



NEPALESE COMMUNITY SOCIETY OF CALGARY (NCSC)

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Annual Report, 2022

Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR 2022

- Nepali Pathshala expanded to Grade 5 (total students 120).
- Nepali Radio completed 234 episodes and celebrated its Silver Jubilee.
- Consular services provided benefit to 30 Nepalese in Calgary that saved almost \$20,000 which otherwise could be incurred if service receivers had to travel all the way to Ottawa.
- A total of 150 families have been provided in-person support (groceries, cash, gift hampers, counselling etc).
- Smarika book printed and is available to the members.
- NCSC building renovation is completed and is finally inspected by the city. We are now moving ahead to rent out the facility to the community members and others.
- Krishna Janmasthami has been celebrated for the first time in the history of NCSC and almost 250 Nepalese participated in the pooja.
- Two scoping sessions of seniors have been completed in a fun-filled open environment and a total of 180 seniors and household members attended the sessions.
- Collaborated with Newa Society of Calgary to celebrate Mah Pooja together and provided free entry to seniors, kids, volunteers and students.
- Seniors have been provided free entry to all socio-cultural events (Nepali New Year, Picnic, Mah Pooja).
- NCSC completed first phase of Strategic Action Planning session with 50 participants.
- Received funding support from Calgary Foundation (\$1,000) to run Badminton for the kids.
- Received funding from the city to run Community Action Planning (\$1,100).
- Received funding from the Public Safety Canada to install key security systems in NCSC (\$8,000).
- Two grant proposals submitted to the City of Calgary (June 2022), two submitted to the Province of Alberta, two submitted to the Federal Government, one to the Red Cross and one to the Parks Canada.
- The City of Calgary funded seniors' project has been over and report is being prepared for submission.
- Christmas Donation Drive raised cash of \$1,075 from 30 individuals and gift hampers from 19 individuals.
- NCSC's mission of providing support to Nepalese Calgarians have been refined to Nepali-speaking Calgarians and other vulnerable Calgarians to include the immigrants from racialized communities and they are included in all project and NCSC activities.
- Participated in Blood Donation, Food Bank volunteering etc.
- Cultural showcasing in Heritage Festival, Fiji community, UofC.



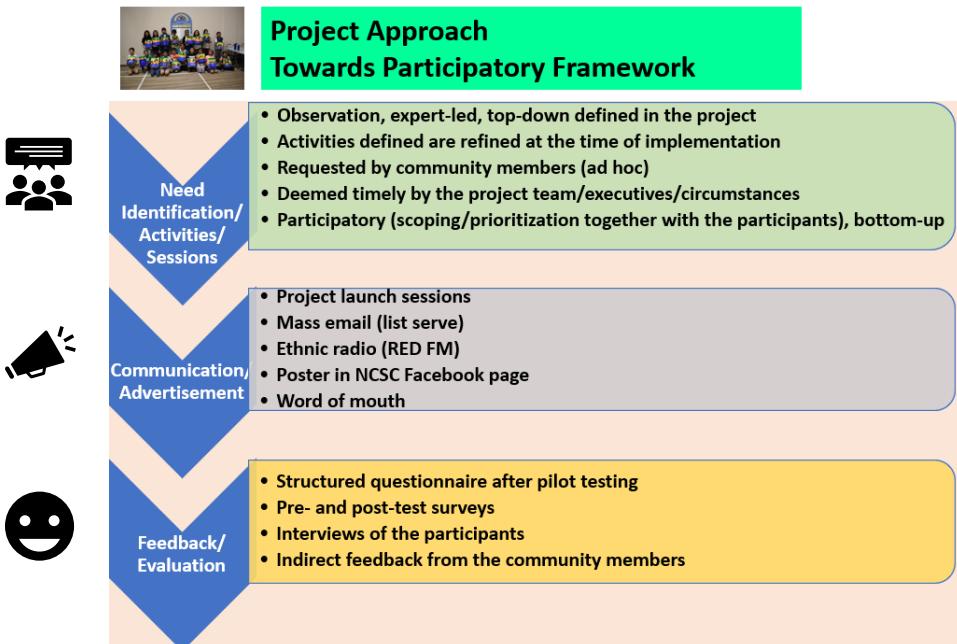
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – PROJECT ACTIVITIES

With the funding support from Alberta Health (Mid 2021), New Horizon for Seniors Program (Mid 2022), the City of Calgary (Mid 2022) and non-profit organizations, NCSC has been running multiple projects aiming to reduce social isolation and to improve mental health of the Nepal-origin Calgarians. The projects have nine overarching outcome areas: (1) reduce screen time and improve mental health of kids, (2) reduce social isolation and improve health of seniors, (3) empower and enable women, (4) develop social capital of the Nepalese community through youth programming, (5) preserve, promote and transfer Nepalese culture and heritage, (6) support services to other ethnic communities through outreach activities, (7) empower and enable vulnerable Calgarians through education and awareness, (8) practice bottom up approach to strategic planning and ultimately (9) enhance the potentials of Calgarians.

The project has been considered highly timely by the parents given that their kids' screen time has been increased significantly due to COVID-19 restrictions. The kids' focused activities have become highly successful as there has been a consistent and high rate of participation in all activities. For instance, almost 91% of parents ($n=370$) found that their kids made a notable progress after joining the programs, 95% parents ($n=328$) reported that the activities helped them to mix and mingle with their friends and it helped reduce mental and physical stress caused directly or indirectly by COVID-19, and almost 95% of adults ($n=610$) expressed that project activities provided an opportunity to discuss/share their ideas/knowledge. Similarly, out of 183 participants of yoga/meditation sessions, 89% reported that the mindfulness and guided meditation sessions helped them reduce their stress and anxiety while assisting to retain healthy lifestyle. Almost 92% of seniors ($n=518$) agreed that they learned new thing from the project activities, 95% ($n=485$) agreed that the project helped them provide an avenue to share their ideas, knowledge and experience that has given them mental relief, and 97% of seniors ($n=470$) reported that they got opportunities to resume their socialization and reduced social isolation.

During the last 18 months period, a total of 8,373 participants attended project activities (2,761 unique participants), mobilized 1,009 volunteers (315 unique volunteers), 3,027 volunteer hours from community members, 1,818 hours of volunteer contribution from staff and community expert with almost \$167,000 value of the volunteer contribution. The projects generated \$15,790 of revenue for NCSC. Under community outreach activities organized during COVID and post-COVID, the projects provided with grocery packages and customized support to 165 vulnerable families that benefited to almost 550 family members of various communities especially Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, and Mexico origin Calgarians. During last 18 months, we partnered with over 15 non-profit organizations in Calgary. All NCSC's past and current projects have increased NCSC's organizational capacity in several areas, specifically in the areas of project management, expert interaction, awareness raising, exploring funding opportunities and future collaboration.





BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The COVID-19 and subsequent restriction measures substantially increased the screen time among kids which ultimately exposed them to various mental health and social isolation.

Witnessing this alarming situation among kids and parents, NCSC took initiatives to make an urgent preventative and early intervention to address the following key concerns of community members:

- how to engage and enable kids in productive activities, particularly outside of school hours
- how to reduce their screen time
- how to reduce social isolation of kids

As part of preventive intervention, NCSC has been engaging kids in youth-led sports sessions (indoor and outdoor), dance and varieties of other activities with the funding support from Alberta health since mid 2021. These activities aim to enhance the socio-psychological state of the participants and to engage them into physical and creative activities to achieve the following objectives:

- Engage kids in productive activities and raise their health awareness
- Increase friendship circle and increase social inclusion
- Engage parents while kids in the learning and engagement sessions.

Feedback (Verbatim)

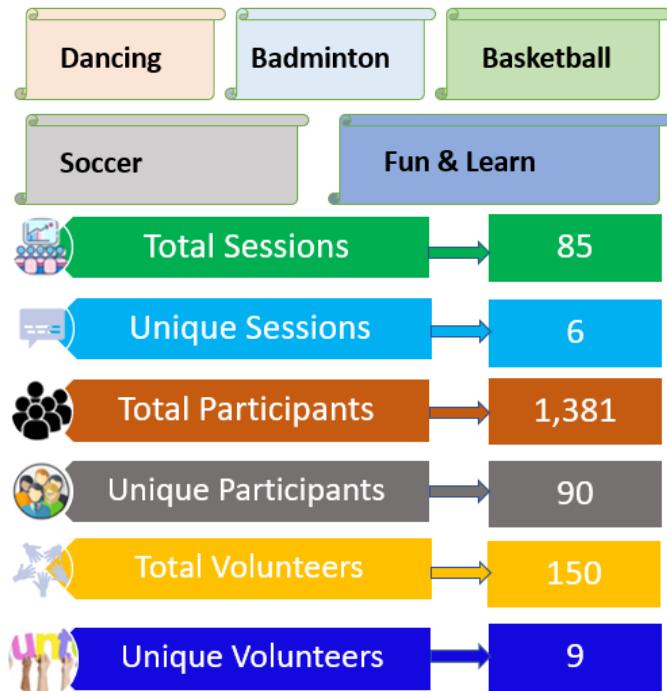
"NCSC has been promoting many programs, and we are really satisfied and feel proud".

"During COVID-19, my kids hardly got time to get connected with their peers and I noticed increased screen time. This was a great concern to me. NCSC's kids' engagement activities started in right time, and I was able to enroll my kids in different activities in the weekend. I have noticed my kids talking about the activities while at home, what they learned and their continued interest on such activities. Thanks NCSC and all those involved in making such fantastic programs".

"When my child gets engaged in NCSC's activities, I get time to work worry free. Please bring more activities".



Output 1: Kids' Engagement Reduce Screen Time



"Kids engagement activities organized by NCSC are awesome gift, please keep doing these activities in future too".

"My kid made new friends and I have noticed his reduced screen time when he is at home."

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The most common risk factors that increase the chances of becoming socially isolated and vulnerability among seniors include lack of awareness of or access to community services, transportation, and mobility services, increased physical and mental health issues, and challenges relating to technology. For immigrant seniors, language and socio-cultural barriers create additional social isolation and vulnerability. On top of that, the COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown measures restricting the space for engagement and interactions have further made them vulnerable and socially isolated.

Amid COVID-19 restrictions, NCSC realized the urgency of providing engagement activities for seniors to achieve following objectives:

- Make seniors physically and mentally agile by reducing their social isolation
- Enhance social relationships and networks to promote social inclusion while minimizing dependency
- Promote and enable seniors' physical, mental, and social engagement within the community.

Using the funding support from The Government of Alberta, The City of Calgary and The Government of Canada, NCSC, has been organizing diverse type of engagement activities for the seniors starting from Mid 2021.

Feedback (Verbatim)

"Meet and greet, social gathering, cultural programs, health camps, Bhajan/kirtan and singing/dancing programs are essential for seniors. And I am extremely happy that NCSC is on top of these activities and helping seniors making them active".

"Seniors are of all, and they need to be heard by all. I felt so connected to get involved into this program with Nepali speaking seniors. Thank you to the organizer of this talk program".



Output 2: Seniors' Engagement Reduce Social Isolation



"Thank you so much for NCSC Project and TOSS for organizing such an event. I felt it is a corner stone in developing resilience among aging Nepali seniors".

"I got time to interact with seniors in my community. When I share with the seniors, I feel mental relief".

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The women in South Asian culture are hesitant to take part in community activities because of patriarchal family system, back home culture and associated taboos. Even if they are interested to partake in the activities/sessions, they have limited time due to multiple roles in the family. COVID-19 disproportionately impacted this group when many women working in the frontline lost their job. The increased screen time among their kids also exposed them to mental health issue, and social isolation. Meanwhile community women raised their voices against the disproportionate rate of participation in project activities and asked NCSC to come up with some strategies to engage women through customized programming.

NCSC internalized the need for engagement activities for the women to meet following objectives:

- Enhance mental and physical wellbeing of women by implementing customized activities
- Provide a platform to the women to share their experiences/stories and get them empowered.

NCSC, since Mid 2022, has been organizing women's engagement activities like Women Conversation Café, fun, share and learn, Zumba and physical fitness sessions successfully with the funding support from the Government of Alberta.

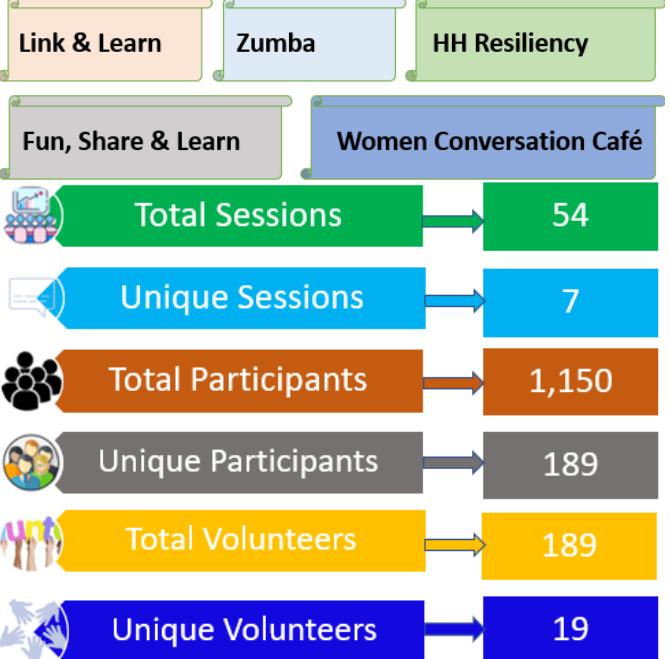
Feedback (Verbatim)

"Great outdoor event with nice participation. Perfect management. I am thankful towards enthusiastic volunteers who organized so much fun games and meditation sessions for seniors, and women. Special thanks go to NCSC team for perfectly managing the event".

"It is not only the festival where we sing and dance, but also the celebration of feminine principles. I am so proud in celebrating femininity while demanding gender justice, equality, and honor in our society".



Output 3: Women's Engagement Women's Empowerment



"Women Conversation Café is unique and customized program for women to share their feelings in a fun-filled environment. Thanks to those who have been involved in making this program available".

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

COVID-19 affected all age groups including youths. There have been concerns about the increased screen time, prone to socially inappropriate behaviors and actions, and mental health issues among youths. There is a need to bring youths in the mainstream of community development process to ensure the future leadership and foundation of nation and community. Youth are the reservoir of social capital and there is a need to tap and strengthen creatively of this resource.

Realizing this fact in mind, NCSC, together with active youths in the community, decided to organize a series of engagement sessions to meet following objectives:

- Bring youth in a common platform, facilitate sharing of experience, and reduce social isolation
- Facilitate intergenerational learning
- Motivate youth in volunteering work.

Youth conversation café, youth-led sport sessions (indoor and outdoor), youth-led mentorship, and homework support are some of the key activities conducted so far since Mid 2021 with the funding support from the Government of Alberta.

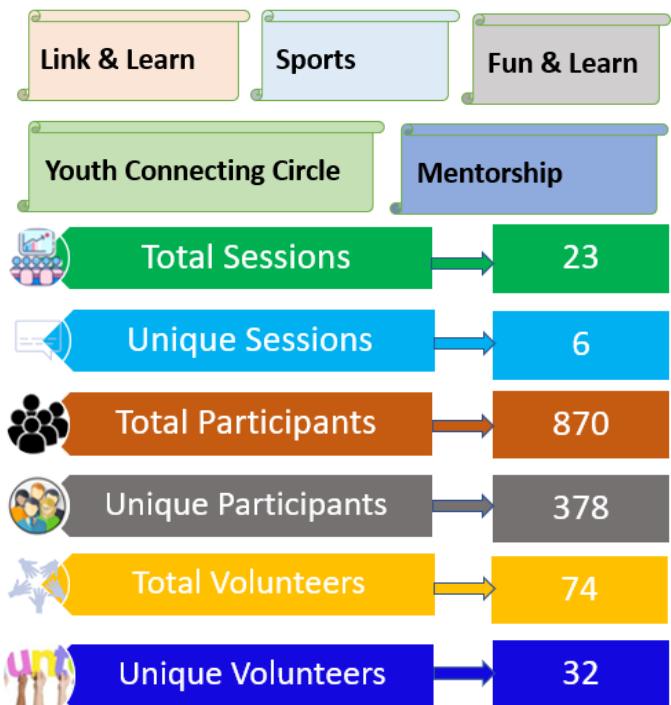
Feedback (Verbatim)

"This youth sport event created an intergenerational impact as all family members from a small kid to seniors met friends, engaged themselves and learned a lot. See me, my family and my kids especially got quality time during these two days. The kids and youth made many friends and enjoyed playing together, we met our community members and shared so many things after Covid. Thanks NCSC and Danfe Sports Club for re-energizing youths and others".

"Youth connecting circle initiative brought all community youths together, shared their experience and expertise, and planned activities for the future. Thanks, NCSC, for making this unique program for us".



Output 4: Youth Engagement Develop Social Asset



"This youth sports event is very important, and successful, I would say in connecting people after a long gap. It has intergenerational impact or link in every walk of life. An awesome event. Thank you to the organizer".



BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

NCSC envisions fostering intergenerational learning by means of promoting and preserving Nepalese culture and heritage. Considering NCSC's vision, NCSC projects, since mid 2021, have incorporated cultural component as a de-stressor, social inclusion, and intergenerational learning.

Community experts have been contacted and mobilized to run the events with the logistic support from NCSC to meet following objectives:

- Bring all generations together on a common platform, observe, share, and learn culture and heritage together
- Facilitate intergenerational learning
- Revitalize the cultural aspirations of the seniors and women and reduce social isolation.

Nepalese festivals (Dashain, Tihar, Teej, Mah pooja, Krishnasthami, Bhanu and Buddha Jayanti, Nepali New Year), expert interviews on culture, cultural showcasing outside the community etc. are made possible due to the funding support from the Government of Alberta, AGLC and The Government of Canada.

Feedback (Verbatim)

"Oh my god. Never imagined event. It was all exciting, joyous, refreshing. I met my friends and we danced together. I wish the event would continue the whole night. I loved this program. What to say! it was so! so!! so good. I don't have words to express the real pleasure I experienced here. I mingled myself into the joys. It is really entertaining for me and my friends. We enjoyed puja and felt inner peace, performed group dance while my mom and her friends were singing bhajans. What an event! It offered everything to all age groups over here. We felt happy and realized that such a program should be promoted. Me and my friends would tell our Canadian friends about this. I am sure they would be amazed".

"This is a milestone event for promoting the intergenerational knowledge transformation. This program will help to understand the importance of peace, love, compassion, non-violence, and

"Being here I feel that Nepali diaspora in Canada is expanding, and Nepali second-generation kids and adults are, as I see here, positively encouraged towards intergenerational learning. Leaders of NCSC and NLSC need to be praised for their initiative to organize such programs in the presence of all stakeholders. I thank you all and wish you success in your every initiation".



Output 5: Culture & Heritage Preserve, Promote & Transfer

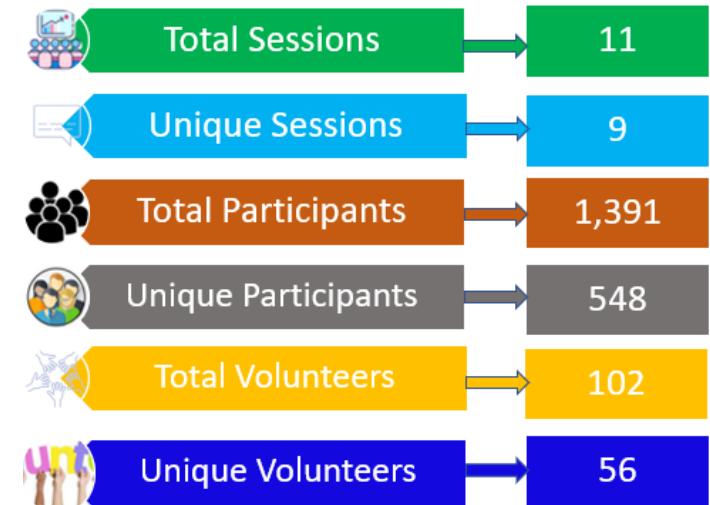
Nepali Festivals

New Year

Interviews

Intergenerational Learning

Cultural Showcasing





BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

While implementing project activities and reaching out to the vulnerable members to provide social supports, it has been realized that there are some people in other communities looking for our support. It has also been noticed that there are the immigrants that share Nepalese culture, language, and lifestyle, and are expecting to be part of Nepalese community.

After realizing this fact, the project team added “Outreach” component in the projects to engage Bhutan-origin seniors into several engagement and enabling activities together with Nepal-origin immigrants. NCSC opens its Resource Centre for any communities in Calgary to make use of the available resources for non-commercial activities. The objectives of the outreach activities are:

- Provide organizational expertise and resources to other communities for their prosperity
- Support vulnerable people in other communities
- Fan out NCSC’s activities beyond the border.

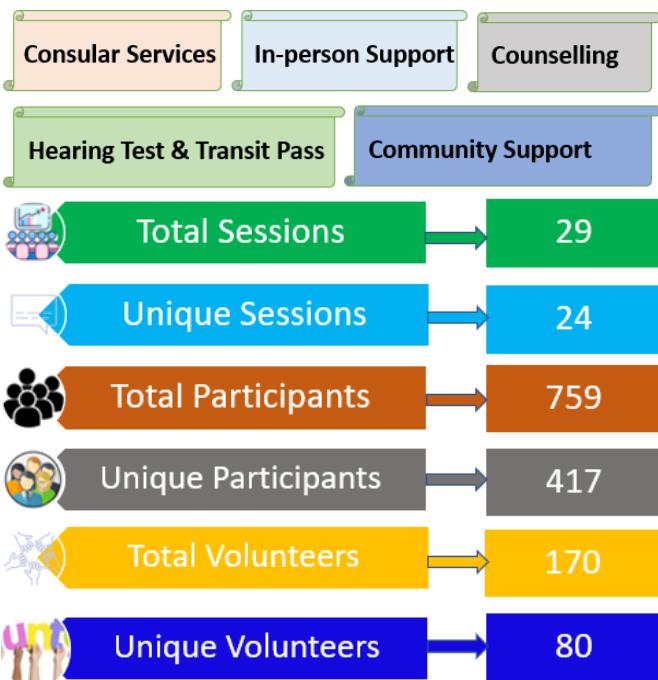
The major outreach program and activities includes making available consular service from Ottawa to Calgary for NCSC members, providing in-person support (groceries, medication, employment, customized counselling, gift hampers), arranging hearing test camp for seniors, and distributing low-income senior annual transit pass etc. These program and activities have become successful with the funding support from the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada. NCSC has extended its outreach services to the other non-Nepali immigrant communities such as Bhutan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, and Mexico originated immigrants’ communities in Calgary, along with single and low-income moms in Calgary.

Feedback (Verbatim)

“I am really overwhelmed by the way I am treated, asked, assessed, and valued. Despite living in Canada, I have no idea that hearing tests are free and hearing loss can be prevented. I was feeling hopeless when I lost hearing power and my family members started to ignore me. I was unable to drive and apply for a job with the fear that I wouldn’t be able to do it. Today, I came to know that it is part of aging, and it could be prevented, or hearing loss can be retained. In the case of using a hearing aid one can lead a very normal life like those who don’t have hearing loss. This test became a therapeutic for me. I am getting confidence that it is a condition only which can be changed. Many thanks to NCSC for making me aware and providing this opportunity”.



Output 6: Outreach Activities Beyond the Border



HELP NEPAL FIGHT COVID-19 CRISIS



H - HELP for shortage of Oxygen Cylinders.
E - EQUIP with Oxygen Concentrators.
L - LIVELIHOOD support for the Vulnerables
P - PPE supplies for medical professionals.

Fundraising coordinated by:
Nepalese Community Society of Calgary (NCSC)

Building Calgary's Anti-Racism Strategy



Have you experienced racism in Calgary?
Are there barriers keeping you from accessing City services?
We want to hear from YOU!

October 24, 2021
6:00PM-7:30PM



BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

It has been realized that many immigrants, particularly the recent immigrants, lack knowledge and awareness about Canadian culture, education system and workplace communication, among others. A large chunk of the community is deprived of information regarding the programs and services available for them in Calgary and the ways of navigating them. With changing socio-cultural context and fast paced technological advancements, there has been an increased incidents of scam and fraud, abuse and violation affecting all age groups but seniors and those with low level of education and linguistic barriers are the hardest hit to them.

Community people need awareness in the areas like workplace communication, family relation, mental and physical health, racism and discrimination, stress management, financial management, scam and fraud, elder abuse etc. to help make a decent life and decent living under changing circumstances, particularly meeting following objectives:

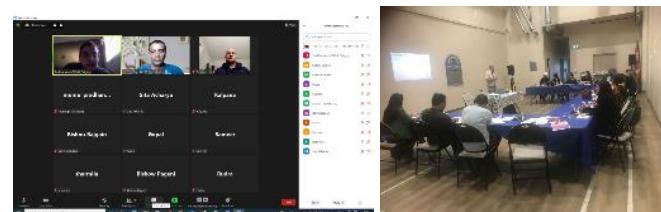
- Provide knowledge and awareness in diverse areas
- Empower and enable participants through education and awareness sessions
- Provide knowledge about available government and non-government resources and ways to navigate them whenever needed.

A series of awareness and education sessions for kids, youth, seniors, parents and grandparents, women etc. are made possible with the funding support from the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada.

Feedback (Verbatim)

"I was not aware about such a range of government services and city rebate programs. This awareness session is eye-opener to me. Thanks, NCSC, for organizing this kind of awareness sessions".

"Today, I know about importance of mental health, and I will follow up with the doctor/counsellor in regular basis".



"We knowingly or unknowingly are the victim of racism and discrimination. Today's session helped me understand how to spot out if this happens to me, reporting such incidents and available resources".

"I came to know about available resources in case I am being abused. I want to see this kind of awareness session frequently by NCSC team".



BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In the past one year of project implementation, it has been realized that the activities focused to specific age group or gender failed to achieve the degree of buy-in it was expected. The fundamental reason behind this failure was to incorporate activities into project proposal without enough consultation with the stakeholders but in accordance with expert observations. As a result, some activities suffered from low participation. NCSC project revisited such activities together with the stakeholders and figured out the gap.

Realizing this gap, NCSC prepared a project that exclusively focused on scoping issues of women, seniors, and youth, and prioritizing the issues and activities together with the stakeholders to meet following objectives:

- Identify key issues/gaps following participatory approach
- Prioritize the issues and activities together with the stakeholders and devise strategy to fill the gaps
- Build leadership capacity of seniors in terms of identifying gaps and prioritization.

Saturday Scoping Sessions with Seniors (4S), Tuesday Tea Sessions with Seniors (2T2S), several round of prioritization and fun activities to rank the issues and action items are some of the exemplary activities that are made possible with the funding support from the City of Calgary and the Government of Canada.

Feedback (Verbatim)

"Awesome approach. NCSC is following a pragmatic approach by working with the vulnerable groups, scoping the gaps, and making strategies to narrow the gaps down".

"The term "Prioritization" itself is new to me. I learned how to prioritize activities and NCSC's plan going forward. Thanks for inviting me in this important session".

Output 8: Scoping & Prioritization Towards Bottom-up Approach



Top 10 issues/gaps and activities identified and prioritized by seniors

Motivation to attend seniors' activities	Socio-cultural events
Lack of seniors' database	Support to seniors in need
Mental and physical health issues	Seniors database
Intergenerational gap	Awareness sessions
Lack of cross-cultural awareness	Cross-cultural tours
Mobility problems	Hearing test campaign
Documentation problem	Indoor activities during winter
Lack of awareness on available resources	Meet and greet
Childminding	Celebration of special days
Linguistic issue	Backyard gardening

"I personally feel happy that actual beneficiaries have been consulted to prepare action plan. Thanks NCSC team to make use of innovative approach".

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Many immigrants, despite having higher level of education and qualification for the workplace, they lack skills required for Canadian workplace. Many seniors, for instance, lack digital literacy. COVID-19 made digital literacy a very essential part of our daily life to get connected with their peers, to share experiences and to access services. However, some community members hesitate to attend the skill development courses provided by native English speakers simply because of linguistic barrier. Many ethnic communities struggle in finding resources to run important activities for their members even though funding supports from different levels of government is there.

NCSC, with a mission to fan out its activities beyond the boarder and develop the potential of its members, started running skill development sessions for ethnic communities, its members and specific group of people like seniors to increase social and professional connections and to develop competency in navigating resources, particularly to meet following objectives:

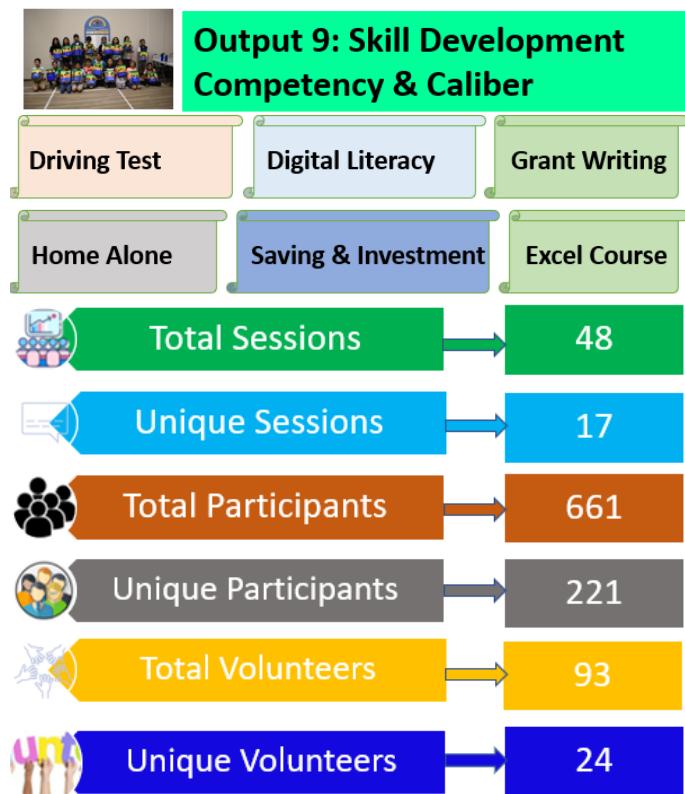
- Enhance and revitalize the skills of the immigrants
- Make ethnic community competent in terms of exploring resources for their sustainability.

To achieve these objectives NCSC offered skill enhancement sessions, such as driving test preparation, basic excel, digital literacy, Home Alone certification, arts, and crafts, saving and investment etc. with the funding support from the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada.

Feedback (Verbatim)

"Sometimes we ignore the type of skill program we needed in the job thinking that employers will train us at the workplace. Structured excel sessions enhanced my skills and I am more competent for the job. Excel is part and parcel these days and NCSC should encourage all age groups to take part in this kind of modular courses".

Output 9: Skill Development Competency & Caliber



"I have linguistic problem and I couldn't attend written test due to this. Making the sessions available at NCSC and by my own language, I felt that I am acknowledged".



BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Volunteers are the backbone of any organizations as they offer their time and expertise to the communities, nation, and organizations free of cost. To promote volunteering culture among community members, NCSC mobilizes its volunteers every year to run different activities and to expand its social capital. The COVID-19 has further justified that volunteers are the strong social capital because during COVID-19 many organizations reached their support and activities to the impacted families by mobilizing volunteers.

Realizing this, NCSC projects have included volunteerism as one of its components with the aim of developing the culture of volunteering among its members. For example, formation of a Project Steering Committee (PSC) and subsequently developing members' leadership and managerial capacity are rooted on the objectives of developing volunteerism among seniors. Community members like kids, youth, women, and seniors have contributed to running various project activities. NCSC projects are the outcome of the thousands of hours of volunteer contribution from community expert. Community members are highly encouraged and motivated to be part of the projects to:

- Develop culture of volunteerism
- Make strong social capital for the community.

Volunteering in AGLC, Blood Donation, Canadian Food Bank etc. are some of the volunteering work NCSC have been offering outside its boarder.

Feedback (Verbatim)

"Great program of its types. I suppose we need to pass this culture of volunteerism to our youths and kids as well and NCSC should further take special initiative to involve adults and students from high schools and university".

"I love volunteering to uplift the status of the organization. This is how you could contribute what you know and make everyone in the community grow".

Output 10: Volunteerism Strong Social Capital



"I feel valued being here as a volunteer. While receiving my certificate I realized that I should take responsibility of engaging our youths and kids towards sports so that they can be refrained from screen time".

"Despite the fact that I was not a member of community, I was contacted and requested for help to grow the community through my expertise. I invested tonnes of hours, and you can see the fruits now".



OUR FUNDERS



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada

Our Projects

Support Services to Socially Isolated and Vulnerable Nepalese in Calgary, Funded by Alberta Health (Mid 2021 – Mid 2023)

Social Inclusion Supports for Immigrant Elders (SISIE), Funded by New Horizon for Seniors Program, Government of Canada (Mid 2022 – Mid 2023)

Rise and Shine (RS): Preparing Immigrant Elders to address Social Isolation and Vulnerability, Funded by Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), The City of Calgary, Mid – end 2022

Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program, Funded by Public Safety Canada, 2023

Community Action Planning Session, Funded by Ward Event Fund, The City of Calgary, 2022

Breaking the Past: Kids' Engagement through Badminton in Winter, Funded by Calgary Foundation, 2022

Women's Engagement through Physical Fitness Sessions, Funded by Action Dignity, 2022

Alberta Jobs Now Program, Funded by the Government of Alberta, 2022

For more information, please visit: <https://www.ncsccalgary.com/>