



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Bangladesh Centre and Community Services
30 September 2023

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I (we) would like to acknowledge the land Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS) operates is on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. I also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Williams Treaty signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2022-2023 has been Year of Recovery

Dear members, volunteers, clients, partners, donors, our special guests and community members,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is an absolute honor for me to welcome you to our Annual General Meeting, and I thank you all for attending.

I want to share a quote with you that made me pause and reflect:

"Though nobody can go back and make a new beginning, anyone can start over and make a new ending" Chico Xavier

This quote made me think of this past year, a year where we learnt how to recover from the multitude of challenges brought forth by Covid-19. And although Covid is much slower now, we are still living in times of difficulty, and are facing a lot of challenges. - Despite this, we showed that we can start over, make a new ending for our story and recover.

We are proud of the dedication of our staff, volunteers, Board members, and donors who have stepped up to the challenge during the pandemic to provide support with their kind hearts and care. To meet the needs of our clients, we have slowly resumed our activities and increased our in person programming while following Public Health Guidelines. This has allowed seniors and other clients who benefit from our services to be able to access our programs.

We believe in partnerships and collaboration to deliver our programs and services. To this end, we became innovative and explored opportunities to build new partnerships with Feed Scarborough, South Riverdale Health Centre, CP Planning, CCMW and CASSA. These new partnerships helped us identify service gaps and develop programs so our clients do not fall through the cracks.

We have implemented many programs in the last fiscal year including: a program that addressed vaccine hesitancy and increased awareness of the benefits of vaccination, a summer camp for the kids to offer them experience away from parents, develop their social skills etc., programs to build awareness on Islamophobia by our YCS team, provided groceries to seniors in need, offered tutoring sessions on English Conversation circles, taught computer skills to seniors through the help of our youth, conducted town hall meetings and sessions on Anti-racism and Anti-hate, created two hotlines (anti-racism and violent against

women) so that clients are able to report their experience on racism and violence/abuse), continued to provide support to our seniors through our Senior programs, started a new initiative to work on Affordable Housing, and provided settlement services to newcomers.

We are moving ahead in the implementation of our five Strategic objectives. Some of the objectives have been completed while others are in progress. Our goals were: a) to increase programming for seniors and women, b) create awareness on "Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate, c) provide training on Board governance, d) Conduct Board, staff and volunteer training on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, e) Support Policy development f) Enhance E capacity of the organization g) Renovate the current HVAC system and build two accessible washrooms. I am pleased to inform you that we have successfully completed 90% of our goals.

In many ways, over this past year, we had to start over and make a new ending for our story. And by having the courage to do so, we have recovered from our challenges with grace and strength.

As some of you may know, this will be the last general meeting with me as the chair of the Board. Before stepping down I wanted to mention a few points that stand out in my mind when I think of the years I have spent at BCCS.

First of all, the dedication and commitment of our staff, volunteers, and Board members has earned the trust of the community, clients, members, partners and funders. BCCS is what it is today because of you all. Since 2010, my goal and determination has been to address the challenges and opportunities of getting the organization to a stable ground, obtaining charitable status, developing a volunteer base, growing programming with government funds, building professional relations with the funders, donors, partners in the community and working through the steps of reaching sustainability.

I am so thankful for the time I have had here, and excited to see how BCCS will transform as it takes on challenges of the future. As mentioned earlier, we have had Board re-treat sessions (Board Governance) this year. A board retreat session is a way to connect the board's passion, expertise and align board members on strategy, goals and creating consensus. I am confident that our Board member will be engaged and will be able to carry out our strategic objectives with a unified mindset. I also hope BCCS will continue to strive for the vision of our founders, members, past and current staff and volunteers, the vision of a community where people are valued, respected and care for one another,

where people come together in their commitment to meet the needs of the community.

I am so thankful for the time I have had here, and excited to see how BCCS in its latest form takes on the future

Finally, I am privileged to have been the Chair for the last 13 years. My sincere and heartfelt thanks to our Board of Directors for all of the time, hard work, passion and governance that you provide. It is greatly appreciated, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with you all. All organizations can and do benefit from a new perspective and I feel as though the time has come for me to pass on the torch.

Respectfully,

Hasina Quader

BANGLADESH CENTRE & COMMUNITY SERVICES (BCCS)

The Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS) has established itself as a highly reputable organization for settlement services within the South Asian communities residing in the Greater Toronto Area since its inception in 2010. BCCS programs are designed to support newcomers and immigrants in acquiring knowledge and skills essential for their integration into Canadian society at large. BCCS takes an active leadership role in both fostering the growth of its members and the broader community, all while promoting South Asian culture and fostering mutual understanding. We offer a diverse range of programs, some funded and others not, which have a positive impact on our larger community.

BCCS strongly believes in the power of building communities through partnerships and collaborative efforts. Our commitment lies in the development of sustainable services and programs that can meet the evolving needs of our members as well as the broader community we serve. In addition to our existing initiatives, our upcoming goals for the year ahead revolve around the creation of specific programs tailored for seniors, youth, women, and immigrants.

OUR VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

Vision

BCCS is working toward a time when it will be a sustainable organization with core funding and programs in order to continue and expand our settlement and integration activities.

Mission Statement

BCCS is a non-profit charitable organization which provides assistance to the South Asian community in the Greater Toronto Area for their integration and settlement in Canadian society. In addition, we provide a place of connection and cultural heritage for members of the South Asian community.

Shared Values

- Responsive to community needs
- Independence and dignity of clients
- Active in community
- Efficient & transparent operation

Strategic Objectives

- Strategic Objective 1: FUNDRAISING: Sustainable revenue of \$300,000
- Strategic Objective 2: GOVERNANCE: Engaged and active Board with clear understanding of the delivery of social services as well as organizational objectives
- Strategic Objective 3: MARKETING: Rebranded, well-known and respected organization -- by our community, partners and funders
- Strategic Objective 4: HUMAN RESOURCE: A full-time Executive Director with 1 other full-time staff
- Strategic Objective 5: ADMIN and COLLABORATION: BCCS Building used for programs and events 6 days a week

GOVERNANCE

Our Board is made up of dedicated, hardworking and passionate volunteers who are committed to the work. We are mandated to help the community. Our Board is comprised of 15 members representing the not-profit, financial, public service sectors and the neighborhoods we serve. The Board is responsible for making policies and procedures, ensuring transparency, setting strategic directions based on our mission, goals and objectives of the organization. New members on the Board can be elected at our Annual General Meeting and all of our eligible members of the organization can participate to run. The Nomination Committee makes recommendations for new recruitment of the Board members based on requirements. Board meetings are held at least 10 times of the year. The minutes of the meetings are being filed once it is approved by the Board. The minutes books are kept in the Organization's office and are accessible to the members.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Hasina Quader - President
- Dr. Shafiq Chowdhury - Vice President
- Nahid Sultana Sharif – Secretary
- Maran Raja Durai -Treasurer
- Kafiluddin Parvez - Director
- Hon. Maria Minna - Director
- Mak Azad - Director
- Mohammed Alamgir Hakim - Director
- Moktadir Kabir- Director
- Shebu Chowdhury - Director
- Syed Shawkat Mahmood – Director
- Sayeeda Rahman – Director
- Tahsin Chowdhury- Director
- Warren Paisely – Director

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

A.Funded Programs

1. Senior's Social Participation through a Hybrid Model and Enhancing Social Inclusion in Ethno-Cultural and Diverse Communities

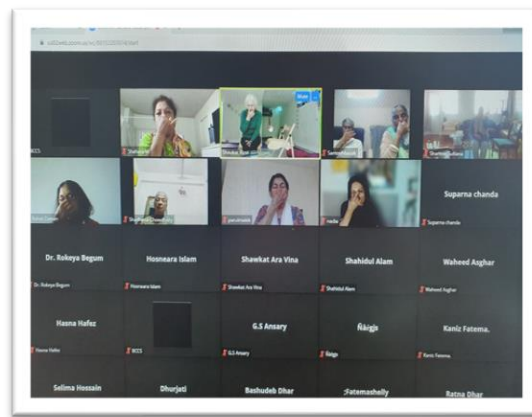
About 100 seniors and 150 family members and friends were benefited by this program

Our senior's programs were funded by the Federal Government's NH Seniors Program and Woodgreen. We scheduled weekly sessions for yoga and therapeutic dance, along with discussion sessions focusing on various topics of interest to senior citizens. These sessions were designed to cater to the needs of our senior community. One of the weekly sessions was conducted virtually, while the other took place at the Feed Scarborough food bank location in Scarborough. Additionally, we hosted monthly in-person sessions at the Danforth location. We actively encouraged seniors from the community to participate in our events and celebrations.

Approximately 50 seniors actively engaged in our yoga and therapeutic dance sessions, while others took part in a variety of events and activities. Seniors took the lead in organizing cultural programs, enjoying movie and music nights, and collaborating with Feed Scarborough for a potluck event in Thompson Park, where they enthusiastically contributed food and participated in games and socializing. Our senior community also spearheaded the celebration of Senior's Month and other events that were not funded by external sources.

This project had a profound impact on improving the mental and physical well-being of our senior participants. It also inspired community members to volunteer and enhanced the seniors' knowledge base through informative discussion sessions. Moreover, the project played a vital role in early detection of elder abuse by creating a social network for sharing resource materials related to elder abuse. Youth members were actively involved in both the planning and execution of the project.

The project's activities were aligned with several key objectives, including: a) Promoting healthy aging b) Preventing elder abuse c) Combating ageism and celebrating diversity d) Promoting inclusion and building capacity for adapting to a virtual environment.





2. South Asian Vaccine Engagement Collaborative: provided Covid-19 vaccine to over 2000 individuals

Through this project, BCCS collaborated with CASSA to support the City of Toronto in facilitating the vaccination of individuals, effectively reaching more than 20,000 people through a multifaceted approach that included interpersonal communication, community outreach, and the use of social media. Additionally, we organized two pop-up vaccination clinics at our center, and in partnership with Feed Scarborough and Settlement Assistant and Family Support Services (SAFSS), we provided support for their respective pop-up clinics.

In our efforts to promote vaccination, BCCS Ambassadors engaged with Bengali and other South Asian communities within our target areas. Our approach involved delivering clear, evidence-based, and culturally sensitive messages that emphasized the significant benefits of COVID-19 vaccines. To maximize our reach, our Ambassadors conducted door-to-door flyer distribution, made phone calls to community members, displayed posters in public spaces, and motivated individuals to get vaccinated. Furthermore, we ran advertisements in local newspapers to reinforce our vaccination campaign.



3. The Educate, Motivate, Build Resilience: A Caring Community Endeavour (EMBRACCE) project: Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism: 500 people attended these workshops

Objectives of EMBRACCE project, funded by Anti-Racism Directorate were multi-faceted and aimed at addressing racism within South Asian communities. The key goals included:

Raising Awareness on Racism: The project sought to increase awareness about racism within South Asian communities, highlighting its existence and impact.

Identifying Good Practice Initiatives: It aimed to identify and promote initiatives that align with the objectives of the Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism (AHAR) agenda, showcasing effective approaches to combat racism.

Reducing Racist Incidents: A significant goal was to actively work towards reducing instances of racism within the targeted communities.

Empowering Individuals and Families: The project aimed to empower individuals and families affected by racism, providing them with tools, resources, and support to address and combat racism.

Taking Action through a Helpline: A dedicated helpline was established to enable people to report incidents of hate, providing a direct channel for addressing and responding to instances of racism.

Fostering Dialogue and Interaction: The project brought together non-racialized community groups and racialized members to engage in discussions about cultural bias and systemic racism. These dialogues aimed to break the cycle of racism by promoting understanding and interaction.

Training Initiatives: Two training sessions on "hate and racism" were organized for Board members and volunteers, involving 57 participants. These sessions were designed to equip individuals with knowledge and strategies for addressing racism effectively.

Community Engagement: The project organized a series of townhall meetings and workshops, with a total of about 500 participants. These events covered various topics related to racism, including Anti-Black Racism, Islamophobia,

Cyberhate, Antisemitism, Truth and Reconciliation, Indigenous Resurgence, LGBTQ+ Communities, and Reporting of Hate Incidences.

Resource Translation: As part of its efforts, the project translated resource materials into Bangla to make them accessible to the Bangladeshi community, contributing to the dissemination of anti-racism information and resources.

In summary, this project was comprehensive in its approach, combining awareness-raising, education, dialogue, and support mechanisms to combat racism and promote inclusivity within South Asian communities.



4. Shock-proofing Community: about 500 people were benefited

Objectives of the Shock-proofing project, funded by Canadian Women's Foundation were to train volunteers, staff, and board members on gender based violence (GBV), identify initiatives and services that promote equality and provide GBV trauma counselling, create awareness of GBV in this community, provide access to web based and printed materials and empower individuals/families to take action to prevent and reduce GBV.

The funding provided significant support to the organization's capacity to respond to the pandemic and prepare for future shocks, enabling them to adapt swiftly and implement innovative policies and practices. Here are some ways in which the funding bolstered their response:

Technological Advancements: The funding facilitated the adoption of digital technologies and tools, enabling the organization to transition to remote work

seamlessly. Virtual counselling sessions, online training, and webinars became integral components of our service delivery, enhancing our ability to respond effectively during the pandemic and prepare for future crises.

Strengthening Remote Support Services: The organization used the funding to expand its helpline and online counselling services, ensuring that survivors of GBV had continuous access to support despite movement restrictions. These reinforced their capacity to handle increased demands during emergencies and served as a model for scaling up remote services in the future. During the project period we received 15 phone calls and provided need based support to the individuals.

Training and Capacity Building: The funding allowed the organization to invest in training and capacity building for their staff and volunteers. They enhanced their expertise in remote service delivery, trauma-informed care, and handling crises. Two batches of trainings were conducted by SWARO for the Board members, staff and volunteers. We organized 20 batches of workshops where more than 500 participants joined. The sessions were conducted by gender experts from different government and non-profit organizations.

Policy Advocacy: The organization used part of the funding to engage in policy advocacy to address GBV during the pandemic. They collaborated with relevant authorities and stakeholders to advocate for better protection mechanisms and support for survivors. These advocacy efforts paved the way for improved policies to tackle GBV during crises and laid the groundwork for future advocacy work.

In conclusion, the funding provided crucial support to the organization's capacity to respond effectively to the pandemic's challenges and prepare for future shocks. By investing in technology, remote support services, training, policy advocacy, and research, the organization developed robust mechanisms to navigate crises and continue our mission of combating GBV effectively.

BCCS also developed a questionnaire to determine the baseline situation of our community. Given our relatively nascent involvement in this field, we undertook a concise survey among the participants to gain deeper insights into the landscape of gender-based violence within our communities. The outcomes of this survey profoundly informed our discussions, equipping us with pertinent information to effectively support both victims and the broader community. Notably, approximately 150 individuals willingly participated in this survey. The findings revealed that 38% of respondents experienced verbal abuse, 22% endured physical abuse, and 36% suffered emotional abuse from their intimate partners. Alarmingly, over half of the respondents who experienced abuse never

disclosed it to anyone. A mere 2.3% reported incidents through telephone hotlines, and 4.7% sought assistance from the police. Regarding reporting preferences, 60% indicated a preference for reporting to the police, 19.2% to non-profit organizations, 11.5% through telephone helplines, while 5.8% opted not to report at all. The survey also highlighted high levels of discrimination/abuse in workplace environments (36%), educational institutions (24%), and public spaces (25%). Shockingly, more than half of the respondents were unaware of government policies and support available for GBV victims.



5. Capacity Building on Diversity, Inclusion and E-Capacity: 35 people attended these sessions

The project was funded by Department of Canadian Heritage. One online training and one in-person training were held to educate and train the board members, staff, volunteers and partners. 35 participants attended the online session and 30 participants attended the in-person session. A well-known consulting firm facilitated the in person training. The trainings helped the participants (board members, staff, volunteers, partners) to learn about DEI in a multi-cultural society. This has helped delivering our services to our participants in an inclusive atmosphere and operate in a more equitable, effective and welcoming manner. Base line data was collected before the beginning of the sessions. Participants feedback after the sessions were very positive.

The in-person board training session was conducted by a pro-bono consultant to train the board on their roles, responsibilities and liabilities. An evaluation was conducted after the sessions. The evaluation indicated board's satisfaction and understanding on Board's and committee's roles and responsibilities. Majority board members expressed their interest to have more sessions on this topic. The consultant agreed to conduct another session as a pro-bono basis.



An on-line session was also conducted on this topic. 15 board members and five committee members attended the session. Our Chair of the Governance Committee has over 15 years experience as a board member and the Chair of Costi Immigrants Services. She has conducted five on line session as well.

In addition, the chair, the officers and ED were trained by Management Advisory Services (MAS) on this topic as a pro-bono basis. MAS also provided information materials on board's roles, responsibilities and liabilities.

In addition, we developed policies on anti-racism, discrimination, social media use, Code of conduct, complaint process and policies etc. through hiring a consultant. The Board members, staff and the committee members were educated and learned the skill on developing and reviewing policies. Board also learned why policies are important for an organization, and learned to abide by the policies and procedures.

The project activities significantly improved the knowledge of the board members about governance issues, understanding about DEI, development and understanding policies, capacity building, importance of the visibility of the organization online and on social media, and redevelopment of the organizational website.

6. Research project on unpaid caregiver:

BCCS collaborated with CASSA on a research project in partnership with the University of Toronto-Lawrence Bloomberg School of Nursing and the Canadian Institute of Health Research. This research initiative focused on exploring caregiving cultures within diverse communities.

The research project acknowledged the vital role played by family caregivers who provide unpaid care and support within the healthcare system. These caregivers are integral in assisting their family members and close associates. The primary objective of the study was to gain deeper insights into the health and well-being of unpaid caregivers belonging to various racial and ethnic backgrounds, encompassing both men and women.

The study aimed to achieve several key goals:

Data Gathering: The research aimed to collect valuable data to better understand the experiences of unpaid caregivers across different racial and ethnic populations.

Policy and Guideline Recommendations: Based on the gathered information, the study sought to make recommendations for the development of policies and guidelines specifically tailored to support unpaid caregivers.

Support and Interventions: The research intended to identify potential areas where support and interventions could be implemented to enhance the well-being of unpaid caregivers within diverse racial and ethnic groups in Canada.

BCCS actively participated in the research project by conducting interviews with 15 Bangladeshi unpaid caregivers. This contribution was a crucial component of the broader study, providing valuable insights into the caregiving experiences within this specific community.

In summary, this research collaboration aimed to shed light on the caregiving dynamics within diverse communities, ultimately striving to enhance the well-being and support systems available to unpaid caregivers across various racial and ethnic backgrounds in Canada.

7. Anti-Islamophobia workshops for youths: reached 20 youths

Our Youth Collaborative Services conducted a series of workshops under the theme "Tackling the Hate: Public Awareness on Islamophobia." These workshops primarily engaged youth participants aged 14 to 30, including high-school students entering grades 9, 10, and 11, as well as university students. The project was funded by Canadian Race Relation Foundation.

The workshops were both in-person and virtual. The attendance for the three in-person workshops was as follows: 20, 18, and 14 participants, respectively. Additionally, two guest speaker workshops were conducted via Zoom, with attendance figures of 11 and 9 participants. The final ceremony, which marked the culmination of the project, was attended by 20 participants. The project aimed to achieve several important objectives, including:

- Increasing public awareness of public policy issues related to race relations, anti-racism, and anti-hate, at national, regional, or local levels.

- Enhancing public awareness of Canada's rich cultural diversity.

- Raising awareness about factors such as race, culture, ethnicity, or religion that may act as barriers to the full participation of all Canadians in society and the economy.

The workshops covered a range of significant topics, including:

Defining Islamophobia and exploring various interpretations, including personal perspectives, text-based definitions, and media portrayals. Examining preventative versus corrective measures to address Islamophobia. Offering insights into Anti-Islamophobia through a digital anti-racism workshop. Providing guidance on countering cyberhate through another digital anti-racism workshop. Discussing the effects of Islamophobia on individuals and communities.

The attendance figures for the workshops demonstrate that a substantial number of participants were exposed to the topic of Islamophobia. Additionally, the effectiveness of the workshops was assessed through participants' ability to apply the skills and knowledge gained in previous sessions. This was demonstrated when the majority of participants successfully answered questions and mini case studies during the second and fifth workshop.

The entire project was efficiently managed by our dedicated Summer Students and members of the Youth Collaborative Services (YCS).

In summary, this project effectively engaged youth participants in workshops aimed at increasing awareness of Islamophobia and related topics. The

attendance numbers, as well as participants' ability to apply their learning, indicate that the project successfully achieved its goal of enhancing public awareness and promoting anti-racism education among young individuals.



8. ROADMAP: Project on Affordable Housing:

“Roadmap project”. Roadmap addresses the problem of Systemic racism and non-inclusive community planning limiting the protection and production of affordable housing. The solution is the Roadmap’s operation of Inclusive Neighbourhood Planning Hubs supported by strategic planning, mentorship, and vertical integration between racialized communities experiencing displacement pressures and those with the assets, knowledge, and/or social capital to plan and develop affordable housing.

Roadmap will operate in the 17 Inclusive Neighborhood Planning Hubs in collaboration with Community Anchor Partners (CAPs). BCCS is working as a CAP for Danforth area. The project, initiated in late 2022 will continue till end of 2023.

9. Summer Students

In 2022, we were fortunate to secure funding from the Employment and Social Development department, allowing us to bring aboard four Summer Students to contribute to our organization. These positions included one Child and Youth Camp Coordinator, one E-Business Website Developer, and two Youth Social Service Workers. Furthermore, we received additional assistance from the YMCA, which placed one Camp Coordinator within our team. Additionally,

Centennial College provided us with a Fall placement, assigning a student from their social service worker program to join our organization. These individuals proved to be invaluable assets, actively supporting our activities, and gaining hands-on experience within the context of a non-profit organization.

10. Renovation of BCCS facilities

We've secured funding from the Enabling Accessibility Fund from national government to enhance accessibility in our washrooms and from Ontario Trillium Foundation and to improve our heating system (HVAC system). Our hall room is a central hub for various community organizations and serves as the focal point for our community programs. Given the vital role it plays in our community, upgrading our facilities is of utmost importance for the convenience and well-being of our community members. The project is currently in progress and is scheduled for completion by the end of 2023.

B. Non-Funded Programs

1. Canada Day

The Canada day was celebrated in partnership with East York Canada Day Committee. BCCS volunteers enthusiastically took part in East York's annual Canada Day parade, which commenced at Dieppe Park and concluded at Stan Wadlow Park. In addition to their involvement in the parade, our volunteers also actively participated in the cultural festivities held at Stan Wadlow Park. The day was marked by an abundance of happiness and a wide range of engaging activities, bringing together the community to celebrate Canada Day in a spirit of unity and joy. About 20 seniors and youth from BCCS joined the event.



2. Summer Camp

In the summer of 2022, we organized a summer camp program that ran throughout July and August. This program spanned four hours each day and was designed to cater to children aged 4 to 12 years old. A total of seven enthusiastic children participated in this camp.

During the summer months, when schools are closed, children often prefer spending their time with peers rather than adults. Our summer program provided them with the perfect opportunity to do just that. It allowed the kids to interact with their peers, learn valuable lessons in sharing and caring, and form new friendships. Our dedicated youth worker and youth volunteers played an integral role in facilitating this experience through a variety of structured activities.



Each day at the camp was filled with exciting and enriching activities. These included engaging art programs tailored for kids, thought-provoking

conversations, and a range of enjoyable games that kept the children entertained and engaged. Additionally, the kids had the chance to visit parks, adding an element of outdoor fun to their summer experience.

The children thoroughly enjoyed their time at the summer camp, and their parents expressed satisfaction with the program. It not only provided a safe and enjoyable environment for the kids but also allowed them to develop important social skills, make lasting memories, and build connections with their peers.

3. PICNIC

As in previous years, we continued the tradition of organizing a delightful picnic at Taylor Creek Park, located on Dawes Road. This year's picnic was a grand success, attracting a vibrant gathering of over **150 community members, 25 dedicated youth volunteers**, and a handful of cheerful children.

The day was a true celebration, brimming with a plethora of enjoyable activities. Attendees reveled in lively games, harmonious songs, and a delectable array of food. It was a joyous occasion that brought together our valued clients, committed volunteers, and the wider community, fostering a sense of togetherness and shared enjoyment.





4. Breast Cancer Prevention Awareness Program

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, BCCS took the initiative to organize an impactful awareness session. The event featured three remarkable breast cancer survivors who generously shared their personal journeys of resilience and survival.

The session commenced with an enlightening informational video that provided valuable insights into breast cancer. Following the video, the spotlight turned to the courageous survivors, who shared their lived experiences of facing and triumphing over breast cancer. Their stories were not only inspiring but also deeply moving, touching the hearts of everyone in the audience. Each survivor's account highlighted their struggles and the tremendous strength they

demonstrated in overcoming this challenging ordeal.



BCCS's moderator also emphasized the critical importance of regular breast cancer screening as a key aspect of early detection and prevention.

Approximately 30 participants attended this event, and the

collective impact was profound. It served as a unique and powerful platform for raising awareness about breast cancer and provided an opportunity for the audience to connect with the human stories behind the statistics.

This event not only honored Breast Cancer Awareness Month but also left a lasting impression on all those who were present, reminding us of the resilience of survivors and the significance of early screening in the fight against breast cancer.

5. International Women's Day

The day commenced with an invigorating therapeutic dance session led by an expert instructor, engaging the audience and setting a positive tone for the event. This energizing activity helped participants connect with their bodies and the spirit of the day.



Our youth volunteer, Mahir Shayor, played a crucial role by presenting a series of slides that highlighted the significance of the day. His informative presentation added depth to the event, enriching the audience's understanding of the occasion.

As part of the program, this year, we had the privilege of hosting three accomplished young women from our community. These remarkable professionals represented diverse fields, including engineering and college teaching, school teaching, and development work. Each of them generously shared their unique experiences as women professionals in Canada, offering

insights into their personal journeys and how they successfully balance their careers with family life.



Their stories were not only impressive but also profoundly inspiring, leaving a lasting impact on the audience. Their ability to navigate the challenges of being female Muslim professionals resonated with many, and their achievements served as a source of motivation for all in attendance.

Approximately **45 participants** had the opportunity to engage with these exceptional women and gain valuable insights into their experiences. This event exemplified the strength and resilience of women in the professional world while highlighting the importance of their contributions to society.

6. Truth and Reconciliation Day

On this memorable day, we had the privilege of hosting an Indigenous resource person from York University who delivered a poignant and enlightening presentation. Their talk delved into the historical significance of the day and shed light on the life and enduring struggles of the Indigenous population.

This engaging presentation left a profound impact on the audience, touching their hearts and providing valuable insights into the Indigenous experience. It served as a platform to acknowledge the historical context and the challenges faced by Indigenous communities, fostering a deeper understanding and empathy among the participants.

Approximately 35 individuals actively participated in this session, demonstrating

their commitment to learning about and honoring Indigenous perspectives and experiences. This event was an important step in recognizing and celebrating the cultural richness and resilience of Indigenous communities.

7. Holiday Party

In the spirit of the holiday season, we organized a festive holiday party in late December that was filled with joy and celebration. Our hall room was transformed into a lively and colorful space, adorned with balloons and vibrant paper decorations, setting the perfect atmosphere for the occasion.

Approximately **45 participants**, primarily seniors and adults from our community, came together to share in the festivities. The room was brimming with cheer and merriment as people were in high spirits, embracing the holiday spirit wholeheartedly.

As part of the program, we had an open mic session that provided a platform for participants to showcase their talents and creativity. Some sang festive songs, while others recited poems or shared jokes, creating an atmosphere of laughter and enjoyment.

The evening reached its delightful conclusion with a scrumptious dinner and a delectable cake that added a sweet touch to the celebration. This holiday party served as a wonderful opportunity for our community members to come together, spread joy, and create cherished memories during the festive season.



8. International Mother's Language Day

BCCS collaborated with three partners to organize a special event in celebration of International Mother Language Day at Access Alliance. The venue was adorned with decorations that beautifully captured the essence of this important day.

The program featured a rich cultural display, including performances, speeches, and engaging activities. Attendees were treated to a captivating cultural program that showcased the diversity and vibrancy of our community's heritage.

The event also included thought-provoking speeches that highlighted the significance of International Mother Language Day and the importance of preserving and celebrating linguistic diversity.



One of the highlights of the occasion was a youth speech competition, where young participants had the opportunity to share their thoughts and perspectives on the day's theme. This competition not only encouraged young voices but also provided a platform for them to express their views and insights.

Overall, the event was a meaningful and culturally rich gathering that celebrated linguistic diversity, promoted cultural exchange, and fostered a sense of unity within the community. It exemplified the spirit of International Mother Language Day and the value of preserving and honoring our mother tongues.



9. Flag Raising Ceremony

In March 2023, in keeping with our annual tradition, BCCS led the Bangladeshi Flag Raising ceremony at the Provincial Parliament. The day was marked by a gathering of enthusiastic Bangladeshi citizens who were proudly adorned in the colors of red and green, representing their national flag.

The honorable Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario warmly welcomed and addressed the group, delivering opening remarks that set the tone for the event. The occasion was graced by the presence of distinguished guests, including Md. Lutfur Rahman, Consul General of Bangladesh in Toronto, and Hon. Dr. Khalilur Rahman, High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Canada, who raised the Bangladeshi flag, symbolizing the unity and pride of the community.



Several Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) added their voices to the celebration, making valuable speeches. MPPs Deepak Anand, Doly Begum, Mary-Margaret McMahon, and Mike Schreiner were among the dignitaries who honored the occasion with their presence and words of appreciation.

Our President Hasina Quader and youth volunteer Mahir Shayor had represented BCCS and the Bangladeshi community sharing their thoughts and sentiments on this significant occasion.

The Bangladeshi Flag Raising ceremony at the Provincial Parliament was a momentous event that not only celebrated the Bangladeshi community's rich heritage and culture but also highlighted the unity and contributions of Bangladeshi-Canadians in the province of Ontario.

11. YOUTH COLLABORATIVE SERVICES (YCS) ACTIVITIES:

The members of our Youth Collaborative Services played a crucial role in enriching BCCS's programming beyond the funded workshop series on Islamophobia. Their dedication and involvement extended to various aspects of our organization's initiatives, benefiting a wide range of projects and events.

One of the key areas of their support was the senior's program, where their contributions added value and enhanced the experiences of our senior community members. Their involvement likely brought an intergenerational dynamic to the program, fostering connections between youth and seniors.

Additionally, the youth volunteers actively participated in organizing and facilitating events such as the picnic, soup fest, and pitha utshab, showcasing their commitment to community engagement and service. Their contributions undoubtedly contributed to the success and enjoyment of these gatherings, creating memorable experiences for all participants.

Overall, the dedication and multifaceted support provided by our Youth Collaborative Services members underscore their vital role in enhancing the reach and impact of BCCS's initiatives, furthering our mission, and fostering a sense of community and togetherness.

11.1 Conversation Circle: benefited 15 people

Our Youth Collaborative Services (YCS) volunteers played a pivotal role in facilitating a valuable and inclusive weekly English conversation circle for new immigrants, including seniors. Throughout the year 2022, this initiative attracted a total of 15 participants who eagerly joined the circle with the aim of enhancing their language skills.

The English conversation circle served as a supportive and welcoming space where newcomers, including seniors, could practice and improve their English language proficiency. The involvement of YCS volunteers in organizing and leading these sessions demonstrated their commitment to assisting those in the community who were looking to build their language skills and better integrate into their new environment.

This initiative not only contributed to the participants' language development but also fostered connections and a sense of belonging within the community. The dedication of our YCS volunteers in providing this valuable service highlights their role as catalysts for positive change and inclusivity within our organization and the broader community.

11.2 Computer Class for Seniors: Benefitted 25 seniors

The involvement of our Youth Collaborative Services (YCS) members in assisting adults and seniors within our community to navigate and utilize various technology devices such as computers, laptops, tablets, and smartphones has had a profound impact. This program serves a dual purpose by enhancing technology literacy among participants and fostering intergenerational connections between our youth and seniors.

In the course of the year, we were delighted to welcome 12 seniors and adults who participated in these computer sessions. Through patient guidance and support from our YCS members, these individuals were able to improve their technology skills, empowering them to engage with the digital world more effectively.

Beyond the acquisition of technical know-how, this program has facilitated meaningful interactions between generations within our community. It has created a platform for knowledge sharing, mutual learning, and relationship building between our youth and seniors, bridging the generation gap and enriching the fabric of our community.

The commitment of our YCS members to this initiative has not only contributed to individual skill development but has also strengthened the sense of community and connectivity among our diverse age groups. It exemplifies the positive impact of intergenerational collaboration and the value it brings to our organization and community at large.

11.3 Volunteer Recognition Ceremony

YCS took the opportunity to recognize and honor our dedicated youth volunteers for their invaluable contributions and commitment to our organization. To show our appreciation, we presented these deserving volunteers with certificates that serve as tokens of recognition for their hard work and dedication.

In addition to the certificates, we celebrated this recognition by sharing a meal together, enjoying delicious food and fostering a sense of camaraderie. This gesture not only acknowledges the vital role our youth volunteers play within our organization but also reinforces the spirit of unity and appreciation that defines our community.

Recognizing the efforts of our youth volunteers with certificates and a shared meal is a heartfelt way to express our gratitude for their contributions, and it serves as a source of motivation for them to continue their valuable work within our organization. Their commitment is truly commendable, and we are proud to have them as an integral part of our team.



C. Fund-raising Events

1. Pitha Utshab

This annual event organized by BCCS is a signature program that brings our community together for a meaningful cause. Our dedicated community volunteers generously donate rice cakes, which are then sold as a fundraiser to support our organization's initiatives. This year, we were thrilled to have approximately 300 community members actively participate in this event, and their collective efforts resulted in a remarkable fundraising achievement of \$3,000. These funds will play a vital role in sustaining and furthering our organization's mission and projects. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed to the success of this event and for their ongoing support of our community's well-being.



2. Soup Fest 2022



BCCS continued its cherished tradition by hosting the Soup Fest, a signature program that provides warmth and comfort during the cold winter days. This event brought together numerous community volunteers who generously contributed delicious soups and snacks. Through the collective efforts of these volunteers, we were able to raise a significant sum of \$1500 during this occasion.

The presence of MPP Doly Begum added a touch of honor to the event. She engaged with participants, fostering a sense of community and connection. Her presence and conversation with attendees contributed to the overall warmth and camaraderie of the day.

The Soup Fest was a vibrant gathering filled with diverse performances on the open stage by community members. These performances added a delightful and entertaining dimension to the event, showcasing the talents and creativity within our community.

This event not only served as a fundraiser but also provided a platform for community members to come together, share delicious food, enjoy performances, and strengthen their bonds. The success of the Soup Fest reflects the dedication and unity of our community in supporting BCCS's mission and initiatives.

3. Music Show (Jhara Patar Khela)

We are proud to acknowledge the incredible dedication of our volunteer, Suman Malik, who took center stage in a music show aimed at raising funds for our organization. Suman's performance was nothing short of outstanding and added a unique touch to the event.

Notably, renowned dancers Aruna Haider and her mother also graced the stage, performing a captivating dance alongside Suman's song. This collaborative effort brought a remarkable fusion of music and dance to the audience.



The event was attended by approximately 50 people from our community, and it received enthusiastic and positive feedback. The community thoroughly enjoyed the program, and it left a lasting impression.

Thanks to the generosity and support of those who attended, we successfully raised a substantial sum of \$500 through this event. These funds will be invaluable in furthering our organization's mission and initiatives.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Suman Malik for his exceptional performance and to all those who contributed to the success of this fundraiser.

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



SRCO Professional Corporation
Chartered Professional Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants
Park Place Corporate Centre
15 Wertheim Court, Suite 409
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3H7
Tel: 905 882 9500 & 416 671 7292
Fax: 905 882 9580
Email: info@srco.ca
www.srco.ca

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members of Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS)

Qualified Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS) (the "Organization"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, and the statements of operations, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, except for the possible effects of the matter described in the *Basis for Qualified Opinion* section of our report, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Bangladesh Centre and Community Services as at March 31, 2023, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Basis for Qualified Opinion

In common with many charitable organizations, the Organization derives revenue from donations, the completeness of which is not susceptible of satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our audit of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the Organization and we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary for recorded donations, the excess of revenues over expenses, cash flows from operating activities for the years ended March 31, 2023 and March 31, 2022, current assets as at March 31, 2023 and March 31, 2022, and net assets as at April 1 and March 31 for both 2023 and 2022. Our audit opinion on the financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2022 was modified accordingly because of the possible effects of this limitation in scope.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements* section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

(continues)



Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS)
(continued)

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

SRCO Professional Corporation

CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

Authorized to practice public accounting by the
Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario

Richmond Hill, Ontario
September 27, 2023

Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

As at March 31, 2023

	2023	2022
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	347,991	137,350
Grants receivable - <i>no allowance</i>	8,063	8,258
Harmonized sales tax receivable	4,390	1,619
Current portion of deferred rent incentive	8,850	—
	369,294	147,227
DEFERRED RENT INCENTIVE	6,638	—
CAPTIAL ASSETS [Note 3]	455,855	458,496
	831,787	605,723
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	52,353	18,260
Deferred rent income	3,000	—
Payroll liabilities	1,077	4,160
Government remittances payable	545	1,158
Current portion of deferred revenue [Note 4]	83,758	4,862
Current portion of mortgage payable [Note 6]	11,544	11,049
Canada Emergency Business Account loan [Note 5]	40,000	—
	192,277	39,489
CANADA EMERGENCY BUSINESS		
ACCOUNT LOAN [Note 5]	—	40,000
DEFERRED REVENUE [Note 4]	283,251	195,972
MORTGAGE PAYABLE [Note 6]	256,659	267,658
	732,187	543,119
Net assets		
Unrestricted fund	98,411	62,604
Grant program fund	1,189	—
	99,600	62,604
	831,787	605,723

See accompanying notes

On behalf of the Board of Directors

Director

Director

Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS)

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Year ended March 31, 2023

	Unrestricted fund	Grant programs fund	Total 2023	Total 2022
	\$	\$	\$	\$
REVENUE				
Operating grants <i>[Note 8]</i>	—	215,261	215,261	65,641
Membership fees, donations and other	43,338	—	43,338	35,218
Rental income	32,038	—	32,038	23,020
Event Income	7,216	—	7,216	—
	82,592	215,261	297,853	123,879
EXPENDITURES				
Direct program <i>[Note 9]</i>	—	98,813	98,813	48,776
Salaries and wages	—	30,524	30,524	14,678
Trainers and instructors fee	—	23,401	23,401	1,225
Property taxes	16,118	—	16,118	13,081
Mortgage interest	5,184	6,954	12,138	12,059
Travelling and Conveyance	—	3,770	3,770	—
Repairs and maintenance	1,845	2,063	3,908	2,426
Insurance	4,376	2,264	6,640	5,962
Utilities	1,772	8,038	9,810	5,962
Professional fees	4,283	6,745	11,028	9,094
Office and general	3,893	27,515	31,408	29,459
Telecommunications	—	595	595	2,541
Bank charges and interest	830	—	830	326
	38,301	210,682	248,983	145,589
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	44,291	4,579	48,870	(21,710)
Amortization	(8,484)	(3,390)	(11,874)	(12,326)
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	35,807	1,189	36,996	(34,036)

See accompanying notes

VOLUNTEERS OF 2022

Adult Volunteers:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleen Peacock • Dipika Moni Roy • Dr. Abdul Fattah • Fahmida Rahman Mita • Fahmida Hossain Nipa • Farida Haque • Fatema Khatun Shelly • Jebun Nessa • Hasna Hafez • Latifa Lylac • Mahbub Reza • Mahmuda Kawser • Marzia Mou • Maureen Ballentin • Mitu Laxmi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mou Modhubontee • Munir Ahmed • Naheed Khan • Nazma Khatun • Nazneen Haque • Notun Israt • Rahat Zaman • Rosamma George • Sayeeda Bari • Sajedun Nahar • Shabiha Mostary • Shirin Begum • Suman Malik • Syed Ezaz Rasul • Zahra Noori Samaleh
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Youth Volunteers:

Aayan Rahman	Nabid Ahmed
Amir Azad	Nahian Ibrahim
Aritra Kundu	Nahyan Hossain
Armin A. Farhad	Naimah Rahman
Aryan Khan	Nameen Alman
Aunrini Shattik	Naveel Marzan Mukit
Ayden Abdullah Hossain	Oishee Das
Ayman Hasan	Puspita Hassan
Ayman Zubair	Rehan Chowhdury
Bibekananda Sarkar	Sohan Kanti Biswas

Farill Arad	Sumit Paul
Fateen Tahmeed	Tahmeed Rahman
Geethika Kodakandla	Tahseef Rahman
Ibhaaj Quraishi	Tamjid Ahmed
Ihtiraam Waheed	Wami Chowdhury (new)
Khondaker Shaian	Wasiul Bari
Mahir Shayor	Zaina Mahveen
Md Raiyan Mahseen Khan	Zayan Waarith
Mohammad Ridwan Islam Bhuiyan	Zuhayr Islam
Muhammad Zafiz Faiq	Zakiul Islam
Muhtasim Rahman (Samin)	Zaeem Ahmed

OUR FUNDERS

- Anti-Racism Directorate
- Canadian Race Relations Foundation
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- City of Toronto
- Council of Agencies Serving South Asians
- CP Planning
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)
- Ministry of Employment and Social Development
- Ontario Seniors Secretariat
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Woodgreen



Canadian
Heritage

Patrimoine
canadien



Employment and
Social Development Canada

Emploi et
Développement social Canada

OUR PARTNERS (PAST & PRESENT)

- Bangladesh Association of Toronto (BAUT)
- Bangladeshi Canadian Community Services (BCS)
- Bengali Information & Employment Services (BIES)
- South Asian Women's Rights Organization (SAWRO)
- Centennial College
- Costi Immigrant Services
- Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA)
- South Riverdale Health Centre

- Quantum Meditation Society Toronto
- Rexdale Women Centre
- Wood Green Community Services
- Feed Scarborough
- YMCA
- Ryerson University
- Centennial College
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Canadian Council of Muslim Women

OUR SPECIAL DONORS

- Chayanika Dutta
- Dr. Kamruzzaman
- Iqbal Roshd
- Honourable Maria Minna
- Mohammed Alamgir Hakim
- S.M. Faruqi Hasan
- Shahidul Khandker Tuku
- Zamal Haque
- Mahmuda Kawser Tisha
- Hasina Quader

MONTHLY DONORS

- Serajul Islam Kazi
- Shumona Shafinaz
- A.H.M Ziaul Islam Mollah
- Mohammad Shamzzoha
- M. Rizuan Rahman
- Chayanika Dutta
- Arthur Potts
- Alimul Chowdhury
- Jayanta Kumar Singha



**THANK
YOU**