

VISION

A community free of barriers
where immigrant and migrant
women and girls flourish.



IMWAH

Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax

IMMIGRANT MIGRANT WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATION OF HALIFAX

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Land Acknowledgement

IMWAH acknowledges that our work takes place in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We are grateful to the L'nu for their knowledge and for their deep connection with this land that continues to guide IMWAH in the next phase of our growth.

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Message from IMWAH

2020-2021 has been a year of unforeseen challenges and promising changes for IMWAH.

COVID-19 presented an unprecedented opportunity for the IMWAH Board of Directors to navigate new programming models while responding to increasing service demands from immigrant migrant women and their families. The pandemic has exacerbated the needs of women and girls, especially those facing gender based violence, economic insecurity, precarious immigration status and those supporting dependents with exceptionalities. As a result, the Board has had to rapidly adapt our programs to create culturally and trauma-informed services and support. Transitioning to a combination of virtual programming and mobile in-person support has allowed the Board to expand IMWAH's digital footprint to bring more women together across Nova Scotia and to support women and their families where they feel safe and comfortable.

2020-2021 has been the most active and dynamic year since IMWAH's founding. The creation of IMWAH's first Strategic Plan marks a significant milestone in our Board's Capacity Building journey. The Strategic Plan will guide IMWAH towards gaining the stability and long-term viability necessary to grow into a strong community-based organization that continues to advance gender equality and equity for immigrant, migrant women and girls in the province. To this end, the Board extends its sincere gratitude to the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) for the Capacity Building Fund.

The Immigrant Migrant Women's Support Group Project marks another milestone in IMWAH's programming history. This project was designed to respond to the increasing financial, food, housing insecurity, and the wellness needs of immigrant migrant women and their families during the pandemic. Funded by Employment and Social Development Canada and the Canadian Red Cross, this six-month project provided direct aid, virtual and in-person resource navigation support to over 25 women and their families facing Gender Based Violence and those raising children with exceptionalities.

As Nova Scotia embarks on post-pandemic recovery and soon on welcoming new immigrants and Afghan refugees, we begin a new fiscal year by acknowledging that the needs of immigrant and migrant women and girls will continue to rise and evolve.

Against this backdrop, IMWAH's Board reaffirms its commitment in building a strong and resilient organization that advocates for the collective voices and responds to the unique needs of immigrant migrant women and girls in Nova Scotia.

We look forward to connecting with more of you in 2022, virtually and in-person!

IMWAH Board of Directors and Staff



From left to right: Emma Lang, Jenny Yujia Shi, Madhurima Asthana, Joanna Strzelec-Stewart, Nancy Zhang, Maria Jose Yax-Fraser, Nyenyo Kwasitsu, Rana Zaman, Nadira Al-Nasleh.

ABOUT US

The Immigrant Migrant Women's Association of Halifax (IMWAH) is a culturally diverse and feminist-based non-profit organization in Nova Scotia. It is committed to the holistic integration of immigrant, migrant women and girls in the province.

MISSION

IMWAH celebrates the contributions and responds to the challenges and unique needs of immigrant and migrant women and girls.

VISION

A Community free of barriers where immigrant and migrant women and girls flourish and belong

APPROACH

IMWAH's approach to advance gender equality in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada is informed by feminist, intersectional and anti-racist values. IMWAH seeks to operate from a holistic and integrated empowerment model to promote women and girl's leadership. It seeks to engage in achieving gender equality as a sustainable development goal.

To fulfill our mission, IMWAH Board of Directors actively works with a wide range of government and community-based organizations, coalitions and research networks to promote women's equality and to facilitate positive policy and social change.

Board of Directors 2020-2021



Joanna Strzelec-Stewart
Acting Chair



Nadira Al-Nasleh
Former Chair



Emma Lang
Secretary



Nenyo Kwasitsu
Treasurer



Maria Jose Yax-Fraser



Nancy Zhang



Madhurima Asthana



Rana Zaman

Committees

IMWAH's initiatives are driven by the following Project Committees:

Capacity Building Committee oversees the planning, delivery and evaluation of the Capacity Building Project with the support of a part-time project coordinator. This project is funded by the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) and takes place from 2019-2023. To date, this project has completed Capacity areas in Board Development and Strategic Planning, with Fund Development and Advocacy as the focus of the upcoming fiscal years.

Committee Members: Maria Jose Yax-Fraser, Joanna Strzelec-Stewart, Madhurima Asthana, and Nancy Zhang

Immigrant Migrant Women's Support Group Committee oversees the planning, delivery and evaluation of the Immigrant Migrant Women's Support Group with the support of a part time project coordinator. This project was funded by the Canadian Red Cross and Employment and Social Development Canada. It was delivered from January - June 2021. This project provided financial support and resource navigation during COVID-19 to immigrant and migrant women experiencing gender based violence, and women raising children with exceptionalities and learning challenges.

Committee Members: Maria Jose Yax-Fraser, Nenyo Kwasitsu, Shweta Pai and Nancy Zhang

Art and Storytelling Committee oversees the planning, delivery and evaluation of the Art and storytelling project which has developed into Four phases. The first two phases were funded by the Nova Scotia Office of Immigrant and Population Growth and the 4Cs Foundations. The first two phases provided immigrant migrant women and their children a space to explore art activities and storytelling. Phase 3 and 4 of the project are funded by the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage and made possible through a collaboration with the Mount Saint Vincent University Alexa McDonough Institute for Women and Gender Justice and Understory Magazine. These phases offer a series of online creative writing sessions with 12 Nova Scotia based immigrant migrant women to explore the topic of personal name.

Committee Members: Maria Jose Yax-Fraser, Nenyo Kwasitsu, and Emma Lang

Capacity Building Highlight

2021 marks the second year since IMWAH began the Capacity Building project funded by the Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE). The objective of this funding is to increase the capacity of women's organizations and organizations with initiatives that advance gender equality and women's movement in Canada. With the goal of enabling IMWAH to achieve long term viability, the project is carried out through four capacity building activities: Board Development, Strategic Planning, Advocacy and Fund Development. We are pleased to report the following capacity building highlights in fiscal 2020-2021:

Board Governance

2020-2021 was our opportunity to put IMWAH's Board Development training into practice. Guided by our Board Governance Manual, the Board follows its job description, policies and protocols, and approves terms of references that guide the work of committees. This year, significant effort was made to follow meeting protocols to ensure our Board and Committee meetings stay focused on task and on schedule. The Board incorporated the approval of its monthly Financial summary and income statement at board meetings and ensured financial records and filing are up to date.

This is the first year IMWAH developed its internal digital filing system. We are at the final stage of bylaw revision and updating organization objectives to submit IMWAH's application for Charitable Status. With increasing programming initiatives, we have begun to develop a comprehensive HR manual to ensure hiring, management and evaluation of staff follow best practices. We are beyond excited to close this year with a record number of 20 applications to join our Board. A first in IMWAH's history!

Strategic Planning

The Board carried out IMWAH's first Strategic Planning process between September 2020 - March 2021. This process consisted of a three-phase community Needs Assessment with immigrant and migrant women in Nova Scotia. The purpose was to gather community needs and a series of Strategic sessions participated by the Board to define IMWAH's vision and strategic objectives. We are pleased to conclude this process with a complete three-Year Strategic Plan and a step by step Action Plan that will guide our vision in securing long term funding, a hiring a 'dream team' of paid staff, gaining a permanent digital and physical space, delivering diverse and responsive programming, and providing timely advocacy on behalf of our community. The Board has devised the following strategic directions to achieve this vision:



- Strengthening IMWAH'S Governance Framework
- Diversifying IMWAH Funding Streams
- Building IMWAH'S Presence in the Community
- Meaningfully Engaging and Recruiting Members and Volunteers

Intersectional Feminist Advocacy Framework

Our current Capacity Building area of concentration is to develop the Board's understanding of intersectionality and Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+). In April 2021, IMWAH held a GBA+ training designed by the Department for Women and Gender Equality. During this session, the Board and volunteers were introduced to the concept of GBA+, discussed its application, gaps and areas of improvement in IMWAH's current programs and services. This knowledge will shape IMWAH's program and service delivery, as well as our capacity to bring the collective voices of immigrant migrant women to the policy making process.

Looking Ahead

We will begin 2022 with training in policy analysis, and advocacy skills in lobbying, campaigning, research, partnership-building. This training will assist us in to devise IMWAH's Feminist Intersectional Advocacy Framework. We look forward to sharing these results with the community following the completion of this training.

In 2022-23, we will continue to develop IMWAH's Intersectional Feminist Advocacy Framework and embark on the fourth and final phase of the capacity building area: Fund Development. We look forward to continuing this journey with a new Board and a growing community of immigrant migrant women and girls in Nova Scotia. Thank-you to WAGE for your recognition and continued support!



Programming Highlight

On this year of a pandemic, 2020-2021, IMWAH's efforts to celebrate and respond to the unique gender needs of immigrant and migrant women and their families was made visible in the delivery of two programs: **Immigrant Migrant Women Support Groups** and **Art and Storytelling Project**.

The **Immigrant Migrant Women Support Groups** was a milestone project in IMWAH's history. Spanning over six-month, this project provided financial and resource navigation support to immigrant migrant women and their families during the Pandemic. Participating women included those experiencing gender based violence, and parents raising children with exceptionalities.

COVID-19 presented challenges and also an opportunity for IMWAH to discover new ways of supporting women and girls including virtual programming and active social media engagement. This has allowed IMWAH to expand the reach of our programs across Nova Scotia. The integration of mobile in-person support where applicable have enabled us to meet the needs of women in the comfort of their chosen space.

For instance, resource navigation and educational workshops were offered online. Workshop focused on improving the wellbeing of women. The topics of these workshops ranged from Cross-cultural parenting (Nova Scotia Parent Cross-Cultural Organization), group and individual art therapies (Nova Scotian Art Therapy, Evie Dunville Art Therapy), Menstrual Care workshop (Venus Envy) and a three-part Inclusive Education Forum for mothers and guardians raising children with special needs. This project also provided financial support including grocery gift cards, hygienic products, childcare products, winter and spring clothing, and online purchases of home and household items.



and opportunity for women to connect with service providers and peers in the comfort of their home.

The Immigrant Migrant Women Support Group project was featured on [Global News](#), marking IMWAH's contribution in a major media outlet. This project would not have been made possible without the

generous support of our funder the Canadian Red Cross and Employment and Social Development Canada.

The **Art and Storytelling Project** began in January 2020 as a 12-week project where immigrant, migrant mothers and children explored guided art activities and storytelling circles. Due to the spread of COVID-19 the project was put on hold for five months. The project resumed in October 2021 where the remainder of the sessions were delivered at Wonder'neath Art Society in the Halifax North end.



This project provided not only a space for art, but, more importantly, a safe and relaxing social environment for women to connect with one another before and during the pandemic. In conjunction with the art activities, a guided storytelling circle held space for discussions on identity, culture and immigration journeys. *Art and Storytelling* is IMWAH's third community art program creating space for immigrant migrant women and their children to feel recognized, connected and inspired through creativity. We

would like to acknowledge the 4Cs Foundation for their generous support throughout these challenging times.

Inspired by the storytelling circles during the early phases, IMWAH was pleased to launch a third phase this Fall of 2021 to explore the theme of Personal Names through narrative and creative writing.

Phase 3 of the project is a collaboration between IMWAH and the Mount Saint Vincent University Alexa McDonough Institute for Women and Gender Justice and Understory Magazine. This phase, which takes place from September - December 2021, offers a ten week online creative writing program on the topic of Personal Names, and provides an opportunity for participants to engage in creative writing with the opportunity to publish selected works on this theme. These workshops will provide a space for 12 self-identified immigrant and migrant women to explore the topic of personal or given names through creative writing.



The fourth phase will involve the organization of an International Women's Day event to launch the publication of the creative writing works, and participation and delivery of a creative writing session during the MSVU International Girls Conference in March 2022 or 2023.

IMWAH would like to thank Dr. Rohini Bannerjee for her volunteer contributions during the second and the present third phase of this project. IMWAH would like to thank the Alexa

McDonough Institute for Women, Gender and Social Justice and Understory Magazine for this partnership.

Advocacy Highlight

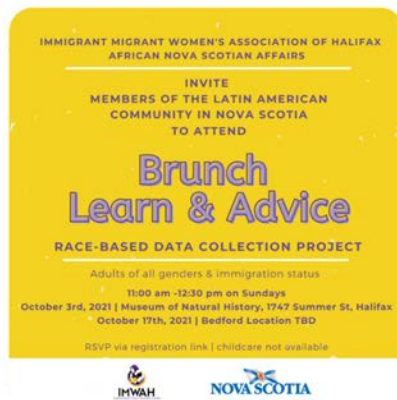
We are pleased to report IMWAH's advocacy highlights in the following areas:

1. Strategic Plan Needs Assessment

From September 2020 - March 2021, IMWAH conducted a three-phase Community Needs Assessment to inform our Strategic Planning process. Through a combination of online survey, virtual focus groups and one-on-one virtual interviews, IMWAH had the privilege to hear from over 30 women on the issues and needs that have prevented them from full and equal access to services and support. We are working through an internal data analysis to launch a report to present our findings and recommendations to community members, service providers and government agencies.



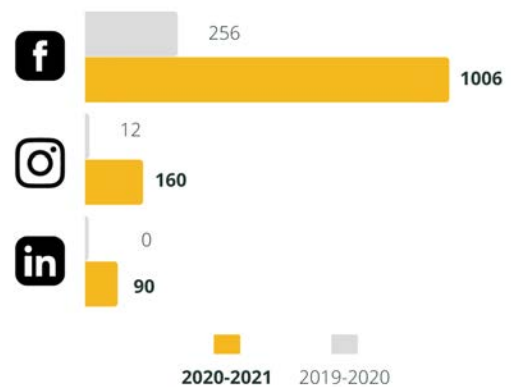
2. Race-Based Data Collection Project Participation



In April 2021, the Nova Scotia government established a community-based working group known as The Primary Reference Working Group to support the collection of race-based data in the Nova Scotia health system. IMWAH was among one of the six organizations serving racialized populations in Nova Scotia to be identified as members of the Primary Reference Working Group. Each member organization is engaged in leading community consultations in late 2021 and developing a community-based approach to support provincial data collection. IMWAH was identified as the representative to engage the Latin American community in Nova Scotia ([Link](#)) with three community consultations scheduled for the fall of 2021.

3. Digital Presence

Since April 2020, as part of our capacity building project we are actively increasing IMWAH's social media presence in the community. This has led to a complete redesign of our website in May 2020, and the creation of an internal social media content calendar, registration of an Instagram account, and a linkedin account. Our new website has been a key platform to promote new projects, highlight past programming and archiving resources developed from our programs. In the coming year, we look forward to expanding our social media footprint and developing our website into a dynamic resource hub.



4. Digital and online programming

Digital tools have dramatically increased IMWAH's capacity to connect with women and respond to their needs. Virtual outreach has become an integral channel through which IMWAH builds partnerships, shares resources and participates in discussions with service providers and government agencies.

5. Sector Engagement

IMWAH's Directors and staff were invited to meet, attend and present at a number of sector engagement opportunities. These opportunities allowed IMWAH to engage and learn from women serving organizations and service providers on the municipal, provincial and national level to bring the voices and concerns of immigrant migrant women to the table. A selection of sector engagement opportunities include:

- Immigrant Migrant Women's Support Group
As part of staff and volunteer training the IMWSG committee Chair organized a series of dialogues with organizations serving women experiencing gender based violence:
 - Dialogue with Alice House, Be the Peace Institute and other organizations working on Gender-Based Violence prevention ([link](#))
 - Meeting with Not Without Us (Easter Seal and Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunities)
- Local and National Network
 - Presentation to Executive Directors from Women's Centre Connect
 - Meeting with OCASI (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants) for the Racialized, Refugee, and Im/migrant Women's National Alliance Project
 - Gender-Based Violence Research participation
 - First Voice/Knowledge Holder Focus Group - Domestic Violence Training Series held by the Nova Scotia Council on the Status of Women and the Department of Justice.
- National Newcomers Navigation Network Membership
Internship with the National Newcomers Navigation Network ([link](#))
- Invited presentations and network opportunities
Presentation at Women's Advisory Committee ([link](#))

Financials

Financial Standing As of March 31, 2021

Fiscal year	2020-2021	2019-2020
Revenue	\$122,662.39	\$73,700
Expenses	\$80,759.61	\$59,565.78
Salaries and payroll	\$39,279.69	\$21,976.41
Professional fees	\$7,258.50	\$19,524.89
Program delivery	\$28,265.01	\$14,535.48
Overhead and operation	\$5,956.41	\$ 3,529.63
Revenue over Expenses	\$ 41,902.78	\$14,134

Thank You

To our funders, partners and supporters who contributed to our projects and initiatives this year.

Department for Women and Gender Equality (WAGE)
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
Nova Scotia Department of Community, Culture and Heritage
4Cs Foundation
Canadian Red Cross
Employment and Social Development Canada

YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth - Centre for Immigrant Programs
Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
HRCE Parent Navigators
NS Early Childhood Development Intervention Services
YMCA School Support Workers -
Halifax Association for Community Living

Shweta Pai
Rohini Bannerjee
Monica Romero
Paroo Mackinnon
Sarvat Nawaz



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