

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Bangladesh Centre & Community Services (BCCS)



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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

Dear members, volunteers, clients, partners, donors, our special guest and community members.

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

We live in times of crisis, but unfortunately, we are not facing only one. During times of crisis, innovation can arise and we showed our resilience. To meet the needs of our clients and community members, we switched our programming from in-person to virtual. We extended our hands to help our seniors, vulnerable members, youth and family so they do not fall through the cracks.

We have implemented many programs in the last fiscal year, and to just to name a few of them: We worked on vaccine hesitancy and increased awareness of the benefit of vaccination, we held a summer camp, we built awareness on Islamophobia by our YCS team, offered tutoring sessions and English Conversation circles, conducted computer teaching by juniors to seniors, established virtual senior programming and built awareness for vulnerable individuals on health and wellness issues, worked on housing challenges, and provided settlement services to new comers.

We are amazed at the commitment of our staff and are grateful to our volunteers, Board members, donors and friends who have stepped up to the challenge during the pandemic to provide incredible care with heart, resilience, and creativity. As you know, we have introduced a number of new initiatives to assist our clients which included support to vulnerable families and seniors by delivering groceries, making regular inquiries with our seniors about their welfare through telephone assurance calls and connecting them to services through virtual platforms.

As the BCCS building is now fully accessible, we have started to run in-person programs for seniors once a week by following Public Health Guidelines. This allowed seniors who have physical challenges to access our programs. We are moving ahead in the implementation of our five Strategic objectives and goals. Our goals are: to increase programming for seniors and women, work on “Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate, Board’s training on diversity, equity and inclusion and re-enforce youth programming.



We are privileged by the opportunity to serve our clients. We focus on outcomes, which are not possible without the dedication of staff, volunteers, Board members, donors, partners and funders. We thank you all for your understanding of clients' needs, meaningful collaboration, and committed efforts in support of BCCS's mission.

As I reflect on the past years, I realize that the most important message I could communicate would be to say – please continue to be a volunteer and if you aren't one already, I strongly encourage you to consider to serve your community in this way!

Finally, sincere and heartfelt thanks to our Board of Directors for all of the time, hard work, passion and Governance that you provide. It is immensely appreciated, and I feel grateful to have the opportunity to work with you all.

Respectfully,

Hasina Quader

# **BANGLADESH CENTRE & COMMUNITY SERVICES (BCCS)**

The Bangladesh Centre and Community Services (BCCS) has emerged as a trusted organization for settlement services among the members of the South Asian communities living in Greater Toronto Area since its establishment in 2010. BCCS programs assist newcomers and immigrants in enhancing knowledge and developing skills to integrate into broader Canadian society. BCCS provides dynamic leadership in enhancing its members and the greater community while advancing South Asian culture and understanding. We played a key role in working with our elected officials to have the Bangladesh flag raised at Queens Park by the Ontario Legislature for the fifth time. BCCS has undertaken a wide array of services and programs including; settlement services, English conversation circles, senior's programs/ Friday senior's Club, computer & mobile technology classes, financial literacy workshops, sewing lessons, elder abuse awareness program, yoga/meditation sessions, health and wellness workshops, intergenerational activities, and board governance a training among many others. In addition to these programs, BCCS organizes events and activities observing days of significance to our community such as, Bengali New Year, Bangladesh Independence Day, Flag raising ceremony in front of the Ontario Provincial Legislature, International Mother Language day, Canada day, and heritage month celebrations through "Pitha Utshob". BCCS believes in building communities through partnerships and collaboration. We strive to develop sustainable services and programs for the growing needs of our members and those that we can impact in the community. Alongside our current programming, our goals for the coming year include developing initiatives centered around 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 & 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

## 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
- Andrew Flint- Director
- 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

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

### Funded Programs

#### **A. Engaging Seniors with Daily Activities for Physical and Mental Health: An Intergenerational Approach**

**Benefitted 70 seniors and impact was over 120 family member and friend.**

We arranged weekly meditation, light exercise sessions and discussion sessions on different topics of Senior's interest. A total of 43 Seniors and 22 volunteers, including 8 youths were engaged through this project. It has been observed that through this project, the mental and physical health of the targeted number of seniors have improved significantly. Moreover, the project helped the seniors in reducing isolation, supporting active participation, creating social networking, gaining knowledge on elder-abuse, promoting volunteerism, and improving the quality of life at large. It is also important to note that some senior participants developed skills and capacity to help other senior participants who were not included in this project. Youths played a significant role in planning and implementation of the project.

We also observed that many participants become more actively involved in attending virtual sessions for other BCCS activities, and thus intend to continue their involvement in a number of activities run by the BCCS. Thus, the project activities supported a) healthy aging, b) preventing elder



abuse, c) combating ageism, celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion, d) building capacity to move to a virtual environment. Need a picture

## **B. SURVEY ON REGULATORY AND COMPLIANCE FRAMEWORK**

BCCS supported the City of Toronto to conduct a study on the regulatory and compliance framework for multi-tenant housing (rooming) houses. A total of 26 community people, men and women, participated in virtual sessions facilitated by the enumerators. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to obtain the results.

## **C. COVID-19 VACCINE PROMOTION CAMPAIGN: Benefitted over 1000 individuals**

Under this project BCCS carried out a community based comprehensive communication campaign using a multi-pronged approach, to improve COVID19 vaccine confidence, vaccine s and continued compliance with public health measures. During the campaign, BCCS reached out to Bengali and other South Asian communities in its targeted areas, with clear, evidence-based and culturally sensitive messaging on the significant benefits of COVID-19 vaccines and the importance of continued adherence to the same for prevention of the disease. The campaign was able to reach out and distribute COVID-19 vaccine information and prevention flyers to at least 1200 households in the targeted community and motivated at least 750 households to receive vaccination through a weekly vaccination campaign. BCCS project team and volunteers also reached out to some 1200 clients over the telephone with the same motivational purpose. The campaign regularly posted COVID-19 awareness and prevention information through BCCS web site and other social media, and posted numerous posters in places of public gathering such as bus stops, super markets, places of worship etc. They also made publicity through local newspapers by full page advertisements. Several virtual meetings were held involving community leaders and experts on COVID19.



BCCS COVID-19 Vaccine Awareness Flyer Distribution

Each year, we celebrate Canada Day with the theme of: "What makes Canada beautiful and strong,".



"This year, with the horrific and tragic news of the unmarked graves of the residential school system, we made a conscious decision not to celebrate Canada Day, but rather to commemorate it as a day of reflection. We spent the day focusing on learning the history of Indigenous peoples of Canada and the issues facing their communities, as well as understanding the ongoing effects of residential schools. We featured speakers who discussed the residential school system, how the children were treated by the Catholic church, the role of the government, and resources for further information. Our event ended with a promise to learn and gain more awareness about the truth of our Canadian history from our Indigenous community. Over 100 people attended the event and we also posted the event on social media.

## Non-Funded Programs

### A. Bangla New Year

Bengali New Year is a special occasion for Bengali immigrants in Toronto. In April, BCCS members celebrated the Bengali New Year virtually. The event committee arranged for a cultural show which included children arts program, song, dance and recitation. Over 65 attendees participated in the event which includes members, volunteers and community people.



## B. Pitha Utshab

We celebrated Pitha Utshab virtually this year due to pandemic. Ten women prepared traditional “pitha” (cake), demonstrated to the audience and shared their recipe. As this was a fundraising event, few



members made their generous donation which amounted approximately \$500. Everybody enjoyed and appreciated the time and effort the volunteers put in preparing the pitha and organizing the event.

## C. Summer Camp

The summer camp was organized during July and Aug 2021, four hours a day. Total seven children 4-12 years old, attended the camp. During summer time, when the school is closed, the kids does not like to spend time with the adults, they like to play and spend time with their peers most of the time.





Through our summer program, the kids were able to interact with other kids, learned sharing and caring and make new friendship. Our youth worker were very much involved with them through different structured program. Every day, they were engaged in different activities such kid's art programs, conversation, engaged the kids with various games. Each day, they visited parks and had fun. The children enjoyed their stay at the summer camp. The parents were quite pleased with the program.

#### **D. PICNIC**

This year we arranged the picnic in Taylor Creek park in Dawes road. It was a wonderful day out where over 100 community members, 20 youth volunteers joined. For many of them it was the first day out after a long homestay due to covid-19. The day was filled with games, songs and food. It was a great enjoyment for our clients, volunteers and community people.





#### **E. Virtual YOGA/MEDITATION FOR VULNERABLE POPULATION: 100 people benefited from this program**

BCCS arranged special virtual bi-weekly Yoga/Meditation and Chat sessions for the vulnerable members in the community. Due to Covid-19, this group was affected significantly as many of them lost their job or close associates. Also many seniors lived alone and couldn't go out, as a result they were depressed. Our sessions helped the participants to get relief from stress and be physically active. The chat sessions also helped them to get information on the resources available in the community and it was also a platform for networking opportunities and making new friendships.

#### **F. THERAPEUTIC DANCE: benefited over 50 participants**

Therapeutic dance is a new approach for improving health and wellness and we organized weekly therapeutic dance sessions for all adults. The participants liked the session very much and found the method very effective.

#### **G. ENGLISH CONVERSATION CIRCLE: benefited 35 people**

We are organizing an English conversation circle for new immigrants including seniors. In 2021, a total of 35 participants joined the circle to improve their language skills. Our youth collaborative engagement members conducted these weekly sessions.

## **H. COMPUTER CLASS FOR SENIORS: Benefitted 25 seniors**

With an aim to improve the technology use by new immigrants and seniors, BCCS has been conducting computer learning sessions for the last 7 years. Our youth members support adults and seniors of our community to use computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones. This program not only improves technology use but also develops intergenerational linkage between the youths and seniors in the community. This year, 25 seniors/adults joined the computer sessions and graduated from the program.

## **I. SUMMER TUTORING (25 students benefitted)**

Based on the needs of our community, weekly Summer tutoring was organized by our Youth members (Youth Collaborative Services) of the organization. Middle school children attended the English, Maths and Science tutoring classes.

## **J. FLAG RAISING CEREMONY**

Like other years, BCCS led the Bangladeshi Flag Raising at Provincial parliament in March 2021. The day was celebrated by hundreds of Bangladeshi citizens along with the MPPs who joined the event.





Bangladeshi Flag Raising at Provincial Parliament

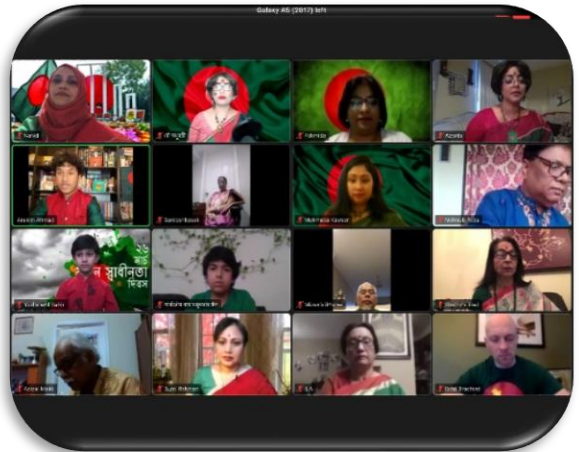
## DAY/MONTH CELEBRATIONS

- Bengali New Year
- Senior's Month
- Father's Day
- Mother's Day
- International Women's Day
- Truth and Reconciliation Day
- Breast Cancer Month
- Victory Day
- International Mother's Language Day

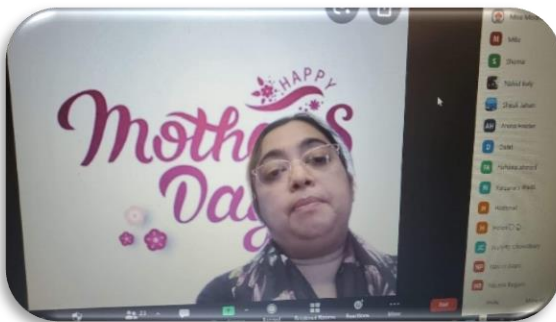




## International Mothers Language Day



## Independence Day



Mother's day

## VOLUNTEERS OF 2021

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ajanta Chowdhury</li> <li>• Aruna Haider</li> <li>• Babita Sen</li> <li>• Charlotte Naranjit</li> <li>• Colleen Peacock</li> <li>• Dipika Moni Roy</li> <li>• Dr. Abdul Fattah</li> <li>• Fahmida Rahman Mita</li> <li>• Fahmida Hossain Nipa</li> <li>• Farida Haque</li> <li>• Farheen Hassan</li> <li>• Farzana Talukder</li> <li>• Fatema Khatun Shelly</li> <li>• Hasna Hafez</li> <li>• Hosen Ara Jamee</li> <li>• Iftekhar Ali (youth)</li> <li>• Mahbub Reza</li> <li>• Mahmuda Kawser</li> <li>• Mahir Shayor (youth)</li> <li>• Marzia Mou</li> <li>• Maureen Ballentin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Md. Shamsul Alam</li> <li>• Mitu Laxmi</li> <li>• Mou Modhubontee</li> <li>• Mohona Miftahul (youth)</li> <li>• Nahid Belly</li> <li>• Naima Rahman (youth)</li> <li>• Nazma Begum</li> <li>• Nazneen Haque</li> <li>• Puspita Hassan (youth)</li> <li>• Rana Saha</li> <li>• Rekha Habibullah</li> <li>• Rosamma George</li> <li>• Sayeeda Bari</li> <li>• Sharmin Sultana</li> <li>• Sajjad Hossain</li> <li>• Sajedun Nahar</li> <li>• Tahmina Ahmed</li> <li>• Samantha Mahin</li> <li>• Shamima Akhter</li> <li>• Rahat Zaman</li> <li>• Zaeem Ahmed (youth)</li> </ul>
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## OUR FUNDERS

- Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)
- United Way Greater Toronto
- Ministry of Employment and Social Development
- Ontario Seniors Secretariat
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- City of Toronto
- Toronto Public Health
- Second Harvest
- Anti Racism Directorate



**MCI**



Employment and  
Social Development Canada

Emploi et  
Développement social Canada



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
canadien

## OUR PARTNERS (PAST & PRESENT)

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

- Greater Dhaka Association (GDA)
- North York Women's Centre
- South Riverdale Health Centre
- Warden Woods Community Services
- Mennonite New Life Centre
- Mural Routes
- Quantum Meditation Society Toronto
- Rexdale Women Centre
- Wood Green Community Services
- Feed Scarborough
- YMCA
- Ryerson University
- Centennial College
- Toronto Public Health

## 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



## OUR MONTHLY DONORS

- Hasina Quader
- Serajul Islam Kazi
- S.Shawkat Mahmood
- Shafiq Chowdhury
- Shebu Chowdhary
- Kafil Uddin (Parvez)
- Mohammed Alamgir Hakim
- Mak Azad
- Syeeda Rahman
- Hon, Maria Minna
- Shumona Shafinaz
- A.H.M Ziaul Islam Mollah
- Mohammad Shamzzoha
- M. Rizuan Rahman
- Chayanika Dutta
- Arthur Potts
- Alimul Chowdhury
- Jayanta Kumar Singha