto (TERT)

It is a transformative project dedicated to building a more inclusive and equitable Toronto. At TERT, we believe in the power of community-led initiatives to confront and dismantle systemic racism and oppression. Our mission is to empower youth from racialized, Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S, and other marginalized communities to become agents of change in the fight against racism. TERT is funded by Government of Canada.



Key Achievements:

Staff Recruitment and Community Outreach:

Successfully recruited 60 Community Animators.

Kick-off Event:

Held an inspiring kick-off event in March 2024 engaging 110 community members and youth

Project Orientations and Planning Workshops:

Engaged a total of 120 youths and community members in orientations and planning workshops.

Training Module Development:

Developed a comprehensive training module on anti-racism, leadership, and advocacy for Community Animators.

Training Delivery:

Began delivering anti-racism, leadership, and advocacy training in April 2024.

Community Events:

Organized a successful community event focused on diversity, anti-racism education, and actions in East Toronto on June 22, 2024.

7. Campaign Website:

Created a dedicated campaign website: endracismtoronto.ca.

8. Youth Stories Blog:

Launched a blog featuring stories from youth participants: [TERT Blog](#).

9. Social Media Presence:

Established a Facebook page to foster community engagement: [TERT Facebook Page](#).

10. Media Coverage:

Published two news stories on anti-racism and inclusive community building.

11. YouTube Video:

Produced a YouTube video on [anti-racism, allyship, and the BRAVE framework](#) to combat racism.

Impact and Future Plans:

TERT has made significant strides in mobilizing and empowering youth to take active roles in combating racism within their communities. The engagement and feedback from our participants have been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting increased awareness, confidence, and readiness to lead anti-racism initiatives.



As we move forward, TERT plans to:

Expand our training programs and reach more youth across Toronto.

Strengthen our partnerships with local organizations and community leaders.

Continue to raise public awareness through media and community events.

Ensure ongoing support and resources for our Community Animators to sustain their efforts.

Together, we are making a difference and building a Toronto where everyone can thrive free from racism and discrimination.



5. After School Dine-In for South Asian Youth

Every Friday, young people come to the BCS to share food and share their cultural experiences. The program is funded by the Canada Service Corps, Government of Canada. The youth gather around 4 p.m. to participate in activities and share a meal together. Each session is attended by 10-15 youth . The program is open to all youth, regardless of gender or race.



6. English Language Class for Newcomers/ refugees



In 2024, Canada welcomed many newcomers and refugees who faced significant challenges in settling in the country. One of the biggest obstacles they faced was the language barrier. To address this issue, Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) took immediate action and established English language classes specifically for these individuals. The classes are designed to focus on everyday English conversation and Canadian culture. The classes are held every Thursday from 12:30pm. to 2:00 pm.

7. Food voucher for refugee claimants/newcomers

Many refugee claimants and newcomers to Canada face food challenges upon arrival. The main reasons are the lack of income or employment opportunities, insufficient government support to address food challenges, and high food prices. In March 2024, BCS distributed food vouchers to 60 newcomers and refugees to address the food challenges, but it was found to be very insufficient. BCS is now seeking donations and funding to support vulnerable refugees and newcomers.

8. Research project

New Research in 2024

Food and Nutrition Challenges Among 60 Recently Arrived South Asian Bangladeshi Refugees in Toronto

Qazi Shafayetul Islam, Nasima Akter

Introduction: In 2023 and 2024, many refugees arrived in Canada, faced challenges such as access to food, housing, and adapting to Canadian culture. The Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) in Toronto has been helping South Asian Bangladeshi refugees with information, application assistance, language interpretation, and limited food support. This study aims to identify the current food challenges faced by these refugees and create a tailored food program to meet their specific needs.

Methods: In a study in Toronto, 60 South Asian refugee claimants were interviewed to explore their social background, food challenges at home, and their expectations from local organizations. BCS provided \$50 food vouchers to the refugees. Face-to-face interviews and a focus group discussion (FGD) were conducted to further clarify the situation further. Frequency analysis was done using SPSS version 26.

Results: The food voucher recipients were South Asian Bangladeshi refugees, with 70% of them arrived in Canada as individuals. The average age was 38.75 years, and they had been in Canada for an average of three months. Almost 92% of recipients were male. They heard about the food vouchers from community members and neighbours. Approximately 86.7% sometimes did not have enough food at home, and almost 52% couldn't afford to eat meat/fish, vegetables, and fruits every day. .

75% were unaware of the Canadian food guide. 75% were registered with the food bank, but most found the received food insufficient. 83% of the recipients felt sad and depressed due to food shortages at home. The recipients shared food with an average of 2.8 persons and believed they could manage food with vouchers for seven days on average. 62.7% felt that a one-time food voucher did not meet their current food challenges and expected ethnic organizations to provide them with monthly food vouchers to overcome the current food and nutrition challenge among the refugees.

Conclusions: South Asian Bangladeshi refugees urgently need support to overcome food and nutrition challenges. Immediate community initiatives are crucial to ensure that every refugee has access to an adequate food supply. The government should provide funding to local organizations to address this pressing issue.

Exploring Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Awareness among SA or Bangladeshi Immigrants

Qazi Shafayetul Islam, Nasima Akter, Jannatul Islam

Introduction: The 'Education and Allyship Program' of Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS), funded by the Government of Canada, aims to raise awareness about racism and discrimination, especially among Bangladeshi immigrants in the Canadian community. It explores the attitudes and awareness of South Asians, primarily Bangladeshi immigrants, towards these issues.

Methods: The survey was quantitative and gathered information from 105 respondents. We used convenient sampling to collect data from respondents in various community gatherings. The survey was self-administered using questionnaires developed based on experience from the BCS's peacemaker initiative project. We conducted the analysis using SPSS version 26.

Results: Out of the total participants, 63% were women and 37% were men. Around 69% were Canadian citizens, and 92% were South Asian Bangladeshi, while 8% were from other South Asian backgrounds. A significant proportion of the participants (56.1%) had poor awareness about racism and discrimination (with a median score of 1 or 0). Only 46% demonstrated good awareness (with a median score of 2 or more). Men had a better awareness level (47%) compared to women (42%). Moreover, good awareness was observed among youth and individuals who had lived in Canada for more than ten years. Additionally, many respondents were not aware of the national racism strategy/policy. Only 43% would attempt to handle racism and discrimination calmly, while others would not take any initiative.

Conclusion: The survey found that many respondents lack awareness of racism and discrimination. Additionally, a significant proportion of respondents would not take any initiative

Event calendar 2024

Event	Date
International Mother Language Day Event	February 22, 2024
Bengali New Year's Event	April 14, 2024
World No Tobacco Day Event	May 31, 2024
Multiculturalism Day (Taste of Taylor Massey)	TBA
Canada Day Celebrations	July 1, 2024
BCS Annual General Meeting for 2023	July 26 , 2024
Annual Sports & Soccer Tournament	24 & 25 August 2024
Bangladesh Victory Day Celebrations	December 16, 2024

BCS Volunteer's Dinner	TBA
------------------------	-----

Announcement: Volunteer opportunity

Volunteer Opportunities

We are also looking for volunteers! Contact information is listed below.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the BCS office at 416-699-4484 between the hours of 11 am and 4 pm (Mon-Fri) or text/email Nasima Akter at Tel. 416-699-4484, Fax: 416-698-8127, E-mail: nakter@bangladeshi.ca. Whether if you need hours for high school or a professional reference, contact us and we can help. BCS volunteer interns serve for a minimum of 3 (three) months.

YOU CAN ALSO GO TO <https://www.bangladeshi.ca/donate>.

Minimum of one day per week with a minimum of 10 hours per month as scheduled by the organization. Volunteers are not eligible for an official certificate until they have served a minimum of 30 hours in 3 months. Ask for a letter of reference 3-5 working days before you need it for admission or job applications. The volunteer should follow the health and safety measures prescribed by the Toronto Public Health (for COVID). Always maintain social distance and wear masks and other PPE as required while on duty and in the office.

Donation link

Without donations from people like you, we could not offer many free projects, programs and services to the community.

Donating to BCS is very simple. You can donate right now by completing the form on our website.

<https://www.bangladeshi.ca/donate>

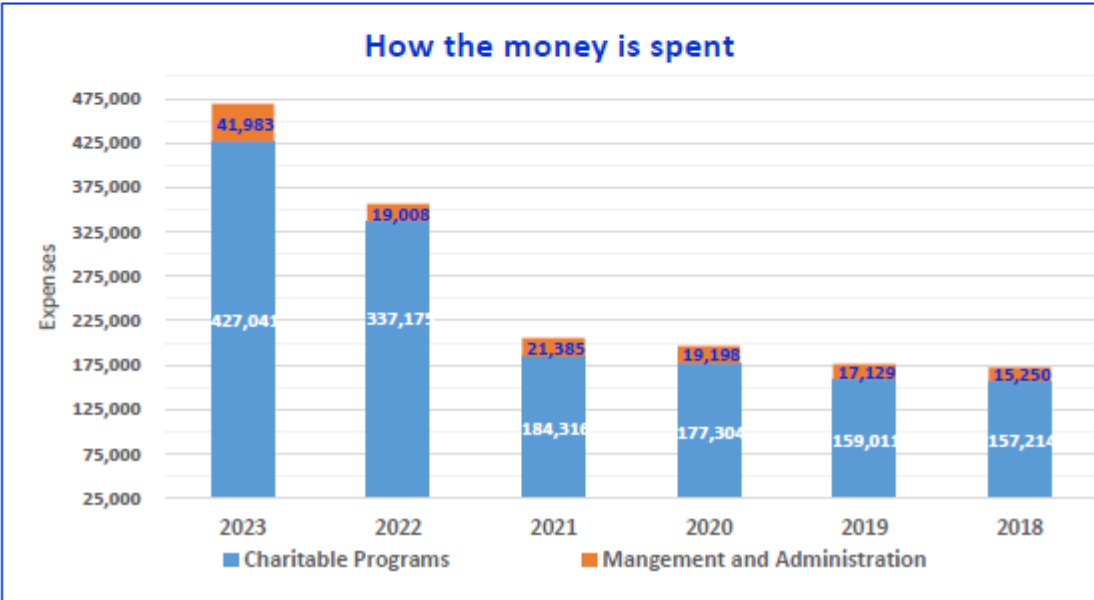
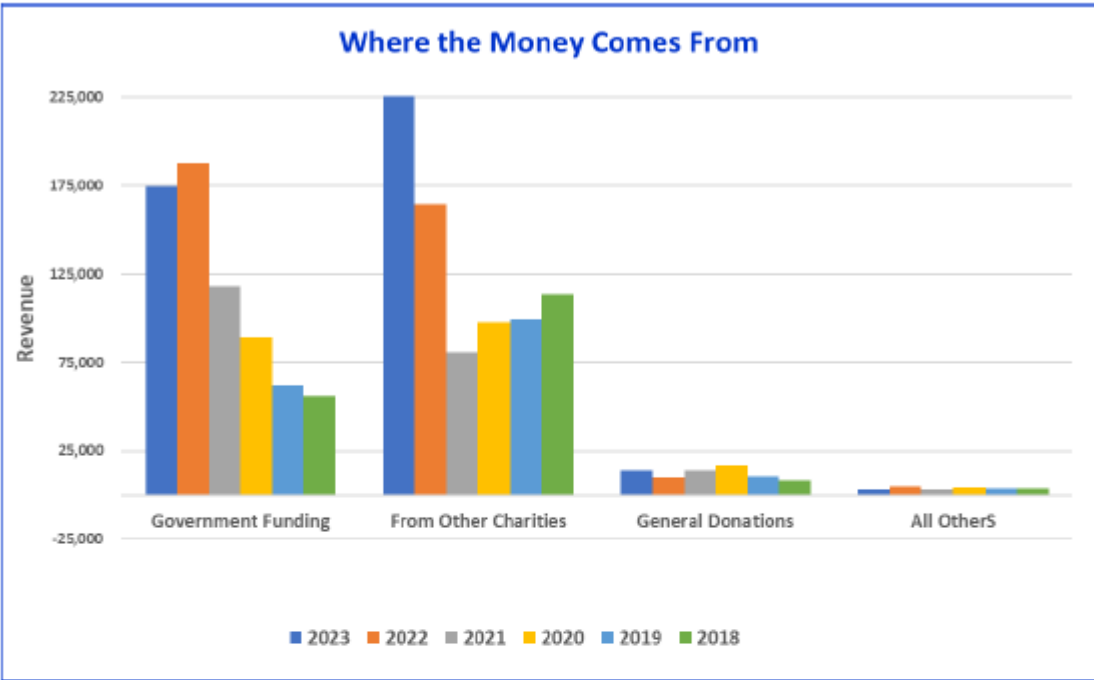
Or you can send a cheque, made payable to "Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services", to our office at 2899 Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4C 1M3.

We are a registered charity and will provide a receipt for tax purposes.

Our [Charity Registration No: 86691 4013 RR0001](#) Thank you for your generosity!

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW:

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW – Year ended 31 Dec 2023:



BANGLADESHI-CANADIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES (BCS)**Statement of revenue and expenses**

For the year ended 31 December 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
REVENUE		
Provincial and Federal Government Grants	174,155	161,258
Program revenue	148,340	78,031
Contribution from other Charities	90,328	56,742
United Way of Greater Toronto	49,355	29,719
General Donations	13,810	9,775
Other Income	2,624	4,369
Membership Fee	720	470
City of Toronto	-	26,253
	-	-
	479,332	366,617
	-	
EXPENSES		
Salaries, Benefits and Honorarium	232,062	215,006
Program Expenses	156,802	66,270
Materials and Supplies	27,165	38,122
Rental Expenses	26,406	18,898
Professional Fees	10,053	4,803
Travel and Transportation	6,583	3,124
Advertisement and Promotion	4,714	3,506
Telephone and Internet	2,065	2,812
Insurance	1,634	1,602
Other Expenses	1,357	1,908
Bank Charges	178	125
Amortization - Fixed Assets	6	9
	469,023	356,185
Excess of revenue over expenses	10,309	10,432

Auditor: Shah Kibria Professional Corporation

BANGLADESHI-CANADIAN COMMUNITY SERVICES (BCS)

Statement of Financial Position

As At December 31, 2023

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
Current Assets:-		
Cash in Hand and at Bank	209,940	148,457
Deposits and Receivables	2,990	4,599
Grant Receivables	-	-
	212,930	153,056
Capital Assets less depreciation [Note-3]	22	28
TOTAL ASSETS	212,952	153,084
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable & Accrued liabilities	3,600	4,518
Deferred contributions [Note-4]	128,797	78,319
	132,397	82,837
NET ASSETS		
Net Assets invested in capital	22	28
Unrestricted fund balance	80,534	70,219
	80,556	70,247
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUNDS	212,953	153,084

See accompanying notes to the financial statements and Review Engagement Report

Approved on behalf of the Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) by:

Director



Kazi Hoque

Director



Syed Bakht

OFFICE EXECUTIVES

Executive Director	Nasima Akter, PhD
Project Coordinator (Program & Research)	Dr. Qazi Shafayetul Islam
ASTP Coordinator	Shaira Tasnia & Zara Karim
Youth Coordinator	Mohammad Kabi
Senior Outreach Worker	Sharmin Nipa
Technical & Web Coordinator	Fariha Bakht
Program Adviser	Dr. Mahbub Hasan
EAP Coordinator	Jannatul Islam
Program Associate	Urbi Khan
Project Admin (senior services)	Farzan Yasmin
Admin Assistant	Kaniz Fatema
Project admin (TERT)	Khansa Ashraf
Mental Health & Outreach coordinator	Nureen Diyanat Eidee
Vaccine Lead Ambassador	Nimra Khan
Volunteer Coordinator	Syeda Shamima
Settlement support (Partner agency)	Bilkis Nahar
Placement students From George Brown Collage Centennial Collage Seneca Collage York University Other private collages	Krishna Sharma Bebak Addhikari Frederic Aubin Brenda Enabulele Celestina Ebhodaghe Abdurrahman Mohammad Farzana Yasmin Ashiquzzaman Sharmin Neepa Agatha Ehiagwina

SENIOR VOLUNTEERS

Jahanara Khanam	Rafika Hakim
Ashraf Hossain	Rina Sen Gupta
Rezaul Haque	Khorsheda Ahmed
Hasna Banu	Monowara Begum
Anthony Gomes	Lutfunnesa
Sraboni Sarker	Tahmina Akter
Mohammad Mufazzal Hossain	Rani Haque
Feroza Aziz	Shilpi Bhatta Charjee
Parvin Rokeya	Nazma A. Khanam
Sultana Ahmed	Taslina Hasan
Akter Ahmed	Shamsun Nahar Abedin
Sultana Jesmin	Nawajish Ara
Salina Khan	Rabiul Islam
Gulnaz Azad	Rokeya Begum
Parul Malik	Sawkat Ara
Lutfunnesa	Shila Halder
Taslina Hasan	Halima Hasan
Nargis A Begum	Hasina Talukdar
Md Moyeen Chowdhury	Rehana Akter

ADULT VOLUNTEERS

Nahil Nazala	Kamrun Nahar
Sarmila Taz	Rehana Islam
Naeem Hassan	Rabeya Akter
Syed Zaki	Kaniz Fatema
Mohammad Sohel	Rozina Bhuiyan
Seema Akter	Theslema Poly
Pia Roy	Mirza R Rahman
Bilkis Begum	Sahedul
Nasima Begum	Samsul
Mohammad Ali	Krishna Sharma
Sharmin Nipa	Bebak Adhikari
Rumana Tanvee	Syeda Zamila Hasan Laila

SENIOR AMBASSADORS

Jahanara Khanam	Shamima Nargis
Rina Sen Gupta	Rahat Zaman
Sadekur Rahman	Rezaful Hoque
Sraboni Sarkar	Bidyut Sarkar
Rokeya Begum	Moinu A Siddique
Akhter Ahmed	Sutana Ahmed
Anthony Gomes	Ashraf Hussain
Gias Uddin Ahmed	Shahara Banu
Khondokar Zubair	Halima Hasan
Rafika Hakim	Lutfunessa
Sawkat Ara	Fatema
Robiul Islam	Nazma A khanam

Vaccine Ambassadors

<p>Rabeya Akter Pinky Shamsul Alam Arion Tarik Reanna Chowdhury Qazi Shafayetul Islam Sofiya Khatun Sadman Mahbub Mohammad Sahedul Islam Tanvee Rumana Mohammad Sohel Samiha Ahsan Youth</p>	<p>Shamima Ahmed Alice Ahsen Ayan Ayan, Qazi Ahmed Kaniz Admin Mohammad A Kaiyyum Maisha Mahbub Mahbub Maisha Md. Mayhedi Hasan Naeem Sadia Rahman Shaira Tasnia Kamrun Nahar</p>
--	---

Youth Volunteer List

<p>Afia Symonty Ahnaf Rashid Inara Akbar Irina Anam Arion Tarik Laiba Chata Zayed Chowdhury Sharia Hoque Irinaanam Areeba Islam Janat Khan Khulood Islam Sadman Mahbub Maisha Mahbub Nusaiba Mahdia Arishi Maisara Maysha Imroze Kashifa Nahar Naheed Akhter Nuren Rahil Anwar Shaira Tasnia Suha Tabassum, Tasnuba Tahmid Hassan Tasneem, Nafisa Nabiha Yousha Tahsin Yusha Hossain Zahin Oishy</p>	<p>Afria Musarrat Ahmedareta Alam Tamima Anuva Hasan Ayan, Qazi Ahmed Reanna Chowdhury Fairoze Maisha Kaniz Admin Huq, Maheer Jubayed Alam Jahin Mohammad A Kaiyyum Kabi Karim, Zara Kazi, Nabila Mohammad Hossain Lutfun Naher Mahbub, Maisha Tasmeena Mahmood Nibras Mansu Nuha Momen Rayn Mahdi siddique Sumyya Rahman Amreen Houque Tawsif Mirza Nashwan Ashraf Sazid Youth Samiha Ahsan Youth Sonali Youth Aushesh Alam And more.....</p>
--	--

Inter-gen Youth Leaders

Areeba Islam Mohammad A Kaiyyum Kabi Karim, Zara Khulood Islam Kashifa Nahar Reanna Chowdhury	Mahbub, Maisha Maisha Mahbub Mahbub, Maisha Qazi Ayan Karim, Zara Shaira Tasnia
--	--

Senior member list:

Razia Rashed	Akhter Ahmed	Alfaz Ahmed
Giasuddin Ahmed	HosneAra	Sultana Ahmed Ila
Zubayda Akter	Ashraf Ali	Aforza Begum
Anthony Gomes	Anwara Begum	Fatema Begum
Hasina Begum	Hosney Begum	Rabiul Islam
Rajia Ahsan	Shireen Ahsan	Raushan Akter
Moyeen Choudhury	Nuzhat Choudhury	D Khelna
J Hamid	MM Hossain	Sabera Hossain
Nasima Begum	Rokeya Begum	D Chanda
Nusrat Huq	Zubaida Iqbal	Shafiul Islam
A Jalil	NM Jahir	Shamsul Karim
Mohiuddin Shah Golam	Nitya Gopal	Guha
Hasan Kabir	Kafil Uddin Bhuiyan	Na Karim
Asma Khatun	Zahid Khan	Sofiya Khatun
Masuda	Swamina Khatun	Khelna
Maksuda Munmun	Nessa Babli	Nashid Haque
Monowara	Nargis	Maksuda Munmun
Shila Halder	Malekparul	Rokeya Parvin
Rashida Newaz	Newzee	Razia Rashed
Afruza	Ratna	Raziuddin Ahmad
Saniya Haque	Shamima Nargis	Sanya
Sadiya Hoque	Shamsul Arifin	Sharifa Jahan
Shawkat Ara	Shaharamulla	Jasmin Sultana

Jesmin Sultana	Nadira Tabassum	QA Tamanna
Malik Syeda	Muntashir Tarafder	Yasmin Ashraf
Rahat Zaman	Rina Sen Gupta	Bidyut Sarker
Sraboni Sarker	Madhury Roy	Farid Uddin Ahmed
Sattar	Anguman Jalil	Abeeda
Ahmeda Kamran	Hasna Hafez	Basudev Dhar
Firoza Aziz	Dilara Zaman	Mahmuda
Enamul Haque	Eng Mojobor	Khorsheda Ahmed
Fatema	Dauzia	Gulnaz
Siddiqma	Sathey Ahmed	Suporna
Shibli Nomani	Amena Khatun	Zahera Begum
Hasina Khatun	Nargis Begum	Nazma Begum
Habiba Shawpna	Halima Hasan	Hasina Banu
Hasina Talukdar	Sultana Ahmed	Hasmat Ara
Helen	Rafika Hakim	Lutfunnessa
Kamona	Kausar Ferdous	Kazi Selina
Kismot Ara	Mahmuda Sheela	Marium
Marry Shandha	Matin Paikar	Misti Anwar
Moffazol	Monowara Begum	Munira
Nargis Islam	Nargis Sultana	Nasreen Akter
Nazmee Begum	Noor Jahan	Nowajish Ara
Nandita Das Gupta	Perveen Chowdhury	Rawshan Ara
Razanul Hoq	Rehana Begum	Selima
Shahana chowdhury	Rehana Hoq	Rokeya
Rumana	Rupon Kanti	Sakina
Samsul	Sayeeda bari	Shireen
Sharifa Jahan	Shansha Ara Begum	Shain Ghani
Shamina Mirza	Samsun Nahar	Sharifa Begum
Sherina Shorif	Samsul Alam	Sufia
Sultana Tahmina	Taslima Hasan	Wasia

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (AS of July 20, 2023)



Kazi Haque, Chair



Syed Bakht, Treasurer



Nasima Akter,
Executive Director



Rokhsana Reza, Vice Chair



Janet Davis, Director



Saklain Jaigridar,
Director



Israt Ahmed, Director



Sourì Zaman, Director



Shahidul Islam Mintu,
Director



Abdul Wahid, Director



[Shairi Islam](#)
Secretary

LIFE MEMBERS:

BCS Thanks all life members for all their continuous support.

Abid Choudhury



Shakila Choudhury



Syed D. Bakht



Benu Bakht



Dewan Shuaib Afzal



Farhat Khan



Mustaq Ahmed



Hamida Choudhury



Jahanara Khanam



Kazi S Hoque



Khandaker Iqbal Hossain



Mahfuz Khalili



Mirza Rahman



Moyeen Uddin Choudhury



Mohammed
Khaliqzaman



Mohsin Bhuiyan



Nasima Akter



Preety Ahmed



Quazi Waliul Islam



Qazi Shafayetul Islam



Rezaul Haque



Rokhsana Reza



Saklain Jaigirdar



Shahidul Islam Mintu



Souri Zaman



Towhid Noman



Abdul Wahid



Jyotirmay Datta





Masumur Rahman
 Monjila
 Monjury

LM Lutfur Rahman
 Zinat Halim
 Kayasur Rahman
 Khan

Patul Malek
 Selina Khan
 Feroza Aziz

FUNDING AGENCIES
HRDC, Government of Canada
Canada Service Corps, ESDC
City of Toronto
Toronto Public Health
Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program, Govt. of Canada
OCASI
New Horizon for Seniors, ESDC
Wood Green
Canadian Heritage
United Way Toronto
Public Health Agency of Canada
The ParticipACTION Community Challenge

PARTNER AGENCIES/AFFILIATIONS WITH OTHERS

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services (AAMHCS)	Opening Doors Project, CMHA
Association of Bangladeshi Professionals in Accounting & Finance	Flemingdon Community Health Center
Bangladesh Center and Community Services (BCCS)	South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC)
Bangladeshi Students Association – Universities: McMaster/ Ryerson / UTSG/UTSC/York/ Waterloo	Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services (SAFSS)
Birchmount Bluffs Neighborhood Centre	Toronto District School Board (TDSB)
Bengali Information & Employment Services (BIES)	South Riverdale Community Health Centre
Children's Peace Theatre	Fairlawn Avenue United Church
City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry & Recreation	Harmony Hall Center for Seniors
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)	Heart & Stroke Foundation
Crescent Town Club	Neighborhood Link Support Services (NLSS)
Crescent Town Youth Support Network (CT-YSN)	East Toronto Health Link
Danforth Islamic society	Heart & Stroke Foundation
Dixon Hall Neighborhood Services	Teesdale Support Network
Family Service, Toronto	The Neighborhood Organization (TNO)
Hindu Society	Skills for Changes
Neighborhood Link	Young Bangladeshi-Canadian Professionals
Regent Park tenant association	Youth-In-Action
West Scarborough Neighborhood Community Centre	Holistic & Sustainable Development Network, International (HSDN,I)
Sunshine Centre For Seniors	Tamil Canadian Centre for Civic Action (TCCCA)
South Asian Women Right Organization (SAWRO)	WoodGreen Community Services & More

Contact Us:

BCS (Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services)

2899 Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON M4C 1M3

(416) 699-4484

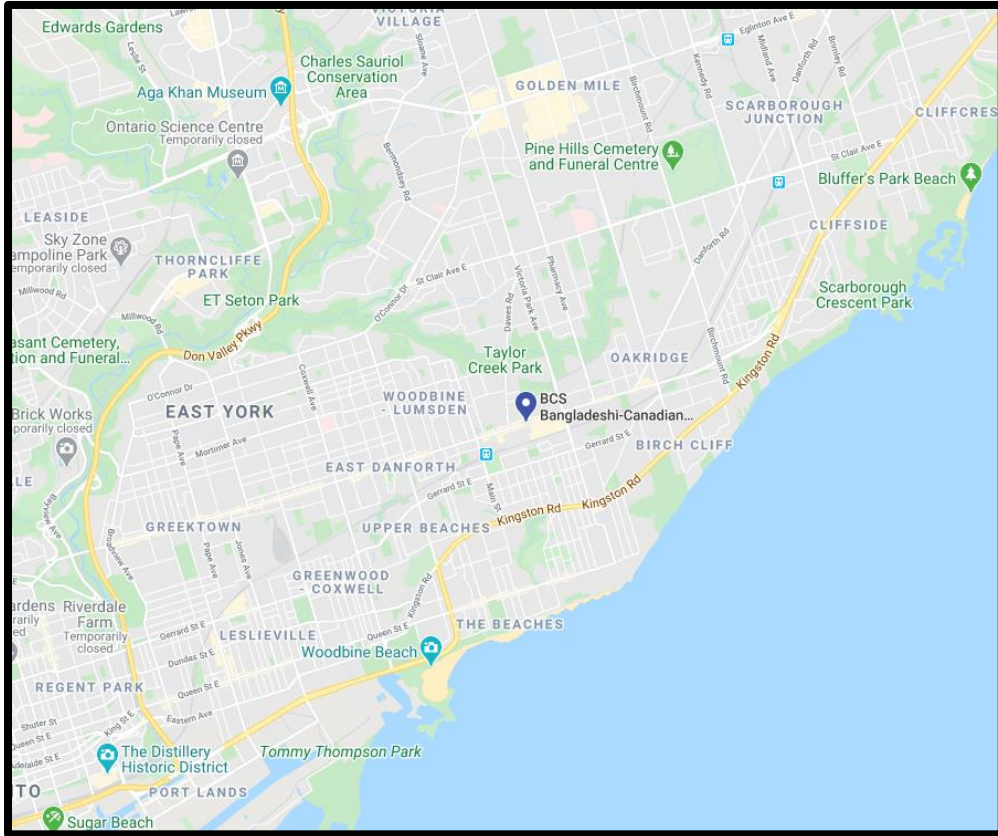
Please like us on:

facebook.com/bdcanadaservices

Instagram.com/bccommunityservices

[@youthbcs](https://twitter.com/youthbcs)

Email: info@bangladeshi.ca



BCS: Helping People Help Themselves since 2000

Say NO to Tobacco

আসুন ধূমপান সহ সকল তামাক দ্রব্যকে **না** বলি