



ALBERTA  
NETWORK OF  
IMMIGRANT  
WOMEN



# MEMORIES & TRIBUTES



CANADA 150

*"I learned; I laughed; I lived... as a woman...  
and as a person."*

-Cindy Tong, Past President



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# Foreword

With a solid foundation due to the dedication, perseverance, knowledge, and attributes of its Executive Director, Board Members and Volunteers, The Alberta Network of Immigrant Women ( ANIW) has established a stellar track record. The non-profit organization is well known for its abilities to identify, conduct research and provide the frameworks which tackle central socio-economic issues that immigrant and visible minority women encounter in living in Alberta and Canada.

Since 1986, ANIW has commissioned a number of funded, research projects. The research reveals the systemic hurdles which tend to restrict the effective integration of immigrant women and by extension, their families. The recommendations generated by the Network's action research have contributed to the design, development and implementation of a number of successful projects which include non-formal education and skills training in several fields in order to enhance the capacities and capabilities of immigrant women. Projects to facilitate accreditation and licensure for international medical doctors and nurses, for example, have become successful independent organizations. Accordingly, by its research and work with immigrant women and men, ANIW has facilitated pathways to success for a number of immigrants in Alberta.

This book is timely, as it summarizes some of ANIW's major successes and captures the voices of key women who have played instrumental roles in the development of the Network and its projects. As importantly, the book's photograph and text share the story ANIW's rich legacy.

It has been an honour to be associated with ANIW in several capacities, and to work with it's Executive Director, Kamal Sehgal. I wish ANIW continued successes as it continues to tackle the difficult issues of social and economic integration of Alberta's immigrant women, and develop programs which mentor immigrant women and encourage us, to take active participatory and leadership roles in our respective communities in Alberta.

## **Cecille DePass, PhD.**

Associate Professor, Emeritus, University of Calgary.

*Recipient, CIESC, David Wilson Award for distinguished services to the field.*

*Recipient, Farquharson Institute for Public Affairs, (FIPA), Kingston, Jamaica, Centennial Award.*

*Former, Chair/President, Education Sectoral Commission, Canadian Commission-UNESCO. Former, Member Executive, World Congress of Comparative Education Societies.*









*Former president of ANIW Sudha Kulsheshta  
with former Mayor of Edmonton Jan Reimer*

# Acknowledgements

On behalf of everyone at the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women (ANIW) I thank:

- The many immigrant women for sharing their experiences to help us document memories of ANIW, the organization created for and by them.
- Our funder, Alberta Canada 150, in fulfilling a long standing wish to honour the many women who have served ANIW from its inception.
- The sheer will of our staff and the many volunteers who continue to give the most precious commodity one can give – their time.
- The dedication of the women who have served and continue to serve on ANIW's Board.
- Vilma Dawson for being such a strong advocate of ANIW. Time and time again she has demonstrated support for such programs: Rights of the Child, Financial literacy, and Internalized Racism. Now, she has completed the labour intensive work of coordinating and conducting the interviews, editing this book and being resourceful in terms of, tracking and finding past Board members.
- Pauline Wu for drawing the narratives from the interviews, working patiently with us, at every step, as we created and edited the text. Pauline has selected the photographs from an enormous collection of ANIW photographs. As importantly, she has designed the arresting graphics. Pauline did not want her pictured to

be included.

- Our anonymous volunteer, for editing, formatting the document to the print ready stage.

Our accomplishments were possible because of you.

Thank you

**Geetha Ramesh**  
President





# The Profile

The Alberta Network of Immigrant Women (ANIW) is an inclusive, non-profit organization that is dedicated to empowering immigrant women through leadership and support which fosters equality, justice, and learning.

We undertake research on issues that impact the settlement process of immigrant and visible minority women in Alberta and follow through with the recommendations made in those findings. We also undertake capacity building projects to ensure that those most affected by the issues gain the capacity themselves to address the issues.

In the last 15 years ANIW has supported over 500 international trained professionals achieve accreditation in their respective field of practice.

In the last five years over 120 immigrants attained knowledge of financial literacy. And five cohorts of participants were part of the Integrity leadership program.

ANIW has connected with over 12 ethnocultural professional associations and ethnocultural community associations. And continues to partner with different stakeholders to bring our project to fruition.

## The Vision

Immigrant women across Alberta are empowered to take an active role in their community.

## The Mission

To empower immigrant women across Alberta by leading and supporting efforts and initiatives which foster equality, justice, and learning; and to provide knowledge for, and about, immigrant women that enables them to contribute more fully to the community.

## The Values

We value ***collaborative partnerships*** because they foster equality and justice for immigrant women.

We value ***integrity*** and accountability because they are the basis for independence, responsibility, and transparency.

We value ***education*** and ***mentorship*** because they are key elements for positive and effective leadership.



A Pledge to Rescue  
Our Youth  
by Maya  
Angelou

Long before going out of school, we all are drawn to the name of your country  
to give our nation our resources, especially education, for  
there is the highest of reasons, for you have chosen this over the  
of the nation of tomorrow, for you are  
not just a thing  
The Word of our Father and the power of our soul have brought you a chance  
for these things, and hope beyond the walls of it  
We hope, we hope, and we hope to see the day when we will be  
our own country, where, perhaps, we will be of your nation, but  
not your people  
We are the best in the  
We are the best  
We are the best in the world  
We hope you can make sense, but the day is here

RING! RING!  
WAKEUP  
CALL

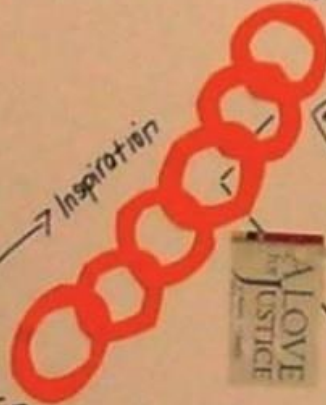
BY RACISM



=POWER

positive  
thinking

→ Inspiration



Beware the three stages of  
denial: 1. Not me 2. Not yet  
3. Not that bad.

Anonymous  
= THE POWER  
OF MANY

ROCK  
MY SOUL  
BLACK PEOPLE AND

LOVE  
JUSTICE

Live Your Best Life  
The great  
secret  
is not to  
be afraid  
of  
the future  
but to  
be afraid  
of  
the present.  
Heaven.  
is as good as another.

"Do one thing everyday  
that scares you?"

If you don't like something  
change it, if you can't change  
it, change your attitude.

DISCRIMINATION  
PREJUDICE  
RACIALIZED GROUP

The  
The  
is  
love









# The Work



## At ANIW, we:

- Conduct **research** related to topics that directly affect immigrant women;
- Provide **education** to immigrant women on relevant issues that impact their lives;
- Develop and provide **training** on the research methodologies that enhance our program outcomes and to initiate programs that directly affect immigrant women;
- Encourage **partnerships and engagement** with women's organizations, ethno-cultural groups, immigrant serving agencies, and government agencies.



Equality.  
Justice.  
Learning  
Growth



EXECUTIVE ROYAL INN  
HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTRE  
NORTH CALGARY



RVEI



# Testimonials

*"ANIW's dedication to helping immigrant women succeed in our society is next to none. They work tirelessly to battle against the barriers that immigrant women face on a day to day basis and ensure that they become meaningful contributors to our country."*

-Dr. Harshi Mathur

*"...was always surprised to see the large number of international physicians who would attend the study sessions every morning and evening." and has acknowledged that our "work has resulted in an increase in the number of residency positions for the internal physicians and a registered non-profit association (The Alberta International Medical Graduates Association)."*

-Dr. Kuen Chow

*"(The experience with the Integrity Leadership program)... was actually beautiful, [that] every session was like a firework of ideas."*

-Mariel Guina

*"Changing for a better community starts from within and shines to the outside, attracting both the right opportunity and those who want to make it happen. ANIW Leadership allowed me to create new dimension to my thoughts and to challenge my own creativity with greater ideas for achieving desired social change."*

-Doaa Ghoneim

*"After I completed this training, my view and perspective about learning has changed for the better. I realized that I am actually just learning to learn"*

- Fromen Bensing





*Capacity Alberta is an inclusive program rooted in gender equality and professional diversity.*

# The Movement

Activism within the women's rights movement took many organizational forms. They focused on different issues and used a range of strategic approaches. Over time, racialized women, lesbians, women with disabilities, and Indigenous women brought new voices to their struggle for women's equality. They challenged the existing social order and mainstream feminism. The process of working through these conflicts redefined and strengthened feminism and created a dialogue which ultimately led to a better understanding of intersecting oppressions and fostered a more inclusive struggle for change.

Continuing to this day, the 1985 women's movement has been engaged in multiple campaigns: from employment equity and childcare, to anti-racism and anti-poverty, and opposing violence against women. It was during this time that we saw a critical need to look at the central issues impacting racialized, immigrant communities. Facing multiple barriers to national inclusion, they started to question mainstream feminism and activism in terms of, existing colonial and racist policies and practices. Organizations such as the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada (established 1986), the Congress of Black Women, and the Canadian National Action Committee (NAC) on

the Status of Women (founded in 1971) were the leaders in Canada.

In 1993, NAC (under the leadership of Sunera Thobani and Joan Grant-Cumming) began placing an emphasis on systemic issues impacting immigrant or visible minority women. Thobani and Grant-Cumming also gave special attention to Indigenous women's issues. In 2000, Terri Brown became the first Indigenous woman to serve as president of the NAC. Immigrant and racialized women became an increasingly significant, presence in all Canadian campaigns for justice and equal rights.

In the workplace today as in the past, gender- and race-based marginalization in the forms of employment policies, practices and procedures, professional accreditation systems, employers' requirements for "Canadian experience", and labour market conditions continue to have negative impacts. As a result, immigrant, visible minority women continue to be channeled into part-time, insecure positions or risk becoming unemployed. In order for immigrant women to become equal and active participants in the Canadian society, the provision of inclusive employment programs and policies are necessary.



WOMAN OF COLOUR  
♀ FOR ♀  
WOMEN OF ALL  
COLOURS







Immigrant  
Rights  
...are...  
Women's Rights  
♀



# The History

The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) and the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women (ANIW) share their roots in the "Making Changes" program. An important component of the "Making Changes" program is the Employment and Life Skills Program for Immigrant Women in Alberta. It is a program that focuses on developing skills such as assertiveness, self-efficacy, career planning, information retrieval, job searches, and job maintenance. It is designed specifically for immigrant women, particularly those who feel isolated in their homes and are frustrated by the obstacles that hinder them from participating more actively in their new society.

This program is for immigrant women who are seeking changes in their working lives, but do not have the knowledge, information, nor confidence to carry them out. The program design and evaluation framework outlines the Employment and Life Skills Program's purpose, rationale, program design and theory of change, and updates the plan for monitoring and reporting outcomes.

The first "Making Changes" program was offered by Humber College in Toronto in 1977. Judith McCallum recognized that immigrant women, while sharing many of the same obstacles as Canadian women looking for work, had

additional challenges that are unique to the immigrant experience. Therefore, she prepared a program that attempted to meet the special needs and concerns of immigrant women. Judith produced the first "Making Changes" manual and accompanying materials for facilitators. In 1979, Amal Umar introduced the "Making Changes" program to the Cross-Cultural Communication Centre in Toronto. Two years later, the Arusha International Development Resource Centre in Calgary introduced the "Making Changes" program into the programming of the Centre.

# The Beginning of a Network

In the early 1980's, the graduates of the "Making Changes" program voiced their concerns regarding their future in Calgary--- What do we do next? Where do we meet? How would we continue to advocate for change? We realized that through the shared immigrant experience, that we were not alone. This realization was empowering. We spoke of the obstacles faced and how some had personal effects. For example, some lacked self-esteem, while others lacked the information and access to programs and services. With determination, we battled to take ownership of these challenges and develop the skills and ability to create change. Our voices helped to create the Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) in 1982 and the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women in 1986. In 1986, ANIW was acknowledged under the Alberta's Society Act as a non-profit and in 1990, held its first Board meeting in Edmonton. Immigrant women from across the province attended the meeting, facilitated by Amal Umar (an advocate for immigrant and visible minority women).

ANIW was conceptualized as a network that would stimulate the formation of immigrant women's organizations across the province and support and nurture their development. It was important to create and provide spaces for women

to grow, to utilize their skills, to make friends, and to build a community. ANIW would work on behalf of the direct service agencies rather than function independently of these organizations. The underlying value was that all of the organizations serving immigrant women needed to work together to identify critical trends and issues affecting immigrant women across the province and mobilize resources to affect positive change.

ANIW has created a unique approach to understanding immigrant women's needs and in finding positive ways to effect broad changes in the organizations and institutions that serve them. The underlying model of empowering immigrant women continues to be relevant to this day.





*The first cohort of Integrity Leadership program with facilitators in the front row from left Duna Bailey and Nitin Manerikar*

# The Founding Women

## Amal Umar



Amal Umar came to Canada in 1973 with a Master's degree from Lebanon. Initially, she was involved with "Making Changes" in Calgary, but found her calling when she realized just how much

she could help immigrant women. Having been a founding member, she was vital in the creation and stabilization of CIWA, and later on, ANIW. She helped launch the organization due to the lack of services for women across rural Alberta. She saw the need to bring together multiple organizations under a provincial network to mobilize support on critical issues and, thus, there was the birth of ANIW. The goal was to encourage immigrant women to believe in themselves and realize they had the voice to make a change in their lives and their families'. The work of ANIW has been anchored on the following pillars: Integrity, Courage, and Compassion.

*"We need to move from the kitchen tables to the boardrooms. 'We came to Canada not just to clean it but to be active participants in building this great nation.'"*

## Barbara Smith



Barbara Smith is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and was born in Canada. Along with Amal, she was a part in the "Making Changes" program, the creation of CIWA, and the creation of ANIW (as one of the founding members).

She saw the gaps in services that were available to immigrant women living in rural Alberta and wanted to help fix that. Through the creation of a network, they could mobilize support. She believed that the women who contributed to the creation of ANIW were important to the philosophy and development of programs. Through such programs, it was found that the critical issues at larger were loneliness and isolation.

*"When women step out to work, the whole family is going to work. It's not just writing resumes, it's not just interviews, it's self-esteem issues, assertiveness issues, complicated skill sets that have to be considered."*



## Christine Lasalle

Christine Lasalle is a registered social worker and served as chair for five years. She became an initiator and executive director of the Association of Spanish-speaking Women after moving to Edmonton. She later attained her Bachelors of Social Work in Calgary. She worked in child welfare services through the Catholic Social Services. It wasn't until she met Amal that she participated in the "Making Changes" program and she created some great memories. It was a pivotal moment in her life. She then proceeded to work with others to get an Alberta Advisory Board on Women's Issues and helped advocate and recommend the creation of foreign accreditation services.

*"The Network and the work on behalf of immigrant women survived because of an extraordinary combination of knowledge, determination, belief in social justice, and women with good hearts."*

## Maria Teresa Verase

Maria Teresa Verase became involved with the organization two years before it was officially established. She was a settlement counsellor at Catholic Social Services and then became a Spanish teacher at a college. When Maria began gathering women to talk, the original intention was to educate women, and their husbands, on women's

rights.

*"The important thing is that the organization is still working and helping women to adjust to their new country."*

## Surinder Kaur



Surinder Kaur was the first coordinator of ANIW. She emigrated from Kenya in 1981 and, when she joined the Network, she helped to establish the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women. As

she met more immigrant women, she came to many realizations. For example, she realized how her journey of settlement was not as difficult as it could have been since she had come alone and with the proper language skills to integrate into Canadian society. She has come to appreciate the great strength and courage immigrant women have to bring their families here.

*"ANIW taught me that my own journey of settlement was not very difficult because I had the language skills and no responsibilities of family members. However, this privilege made me realize the sacrifices many women were making to bring their families here and settle them were really admirable."*

*Amal Umar, Barbara Smith, Christine Lasalle, Maria Teresa Verase, and Surinder Kaur are the signatories on the registration document submitted to Consumer and Corporate Affairs on March 21st, 1986.*





# The Women

## Cindy Tong



Cindy Tong was born in Hong Kong and came to Canada in 1974 with a BA. She originally started as a volunteer at ANIW, but worked her way to become a Board member and eventually the

President around 2001. She represented ANIW on the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women board. Representing ANIW in Ottawa during NOIVMW meetings was a personal and professional development experience for her and it taught her to be a better person and leader. Cindy believes that ANIW is the silent leader in the community.

*"We help provide the building blocks for the success of other organizations and initiatives—I truly believe that."*

## Geetha Ramesh



Geetha Ramesh has a PhD from India and moved to Canada in 1992. Geetha joined the board as a member and eventually Vice President and President in 2017. She was impressed

by the Network's projects stemming from discussion with women at the grassroots level, from which issues were researched. She saw how the programs helped many highly skilled immigrant women overcome the challenge of cultural barriers, unrecognized credentials, and societal discrimination. In her role as the current president of the organization Geetha is keen to engage the organization within social media

*"Feminism isn't about making women strong: they are strong already. It's about how the world perceives that strength."*

## Halima Ali



Halima Ali was born in Somalia and moved to Canada in 1991. Halima knew the difficulty of moving to a new country and new culture with no support or guidance, especially for women. To overcome such

challenges, she believes ANIW could provide a stage for research, evaluation, and developing strategies to support the unique issues immigrant women have in Alberta.

*“ANIW has strengthened my commitment to serve my community and be the voice for those immigrant women who face multiple barriers.”*

## Hina Thaker



Hina Thaker emigrated from the UK to Canada in 1980. She volunteered for the ANIW and helped to start the international medical graduate committee, later

volunteering to work on the Women in the Workplace project. Working collaboratively with other members to acquire a charitable number for the organization. Through her work with the Network, she has seen the many projects, events, and forums that ANIW has hosted and saw the powerful impact it had on encouraging immigrant women to participate as well as meet and network with other people similar to them. Her experience with the Network has provided her with experiences that are invaluable in her professional life.

*“ANIW has provided me with extensive experience with boards, regulatory, and non-profit environments—all of which have been invaluable in my professional life and most importantly, it has provided for me lifelong and wonderful relationships.”*

## Jay Negi



Jay Negi came to Canada from India with a Master's degree in English. She played a pivotal role in the development of ANIW beginning the second year of its creation. She was a pioneer in



identifying the gaps in settlement aid and providing and establishing such aids. She was played a key role in creation of the Millwoods Welcome Centre for Immigrants, the Indo-Canadian Women's Association, and the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. She worked tirelessly in the prevention of family violence. She has received several awards and recognition for her exceptional work in community services.

## Joyshree Nandy



Joyshree Nandy came to Canada as a student from India with her husband in 1977. She has worked in the non-profit sector and was a Board member from 1990 to very recently where she contributed to

policy development. She was a member of the "outcomes" team and advisor, if required, on local issues in Medicine Hat. In her role as a volunteer, she loved the celebrations, the friendships forged, the networking, and the opportunity to make referrals to her clients. Rewarding was the opportunity to take back to her agency "The World of Women Together" issue analysis and solutions, empowering immigrant women

through engagement and participation along with opportunities to learn more, and how to access additional resources.

*"I am saddened that there is too much territorialism and this affects much needed work for change."*

## Lynn (Tsewong) Chazotsang

Lynn (Tsewong) Chazotsang was born in Tibet and moved to Canada in 1971. She met many other immigrant women who are also leaders in their own organizations. As one of the Board of Directors of ANIW, she was exposed to what the organization had to offer and still finds their resources helpful to this day. ANIW helped Lynn to branch out, and she founded the Women in Spirituality group with members from 11 different faiths.

*"It will be a shame if any funding to this organization is cut as all the services this organization offers is necessary for every immigrant woman who comes to this country."*

## Maria Torres

Maria Torres is currently in her fourth year as the treasurer of ANIW. She has a PhD in Mathematics and moved to Canada from Mexico in 1978. Before beginning her time at the Network, she



was previously the president of the Mexican Association. She was drawn to the organization due to the fact that organizations such as CIWA and the Alberta International Medical Graduates Association had their beginnings here. She

found it comforting to meet women who are interested in supporting immigrant women. As soon as she learned about the organization, she knew that she would commit to it.

*"It is comforting to meet women who are interested in supporting immigrant women."*

## Minh Le



Minh Le emigrated from Vietnam to Canada in 1980 with a Bachelor's of Social Work and a Master's in Counselling. She has worked in both the non-profit sector and the government. What sets ANIW apart is its ability to work with

key stakeholders relevant to the issue at hand. Her role at the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women is not just limited to holding executive positions on the board of directors but also taking an active role to spearheading the Integrity Leadership program, the fundraising program and contributing to the development of the Study Guide "An Aspect of Racism Seldom Discussed: Internalized Racism".

*"ANIW has been a trailblazer for the past 32 years and founded a number of valuable services for immigrant women and their families such as Immigrant Access Fund, Alberta Immigrant Medical Graduates Association, Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council, and it continues doing the important and relevant work to serve immigrant women and the communities in Alberta, particularly rural Alberta."*

## Papiya Das



Papiya Das came to Canada with a family of two from India in 1978. She has a Masters in social work which she has to put to good use while working with the government. Her role at ANIW has been consistent—



from 1986 to date as a Board member actively involved in public development and research and sustainability, both of which are important for successions planning for the organization. It is still a fact that foreign-trained doctors, nurses, and social workers are experiencing critical challenges getting their qualifications assessed or getting placements. Immigrant women face double jeopardy when it comes to being able to really work as a professional. Childcare is a major issue. ANIW has helped so many immigrant women with the integration process. It has enhanced programs and services through its involvement with local groups and agencies. What sets it apart from other immigrant settlement agencies is ANIW's unique ability to make recommendations to the government on policy changes.

*"I have enjoyed my involvement of ANIW especially at the many celebrations which was great fun. As for the friendships forged, many of them have been long-lasting."*

### Rispah Kiptoo-Tremblay



Rispah Kiptoo-Tremblay was born in Kenya and moved to Canada in 1997. Soon after, she received her Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. Upon

hearing about the Network from the former CAIWA coordinator, Rispah became heavily involved as a volunteer board member. She has always seen ANIW as the voice of immigrant women in Alberta as no other organization does the same, it is unique to ANIW. Funding through the IRCC has allowed her to continue to work on the I-WIN project in Edmonton which started first with ANIW.

*"I believe that all the research and mentorship opportunities ANIW has provided to professional women in Alberta have paid dividends."*

### Shalla Shaharyar



Shalla Shaharyar has a Master's in Intercultural Communication and International Relations from Pakistan, but came to Canada in 2001. She was a volunteer Board member and helped with the Alternative Professional

Employment Initiative and the International Dental Graduates study group. These initiatives proved to be valuable in assisting women in their economic mobility and social inclusion. Her experience with ANIW led to meeting similar-minded women with whom she could connect and collaborate with.

It gave her an opportunity to utilize her skills to further pave the path to empowerment and success for immigrant women.

*"The support services provided by ANIW are invaluable, unique, and essential in supporting the successful integration of immigrant women."*

## Sushila Samy



Sushila Samy emigrated from Singapore to Canada in 1981. She had been the executive director of the Immigrant Women's Centre in Edmonton (Changing Together) before coming to ANIW as the Vice Chair and then Chair of Board

of Directors. When she realized the imbalance of women's rights towards the white population, she knew she had to step up and advocate on behalf of immigrant women and women of colour. Her role at ANIW provided her the opportunity to learn about governance, funding, and advocating for programs and services. These learnings continue to be her foundation in all she is involved with.

*"Immigrant women and women of colour had to form their own association to advocate for issues*

*that were important to them."*

## Veena Chandra

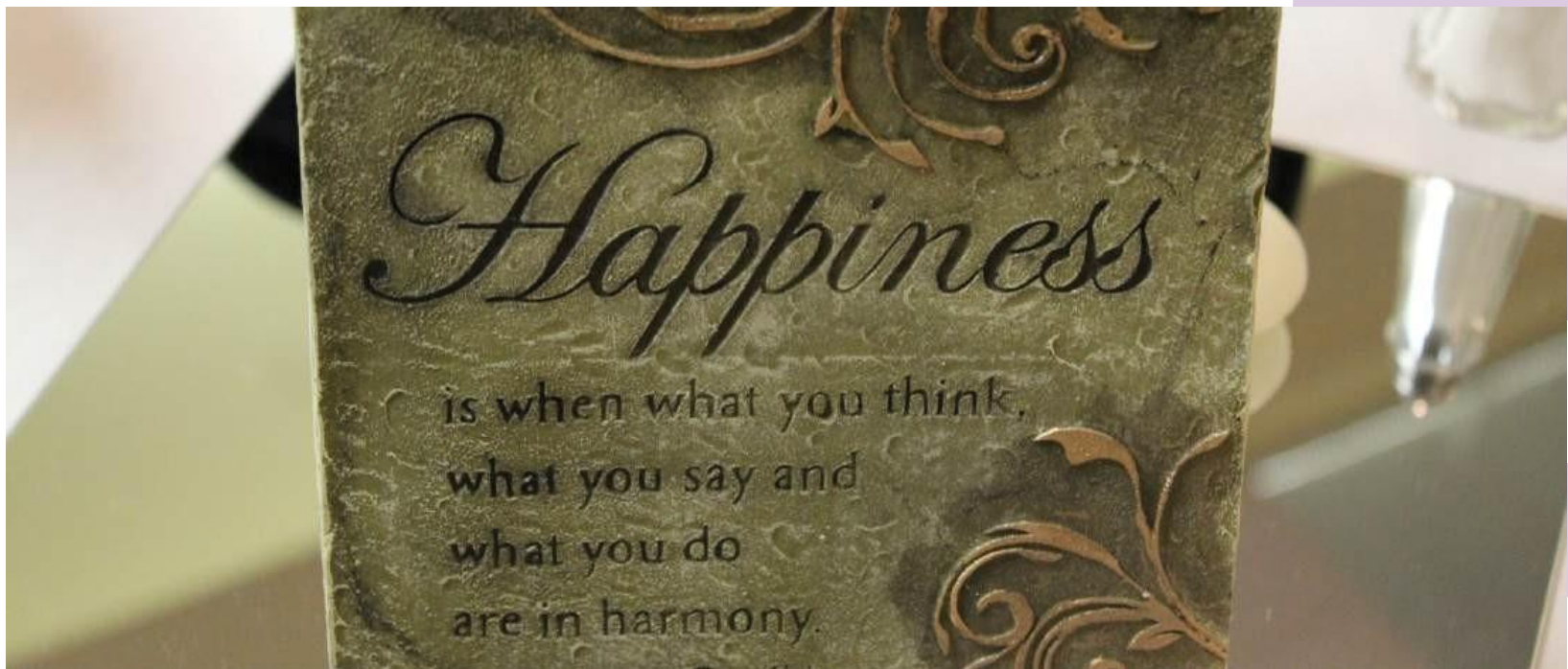


Veena Chandra came to Canada from India in 1970 with a Masters of Arts degree. She believes that ANIW has provided services that have benefited immigrant women and their families

by providing support and a venue to learn together. ANIW has changed her by providing the opportunity to work together and build confidence and strength to work on related issues.

*"I will always hold a soft spot for the many women I got to know through ANIW. I admire their passion and commitment to the rights of immigrant women."*





# In Memory of Sudha Kulsheshta

Sudha was born and raised in Agra, India where she developed a natural instinct to advocate for the rights of women and minorities. Although education wasn't seen as a part of her future, she was determined to be educated and soon attained her BSc from St. John's College in Agra.

Following her marriage, she soon immigrated to Canada and found her first job at the University of Alberta. Holding onto one's culture, while trying to adapt to a new one, was not a simple endeavor.

She worked with the Indo-Canadian Women's Association (ICWA) and was a member of the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women. Her concerned nature and desire to give back to the community made her role as President of ANIW a very natural one.

Upon losing her two-year battle with cancer, her legacy and spirit will live on with the work of the ICWA and the ANIW.



*Sudha with former Prime Minister, Joe Clark*



# In Memory of Linda Thomson

Linda Thomson came to Canada from the Philippines in 1969 with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work. She worked with the Citizenship Council of Manitoba as the Immigrant Settlement Coordinator and then as the Intercultural Coordinator. She moved to Calgary, on being appointed as executive director of Calgary Immigrant Women's Association.

As a board member of the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women, she took on the heavy responsibilities of being the treasurer, the vice president, president and as past president continued to mentor the incoming president. She represented ANIW as the voice from Alberta on the National Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada organization.



Through her time with ANIW, she devoted her time to bring key issues that impact immigrant women to the forefront with stakeholders while tirelessly working with the Filipino Cultural Centre overseeing their governance and program development. Linda represented ANIW locally, provincially and nationally.

# In Memory of Pilar Silva

Pilar Silva was born in Santiago, Chile and moved to Medicine Hat, Canada in 1976. She was humble and generous and will be remembered for all her humanitarian work. Among that work was her involvement in the Worlds of Women Together, where she became the program director. At the Board of Alberta Network of Immigrant Women she represented her organization and brought to the forefront the many issues immigrant women faced in small cities of Alberta . Her interest in lifelong learning led her to devote her time to Unisphere Learning Centre. She had a love for the arts and was herself a gifted artist.

She had a strong will to fight for human rights and to speak out against discrimination. She dedicated much of her time and effort to enriching the lives of those around her and those who needed help. She was a strong advocate for educating women on employment issues and for immigrant women in general.

After a long and courageous battle with cancer, she passed away in 2011. She will be missed dearly by those she touched with her kindness and compassion, and her contribution to ANIW will live on.







# The Challenges Faced

Alberta Network of Immigrant Women, like many other organizations in the non-profit sector is driven by its sense of mission and values and faces many of the challenges that the larger non-profit sector encounter. Sometimes being a women's organization, as well as, being an immigrant women's organization, in itself can be a challenge on many levels. The issues that impact the lives of immigrant women do not pull at the heart strings of the philanthropic world, nor are these issues ever the flavour of the month. As a result, building our financial capacity, as well as, attracting and retaining top qualified and trained talent are among the key challenges.

ANIW is aware of the challenges in our sector and remains committed to addressing them.

- Bringing social issues to the table of policy makers requires a seat at the decision making tables, yet few immigrant women have the networks to support their presence at such tables.
- The non-profit sector is not a regulated profession hence it lacks the pay scales, benefits of pension plans, savings contributions and other such benefits. Accordingly, many employees of this sector are vulnerable to economic insecurities. Thus, gender and pay inequities economically marginalize, immigrant

women even further.

- The ever-changing digital world poses challenges of acquiring the technological knowledge and skills, and the abilities to learn to use technology to our advantage.

Our biggest challenge: How can we measure our successes? As importantly, succession issues, how do we mentor the next generation of immigrant women to become leaders, who will step into the shoes of the women entering their retirement years?

**Kamal Sehgal**

Executive Director













# Visions for the Future

In 1986, the founding members of the Alberta Network of Immigrant Women ( ANIW) anchored the emerging organization on three significant values: Integrity, Courage and Compassion. To these organizational values were added central program values: Justice, Equality and Learning, within which all programs would be embedded, along with a basic functional principle, namely, to empower those impacted by the issues to take action to address the issues. By working with these core values, the ANIW has developed a proud history. The not-for- profit organization systematically, develops and implements programs which seek to find solutions to the many issues that impact the lives of immigrant women and their families.

Addressing unrecognized credentials our program Capacity Alberta initiated the formation of the following: the Alberta International Medical Graduates Association, the Immigrant Access Fund to provide micro loans and the Calgary Regional Immigrant Employment Council to provide mentorship for immigrants, enabling hundreds of immigrant to achieve their potential. The program continues to focus on the unrecognized credentials of the international trained dentist and in addition delivering programs that ensure economic security for immigrant women.

Addressing workplace issues of racism and discrimination our research brought to the forefront the awareness of internalized racism, the health damages it can cause, and the need to develop a community service framework. The program continues to use the racism and discrimination lens to address domestic violence in partnership with the Alberta Men's Network.





Our leadership program is to learn how one's character (eg. the ability to conduct oneself well under difficult situations) develops. As importantly, one gains the abilities to apply new tools to build capacity for adaptive persistence, and construct a personal ethical framework. One learns to recognize how our genetic wiring, culture and convention influence individual development and formation of relationships. One learns the nature of caring, compassion, justice and virtue and its role in leadership.

The program delivered once a year continues into its fifth year of meeting the leadership needs in our society.

As an organization, we stay motivated to ensure that every immigrant women reaches her full potential in Alberta. The ANIW vision for the future is to stay true to our values and principles. Being cognizant, understanding and incorporating the best of our ever-changing environment and above all being resilient and adaptive. With these principles and thoughts in our focus, ANIW can step boldly into the future, by building on its proud history to achieving, even greater possibilities.

**Kamal Sehgal**  
Executive Director



# Appreciations

Our appreciation is extended to everyone who helped to make this book a success.

## Board members of the ANIW

Our appreciation extends to the determined Board members of ANIW who contributed to its growth and development.

Abby Aiyeleye	Adelina Herstova	Adetoun Aiyeleye	Ajike Oladoyin	Anila Umar
Anna Marie Ashton	Aradhana Parmar	Beba Svigir	Carol Kensley	Edna Sutherland
Eileen Soo	Elaine Lupul	Esther Lau	Eun Jin Kim	Grace Emblem
Haritha Devulapally	Helen Chau	Jagjeet Bhardwaj	Jelena Krnic	Jean Chung
Jehan Wassef	Joyce Bridgmohar	Kamil Kobayashi	Lan Chan Marples	Lisa Hari
Lucia Mena	Mae Way	Marva Ferguson	Menna Kebede	Neelum Gurm
Pamela Dos Ramos	Ramona Fernando	Sara Bateman	Shelly Smith	Sonia Bitar
Surinder Pannu	Vafa Adib,	Val Markin	Yan Guo	Zovinita Estoconing
Zohra Husaini				

## People we interviewed:

Through interviews, we were better able to encapsulate the essence of the organization and share the stories of those who pioneered the work of ANIW . We discovered their successes and challenges and their hopes for the organization's future.

Amal Umar	Barbara Smith	Cindy Tong	Geetha Ramesh	Halima Ali	Hina Thaker
Joyshree Nandy	Lynn Chazotsang	Maria Torres	Minh Le	Papiya Das	Rispah Tremblay
Shalla Shaharyar	Surinder Kaur	Sushila Samy	Veena Chandra		



## Staff of ANIW

Our warm appreciation to our dedicated staff past and present . As a result of their valuable knowledge, skills and time commitments to the organization, they have been ANIW’s backbone and have helped to keep ANIW running smoothly, on a daily basis:

Chido Mbavarira	Eunice Mahama	Glecy Cuenco	Jumana Bastawala	Marcelle Sarkis
Mercedes Ipaarraguirre	Monika Thakur	Marcus Ma	Nicky Liao	Nizar Alidina
Olivia Busby	Pearl Yip	Petra Okeke	Rosa Martinez-Suares	Rita Wong

## Our facilitators

Duna Bayley, Farnaz Farhidi, Gemma Epp, Kim Rowe, Mark Hopkins and Sarah Kinnie,  
A very special thank you to Ken Low of the Human Venture Institute for guiding us to develop our Leadership program

## Funding

We extend our appreciation to our many funders who have supported us throughout our years, as a non-profit organization. We could not have done this vital work without you. The funders have given us the opportunity to research critical issues in our society and further, to understand how we can help immigrant women to integrate. More important, was their confidence in ANIW’s abilities to carry forward, and complete the agreed work.

For the generations who follow, may ANIW’s past accomplishments and present activities, act like bright beacons of hope.

May ANIW, inspire you to continue to work with the determination and passion to develop future programs which foster the empowerment of immigrant, visible minority to achieve their full potential in their Alberta communities.

# Publication Achievements of ANIW

## **Policy Discussion Paper to Address Preceptor Shortage for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in Alberta Resident Training Programs**

The Alberta International Medical Graduate Program (AIMPG) will discuss the possible solutions to counteracting preceptor shortages. Preceptor shortage has been linked to smaller residency training programs and, consequently, a climbing rate of under-employed/unemployed International Medical Graduates.

## **The Legal Case to Accommodate International Medical Graduates in their Integration into Alberta's Health Care System**

This report discusses the debate of whether assessment of foreign medical training should be judged on competency and merit rather than in comparison to Canada's standards. To protect human rights and prevent further violations, solutions are discussed.

## **The Alberta Blue Print- Addressing Alberta's Physician Shortage: Integration of International Medical Graduates into Alberta's Health Care System**

The paper provides an in-depth examination of the deficit of physicians in Canada in addition to explanations for the course of action taken by IMGs to be able to practice medicine in Canada.

Residency issues are explored with their effect on IMGs.

## **Those Really Are Thousand Dollar Bills on the Sidewalk: The Social Opportunity Cost to Alberta of the Underemployment of Un-Licensed International Medical Graduates**

Unlicensed International Medical Graduates (IMGs) are a concern for the human capital of Canada. Seeing as approximately half in Alberta are unemployed and only a few hold jobs related to their medical training and background, the paper implicates expanding post-graduate training positions to help IMGs have a better chance at obtaining a license to practice medicine.

## **Equal Access to Medical Licensure for International Trained Physicians**

The Alberta Network of Immigrant Women (ANIW) will talk about foreign credentials as well as instructions concerning how to achieve recognition for past experience and education for foreign-trained professionals. Therefore, changing policies could remove some barriers for obtaining licensure for the internationally trained community without risking current standard health care.



### **Over-Qualified, Underemployed: Accessibility Barriers to Accreditation for Immigrant Women with Foreign Qualifications**

Accreditation is a process that includes both external and internal challenges for internationally trained individuals. This paper provides suggestions as to how Canada can help foreign professionals better integrate into Canadian society.

### **Access to Licensure for Foreign Qualified Nurses**

Looking at a sample of nurses from the Filipino Nurses' Association and Domestic Workers' Association, the paper will themes found throughout the interviews and focus-group discussions, such as challenges to the application process and financial impacts. Recommendations for how to compensate for these obstacles are also given.

### **Unlicensed International Medical Graduates (IMGs) Survey 2000**

In order to attain their license to practice in Canada, many IMGs are willing to relearn their knowledge to be up-to-date with Canadian current medical practices. Exploration and explanation of the medical examinations results are given. Further topics such as gender issues and training are proposed to be studied in the future.

### **Forum: Equal Access to Licensure for International Trained Physicians**

The forum discusses the integration of internationally trained physicians and what their experience brings to the Alberta health care system. Propositions on how to better integrate internationally-trained physicians are taken up.

### **Economic Security for Immigrant Women: Living in Rural and Small Town Alberta**

This paper will look at the struggles immigrant women face as they attempt to integrate into Canadian economics. A lack of economic security and financial literacy gives rise to numerous other issues such as lack of access to affordable housing or employment opportunities.

### **Equitable Treatment of Immigrant/Visible Minority Women as Employees and Volunteers in the Alberta Voluntary Sector**

The presence of barriers to equitable treatment of immigrant women in the workplace must be identified and overcome. Systemic issues and barriers, funding issues and barriers, and workplace issues and barriers were identified and suggestions as to how to reduce these barriers were given.

### **Financial Literacy for Immigrant Women**

This manual helps immigrant women familiarize themselves with financial literacy to get closer to economic security by providing 12 modules

in various economic areas as well as multiple resources for support.

### **Financial Literacy for Immigrant Seniors**

A manual is prepared to help immigrant seniors in being independent and build financial literacy. Four modules are presented: income for immigrant seniors, housing, help at home, and planning for the future.

### **Research Report: Mentorship Programs for Alberta Network of Immigrant Women**

In order to better the opportunities for immigrant women to participate in the economic, social, and cultural life of Canada, types of mentorships, opportunities to lead and support are highly recommended. All of this is to enhance their participation in the community.

### **Blueprint Project: Increasing Women's Involvement as Decision-Makers in Community Based Organizations (Gender-Based Analysis Report)**

The intention of this project is to encourage women's leadership and contribute in community organizations. Challenges and contributions of non-profit organizations and immigrant and/or racialized women (IRW) are examined.

### **An Aspect of Racism Seldom Discussed: Internalized Racism (A Study Guide)**

Five studies are looked at to further understand

internalized racism. Strategies are suggested for challenging systemic and internalized racism.

### **Healing from Racism: Mapping Anti-Racism Programs in Alberta (A Research Project of Alberta Network of Immigrant Women)**

This project looks into anti-racism and identifying organizations that offer programs for healing from racism.

### **Healing from Racism: Suggested Practitioners Tools**

There is a gap between available services and the lack of service for helping people to heal from racism as well as discuss internalized racism. Narratives from focus groups show the effect of internalized racism and strategies of possible how to overcome it. A literature review is also done to identify existing forms of healing from racism.

### **Healing from Racism: A Community Service Framework (A Project Report of Alberta Network of Immigrant Women)**

Developing an Internalized Racism Scale (IRS) with a set of criteria to identify internalized racism and increase awareness of its effects and developing a manual to initiate the discussion of the issue are presented in the report. This is meant to promote healing and develop community programs to support those who experienced it.



### **Barriers to Accreditation for Immigrant Women with Foreign Qualifications**

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### **Breaking the Silence of Racism Injuries: A Community-Driven Study**

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