



Calgary Immigrant Women's Association Annual Report 2015-2016



Innovative Ideas




Our Mandate

Vision: Empower immigrant women. Enrich Canadian society.

Mission: To engage and integrate immigrant women and their families in the community.

Values: Integrity. Equity. Empowerment. Relevance. Collaboration.

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Message from the Board of Directors



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Director

Last year was very busy and productive for all of us at CIWA. My colleagues on the Board of Directors and I have been privileged to assist the agency, our city and country, in responding to the unprecedented global challenge - the highest number of forcibly displaced people in recorded history.

Our business is informed and guided by the immediate needs of refugee and immigrant populations arriving to Canada. All our governance decisions are aligned with the following questions: what is in the best interest of immigrant women and their families, what is in the best interest of CIWA and what is in the best interest of the community.

We fulfilled our responsibilities last year through a variety of governance projects and initiatives relating to:

- Emerging immigration trends and our ability to address them
- Updates and implementation of agency policies
- Organizational risks and best practices to address them
- Review and assessment of programs and services

Our annual Board Retreat in March this year focused on the upcoming five-year Strategic Plan we will embark on later in the fall.

CIWA staff and service volunteers have done an excellent job of responding to the needs of thousands of clients that came to the agency last year looking for help and assistance in achieving their dreams of better life in Canada.

All of us at CIWA are united in doing the best we can to make settlement and integration of immigrant women coming to Canada a success for themselves and the community we live in.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Board members for their contribution to and leadership of the agency.

Thank you to our funding partners for working with us on achieving best results for our clients.

Sarah J. King D'Souza
Board Chair

Message from Senior Management

The community of immigrant women in Calgary have the opportunity to connect, learn, network and take advantage of more than 40 programs and services at CIWA to enhance and expedite their integration experience in Canada.

Our focus encompasses customized, holistic, gender specific interventions in all areas of family and community needs from literacy and language supports, youth and seniors programs, counselling, health, employment, to support services such as childcare for all women that access our programs, emergency housing, family conflict, as well as tax and legal supports.

Everything we do is based on best practices in the area of effective partnerships and collaborative service delivery. CIWA is everywhere in this city: our programs are currently offered in 119 community locations in Calgary, which brings millions of dollars of added value to our service delivery model and makes it possible for us to never have to refuse a service for a client in need. This approach, coupled with over a thousand volunteers that support our daily work, and a reliable group of over 100 certified interpreters and translators, constitutes one of the biggest strengths of this organization.

Over 25 funding partners contributed to our 2015-2016 annual budget of \$9.9 million. Our staff, through their expertise, resourcefulness and innovative service delivery, stretched the value and returns on that amount, achieving outcomes for clients and their families that go well beyond the investment. We thank all our funders for working with us on making immigrant women relevant for this community and for empowering them to thrive. Our clients' outcomes are the ultimate measure of our work. They are the proof that everything is possible if people are given a fair chance to start a new life. With our help, they take ownership of their lives by seizing opportunities that benefit their future goals and aspirations.

We thank our Board of Directors for their leadership, wisdom and support of our work, as well as for their outstanding commitment to the agency and our mandate. We extend our appreciation to community and business partners who work with us and embrace the hundreds of immigrant women as equal and promising employees.



Left to Right: Beba Svigir, Michael Wyman, Jennifer McColl, Joan Chernoff, Maria MacMinn Varvos, Rekha Gadhia, Eva Szasz-Redmond, Celestina Akinkunmi, Amarjit Parmar

Statistical Overview

17,926 clients served (individual and group service)

Immigration Categories

- Economic (35.22%)
- Citizen (21.61%) - our children and youth
- Family (19.78%)
- Refugees (14.62%)
- Other (7.94%)
- Refugee Claimant (0.83%)

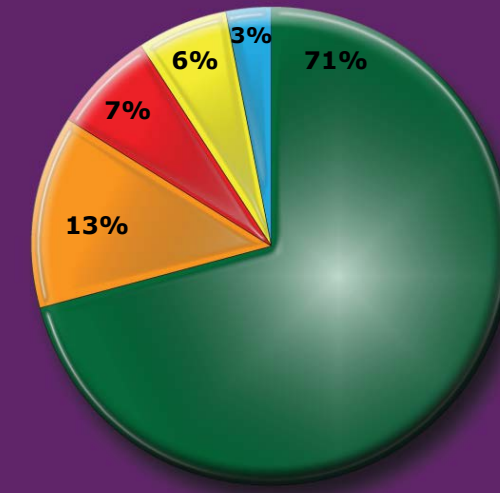
Top 3 Countries

Philippines
China
India

Top 3 Languages

Filipino (Cebuano, Tagalog, Ilocano)
Arabic
Mandarin

Operating Revenue Sources



- Government of Canada
- Government of Alberta
- Other Funders and Revenue
- United Way
- City of Calgary - FCSS

CIWA Programs

Employment Services

- Bridging the Gap for Foreign Trained Accountants
- Links to Success: Skills Enhancement & Internships for Young Immigrant Mothers
- Office Administration Program for Immigrant Women
- Labour Market Bridging for Volunteers: Interpretation and Translation Clinic
- Employment Skills Program
- Low Literacy Modular Employment
- Employment Skills Preparation for the Retail Industry
- Childcare Training for Low Literacy Immigrant Women
- Building Futures for Low Literacy Immigrant Women
- Alternative Childcare for Immigrant Women

Family Services

- Cross Cultural Parenting Program
- Family Conflict Program
- One-on-One Counselling for Immigrant Women
- Civic Engagement for Immigrant Women
- Healthy Families Program
- Youth Program
- In-Home Support Program
- Hand in Hand Parent Link Centre
- Victim Supports Outreach Program
- Grandma's Kitchen
- Empowered to Achieve: Culture. Confidence. Connection.
- Rebuilding Lives
- Victims of Forced Marriages Awareness Project
- After School Homework Help

Settlement and Integration

- Intake, Settlement and Referral Services
- New Friends and Neighborhood Groups
- Integration Program
- Filipino Community Development Program
- Volunteer Program
- Connecting Women of Southern Alberta to Breast Health Education and Services
- Find Me a Home Project
- Legal and Tax Clinics
- Financial Literacy for Immigrant Women
- Refugee Settlement and Community Development Project
- Healthy Relationships Project
- Immigrant Seniors in Action

Language Training and Childcare

- Pebbles in the Sand Program
- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Program
- Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)
- Learning Support Services
- SMILES Childcare
- Canadian Pronunciation
- Building Skills and Expertise for Working with Struggling Adult ESL Learners
- Skills, Needs and Progress with ESL Literacy Learners: Measurable and Informative Assessment Tools
- Identifying Skills and Addressing the Gaps for Struggling ESL Literacy Learners



Innovative Service Delivery

Healthy Relationships Project

When innovation meets service delivery, the result is a collaborative initiative between CIWA and the Calgary Sexual Health Centre (CSHC). Healthy Relationships Project delivers culturally sensitive information on sexual health to immigrant women and their families to ensure that they have access to accurate, relevant, and appropriate information. The project aims to foster equality and reduce discrimination related to gender, sexual orientation and sexual health.

“I learned about good and bad of unhealthy relationships.” - project participant

Rebuilding Lives Project

Innovation is at the heart of the Rebuilding Lives Project which aims to support the healing process of immigrant girls who have witnessed family violence in their homes. The unique project design provides support to immigrant youth aged 11-19 and utilizes a holistic approach to domestic violence addressing the needs of secondary victims of violence. Through counselling and educational sessions, vulnerable youth build positive support networks and begin to rebuild their lives.

“I loved how we talked about respecting each other” - project participant

Refugee Settlement and Community Development Project

Working with displaced families in crisis requires nothing less than an innovative approach to service delivery. The Refugee Settlement and Community Development Project helps Syrian refugee women and their families access services and resources in the community. The project provides settlement, employment and counselling supports for families experiencing crisis, grief and family displacement.

“I am very delighted now because I know the right path to take” - project participant

Innovative Research Projects

Skills, Needs and Progress for ESL Literacy Learners: Measurable and Informative Assessment Tools

and

Identifying Skills and Addressing the Gaps for Struggling ESL Literacy Learners

Four ESL instructors at CIWA have donned action researcher hats as they are exploring innovative assessment tools that measure the progress of ESL Literacy learners. The aim of these research projects is to help ESL instructors respond to the learning needs of struggling ESL learners with low first language literacy, identify why these learners are struggling and what skills they need help with. These projects are unique because of the limited research, resources, and assessment tools that currently exist in the field of ESL for low literacy adult learners.

Alternative Childcare for Immigrant Women

Alternative Childcare for Immigrant Women goes where no one has ventured before: explore the economic prosperity of gainfully employed immigrant women by addressing the barriers to accessing non-traditional childcare hours to support their employment needs. This innovative CIWA research project aims to investigate how childcare provided during early morning and late evening hours enables immigrant women to advance their careers and thrive in the workplace. Collaboration with businesses and service providers ensures that gainfully employed women pursue opportunities for training and mentorship and prosper at their workplace.



Innovative Volunteer Engagement



Administrative Support

Ask Alka Tiwari what she attributes to her success of securing her current position as Senior Accounting Clerk at Scotiabank and she will quickly affirm the importance of having been a volunteer at CIWA. Alka maintains that the completion of several months of administrative support as a volunteer enabled her to jumpstart her professional career after three years of unsuccessful attempts following her immigration from India in 2012. A letter from a CIWA reference resulted in a full time job offer at a medical clinic followed by her current role in the banking industry. Thank you, Alka, for your enthusiasm and commitment to CIWA!



Labour Market Bridging for Volunteers: Interpretation and Translation

Innovative volunteer engagement can be infectious. This has indeed been the case with Hanan Boqtosh and Nada Haider, two Labour Market Bridging for Volunteers program students who committed over 240 hours of combined time to provide their translation and interpretation expertise in a variety of medical, legal and social contexts. Their most recent effort of translating 72 signs, messages and flyers into Arabic in 2 weeks for the Calgary Welcome and Newcomer Fair event was lauded with an acknowledgement letter from Mayor Naheed Nenshi recognizing their hard work.

Childcare

For Amalia Ludusan the adage that volunteer engagement can lead to employment came true in October 2015 when she was hired full time by a local daycare after having completed six months as a childcare support volunteer in CIWA's SMILES childcare program. Since her arrival in Canada in June 2014, Amalia has had a strong desire to volunteer through interacting with children. In addition to the job satisfaction that Amalia reported to have gained from her volunteer placement, her volunteer involvement also provided her with Canadian work experience and employment references needed to secure employment. Great work, Amalia!



International Woman's Day

Zulfira Pulotova immigrated to Canada in 2014 from Tajikistan where she worked as a National Program Manager for the Poverty and Environment Global Initiative. Prior to her arrival in Canada, Zulfira completed a Master's in Social Work from the Boise State University in Idaho where she also worked as a Research Coordinator. In August 2015, Zulfira joined CIWA as a volunteer group facilitator for the New Friends and Neighbourhood Groups Program and was recruited as a Program Assistant for International Women's Day. Zulfira became familiar on how organizations in Canada work and gained experience doing public presentations and delivering sessions to audiences of various ages. At the end of the year she was hired at the Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth. Congratulations, Zulfira!



Award Winning Innovative Ideas

Aspen's HOPE Award for Agency Collaboration

CIWA was one of the proud recipients of the 2016 HOPE Award in the category of collaboration. CIWA was recognized for engaging with communities, families and Aspen staff to offer programming to clients that has encouraged the successful integration of immigrant women and families throughout the city.



Daughters' Day

CIWA's annual Daughters' Day Awards recognize daughters who are making a significant contribution to their communities. The award winners receive an honorarium to allow them to continue doing good work. This year's winners are: Iman Bukhari, Monica Buencamino, and Desiree Fonderson.

Gerda R. Bloemraad Scholarship Fund

The Gerda R. Bloemraad Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to CIWA clients or volunteers who wish to further their education in a chosen course or program at an accredited institution. The 2015-2016 education scholarship recipients were Sreelakshmi Nair and Yulia Kryuchenkova.

CIWA's United Way Campaign

CIWA's internal United Way Fundraising Campaign raised just over \$14,000 in November 2015. The campaign included activities such as a cook-off, bake sale, paint night, spaghetti lunch and an accessory sale. The campaign was so successful and innovative that CIWA was honoured with United Way's Divisional Recognition Award for Agencies.



U of C - Contemporary Women's Scholarship Award

CIWA has created a partnership with the University of Calgary to support immigrant women looking to take courses to increase their employability but are unable to afford tuition fees. Every year, the University of Calgary Continuing Education gives scholarships to two deserving clients, empowering them to move forward and gain meaningful employment.

Innovative Events

Accessory Sale as part of CIWA's United Way Fundraising Campaign

As part of the agency's United Way Fundraising Campaign, CIWA hosted an accessory sale. Staff donated their gently used accessories, including scarves, purses, earrings and necklaces. CIWA's Board of Directors also participated by donating high quality items that were auctioned off at the sale. The sale even attracted donations from Lethbridge through CIWA volunteers.



Victims Awareness Week

Victims and Survivors of Crime Week is an annual outreach initiative of the Justice Canada Policy Centre for Victim Issues. As part of this annual initiative, CIWA raised awareness of a hidden issue that impacts immigrant girls: forced marriages. Through gender-based violence education in schools, youth engagement opportunities, documentary screening and collaborative partnerships, over 400 youth, parents and community members learned about forced marriages and services available to support victims.

CIWA's Open House

CIWA organized an Open House in October 2015, hosted by the Board of Directors with the aim of connecting Calgary's corporate community to the agency and its mandate. The event included displays featuring our programs and initiatives. The invitees learned about the diverse ways to engage with CIWA through financial contributions, program support and volunteering.



CIWA's Business Partner Luncheon

CIWA recognized 18 businesses and organizations at the annual business partner luncheon held in October 2015. Invited guests engaged with CIWA's professional employment programs by providing clients with meaningful work experience and job support, participating in networking events and sharing valuable labour market information.

Innovative Business Partnerships



Susan Arnison, Executive Director Stikeman Elliott, Emily Ross, Business Development Coordinator CIWA, Andrea Boyle, HR Manager Stikeman Elliott

Q&A with Stikeman Elliott

Since 2014, Stikeman Elliott has connected with CIWA as a business partner, hosting a work placement for professional immigrant women through the Links to Success program.

When Andrea Boyle, HR Manager of Stikeman Elliott, first heard about the many different programs our agency offers, she felt that CIWA was an organization that Stikeman Elliott could easily support.

Stikeman Elliott puts in every effort to ensure the best possible experience for CIWA clients in their work practicum. “We chose to place [the clients] in a department of 7 people where they could benefit from the mentorship of staff members who each hold different positions within the firm,” Boyle explains.

“The manager and staff members of this department have embraced CIWA clients, taking a personal interest in providing very detailed training. We have now hosted our third CIWA client on practicum and at each graduation we have had a number of co-workers attend to show their support, it is a real family feel!”

Stikeman Elliott’s values are based on the pursuit of professional excellence; challenging their people to stretch their abilities; welcoming diversity; community involvement; respect, as well as other meaningful characteristics. “Each time we host a practicum, our work with CIWA clients allows us to contribute to the growth and development of a new Canadian woman. It really encompasses all of our values which makes it so very rewarding.”

Here are some of CIWA’s business partners from the 2015-2016 year:

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Bowen | • Carewest | • Manpower |
| • Bredin Centre for Learning | • Cervus Equipment | • NE Calgary Women’s Clinic |
| • Burnett Duckworth & Palmer LLP | • Chrysalis Accounting | • Robert Half International |
| • C2 Business & Employment Services | • Enbridge INC | • Shim Law |
| • Calgary Board of Education | • First on Colour | • Sierra Systems |
| • Calgary Catholic School District | • Kerby Centre | • Thermal Systems |
| • Calgary Health Trust | • Knight and Pritchett LLP | • Unison Realty |
| • Canadian Pacific Railway | • Management 2000+ Inc. | • University of Calgary |
| • Canadian Western Bank | • McLennan Ross LLP | • Your Lawyer LLP |

Employee Milestones



Celebrating 15 years at CIWA

Malgosia Skrzynski came to Canada from Poland in 1999 as a visitor. She then got married and made Canada her home. She heard about CIWA through her husband and started volunteering with the agency. She landed her first job in 2001, working at CIWA as a part-time Craft Instructor while enrolled in LINC classes. Malgosia later worked as a receptionist for CIWA and has been supporting the Volunteer Program as an Administrative Assistant for over a decade.


Over the past 15 years, under Malgosia’s leadership, the craft group at CIWA has grown to include customized seniors arts and crafts initiatives throughout several locations in the community. The craft groups have become quite popular over the years, increasing their capacity from 10 women to 43 women currently. There are some volunteers who have been attending the group for over 10 years and Malgosia loves seeing these immigrant women finding their place within CIWA.

Malgosia loves the diversity of people who come to CIWA. She enjoys seeing how volunteers grow, gain confidence and make connections. She has seen how the Volunteer Program has helped many immigrant women gain valuable skills that they can then apply in their daily lives.

Thank you, Malgosia, for your 15 years of commitment to CIWA!

Funders and Donors

 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

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 Status of Women Canada Condition féminine Canada

 Service Canada

Alberta

Labour
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Human Services

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 And numerous

Municipalities Association - Asian Heritage Foundation - Bento Sushi - Borden Ladner Gervais LLP - Calgary Interfaith Food Bank- Calgary International Children's Festival - Calgary Sports and ConocoPhillips - Deaf and Hear Alberta - Direct Energy - Encana Cares - Enseco - Ethnocultural Christian Church - Heart2Heart Productions - Honens Festival and Piano Competition - Imperial Order United Church - Making Changes Association (Walk In Closet) - McCarthy Tetrault Foundation - MTG Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying - QV Investors Inc. - Red Lobster - Safeway (Beacon Spring Bank Cheese (Willow Park) - Stephanie Jager Photography - Subway - TD Bank - Telus Spark - Toronto Foundation - TransCanada - Travel Alberta - University of Calgary Continuing Education

individual donors 

CIWA Team



Each year, CIWA staff support and encourage immigrant women and their families through a variety of programs and services. We also aspire to create a culture where everyone's contribution is valued and the spirit of team work is celebrated. It is the collective effort of all of us that creates the pride in what we do for our clients and the community we serve.

We see expressions of CIWA culture and commitment to agency values through different examples of belonging to the CIWA family. Throughout the years, we have seen many staff members leave the agency for other employment opportunities that diversify their experience and skills. Many of them stay connected with us in the best spirit of support for the agency. Some of them choose to reapply to work for CIWA and come back to the agency with a new skill set to offer. We embrace and welcome them to the team, and benefit from their work commitment and alignment with our values.

A sense of kinship is developed at CIWA through shared values, honesty and collaborative work of all of us.

We have staff members who have retired, but continue to participate through special projects and events, which allow us to benefit from their wealth of knowledge and expertise. For all of them, there is a place at CIWA to come to- for staff appreciation events, promotional events, volunteer celebrations and staff parties. We also love to have fun and laugh when working together. At the most recent staff appreciation event, we utilised the power of our collective language efficiency to express appreciation for the agency that we belong to. We participated in the activity that produced a powerful team building message about the importance of the work of the agency, its mandate and values – CIWA staff translated the phrase 'I love working at CIWA' in all 48 languages we speak.

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