

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



# **Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS)**

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# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

July 25, 2019

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure I welcome you all to the 18th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS). BCS, with its mission objectives, "Helping People to Help Themselves", have assisted and supported the needs of thousands of youth, seniors and newcomers over the past 18 years by developing and delivering programs and services of importance to them.

More than 4000 clients rely on the services provided by BCS every year. This number is continually on the increase and we take pride in providing services to our clients despite many challenges. The Executive Director's report will provide full details on the programs and services offered by BCS and where most successes have been achieved.

BCS has had a very successful year in 2018. This year, we have taken several new initiatives to further reach out to our community. These initiatives and their subsequent accomplishments are the shared credit of a dedicated staff, a committed Board of Directors, and a diverse group of youth and senior volunteers.

Volunteers, in fact, are the life-blood of this organization. They help in many ways running the organization on a daily basis. We also have some committed new Life Members who joined the organization this year. We thank them for their contributions and look forward to working with them. Building on this strong foundation of people and the work we have accomplished thus far, we look forward to taking on more challenges in the coming year.

I would like to this opportunity to thank all of our funders for their sensitivity and support towards our mission. Our growth and achievements would not have been possible without their support.

I would also like to thank our Executive Director and all staff and volunteers for their commitment and dedication; our partners for their collaboration; and our Board of Directors for their wisdom and vision. I salute them for their contributions and look forward to another successful year.

Thank you all for attending and for your unwavering support. Have a joyful evening.

Dr. Kazí Sadrul Hoque Chair. BCS Board of Directors





# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 25, 2019

Distinguish guests, partners, community member, BCS's member, life member, our staff and volunteers, greetings from BCS.

BCS is proud to announce it's another busy and successful year for the organization. We achieved many of the goals we set last year and through the process, we were able to launch new initiatives like Youth Social, Financial & Economic Collective (YSFEC), Senior Ambassadors+55, Better together (BT): inter-gen initiative, and events (e.g. inter-gen workshops & events), while continuing to ensure that our existing programs flourished.

Youth Eliminates Smoking (YES), one of our oldest running youth initiatives, has completed phase 10 this year and is now progressing to phase 11. YES is currently organized by 10 youth leaders who continue to strive to create a healthy smoke-free community. We have also continued our Youth Recreational Project in collaboration with Neighbourhood Youth Alliance (NYA) to provide Smoke-free Game Nights every Friday to encourage youth to participate in positive recreational activities. Our Entrepreneurship N Technology 4 Youth (ETY) program, a technology literacy and business program for youth is entering to it's third year. Youth were taught different platforms of technology such as coding, MS Word, and Graphic Design and learn how to apply these skills in a business setting. Every year there are 10 youth have been graduating from this program with life skill education in technology and entrepreneurship.

Bringing back the Golden Age for seniors is now in Phase 8 and continues to be a program that empowers and engages seniors and provides them with opportunities to be involved and influential members of their community. There are over 300 seniors who participate in the various health support services, recreational activities, weekly exercise and educational programs we offer. During the second year of the South Asian Senor network (SASN) project, we have been able to offer a platform for the seniors. Through this, they can practice their empowerment, improve their independence as well as self-esteem and can explore their potentiality to make a congenial environment for a safer community. This project included field trips, technology literacy programs, and weekly drop-in sessions for Coffee N Chat and Meditation. Another inter-gen program titled Better Together (BT) give an opportunity to our senior and youth to mingle together and share their space in capacity building and recreational activities. We have successfully formed a senior cabinet and youth volunteer pool for our inter-gen activities. Ambassador 55+ project bring together youth and seniors to work together and share their experience and skills in various workshops and story & pen club. More than 40 seniors and youth volunteered for this initiative engaging more than 200 seniors and youth.

Along with the success of many of our existing programs, BCS has competed 2 years of TPH Peer Leadership Grant for Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes recruited 4 youth peer leaders who received training from Toronto Public Health. They are to educate recruited participants on prevention of Diabetes with various training and activities.

In addition, our Afterschool Tutoring Program (ASTP) and Summer Sports programs have been well regarded and supported by the community since last 18 years. The ASTP program has provided volunteer opportunities to 50+ youth and has helped improve the education of other 500 kids throughout the year.



The Summer Sports program has continued its success with over 280 youth participating in the BCS Annual Soccer Tournament. Last three years we have been partnering with NYA that helped us to reach the broader community youth.

One of our new initiatives in 2018 was the South Asian Art: Culture & Color, our very own cultural art team. There were 96 participants learnt and practiced visual arts & crafts with the help of 2 youth mentors and 2 professional artists. Their artworks were exhibited in our Bengali New year celebration event where more than 300 participants enjoyed the culture of South Asia in colors.

Some prominent and exciting new projects are as follows: "Senior Ambassadors+55: inspiration and strengths for deprived seniors" an inter-gen project funded by Service Canada; Better Together: Moving Forward (Project BT2), an inter-gen project funded by Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. South Asian Arts: Culture and Colours for kids and youth funded by the Ontario Art Council; Youth Social, Financial & Economic Collective (YSFEC) funded by Laidlaw.

These accomplishments could not have been possible without the extraordinary commitment and hard work of our staff, volunteers, and board members. The supports of our partner organizations and funders have also been significant to our operations.

Thank you indeed for all your supports.



Dr. Nasima Akter
Executive Director



# **INTRODUCTION**

THE BCS MISSION: "HELPING PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES"

### **BCS MANDATE:**

BCS shall provide information, referrals, skill development and settlement services to diverse communities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Services shall be adaptive to the changing community needs and are delivered in partnership with other committees and service providers.

Bangladeshi-Canadian Community Services (BCS) is a non-profit organization serving not only the vast Bangladeshi population here in Toronto but also the local (Taylor-Massey, Crescent Town and adjacent neighbourhoods) community since 2000. Our focuses are youth, seniors and newcomers and we now serve over 3000 beneficiaries that rely on the services we provide, with the number increasing every year.

### YOUTH INITIATIVES

Youth engagement: Currently, we have five unique and active youth-led projects and programs (YES, YSFEC, Summer Sports, ETY, and weekly drop in) catered specifically to the adolescents of the community. Through these initiatives, we have been able to develop a healthy living, a stronger community as well as a wide array of inter/intrapersonal skills (leadership, communication, time management, etc.) among the young people. In the past year specifically, BCS has met with success in all of our campaigns.

Youth Eliminates Smoking (YES) Phase 10 successfully concluded in June 2018. Throughout the phase, monthly leadership meetings have been held amongst our 12 youth leaders who have worked tirelessly to develop the YES Program to its fullest. Additionally, monthly Game Nights, held weekly throughout 2018, have seen 15-20 youth in attendance for each event with special tournaments, attracting youth from all across the community and city. Integrated with the recreational games were peer-led presentations on tobacco prevention and healthy eating topics.

The Summer Sports Program now in its 15th year has helped more than 280 youth (registered participants per year) participate in a free annual soccer tournament, as well as friendly matches in the weekends leading up to the tournament.

**Entrepreneurship and Technology for Youth (ETY)** launched recently in 2017, the program teaches youth digital literacy and entrepreneurial skills through weekly workshops.

Youth, Social Financial and Economic Council (YSFEC) was formed by the BCS Youth Leaders in partnership with the Neighbourhood Youth Alliance (NYA) in order to explore and better understand the employment and financial literacy experiences, such as barriers in acquiring the right skills and knowledge, among youth in marginalized communities.

Weekly youth drop in & Game night: In partnership with NYA, BCS is running weekly drop in and game night every Friday evening for kids from grade 8 to university students.

# SENIOR SERVICES & Inter-gen Initiatives

Seniors support services: In 2018, BCS offered 'volunteer opportunity for seniors', 'monthly health workshop', 'medical escort', 'weekly physical exercise for wellness', 'pen club (writer's club)', 'intergenerational meeting for monthly issue-based discussions', and 'technology for building senior's



network'. Two projects: "Bringing Back the Golden Age for Seniors Project" (completed its 8th phase in March, 2019) and "Ambassador 55+: Inspiration and Strength for Deprived Seniors" (started in January 2018 and completed in December, 2018) brought the wide range of services for seniors. Both the programs were tailored to address an aging population facing a wide range of difficulties, including frailty, social isolation, immobility, depression, etc. Thus, the main purposes of two projects were to empower seniors, to break social isolation, and to engage seniors in social network.

Volunteer opportunity: The programs provided seniors with a great opportunity to work for BCS and community as volunteers for implementing the senior activities. It is an ongoing process. The aim is to empower seniors to run seniors' activities in the community and neighbourhood. The volunteers work in three different levels in the community: the seniors work in senior cabinet/or ambassador group, work for disease advocacy groups, and work as door-to -door workers. To be a volunteer, the senior has to fill out the application form. Every year, the senior volunteers are adding to BCS's volunteer pool.



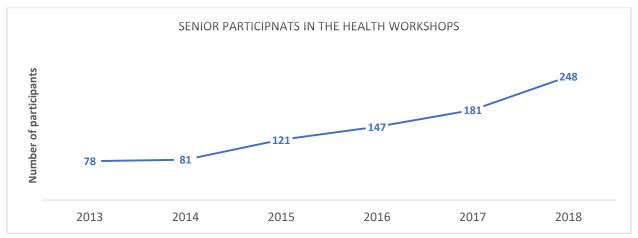
1. Monthly health workshop: workshops helped seniors to increase the knowledge to manage seniors' chronic health conditions workshops were: diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol management, chronic pain, dementia and mental health, etc.) and the workshop was designed comprehensive with information and conducted by trained and certified healthcare providers. BCS



also assigned certified interpreters to support the seniors to make the workshop effective in terms of communication. Any senior from GTA had access to health workshop. The seniors were given TTC (token) to attend the workshop. The BCS posted the flyer and notice about the workshop detail on its own Facebook. The prior registration was required to ensure the spot. 20-25 seniors attended each health workshop in 2018. The participation increased over the time period.

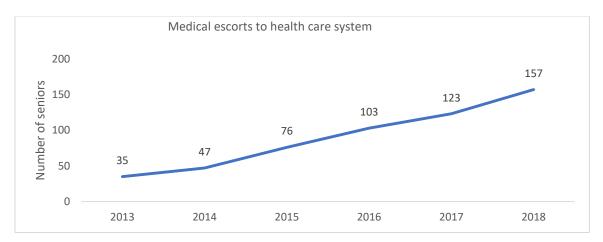






- 2. Weekly Physical Exercise: To maintain a good health and wellness, various forms of physical exercises were offered for the seniors by BCS. However, it is a regular program of BCS. The session is on every Thursday at 2:30 pm at BCS office. Every session is fun for the session (with full of creative movements and music). One certified Recreation therapist (activation) runs the program. About 8-10 seniors attend in every session.
- 3. **Medical Assistance:** BCS provided seniors with medical escorts, pharmacy assistance, and support for medical appointments. The main purpose was to support seniors to maintain the healthcare without any interruption (like language and social challenges).





- 4. Weekly Coffee and Chat: This is a great platform for the seniors to socialize each other. It is a weekly program. After the physical exercise, the seniors participate in sharing the ideas, social and family issues for seeking assistance from others. The seniors get the opportunity to read news paper and to make friendship in the coffee and chat program. BCS organizes the session on Thursday at 3:30 pm at BCS office.
- 5. **Mediation:** To make seniors relaxed and comfortable, the mediation session is designed with Tibetan, mountainous, instrumental and natural music. The mediation program heals internal emotional erosion that could affect health and wellness. The session is half an hour duration. It is held on Thursday at 4:30 pm at BCS office.
- 6. **Story & Pen Club:** The main purpose of this service was to explore the senior's potentiality, so the seniors could have contributed to writing their issues that they wanted to express in the magazine. The service engaged seniors and provided the seniors with a comprehensive guideline to create a healthy writing environment (intergenerational space). Around 13 seniors attended the biweekly session in 2018 with 10 youth to make an intergenerational platform. Currently, the seniors have opportunity to post their stories on BCS's blog.
- 7. **Monthly issue-based workshop:** The objectives of this workshop to engage seniors and youth to identify the issues that are related to intergenerational gap in Taylor Massey neighbourhood. Average 40 community members (like seniors, adult and youth) participated in each workshop to capture the actual factors and facts that affected the intergenerational relationship. The workshop included group discussion and presentation.
- 8. **Technology for social network:** The session was conducted to address the basic technological capacity improvement of seniors to connect their world. The seniors learned about MS word, basic computer operations, opening email, Facebook, Viber applications, etc. Every session included 4-5 seniors and 16 sessions completed to cover 22 seniors. The session is being conducted on every Monday at 3:00 pm.

# ASTP & CULTURE/HERITAGE PROGRAMS

Free after-school support: For young children and newcomers, our free After School Tutoring Program (ASTP) has provided supplementary education to children of families that could not otherwise afford paid services. One of our most successful and longest-running initiatives, the ASTP program has enabled 40 volunteers to help 500 kids throughout the year. The initiative now also features a children's dance program entitled Dancing with Peacock dance group, and South Asian Art where children can learn about traditional and modern dances and south Asian arts & crafts for free. They also have the ability to



perform at the many large community cultural events that BCS hosts throughout the year such as International Mother Language Day, Canada Day, Pohela Boishakh, CBON Mela and many more. In 2018, BCS hosted the International Mother Language Day and Pohela Boishakh events, featuring traditional food, dances and songs, with 300+ community members taking part in the festivities.

### SETTLEMENT SERVICES & RESEARCH

Research: BCS continues to push forward research on our community and the demographics we serve. Recently, we completed a study on Labour Market & Financial Literacy Experiences of Scarborough Youth, 2018. Moreover, we have conducted numerous studies specific to the community that have been completed and presented in different forums and seminars like Non-profit Research table, NAP table, Health & Equity Conference and more, thus laying the foundation for future developments.

**Settlement Services:** Additionally, settlement services are provided in partnership with other community organizations, helping approximately 500-600 clients yearly. Our clients include new and old residents of the catchments area who are not only Bangladeshi but from other ethnicities as well.











# 2018 AT A GLANCE

Knowledge of cultural norms and values has allowed BCS to maximize its potential by providing services targeted at newcomers, youth, and seniors. BCS has over 5000 beneficiaries that rely on the services provided by the organization, with a steady increase in beneficiaries every year. Our achievements in 2018 are given below.

Initiatives for Yo	uth		
Youth Eliminates Smoking (YES)			
Monthly Leadership Meetings	12 Youth		
Smoke-Free Board Game Night	15-25 Youth		
World No Tobacco Day Celebrations	100 Participants		
Anti-Tobacco Pledge Signing	80 signatures		
2018 Summer Sports			
Track & Field Day	50 registered participants plus visitors		
10 Session Training Camp	10-15 Youth		
Soccer Tournament Weekend	200 registered participants plus visitors		
Initiatives for Ser	niors		
Activity	# of participants per session		
Weekly Exercise Sessions	32 sessions (10-15 Seniors)		
Weekly Technology sessions	32 sessions (5-6) Seniors		
Senior Cabinet Meeting	10 meetings (11 members)		
Monthly Health Education Workshop	15 workshops (Average 20 participants)		
Home Support	140 members		
Bangladesh Independence Day Celebrations	70 Seniors		
Accompaniment Supports (for interpreter, travel assistance, etc.)	152		
Senior Outdoor Visits (Aga Khan museum, Guild wood Park, Apple picking and Pacific mall)	150		
Coffee and Chat sessions	8-10 per session		
Meditation for Seniors	8-10 per session		
Barriers to Access, Canadian Health Care Systems	210 Seniors		
Barriers to Volunteering and motivations to volunteers	Qualitative study (Sample size n=45)		



After School Tutoring & Heritage Program			
Activity	# of participants		
Free weekly tutoring sessions	500 students per year (cumulative) with an average of 25 students per session as well as 40 volunteers throughout the year (8 volunteers on average per session)		
Weekly Cultural Session	Children's Session which is half an hour of events such as poem recitation and dances		

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	200 Visitors		
CBON Community Festival	5,000+ Visitors		
Bangladeshi New Year's Art Competition	60 Kids		
International Mother Language Day Performance	400 Visitors		
Victory Day Cultural Show	80 Seniors		
Canada Day Rally in Taylor-Massey	50 Participants		
Guild Wood Park Trip	50 Participants		
Islamophobia: Know Your Rights	50 Participants		
Canada Day Speech and Art Competition	25 Participants and 150 Visitors		



### Research

Labour Market & Financial Literacy Experiences of Scarborough Youth, 2018. Report published in December 2018.

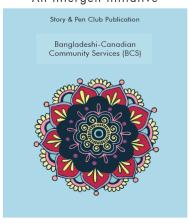
Study paper on: Personal and social challenges of Bangladeshi seniors in the pathways of chronic diseases management.

Bringing back the golden age of seniors- Ways to improve their Health Situations. — an Ongoing study

Ambassador 55+: Inspiration and Strength for Deprived Seniors - An Evaluation

Ambassador 55+: An inter-gen initiative : Story & Pen Club Publication













# **BCS INITIATIVES**

### 1. SETTLEMENT SERVICES

We have continued to provide settlement services in partnership with other community organizations, helping approximately 100 clients over the past year. Our clients include new and old residents of the catchment area who are not only Bangladeshi but from other ethnicities as well.

### **CHILDREN & YOUTH**

### 2. YOUTH ELIMINATES SMOKING (YES)

Facebook: facebook.com/youtheliminates, Instagram: @youthbcs, Twitter: @YouthBCS

Blog: yescinemas.blogspot.com

The YES program completed its 10th year with support from The City of Toronto's Investment in Youth Engagement (IYE) grant, running from February 2018 to June 2019. YES is a youth group dedicated to increasing awareness of tobacco use with a focus on tobacco prevention using different techniques every year.



Phase 10 focused on engaging community youth in tobacco free recreation and reflection about the effects of tobacco use for its tobacco topic. Through a series of smoke-free movie nights, drop-in game nights, youth leader meetings, and the World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) celebration, the program has been able to engage close to 200 youths. The smoke-free movie nights held in February, March, April, July, November, and December allowed youth to identify instances of tobacco use in movies and reflect on the implications it has on influencing the younger audiences. A core group of 12 youth leaders were formed to organize and facilitate the activities in this program. The youth leaders attended monthly meetings, working diligently to ensure the project runs smoothly. One of the biggest

products of the smoke-free movie nights were the corresponding blog posts for each movie. These posts were written by designated youth leaders who analyzed the film for tobacco and drug use to try and explain its effects on a younger audience – crucial information regarding parental guidance and peer pressure among other things were mentioned to keep the youth informed and safe from tobacco and other harmful drugs. The World No Tobacco Day Celebration held on June 2nd, 2018 included speeches and presentations from local political figures, a Toronto Public Health nurse, and youths. WNTD also included a panel discussion regarding the prevalence of tobacco use among youths in the community and possible solutions for stopping it. The panel included professionals from the public health field, local political figures, and university students. Over 100 individuals were successfully engaged from across the community through this event. Additionally, community members were encouraged to sign a pledge to do their best to pursue a healthy lifestyle, free of tobacco use at every event. By June 2018, the pledge reached 150 signatures. YES continues to be a highly successful youth-led community initiative



### 3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP & TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUTH (ETY)

The Entrepreneurship N Tech 4 Youth (ETY) project continued with phase (year) 2 of the project from September 2018 to August 2019. The project consists of a series of weekly workshops which focuses on technology and entrepreneurship topics for community youth and provide them with the applicable tools, support, and resources to pursue their own technological entrepreneurship initiatives.

A total of 10 youths is enrolled in the program at a time for both years. Phase 1 produced great results, the participants were able to use the skills they learned from their weekly workshops and applied them to create their own functioning applications (e.g. games, education tools, and social media tools), the graduates of the program went on to entrepreneurship and technology related fields of study with lots of relevant experience under their belt.



Both phases had professional instructors from relevant fields teaching the youth about entrepreneurship and technology. F

teaching the youth about entrepreneurship and technology. First half of each phase started with entrepreneurship workshops, which included lessons on presentation skills, profile building, design tools, and marketing strategies. The technology workshops focused more on hardware and software knowledge, coding/programming, and application development. Phase 2 of the project completed its entrepreneurship workshops in December 2018 and is now continuing with the technology workshops.

In addition to the workshops, this project also included field trips with the youth into the relevant industries. Some noteworthy trips include a visit to The DMZ at Ryerson University, which is a world leading accelerator for start-ups in Canada, and a visit to the Toronto Reference Library for a workshop on 3D printing. These trips helped broaden the horizons of the youth and give them inspiration and guidance into possible fields they could go into – all the while giving them a hands-on experience with the tools of the trade, so that they can decide for themselves. Furthermore, the project also produced a yearbook for phase 1, which showcased the participants taking part in the field trips and workshops. This helped give the youth a sense of belonging and a keepsake for the work they had done with their peers.

This project is in its second year only, but the engagement and support the youth are receiving is getting stronger. The interest and demand for projects like this is still high in the community and continues to

grow. The project will go on and keep providing the youth with these opportunities onto phase 3 in September 2019.

### 4. SUMMER SPORTS

The Annual Soccer Tournament, funded and supported by the Neighbourhood Youth Alliance (NYA), is one of the most successful youth events hosted by BCS. Since its inception over a decade ago, the event has actively engaged both boys and girls in the greater community in a fun and friendly soccer tournament. In 2018, the tournament was held over the weekend of August



25th and 26th. A new aspect was also introduced this year with friendly practice matches held every weekend in August leading up to the main tournament. The tournament weekend alone was very successful, with 130 registered youth players, 25 youth volunteers, and over 50 additional attendees and spectators. MP Nathaniel Erskine-Smith and Councillor Janet Davis also paid a visit and helped distribute medals during the award ceremony. Similar to previous years, the event was held at the Dentonia Park soccer field, offering easy accessibility to the local community and extended community through its proximity to the Victoria Park Subway Station. The organization hopes to continue this initiative for the following years as it has effectively engaged youth in sports, provided a positive environment to encourage socialization, and contributed to building a healthier community.

### 5. AFTER SCHOOL TUTORING & CULTURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM (ASTP)

The After School Program is one of the pioneer initiatives taken by BCS and has provided quality tutoring for the last 16 years. It is an extremely successful project and helps over 500 students (per year) achieve, if not surpass, the TDSB's expectations of them.





These efforts are implemented by volunteers, which include youth who have grown up within the school system. They are provided with the necessary material (practice questions, lesson plans, etc.) for each age group and use their experience to create an environment where learning is encouraged through interaction and enjoyment. The relationships that are developed as well as the success achieved by students and teachers alike extends beyond the walls of the After-School Program and continues to better the community in the years to come.

The Afterschool Program is open to all youth (as young as grade 1 or as old as grade 12) on a drop-in basis. However, the focus of the Afterschool Program is on children who may not have the necessary resources to achieve academic success: children from families who have recently immigrated to Canada and/or children of low-income families often face numerous barriers to learning (such as language, financial, etc.). For this reason, the service is provided completely free of charge.

### 6. YOUTH, SOCIAL, FINANCIAL, AND ECONOMIC COUNCIL (YSFEC)

The Youth, Social, Financial, and Economic Council (YSFEC), funded by the Laidlaw Foundation and supported by Neighbourhood Youth Alliance, was introduced as a new research initiative this year (2018). The purpose of the research was to explore how gaps in opportunity, awareness, and achievement impact financial literacy and labour market experiences among certain underprivileged youth groups. While respondents for the project were gathered from various Scarborough neighbourhoods, the home base ran on the border of East York and West Scarborough, where there is a





significant racialized and newcomer population. Overall, 65 survey questionnaires and 5 in-depth semistructured interviews were conducted. Numerous areas within the topic were studied such as how living or growing up in Scarborough affected their employment chances, the main challenges the youth faced when trying to get good jobs, their levels of financial literacy, financial habits, and financial influences. The research established while there is optimism about the youth labour market, it is important to note the prevalence of barriers to prosperity. In general, the youth studied were found to be mostly taking the correct steps and possessed confidence in their future success. Future steps are highlighted such as institutions needing to play a greater role in promoting and enhancing financial literacy, especially programs catered towards females who are more likely to be less confident in their financial capabilities. Further, institutions such as schools and community centres are encouraged to be socio-culturally sensitive to be able to help youth who come from underprivileged backgrounds when it comes to labour markets. BCS hopes to continue research projects such as these to better understand the needs of the population it is serving.

### 7. WEEKLY YOUTH RECREATIONAL DROP-IN (GAME NIGHT)

Weekly Game Nights, funded and supported by the Neighbourhood Youth Alliance and City of Toronto, ran nearly Friday from 5-8 PM throughout all of 2018 at the BCS office and has been operating consistently since 2016. On average, the event attracted 10-20 participants every week. Attendees were able to socialize with other



youth in the community, playing board games, card games, computer games, and table tennis. Dinner or a light snack was



also provided. The drop-in creates a consistent, but informal space for youth to network with others in the community. Often, many newcomers are able to develop friendships and ease the integration process into the community. Due its success and traction, BCS hopes to continue to this project for the indefinite future.

## **SENIORS & INTER-GEN**

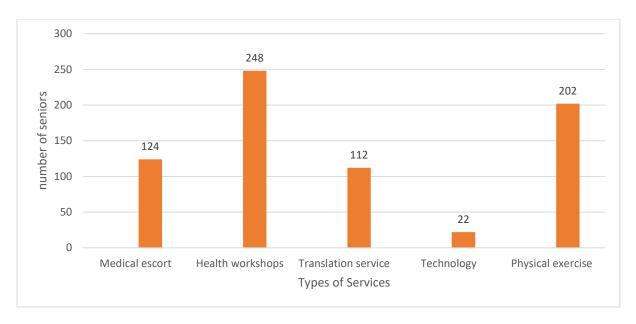
# 8. BRINGING BACK THE GOLDEN AGE FOR SENIORS PROJECT

For seniors, aging can result in many problematic situations: health issues such as multiple physiological illnesses, decreased mobility, etc. can make everyday life very difficult. Moreover, sorrow, loneliness and (potential) abuse (which is often a result of



socioeconomic burdens preventing immigrant families from dedicating time and valuable resources to their elders) can lead to psychological disorders that worsen their current situation. These socioeconomic burdens are also faced by seniors in the form of income security, housing affordability and inadequate social support, which further undermines their ability to attain optimal healthcare. For this reason, the Bringing Back the Golden Age for Seniors Project has been designed to support seniors by giving them the means to improve their lives whilst also feeling comfortable alone at home.





The project has been implemented by BCS since 2011 and funded by WoodGreen Community Services. The purpose of this project was to improve the health and wellness of seniors in the community. The project components were health workshops, physical exercises and accompaniment to healthcare system. The main objective of the workshop was to improve knowledge of seniors, so they could manage their chronic diseases. A total of 10 workshops were done by Alzheimer's Society, East End Community Health Centre, Flemingdon health Centre, DECNET, and Canadian Mental Health Association. About 148 seniors attended the workshop. Furthermore, a total of 20 physical exercise sessions covered upper and lower body, body balance, created movement, stretches, etc. The main idea of the physical exercise was fall prevention. Average participation rate in a session was 8-10 seniors. About 124 seniors were given accompaniments or medical escorts to health care system like family physicians, hospitals, specialized



doctors, dentists, eye care, physiotherapy, etc. The BCS has been successfully implementing the project for eight years and there were successful factors. The main top factor of success was wide range of experience. Regular documentation of the project helped to understand deeply about the ways of implementation in a structural barrier in the society. Considering clients' language challenges in this project, BCS often organized interpreters in the workshop and in the health care systems for over coming the communication obstacles. More than 20 dedicated senior volunteers paid their hours to bring the successful outcomes.

Moreover, the success behind was TTC tokens that helped the seniors to come to centre for attending the activities regularly.

### 9. AMBASSADOR 55+: INSPIRATION AND STRENGTH FOR DEPRIVED SENIORS:

The project duration was about 10 months and was funded by Ontario's Seniors Secretariat. The project originally started in 2016 and, the year 2017 was the continuation of SASN project. The purpose of the project was to make a platform for the seniors, so they can practice their empowerment, improve their independence as well as self-esteem and can explore their potentiality (through voluntarism) to make a congenial environment for a safe community for the seniors. Through the project period, 10 vulnerable



seniors were able to discuss the social problem, including the intergenerational gap, seniors' challenges, health issues and overall solutions to improve the seniors' quality of life for being an active life. The



project formed a senior cabinet consisted of 10 vulnerable seniors who attended a monthly meeting. During the project period, the cabinet members attended 8 meetings, and their discussions were documented by BCS's staff. Moreover, the project organized 6 health promotion workshops about the common diseases (diabetes, chronic pain, Dementia, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol) to educate and empower Bengali seniors for managing their diseases with minimal support. More than 150 seniors attended outdoor

activities under the project. They enjoyed

Aga Khan Museum, Parks and Mall (Thompson Memorial Park, Guildwood Park, Pacific Mall, Wardenwood trail) and cooking session. Furthermore, 22 seniors were graduated from the technology classes. They were able to check emails, send pictures on Viber, and use Facebook. The project was successful in connecting 150 seniors in the community and making a social network and keeping the environment safe for the seniors.



### **10. BETTER TOGETHER (PROJECT BT)**

### An Inter-gen project

The Better Together project focused on reducing the intergenerational gap present between the seniors and youth in the community. Total of six activities took place within this project and catered to a total of 252 participants. The activities consisted of a consultation workshop to gauge the community's interests and concerns, a museum trip to Aga Khan



Museum, the celebration of International Mother Language Day (Ekushey February), a Bangladeshi



cooking workshop at Victoria Park Hub where seniors and youth worked together to create various cultural dishes, an outdoor hiking excursion to Warden Woods Trail, and finally an impact assessment workshop took place at the BCS office where the effectiveness of the project was measured and any concerns/suggestions from the participants were addressed.

### 11. SENIOR CABINET



The cabinet is the ideal way to bridge the gap between the needs of seniors and the services provided which consists of 12 members this year. Through the Cabinet, BCS is able to offer enhanced programs to resolve issues seniors face. The senior cabinet is the primary reason that the many different senior initiatives of BCS are effective and efficient.



#### 12. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SENIORS

BCS provides accompaniment, pharmacy assistance and support for any medical appointments for seniors when required. BCS also provides home support services for seniors such as scheduling medical appointments, basic cleaning and meal preparation, emotional support, and assistance in walking. Home support has helped 149 seniors and accompaniment has aided 152 seniors.

### 13. Weekly Coffee N Chat and exercise for Seniors:

We have weekly senior's drop-in on every Thursday where they do socialization, enjoy refreshments. We also have exercise facilitator to run light exercise and meditation sessions for seniors.



### 14. REFERRAL AND CONNECTIONS

BCS has strong ties with various organizations and individuals and can connect seniors with the right resources when necessary. We connected 239 seniors with family physicians, nutritionists, dentists, eye doctors, specialized doctors and many more services.

### 15. LITERACY HEALTH AND FITNESS

BCS hosts monthly health promotion and health management workshops, and informal discussions to relay conducted by DECNET, CMMA, FHC, East end health healthcare discuss vital health-related topics. Attendance for these monthly health workshops is approximately 30-40 seniors per session.

### FESTIVALS & CELEBRATIONS

### 16. BANGLA NEW YEAR





Pohela Boishakh (Bangla New Year) was a wonderful and entertaining celebration with fun activities and performances for all community members to enjoy. BCS was fortunate to see over 200 visitors attend the event.



### 17. CANADA DAY



BCS held their annual Canada Day festive event during July. It consisted of art and speech competitions, a playback of the national anthem, a ceremonial Canada Day cake-cutting and a parade localized in the Victoria Park and Danforth area. It brought 70 community members to celebrate the event together.

### 18. WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY



World No Tobacco Day is an event that is coordinated annually by Youth Eliminates Smoking. It is held annually on the community since 2018. Held at Access Point Danforth, WNTD is a day where the community brings awareness against the dangers of tobacco use. This year 60+ community member attended including our esteemed councillor, along with having the youth and kids participate in the competitions and interactive activities.

### 19. INDEPENDENCE DAY

Another important cultural event for BCS was the Bangladesh Independence Day event during 2018. This is to orient our children about the history of Bangladesh. Our seniors and young kids take part in cultural performances, speech competitions and various jeopardy and fun games. This year BCS had 100 community members attend to celebrate this glorious day.







# RESEARCH

A big portion of BCS's efforts is directed towards research. A largely under-rated aspect of the organization, research lays the foundation for all initiatives – these studies are imperative in determining the needs of the community and the means to best address these needs. These studies are often conducted via surveys and/or face-to-face focal group interviews in an effort to determine both quantitative and qualitative information, existing mandates: youth, seniors and newcomers. The following conclusions were reached:

### **Research Project**

Title: Personal and social challenges of Bangladeshi seniors in the pathways of chronic diseases management. Quazi Shafayetul Islam & Nasima Akter

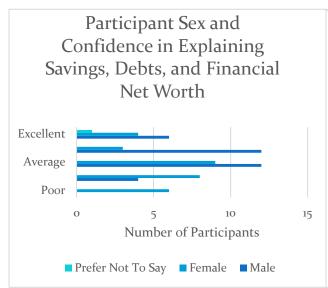
Abstract: Bangladeshi seniors have chronic diseases; however, they face challenges to manage their diseases. The study explored the personal and social challenges that hinder the health seeking in accessing the healthcare system. The study interviewed 210 seniors aged 55+ ( 140 females and 70 males). Face -to-face interviewed were done. About 71% of seniors had more than one chronic disease. Two-third of seniors had to depend on the family members for their medical appointments. Majority of the seniors did not have complete knowledge about diabetes, arthritis, and hypertensions, but they attended health workshop last year, and they had access to the source of health information. 67% of seniors reported that they sometimes missed their daily medications. Near about three-fourth ( 71%) were physically inactive, and many of them were not aware of healthy food for addressing chronic conditions. In conclusions, Bangladeshi seniors managed their health poorly. Health information in Bengali language can help them retain their health information. Caregiver in the family members should be developed urgently to manage their medication and feeding.

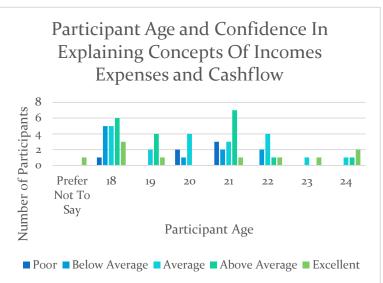
# LABOUR MARKET AND FINANCIAL LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF SCARBOROUGH YOUTH Tahmid Rouf, Saadia Sarker, Michael Asres & Hassan Karim

Abstract: This short research report explores how barriers, particularly gaps in opportunity, awareness, and achievement, impact financial literacy and labour market experiences among some underprivileged youth. The study is conducted using survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with children of immigrants (generation 1.5 and 2) between the ages of 18-24, residing in Scarborough, a dense ethnic suburb in Toronto, Canada, who face barriers such as racialization and poverty. Their daily experiences from engagements with members of their broader residential communities



to close personal networks that guide them in finding jobs and managing money are all explored. The findings show that most participants feel a lack of certain financial knowledge and career networking opportunities; a notable disadvantage in terms of their finances and job prospects. Moreover, social organizations such as registered charities need to better understand financial literacy challenges unique to children of immigrants from diverse backgrounds and to better link institutional offerings in youth employment services to financial literacy initiatives to ensure a holistic sustainable approach to youth development.





Females expressed less confidence in explaining financial concepts than males.

"My dad was really strict about money, so whenever I spent something, I think about [spending] two or three times. I have a hard time spending money for myself..."



## ON-GOING PROJECTS

### **Settlement Services**

Settlement Services is at the core of BCS initiatives, continuously providing newcomers with support in all facets of life, whether it is a translation of application forms or information about immigration, healthcare, etc.

### Youth Recreational Drop-In

The Youth Recreation Drop-In program funded by Neighbourhood Youth Alliance (NYA) provided youth from the Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) of Taylor Massey and Oakridge with an easily accessible weekly recreational drop-in within their community.

Preliminary studies conducted in the community found that local youth had a desire to participate in sports and other recreational activities; however, they were limited by a lack of space, safety concerns, in addition to increasing costs. With the Drop-in, youth could participate in leisurely and beneficial recreational activities such as card games, board games, and table tennis. The program provided youth with a safe space to relieve stress and interact with other youth in their community. Special events such as bowling nights and skating nights were also able to engage over a dozen youth. This has been proven to be a positive deterrent from risky behaviours, resulting in a more vibrant and healthy community.

### **Grassroots Seniors**

Phase 4 of the Grassroots Seniors initiative has successfully begun. Seniors have been actively engaged within the community and are being given the opportunity to put their knowledge and experience to use in a multitude of ways.

### **Summer Sports**

The summer sports program has seen 12 years of success and continues to grow with every passing year. This summer, BCS is attempting to expand the initiative to university students to increase outreach whilst generating revenue.

### Art workshop: Color and cultures

The project is funded by Ontario Arts Councils to encourage South Asian kids and youth for expressing their cultures with a colourful touch. The project started in May 2018 and ends in December. Initially, 50 youth and kids had registered, and average 30-35 youth and kids are attending the weekly session. This is the first time, BCS and Ontario Arts Council started a weekly free art workshop for a great number of South Asian youth and kids (50 in number) that are being held in Danforth area. The participants are learning about the application of appropriate colours in South Asian cultures through Alpona, graphic design, pottery, Calligraphy, architectures, crafting and decoration, and ceramic products. Over the project period, about 24 workshops will be facilitated by professionals. In the end, the participant will receive certificates and their art products will be displayed for the community people.

### New Horizon for Seniors: Senior Ambassador 55+: An Inter-gen Project

The project was designed to address the intergenerational gap and to eliminate the gap to form a healthy and safe environment in Crescent Town areas. The project activity started in April 2018 and ends in December 2018. The main activities of this project are to form ambassadors consisting of 10 seniors (age



55+ years) and 5 youth. The ambassadors organize a monthly workshop to invite 40-50 youth and seniors to discuss the factors for the integrational gap and solutions. A total of eight workshops will be done by December and discussions are being documented. To date (July), there were three workshops were completed. In the workshop, 4 or 5 groups discuss each other and present the findings. At the end of the project, the ambassadors will present (in a large audience) the information (discussion results) about the intergenerational gap in front of community members, media, and local providers. Another activity of the project is to create a pen club for seniors and youths. The ultimate goal is to generate writers who write the social problem, intergenerational issues for the community. Two workshops about pen club are run in a month. Up to July, the project completed 10 workshops. One blog was created, and writers put their writings on the blog and 20 small and big stories (written by youth) were posted on the blog (blog link: <a href="https://bcspenclub.blogspot.com/">https://bcspenclub.blogspot.com/</a>). Furthermore, under this project, more than 20 seniors are learning technology like Facebooks, emails, internet for connecting people and social media.

### Better Together: Moving Forward (Project BT2)

### An Inter-gen project

This is the continuation of phase1 (Better Together project BT1). The project is funded by the Multicultural Community Capacity Grant Program. The project duration is 4 months (May to Aug). The purpose of the project is to create a scope or a platform where South Asian immigrants (both senior and youth) can participate in cultural events together to be empowered in Canadian society. To understand about the collectivistic South Asian culture, three monthly meeting (intergen meeting) were done, and more than 100 youth and seniors attended the meetings, and they discussed about the about intergenerational gap and challenges towards cultural performances together (both youth and seniors). From the discussion, the project got ideas to encourage both youth and seniors and engages youth and seniors to perform cultural event together on the same platform. With a view to, one cultural show (bridegroom's journey in rural Bangladesh) was done in Taylor Creek Park where 10 seniors and 10 youth performed. More then 300 community people enjoyed this cultural show with BBQ. Another two cultural events will be done in July and Aug. The final one (the cultural show) will be held in Dentonia park (Saturday, Aug 11, 2018). Tentative 5000 community members will enjoy the show.

### Entrepreneurship and Technology for Youth (ETY)

Delivering a project at the idea or conceptual stage over 36 months since 2017 seeks to provide digital literacy, and entrepreneurial education, resources and supports for low-income, racialized youth in Toronto with funding and support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation - Youth Opportunities Fund. Youth will learn to harness the power of business and technology and have space where they feel a part of, share their ideas and work collaboratively. In the first year of the program 2 mentors, 12 mentees and 3 youth project staff were recruited. 32 weekly workshops were delivered throughout September 2017 - April 2018. The workshops taught important digital and entrepreneurial literacy concepts such as business canvas models, elevator pitches, personal branding and coding. The project is now officially in its second year.

### Youth Eliminates Smoking (YES 10)

Running since 2010, this phase of the anti-tobacco initiative focuses on smoke-free movies as well as hookah and shisha. Planned events include World No Tobacco Day Celebrations, smoke-free movie nights for the youth, online smoke-free movies blog and tobacco-free lifestyle pledges. The 2018 World No Tobacco Day Celebrations attracted over 50 community members and many dignitaries such as the councillor.



# **UPCOMING EVENTS**

Special Events				
Event	Date			
YES International Mother Language Day Event	February 21, 2019			
YES Bengali New Year's Event	April 13, 2019			
World No Tobacco Day Event	June 1, 2019			
Canada Day Celebrations	July 01, 2019			
BCS Annual General Meeting	July 25, 2019			
Soccer Training Camp	Early August			
Soccer Tournament	Mid of August			
Summer Soccer Finals	August 24-25			
Bangladesh Victory Day Celebrations	December 16, 2018			
BCS Volunteer's Dinner	TBA			
ETY Final Pitch Day	TBA			

# **Regularly Scheduled Events**

After School Tutoring Program: Saturday 2:30PM to 4:30PM

Senior's Coffee and Chat, exercise, yoga, meditation, technology learning sessions: Thursday 3:30PM to

5:00PM

Youth Game Night: Friday evening
YES Smoke-Free Movie Night: Friday
Youth Leader Meeting: as scheduled
Monthly senior cabinet meeting

Weekly art workshop for children & youth

Senior volunteer meeting: monthly



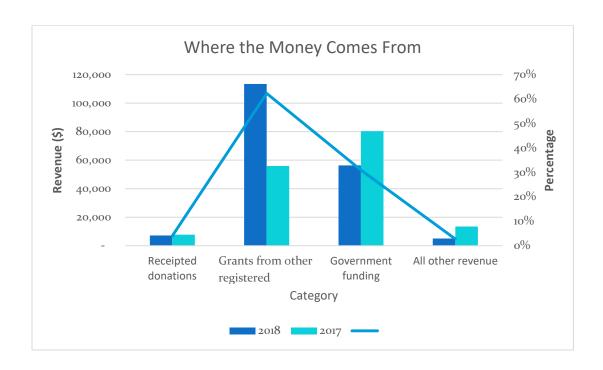
# **Weekly Schedule**

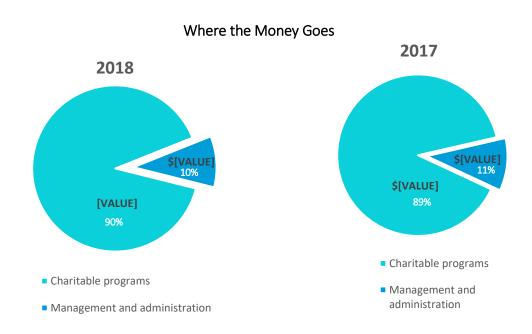
2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Senior's Drop-in		ETY Workshop (1-4 PM)
					Night' (6 – 8 PM)	
				Meditation (3:30 – 5:30 PM)		After-school Tutoring & Art
						Program (2:30 – 4:30 PM)



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW







# **OFFICE MEMBERS**

### **POSITION NAME**

Project Coordinator Qazi Shafeyetul Islam
ASTP Coordinator Syeda Shamima Ahmed

Youth Coordinator Tahmid Rouf
Senior Outreach Assistant Shamima Nargis
Assistant Youth Coordinator Tanmoya Paul

Accounts Assistant Fariha Bakht
Project Assistant Fariha R Khan
Project Assistant Abir Ashraful Islam
Placement Students Mohammed Sohel

Kaniz Fatima Rozina Bhuiyan Syeda Aksa Anzuman Hosna Ara Lopa Sijhitha Sunil Farjad Agha

### YOUTH COORDINATOR

Tahmid Rouf

### **YOUTH LEADERS**

Tanmoy Paul Safwan Ahmed Naomi Monower
Rafsan Kabir Shairi Islam Mafriaz Ul Alam
Fariha Khan Orindom Dip Das Abir Ashraful Islam
Mirza Faiyaz Mustafiz Tabia Sobahan Sumaiyah Moral
Hassan Karim Shamsur Rahman Saadia Sarker

### **SENIOR VOLUNTEERS**

Jahanara Khanam
Md Moyeen Chowdhury
Farid Uddin Ahmed
Rezaul Haque
Kamil Hossain
Anthony Gomes
Sraboni Sarker
Mohammad Mufazzal Hossain

Feroza Aziz Parvin Rokeya Sultana Ahmed Rafika Hakim

Rehana Akter Khorsheda Ahmed Monowara Begum Lutfunnesa Tahmina Akter Rani Haque Shilpi Bhatta Charjee Nazma A. Khanam Aleya Begum



### Akter Ahmed Sultana Jesmin

### Shamsun Nahar Abedin Nawajish Ara

### **YOUTH VOLUNTEERS**

Tamim Rahman Safwan Ahmed Mafriaz Ul Alam Afnan Sahil Nazifa Tasnim Ridwan Ahmed Mahmoodur Rahman Tanmoy Paul Liaba Chatha Zubian Muntahee Adib Chouwdhury Shams Rahman Zahin Murshed Jumael Muntahee Masrur Fakhruddin Naslin Rahman Arisihi Maisara Hassan Karim Tasnia Zeba Sahat Khandaker

### **ADULT VOLUNTEERS**

Lubaba Lamia Nusrat Anwar Shamsun Nahar Abedin Heera Rehman Tonmoy Talukder Farzana Yesmin Kaniz Fatema Mohammad Sohel Rozina Bhuiyan

### **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS**

Arthi Sarkar
Tamim Rahman
Sharia Hoque
Liaba Chatha
Nazifa Tasnim
Shamail Rahman
Rafeed Nazmul
Krishna Sritharna
Sahat Khondker
Sakib Tariq
Tasnuba Tabassum
Yusha Hossain
Afia Semonthy
Nureen Nawar
Shukria

Jannatul Ferdousi Nafio Miah Ramisa Razi Heera Rahman Farzana Yesmin Reanna Chowdhury Nafisa Farzana Inara Akbar Areeba Islam Mohammad Kayyum (Kabi) Kashifa Nahar Arion Tarik Nusaiba Mahdia Fairuze Maisha Nureen DiyaNat Edee Many more names to add......





## **SENIOR CABINET 2018**

Rezaul Hoque Anthoni Gomez Shamima Nargis Gias Uddin Ahmed Bahauddin Akter Ahmed Jahanara Khanam Shahara Banu Siddique Tulsi Das Samshul Arefin Rezaul Hoque

## **PEN CLUB MEMBERS 2018**

Rezaul Hoque Ashraf Ahmed Shamima Nargis Gias Uddin Ahmed Nadira Tabassum Sraboni Sarkar Jahanara Khanam Sultana Ahmed Rahat Zaman Bidyut Sarkar Samshul Arefin

# **BOARD OF DIRECTORS (AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2018)**



Kazi Haque, Chair



Syed Bakht, Treasurer



Nasima Akter, Executive Director



Rokhsana Reza, Secretary



Sarwar Khan, Director



Sakiain Jaigridar Director



Israt Ahmed, Director



Souri Zaman, Director



Shahidul Mintu, Director



## **LIFE MEMBERS**

# BCS Thanks all life members for all their continuous support.

Abid Choudhury





Farhat Khan



Mustaq Ahmed



Hamida Choudhury



Jahanara Khanam



Kazi S Hoque



Khandaker Iqbal Hossain



Mahfuz Khalili





Moyeen Uddin Choudhury



Mohammed













Nasima Akter



Preety Ahmed



Quazi Waliul Islam



Qazi Shafayetul Islam



Rezaul Haque



Rokhsana Reza



Saklain Jaigirdar





Souri Zaman



Towhid Noman



Abdul Wahid



Jyotirmay Datta



**ANM Yousuf** 



Zinat Halim





# **FUNDING AGENCIES**

Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF)

City of Toronto

Toronto Public Health

Service Canada

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration

Ontario Art Council

LaidLaw Foundation

Wood Green

Canadian Heritage

# PARTNER AGENCIES/AFFILIATIONS WITH OTHERS

Access Alliance Multi-Cultural Health and Community Services (AAMHCS)

Opening Doors Project, CMHA

Association of Bangladeshi Professionals in Accounting & Finance (ABPAFC)

Flemingdon Community Health Center

Bangladeshi Students Association – Universities: McMaster/ Ryerson / UTSG/UTSC/York/ Waterloo

East Toronto Health Link

Bloor Information and Life Skills Centre (BILS)

Flemingdon Community Hospital

Children's Peace Theatre
City of Toronto, Parks, Forestry & Recreation

Fairlawn Avenue United Church

Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)

Harmony Hall Center for Seniors

Heart & Stroke Foundation

Crescent Town Club

Neighborhood Link Support Services

(NLSS)

Crescent Town Youth Support Network (CT-YSN)

Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services (SAFSS)

Dixon Hall Neighborhood Services

Teesdale Support Network

Family Service, Toronto

Thorncliffe Neighborhood Office (TNO)

Sunshine Centre For Seniors

Toronto Community Housing (TCHC)

Birchmount Bluffs Neighborhood Centre

Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

WoodGreen Community Services

West Scarborough Neighborhood Community Centre

Young Bangladeshi-Canadian Professionals

Neighborhood Link

Young Diplomats

Regent park tenant association

Youth-In-Action

Danforth Islamic society

Heart & Stroke Foundation

Hindu society

South Asian Women Right Organization (SAWRO)

Bangladesh Center and Community Services (BCCS)

