



**C I W A**

*Calgary Immigrant Women's Association*

# Annual Report 2010 - 2011

strong women • strong communities • across generations



# **VISION**

**Empower immigrant women.  
Enrich Canadian society.**



Calgary Immigrant Women's Association is dedicated to building strong women and strong communities by serving immigrant women and their families across generations.

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# President and Chair of the Board

Gerda R. Bloemraad



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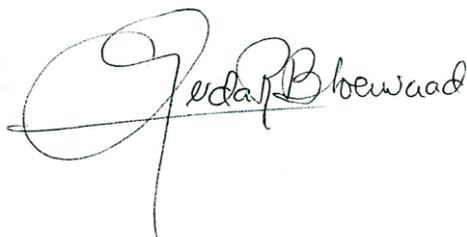
Jasmine Qadri

The Board of Directors is pleased to report that once again CIWA saw exceptional growth and accomplishments in the last fiscal year thanks to the dedication, efforts and teamwork of the Executive Director, staff and volunteers, to whom we extend our warmest thanks. The Board also wishes to thank our funders and partners for their generous endorsement of our programs and projects and our hard-working, enthusiastic clients for providing us with the motivation to continue CIWA's mandate, goals and objectives. The clients' perseverance, dedication and will to succeed were an inspiration to us all. Last, but not least, we wish to thank the Board members, who are stepping down, for their expertise and invaluable assistance.

As in previous years, the Board took its responsibility of preserving good governance and supervising CIWA's financial and operational activities very seriously. To understand CIWA's operations better, the Board invited managers to give an overview of their departments' activities. The Board also commenced the process of preparing a new Strategic Plan, which will guide CIWA through the anticipated changes of the next five years. A rebranding of CIWA's logo, which will be unveiled during the upcoming Annual General Meeting in June, will be part of this process.

Board committees assisted in many areas, such as fundraising, networking, recruitment and finances. Hopefully, the Adopt-a-Family program, initiated last Christmas, will be repeated this year. Due to work demands and relocations, some directors were forced to resign resulting in a busy year for the Recruitment Committee. The Finance Committee again shared their knowledge and expertise not only in educating other Board members, but also in monitoring CIWA's finances. To all involved goes a heartfelt thank you.

In the upcoming year, we hope to finalize the new Strategic Plan and the rebranding process. It is important for an organization like CIWA to systematically renew and re-energize its goals and objectives and to adapt to new times and economic circumstances. When we all keep on working together as enthusiastically and committed as before, CIWA will be able to provide once again the best possible services and support to its appreciative clients.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeda Bbewaad". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

# Executive Director

## Beba Svirig



### Statistical Overview

**14,642 clients served**  
(individual and group services)

**Immigration categories:**

Independent /	Investor and Other 6.67%
Assisted Relative 29.32%	Temporary Foreign Worker 5.71%
Family 24.56%	Refugee Claimant 4.74%
Refugee 14.54%	Live-In Caregiver 3.05%
Citizen 11.41%* (*childcare clients)	

**143 countries**

**Top 5 countries:**

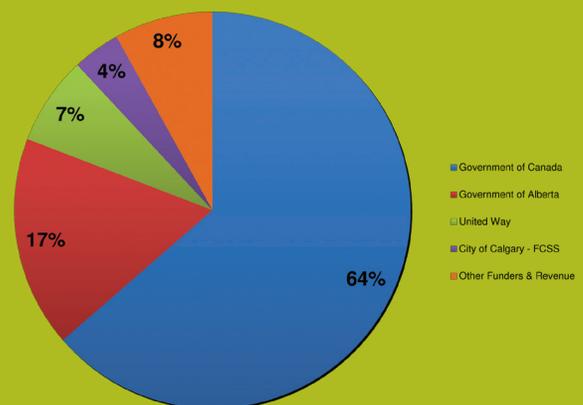
Philippines 14.94%  
China 13.84%  
India 6.20%  
Colombia 5.56%  
Pakistan 4.90%

**113 languages**

**Top 5 languages:**

Spanish 15.60%  
Cebuano/Filipino/Illocano/Tagalog 14.50%  
Cantonese/Mandarin 14.09%  
Arabic 6.98%  
Hindi/Urdu 6.56%

### Operating Revenue Sources



This past year was very busy and quite rewarding for all of us at CIWA. Our funding and revenues continued to increase and we were able to further expand our presence in diverse and isolated neighbourhoods across the city. Currently, we offer community based programs out of 102 locations in Calgary.

We achieved a high level of agency capacity to address clients' needs, as well as sophisticated reporting and outcome measurement requirements imposed on us by funding partners. To enhance CIWA competitiveness, staff recruitment and retention, we made substantial efforts to implement additional, non-tangible benefits for our staff.

On the program side, we raised awareness of the importance of equitable support for all immigrant women who come to CIWA for employment assistance. Over the years, our focus on skilled immigrants has yielded excellent results in supporting foreign trained professionals to obtain jobs. However, lower skilled immigrant women, particularly those with literacy issues, have been a forgotten group of people for too long. We talked to funders and employment partners about an effective approach to assisting this client group. The support we received enables us to transition low literacy immigrant women into employment opportunities proportionate to their skills and abilities, and many of them are thriving in new jobs. We continue to advocate for funding to help low literacy immigrant women achieve their dreams of financial independence and ability to effectively support their children. Our approach was streamlined to include an educational structure for this endeavour. To that end, we generated a number of plain language educational manuals in the area of essential skills, health literacy and occupational courses required for different professions.

Holistic, family oriented support yielded excellent results for our clients in all areas of integration. Our concept of client focused, individual support made it possible for many immigrant women to achieve positive integration and employment results in a shorter period of time than they expected.

As we continue to recover from the recession, we anticipate to further streamline the process of moving immigrant women from poverty into successful jobs through effective and collaborative community supports. I look forward to Calgary being the city where immigrant women have achieved a measure of success for which the fundamental requirement should be what all immigrants hope to achieve in Canada- equitable employment opportunity.





# **MISSION**

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

# Nurturing our children

By nurturing our children, we build bridges to creating prosperous communities.

Immigrant children need community support to develop and grow as they prepare for school.

As we serve and care for our youngest clients, we provide holistic support for the whole family.

**nurture** ■ to support and encourage during a period of development ■ to foster growth

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-  Focusing on early childhood development enables immigrant children to successfully transition into the Canadian school system.
-  Mothers and their children strengthen their relationships and engage in meaningful learning activities.
-  Our programs enhance children's cognitive abilities, motor skills, team building, and vital social skills.
-  CIWA's childcare services ensure children have the opportunity to engage with their peers and develop multicultural understanding.
-  Our programs offer a family literacy component to ensure both children and their parents learn together and engage in activities that enhance overall quality of their life.

SMILES Childcare ■ Pebbles in the Sand ■ Occasional Childcare ■ Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPO) ■ LINC Childcare ■ Hand in Hand Parent Link Centre ■ Healthy Families Program ■ In-home Support Program

# Guiding our youth

Immigrant youth are vulnerable and face many challenges that hamper their ability to reach their goals and dreams.

Immigrant girls struggle to reconcile cultural expectations imposed on them by their communities with expectations of Canadian society.

The integration process for immigrant youth is connected to stress factors that affect their feelings of belonging in a new country.

**guide** ■ to assist to reach a destination ■ to give direction ■ to show the way



At CIWA, youth develop their skills by engaging in leadership opportunities, participating in skill building workshops and mentoring other youth.



Participating in effective social engagement initiatives gives immigrant youth healthy behaviours and attitudes that benefit the entire community.



We provide creative and interactive group activities for youth to build positive peer relationships.



Programs in schools run in collaboration with teachers and educators to find the best solutions for immigrant girls.



Our approach to supporting immigrant youth always includes parents and family members to ensure clients have an effective support network to grow and develop their potential.

Youth Program ■ One on One Counselling for Youth ■ Civic Engagement Program ■ Links to Success Program

# Achieving for ourselves

CIWA is all about breaking down the barriers that stand in the way of immigrant women reaching their goals and dreams.

Every immigrant woman deserves the chance to learn and flourish, to become a person with unlimited possibilities.

We work towards a vibrant society where generations of immigrant women and their families thrive and where diversity is truly celebrated.

**achieve** ■ to get or attain by effort ■ to accomplish ■ to acquire or gain ■ to carry out



-  We ensure that basic needs are met and barriers to integration addressed for all our clients.
-  Immigrant women overcome life's challenges, understand how to maintain healthy family relationships and learn how to be proactive in all areas of their lives.
-  We work tirelessly on giving immigrant women language, computer and cultural competencies to secure equitable employment opportunities in line with their education and professional background.
-  CIWA offers expert service to our clients by helping them assess their skills, develop actions plans and achieve their goals independently.
-  Our programs equip women with tools and strategies to enhance their knowledge of Canadian culture, community and government, and become participating members of society.

Settlement and Integration ■ Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) ■ Employment Skills Program ■ Pebbles in the Sand ■ Bridging the Gap Program ■ Office Administration Program ■ Childcare Training for Low Literacy Immigrant Women ■ Links to Success Program ■ Cross Cultural Parenting Program ■ Home Instructions for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY) ■ Family Conflict Program ■ Breast Health Education ■ Filipino Community Development Program ■ Canadian Pronunciation ■ Find Me a Home Project ■ Essential Skills

# Supporting our seniors

There are thousands of immigrant seniors living in Calgary with no access to support services.

Senior immigrant women often assume parenting responsibilities within the extended family.

We work towards utilizing the full potential of senior immigrant women knowing that they play a crucial role in the family and community.

**support** ■ to uphold and sustain ■ to provide for ■ to give strength to

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We provide cross cultural parenting education for seniors to ensure immigrant children receive appropriate support from their caregivers.



Senior immigrant women participate in English language enhancement classes where they learn to access community resources independently.



We engage seniors by providing civic engagement opportunities and developing meaningful connections with community groups.



Seniors receive in-home counselling with first language support to address their unique needs including information about health resources, parenting support, family law, intergenerational issues, and community support.



We encourage communication and building relationships across generations by bringing immigrant seniors and youth together to share knowledge and experiences.

Integration Program ■ One on One Counselling for Seniors ■ Engaging Immigrant Seniors ■ Grandma's Kitchen Project ■ Cross Cultural Parenting Program

# Connecting our volunteers

Linking women of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to meaningful volunteering opportunities helps them develop a sense of purpose.

We promote volunteering as a two-way street; it benefits volunteers and their families as much as the cause they choose to help.

Volunteering opportunities enhance overall integration of immigrants in their new community.

**connect** ■ to join, link and unite ■ to establish communication ■ to associate with



We instill the importance of helping others through volunteerism and celebrate giving back to the community with all our clients.



Computer and other training sessions build the capacity of our volunteers and increase their employment prospects.



We offer many types of volunteer opportunities including mentoring, translation, tutoring and facilitation.



CIWA trains volunteers to facilitate educational workshops in their ethnic communities.



Our volunteers promote diversity and create positive change in the community.

Volunteer Program ■ Arts and Crafts Program ■ Volunteer Training Initiative ■ New Friends and Neighbourhood Groups Program

# Proud Women: a collection of stories



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In October 2010, CIWA launched a publication that showcases intergenerational collaboration and promotes the benefits of immigration and its positive effects on our community.

The book is a product of a humble initiative to inspire and encourage communication and understanding between immigrant youth and seniors in Calgary. Immigrant girls from our youth programs connected with outstanding senior immigrant women who were willing to share their life stories. In telling their uplifting stories of personal struggle and triumph to the youth, senior immigrant women shared a wealth of life experiences and accomplishments. They became role models of wisdom, leadership and vision for youth and the wider community.

The youth recorded the stories, realizing the creative, cultural and developmental learning opportunities being given to them. From listening to the seniors, they acquired an appreciation for the challenges women face and the power they have to overcome obstacles. The youth benefited by taking ownership of the positive and optimistic messages of peace, love and pride. They gained insight into the sacrifices, devotion and commitment it takes to persevere and succeed in life. Seniors, in return, reflected on their lives and conceptualized their integration experiences in a uniquely individual way that opened community connections and appreciation for their courageous actions.

Reading these stories is like travelling the world, visiting the places these women came from and tasting the richness of many cultures and traditions. Each of the stories is a reminder of Calgary's vibrant multicultural heritage and the journeys women take to adopt Canada as their new home.

The book is available at CIWA and 13 locations in the Calgary Public Library system as well as 15 Calgary Board of Education junior and senior high schools throughout the city.



# VALUES

equality ■ innovation ■ empathy ■ collaboration

# Celebrating our staff



**Hamda Umar, 25 years of service**

In 1986, Hamda Umar took on her first contract position with CIWA - to facilitate a single 70-hour course for the Cross Cultural Parenting Program (CCPP). A short few months later, she was promoted to the Coordinator's position and has been in charge of the program ever since. Reaching out to communities throughout Calgary and connecting people to parenting and peer support is just one of the many aspects of her work that she never tires of.

Helping immigrant parents overcome the many challenges of raising children in a new country and dealing with Canadian cultural expectations is at the heart of the CCPP. Hamda has been a key player in making CIWA a leader in educating immigrants about parenting practices in Canada. She has touched the lives of thousands of immigrant parents and made our CCPP manual the standard for agencies and communities across North America.

Hamda also oversees CIWA's Healthy Families Program which provides long-term support for immigrant families with newborns.

Hamda's secret to continued success: 'I believe in the work I do. I believe that knowledge is power and my small contribution empowers parents and their children to create the building blocks for long and successful lives in Canada.'



**Silvia Vidal B., 25 years of service**

Twenty-five years ago, Silvia Vidal B. began her work at CIWA as the Coordinator for the New Friends and Neighbourhood Groups. Soon afterwards, she moved on to work in the area of employment as the Manager of the Skills Training and Development Program. She has been providing exceptional service helping immigrant women develop the necessary skills to find and maintain employment in their adopted country.

Silvia established one of CIWA's most successful initiatives for bringing professional women together to support each other. For almost 10 years, she has been hosting and coordinating monthly Networking Breakfast Meetings providing thousands of immigrant women with the chance to meet prospective employers, mentors and peers.

Working closely with fellow immigrant serving colleagues, business and community partners and women from all over the world energizes Silvia. Her most treasured experience involves a client who is now a long-time CIWA staff member: 'She was so lost, so totally isolated and so depressed. After my presentation at the health centre she started taking courses and workshops. Every year, on my birthday, she thanks me for changing her life. She has changed mine!'

# Funders & Donors

# Canada

# Alberta

Service Canada  
 Status of Women Canada  
 New Horizons for Seniors Program  
 Human Resources and Skills Development Canada  
 Citizenship and Immigration Canada    Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada

Alberta Employment and Immigration  
 Alberta Children and Youth Services  
 Alberta Advanced Education and Technology  
 Alberta Culture and Community Spirit  
 Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority



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