Annual Report

2018-2019

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Over the past year, Canadians for a Civil Society (CCS) focused on organizing its finances and governance model as well as carrying out the core projects. We received casino funds from the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission (AGLC) for the first time, and it took some learning on how to utilize and report. Our board members enrolled into the AGLC courses over the year.

We also started reviewing our governance model and forming structured committees and developing improved terms of operation. We have now created a common drive and started to post all our documents and correspondence on it so they are easily available from any remote location. We are also improving the CCS website and DD website to make them more user friendly and record more hits by the public. The process is still continuing.

But that does not mean that we did not engage in activities that define our vision and our purpose. To begin with, we welcome Professor Yasmeen Abu-Laban of University of Alberta as the newly appointed Canada Research Chair of the Politics of Citizenship and Human Rights; the CCS proposed to work jointly with her on human rights issues. The CCS had an important role in the creation of that Chair.

In the coming year, the Canadians for a Civil Society will continue to organize more activities that have a long lasting impact in our community and ripple widely into the world to bring about our vision. To begin with, we are already organizing the Dialogue for Peace event with fifty invited community leaders to take place a month after this Annual General Meeting. That is just the beginning.

Vasant Chotai, DipEd, BA (Hon), MPI (Queen's)
President, Canadians for a Civil Society

VISION, MISSION & WHAT DO WE DO

VISION

A culture of human rights is the foundation of life in a civil society

WHAT DO WE DO?

CCS works to advance a culture of respect for human rights as well as gender equality through community events that celebrate women and foster an inclusive society. With education and advocacy as tools to effect change in society, we seek to cultivate an environment of dialogues and deliberations that strengthen our resolve on freedom from fear and promote the five pillars of civil society – respect, literacy, human rights, the rule of law and meaningful economic opportunity

MISSION

We advocate, share, and celebrate Canadian values and human rights as a way of life by engaging people and communities

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DAUGHTERS DAY 2018

Theme: "Spectators No More"

Daughters Day is the flagship initiative of the CCS that celebrates the lives, contributions and achievements of all daughters who have helped eliminate barriers such as violence, harassment, discrimination, bullying and abuse in the realization of their full potential.

In September we held the Daughters Day 2018 Celebration at the City Hall with several speakers, both community torchbearers and elected officials - including federal Minister Amarjeet Sohi, provincial Minister Lori Sigurdson and city Councillor Tim Cartmell.

This year's theme was "Spectators No More" - to challenge everyone to be fully engaged in building a society that embraces gender equality and human dignity for each and every member of our society. Six energetic women were given 2018 Daughter of the Year Awards.

BECA 2018

"Mental Health - Surviving to Thriving"

Just before the last AGM, the CCS held its third symposium in the series titled Building Empathy Conquering Apathy (BECA). The theme was "Mental Health - Surviving to Thriving", focusing on youth, caregivers, refugees, seniors and Indigenous experience.

With the keynote speaker Wendy Edey, more than a hundred people attended, including many students from local colleges, their registration fees paid by board members and sponsors.

The speaker encouraged choosing hope over fear in down times, nurturing hope and it will grow and thrive.

HUMAN RIGHTS & SPEAKERS

In December 2018, the CCS collaborated with the government to organize a Human Rights Day at the Legislature like we have done in the past years. On the International Human Rights Day, the CCS invited 25 leaders of other non-profit organizations that are serving their communities in various ways that contribute to the enhancement of human rights, equality, fairness and freedom from fear. All the delegates committed themselves to work together in future on the common purpose. A group photo was taken of the delegates with the cabinet ministers and other elected members. These delegates were then publicly recognized for their contributions by elected Members of the Legislature and their names recorded in the Alberta Hansard.

Civil Society Speaker Series at Norquest College
The Norquest College and the CCS collaborated on an annual series of Civil Society Speakers in March 2019. The keynote speaker was Jamil Jivani, the author from Toronto who had experienced firsthand how a young man's future becomes influenced by gangster culture or radical ideologies. He inspired the young audience by describing how he pulled himself out of the path to troubled life we hear about and onto a path of education and leadership to fostering a civil society. The CCS sponsored a student essay contest on civil society, and Vasant Chotai presented three winners with awards and two entrants with certificates of merit.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Week at MacEwan University

The MacEwan University and the CCS collaborated on a weeklong exposition in March 2019 on civil society - open to students and the public - that included topics on Canadian values, diversity, equity and inclusion. The speakers included three board members of the CCS - one in an Indigenous Circle to abet solidarity and communion to experience respect, rule of law, human rights and meaningful economic opportunity conducted by Satya Das; another on overcoming gender discrimination as women experience conducted by Vivian Abboud; and the third on the role men must play in eliminating gender inequality and not just stand on the sideline conducted by Vasant Chotai.

Think Equal Translation Project

The CCS provided funds to support the world-renowned Think Equal project to translate its three levels of the program into the French language so that it can be extended within Canada and to other French-speaking countries throughout the world. Think Equal, pioneered by the famous film producer/director Leslee Udwin, empowers change through education to end the discriminatory mindset and cycle of violence across our world.

CCS Training Workshops Project
The CCS board approved a fund to carry out the second phase of the CCS Skills Training Workshops. This second phase of a larger initiative is to provide opportunity for skills training to women living in marginalized situations and to equip them for asset-based community development activities. The handbook will be used in this second phase of training across seven large and medium cities and towns across Alberta.

SUMMARY OF FINANCES

Financial Overview 2018

• AGLC Casino Funds: Received and allocated under AGLC compliance guidelines.

• Governance & Operations: Investments made into centralized cloud systems and web platforms.

• Project Sponsorships: Direct funding provided for Think Equal translations and local symposiums.