Annual Report

2020-2021

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ANNUAL REPORT 2020–2021

Executive Summary:

Due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic over the last year, the Canadians for a Civil Society (CCS) had to continue with virtual monthly meetings of the Board of Directors and the various committees. All the other meetings with external organizations, where we are jointly embarking on projects within our mandate, were also carried out virtually through the zoom platform. But we did not let the pandemic stop us from carrying on with our business.

Governance & Operations:

We restructured our governance model to streamline and improve efficiency. We have completed rewriting our By-Laws and drafted a new section on Objects of the Society. Both of these documents will be submitted to Alberta Registries once the members have approved them. We will also be inviting new board members to the CCS in order to increase our expertise and scope.

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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GOVERNANCE & COMMUNICATIONS

Filing Systems & Digital Overhaul:

We re-organized our filing system for all our documents so they are centrally located and the latest versions are available to all eligible persons. At the same time, we re-structured our Daughters Day website with a contract with an outside agency so that it is modern and appealing to visitors. We are currently re-structuring our Canadians for a Civil Society website with the same intent.

Communications Plan & Coordinator:

This year, we developed a Communications Plan for our organization. Facebook and Twitter accounts were started and blogs sections will be started soon. We are in the process of hiring a Communications Coordinator who will work with senior leadership to educate and promote the benefits of a civil society to the community at large.

Charitable Status & AGLC Casino:

We commenced an application to the Canada Revenue Agency to acquire a charitable status for the CCS. Later this year the Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) opened the casinos and the CCS was one of the non-profit organizations selected to be a funding recipient.

PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

Strong Women, Strong Communities:

Our Strong Women, Strong Communities Training project of six workshops in Edmonton have not been able to start yet since the selected participants are worried of the pandemic. So we are going to start with virtual workshops until the pandemic situation improves.

Human Rights Day Recognition:

This year public gallery at Alberta Legislature was closed due to the pandemic and so we could not convince the Speaker to invite our nominees from the community for recognition of their human rights work... We nevertheless sent out letters of recognition to each of the nominees.

Think Equal & Us Book Distribution:

We provided funds to the world-renowned Think Equal project for translation into French... From the stock of the "Us" book on five pillars of a civil society acquired by the CCS... we have distributed 88 books this year. The Circles of community consultation and Being & Belonging conversations will begin soon... jointly sponsored by the CCS and the Edmonton Heritage Council.

DAUGHTERS DAY 2020 & 2021

Virtual Celebrations:

We held our Daughters Day 2020 event virtually and gave Daughters of the Year awards to the selected candidates. We also included inspiring talks from community leaders, and music and dances from the community groups. We will be holding Daughters Day 2021 event soon, again virtually.

10th Anniversary Milestone:

In addition, we will hold a tenth anniversary of the Daughters Day initiative with a futures conference with all the past Daughters of the Year award winners.

THE CHARTER AT FORTY CONFERENCE

"From Isolation to Inclusion - Navigating the Post-Covid World"

Conference Partnership:

The second major project the CCS initiated last year and are continuing with the planning, is the human rights conference in partnership with the Canada Research Chair on Human Rights and the University of Alberta Political Science Department.

Keynote & Opening Speakers:

On October 28, the former Chief Justice the Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin will be the keynote speaker on the Charter. The conference will be held virtually on November 8 to 10, 2021, and will be opened by the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, the Honourable Salma Lakhani.

Academic & Community Engagement:

There will be academic scholars presenting their research papers on different areas of human rights issues and also on the differences between the Charter and Human Rights legislation. There will be community artists presenting their artwork and workshops on art.

POLICY WORKSHOPS & ACTION ROADMAP

Policy Group Workshops:

The Policy Group, initiated by the Canadians for a Civil Society, held "issues-identification" workshops in June, followed by legal and policy research work by U of A graduate students, and will hold "solutions-based" workshops on November 4 and 5.

Systemic Policy Outreach:

After the conference, the Canadians for a Civil Society and the participating network of community organizations will consult with levels of governments, agencies and private sector decision-makers to provide the solutions and policies developed by the workshops at the conference.

Core Purpose:

The purpose is to make human rights a way of life.