



THE INDIA CANADA ASSOCIATION
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INSTITUTION OF EXCELLENCE

REPORT

SEMINAR / WORKSHOP
for
INCA AFFILIATED PRESIDENTS

OCTOBER 3, 2009

PREFACE

One of the priorities for the India Canada Association of Calgary has been to build greater rapport and understanding amongst all the Affiliated Organizations to foster a sense of unity in diversity. Since INCA has the option to be secular and non-political it is well positioned to garner support from the Affiliated Organizations towards this cause to benefit all Indo-Canadians. This concept of unity has been perceived as an important step for the community to be exemplary in Calgary.

The Seminar / Workshop conducted for the Affiliated Presidents on October 3, 2009 was an attempt to create an avenue for all the presidents to express their views and exchange ideas to further improve a sense of professionalism in organizing community related activities and to build greater cohesion among the Affiliated Organizations. Thus the topic chosen was absolutely relevant.

It was gratifying to note that all the INCA Affiliated Presidents were in unison towards making the activity productive and successful. They were anxious to share with each other the experiences they have had in helping their respective organizations to function with excellence. They have appreciated the fact that the undertone for success in community activities is professionalism be at the committee level or at the activity level.

All those who participated in the Seminar / Workshop had the opportunity to arm themselves at the end of the session, with new ideas and directions to further improve the functionalities of their respective organizations.

The India Canada Association of Calgary has taken great pride not only for having conducted the activity with a touch of excellence but also for having received exceptional praise and congratulatory messages. This augurs well for INCA to pursue further with related activities for the benefit of the Affiliated Organizations along with the recommendations enumerated in the last section of the report.

May I now conclude by applauding the speakers on the panel Ms Shari Hanson, Dr. Kal Mahadev, Mr. Surinder Rehill and Ms Uma Thakor along with all the Affiliated Presidents / Representatives for their productive deliverances and encouragement to create a better perception for community service. The contributions made by the observers have also been invaluable.

Senan Mathummal
President
India Canada Association
Calgary

THE INCA AFFILIATED PRESIDENTS SEMINAR / WORKSHOP

Topic: Professionalism in Volunteer Services

Thematic Emphasis: Towards Excellence

Summary of Activity

- a. Chairperson / Moderator Mr. Senan Mathummal
- b. Secretary Ms. Madhura Keshavan
- c. Speakers on the Panel Ms. Shari Hanson
Dr. Kal Mahadev
Mr. Surinder Rehill
Ms. Uma Thakor
- d. Dr. Indernath Kher conducted the summing up on the presentations made by the speakers on the Panel.
- e. The following INCA Affiliated Presidents / Representatives presented their papers related to the topic.
- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Mr. Channi toor | Mehak Punjab Dee |
| 2. Mr. Has Mukh Vara | Gujarati Mandal of Calgary |
| 3. Mr. Joseph John | Malayalee Cultural Association of Calgary |
| 4. Ms. Lorna Rutrigues | Canadian Overseas Seniors' Christian Assn. |
| 5. Ms. Nirupama Nagarajappa | South Indian Cultural Assn of Calgary |
| 6. Mr. Pratap Varshney | The Hindu Society of Calgary |
| 7. Mr. Rahul Kohli | School of E. Indian Languages & Performing Arts |
| 8. Ms. Rajeshree Desai | Calgary Association of Marathi Bhashik |
| 9. Dr. R. Chatterjee | Vedanta Society of Calgary |
| 10. Mr. Rupak Datta | Bengali Association of Calgary |
| 11. Mr. Bipin Patel | Radha Madhav Cultural Association |
| 12. Mr. Shekhar Parmar | Calgary Indo-Canadian Centre Association |
| 13. Mr. Bharat Dixit | Raga Mala Music Society of Calgary |
- Power point facility was made available by Mr. Chandrakant Lad.
- f. Observers were welcomed to make suggestions or recommendations with reference to the presentations made by the speakers.
- g. Conclusion: It was well conducted seminar/workshop creating scope for improved interaction amongst the Affiliated Organizations. However more time was needed for the Affiliated Presidents to share their experiences with each other by way of productive discussions.

Seminar / Workshop for INCA Affiliated Presidents

October 3,2009

Objectives:

The proposed seminar / workshop for the INCA Affiliated Presidents will be in keeping with the intent of INCA as expressed during the Council Meeting to further improve the functional relationship of INCA with the Affiliated Organizations and to build professionalism in volunteer services.

The seminar / workshop will be an opportunity to foster greater rapport amongst all the Affiliated Organizations and become equal partners along with INCA to create greater appreciation of the united East Indian Community in Calgary with the advantage of INCA being non-religious and non-political.

Procedure:

- a. The topic for the seminar / workshop will be as follows:
Professionalism in volunteer services.
- b. Date of the Seminar: October 3, 2009
- c. Venue: Indo-Canadian Centre, 826 Edmonton Trail N.E. Calgary
- d. Time: 10.00 a.m to 2.00 p.m.

Format of the Activity

- Section A Four invited guest speakers with relevant expertise and background will present their papers. One of them will be from the Alberta Culture and Community Spirit Department.
- Section B INCA affiliated presidents will present their papers on topics that are related to the subject of the seminar, enumerating the various difficulties that impede efficiency and productivity of their respective organizations.
- Section C The floor will be open for the plenary session (Q & A) under the purview of the chairperson / moderator. Participants will have the opportunity to seek clarifications on certain areas of the presentations made by the guest speakers as well as the affiliated presidents. This will also enable the observers to contribute suggestions to remedy certain situations.
- Section D Summing Up. The chairperson / moderator will sum up the whole seminar / workshop activity with a focus on the contributions made towards the main topic “professionalism in volunteer services”. A report on the seminar / workshop will be made available to the INCA Affiliated Presidents in due course as reference material.

Moderator's Notes

1. Welcome remarks - ref. to the objectives in the program format.
Preamble Brief discussion of the topic and its implications in community Service.: the core values honesty and integrity, altruism, respect, responsibility And accountability, compassion and empathy, dedication and self-improvement
2. The conduct of the Seminar / Workshop
 - a. contributions by the speakers and observers should be always relevant to the topic of the seminar / workshop.
 - b. we shall maintain a cordial, proactive atmosphere all through the session
 - c. questions or items for clarification should be addressed to the chairperson who could then direct them to the relevant speakers.
 - d. unnecessary deviations, digressions or personal anecdotes should be avoided.
 - e. all questions, suggestions or comments should be brief and to the point.
 - f. each speaker should have a proactive objective and subscribe positive views to support the main topic.
 - g. if any of the presidents has problems in his/her particular organization it is advisable to be discreet whilst requesting for solutions so that the credibility of that particular organization is not jeopardized.
 - h. only one speaker will speak at a given time
 - i. when one participant is engaged in speaking others should not have private or group discussions whatsoever.
 - j. if any one of the participants is speaking no other person should get up or leave the premises unless it is an emergency.
 - k. we shall always subscribe to the dictums “courtesy begets courtesy” and “respect begets respect.”
 - l. when any of the observers need to speak he or she will kindly raise the hand and wait for the turn.
 - m. at the end of the session speakers will kindly hand over the texts and /or notes in order to facilitate completing the report that would be ready for distribution in due course.

PANEL SPEAKERS

Ms. Shari Henson
Dr. Kal Mahadev
Mr. Surinder Rehill
Ms. Uma Thakor

Panel Speaker – Ms. Shari Henson

Please view her Power point presentation attached in email.

Subject:- From “Bored” to BOARD Member

Panel Speaker – Dr. Kal Mahadev

Please view his Power point presentation attached in email.

Subject:- Professionalism in Volunteer Services

Panel Speaker – Mr. Surinder Rehill

Please view his Power point presentation attached in email.

Subject:- What is a Team ?

Panel Speaker- Uma Thakor

Each organization has a clear mandate and the members have expectations. Some of the organization have existed for many years and started on a small scale. It was started off based on the need in the community. Based on the growth, committees have moved forward and changes occur. Evolution within the organization is an asset, however the purpose and foundation need to be kept in mind and changes made based on the benefits to all.

Treat every event, project, as a business. In my field I deal with several agencies that started off as a “ Mom and Pop” business but the organization has grown and there have been many changes. The successful agencies have adapted to the expectations of the government, the Boards and agencies.

The agencies that struggle have difficulty in making changes based on what is happening in the community, the government and grants etc.

The organizations are a huge asset for the new comers.

We can be struck in traditions that were in place when we came here and new people come with new ideas.

Our youth need to be very much a part of the organizations. Often we see them grow into professionals, who are great contributors to the society but we sometimes miss taking advantage of their skills and assets and have them be a part of our team. Comments and feedback from the youth has been that they are seen as to be on committee and not to be taken seriously.

Guidance is required for any organization and history has proven that it is relatively easy to for an organization can become dysfunctional and fragmented.

It is clear to have all volunteers to be aware of the mandate, the expectations, the commitment and the outcomes. By making this process automatic, we create an atmosphere of professionalism. This is like a business and similar rules need to apply.

The entire community is a fabric of the society and it is important to ensure we don't have “holes” in the fabric because it has a huge impact on how we are seen in the mainstream. If we have a strong relationship within our groups we can build momentum in making changes effectively and clearly.

Partnership, Identify the skill set, Mentorship, Delegate- no interference, accountability.

The India Canada Association of Calgary

Notes from Seminar/Workshop for INCA Affiliated Presidents (October 3rd, 2009)

Concluding questions/comments:

- This was a 1st step for having a united East Indian community in Calgary
- Youth = a common issue for all INCA affiliated organizations
 - Youth committee members need to be heard/embraced
 - There is value in a plan – & youth have the computer skills to help map out that plan!
 - cultural differences / generation gap
- Common pool of volunteers?
- Build an understanding of the commitment of a volunteer (make it a commitment)
- Insular Groups can be an issue (need to communicate, work in partnership, put it into practice)
- Raising concerns is good for the betterment of an organization (addressing issues as a team)
- 1 volunteer appreciation night for all... a collective volunteer appreciation event!
- Quarterly workshops/meetings for Presidents
- Continuity (update bylaws for alternating election years for key positions)
- Policies are more flexible – policies are “owned” (developed and maintained) by the Board while Bylaws are “owned” by the membership and therefore less flexible and require membership vote to make changes. Governing aspects of your organization that require flexibility should not be in Bylaws... but don't take things out of your bylaws that are required to be there by the Societies Act. Some things can be more effective as policy. – This includes Committees.... Committee structure should be flexible – so be careful about standing committees in bylaws (though sometimes standing committees are required of a parent organization –i.e. a national or international organization your association may be tied to).
- Volunteerism as a Profession? (Training is available through places like Grant MacEwan University.... Example of program: Executive Leadership in the Non-profit Sector)
- How do you get volunteers and get them to commit? – empower them. Have a mechanism to motivate them, involve them in the planning, follow-up with them individually
- Idea for a new Association: Hidden Gems Film Festival – to show independent movies (not Bollywood) from all regions of India – to inspire feelings, thoughts, connection, uplift and catalyze change in the world! For more info: Niru Bhatia (403 457-3036) or niru@shaw.ca

Notes from INCA Affiliated Presidents... Our Priorities/Challenges:

Radha Madhav Cultural Association - Mr. Bipin Patel

- Mission = God consciousness
- Motivating younger volunteers is critically important
- ✓ Volunteer appreciation

Gujarati Mandal of Calgary – Mr. Hashmuk Vara

- Committees & communication (organizational structure & flow of information)
- Accurate record keeping
- Education/orientation
- Recognition
- Continuity of the organization
- Volunteer recruitment (especially youth)

Mehak Punjab Dee – Mr. Channi toor

- Developing our youth
- Performing Art – building confidence & respect
- Involving youth to deter from gangs and other risk behaviours
- Parenting – team activity – opportunity to be together

Malayalee Cultural Association of Calgary – Mr. Joseph John

- Leadership – developing leadership skills (determination and perseverance)

Canadian Overseas Seniors' Christian Association of Calgary – Ms. Lorna Rutrigues

- We're all retired & tired (own health comes first)
- Majority of members are 70+ and many unable to drive
- Loud events aren't inviting to elderly (turn the music down!?!?!)

South Indian Cultural Association of Calgary – Ms. Nirupama N.

- Matching volunteer expectations with opportunities
- Communicating (sharing) expectations
- Being clear on expectations of volunteer positions (being clear of what will be required)
- Will result in a positive volunteer experience!

The Hindu Society of Calgary – Mr. Pratap Varshney

- Volunteering in a social and religious environment
- Professional to deal with difficult situations – doing best even when doesn't feel like it.
- Setting an example (inner strength, sound judgement, know-how, business savvy, mature responsibility, problem-solving perseverance, ingenuity, class, acting with safety)
- Challenges – lack of training, politics, lack of punctuality, absence without notice, lack of accountability, lack of responsibility, lack of policies related to the volunteer
- Selection of volunteers is important

School of E. Indian Languages & Performing Arts – Mr. Rahul Kohli

- Chalta hai attitude a big no-no!
- Share ideas of how to be more professional
- INCA should host an annual planning to coordinate events/activities
- Hope!

Calgary Association of Marathi Bhashik – Ms. Rajeshree Desai

- Keep people together & attract to events
- Enough volunteers
- Younger generation engagement – youth are our power – actively involve them! – they make wonderful contributions!
- Values of social responsibility
- Shared effort/opportunity to nurture this (let's work together to nurture our youth engagement)

Vedanta Society of Calgary – Dr. R. Chatterjee

- Spiritual Society (a Board – not bored!)
- Communication
- Organization building
- Share view – important but difficult
- Responsibility & accountability (president/leadership)
- Changing needs – flexible (but bylaws not flexible)
- Lack of motivation to come out / support
- Less compassion and increasing criticizing

Bengali Association of Calgary – Mr. Rupak Datta

- Importance of matching interest of volunteers with good experience

Raga Mala Music Society of Calgary – Mr. Bharat Dixit

- 90/10 rule.... 10% of our people doing 90% of the work... volunteer burnout
- Looking for new ideas/revival!

CALGARY INDO-CANADIAN CENTRE ASSOCIATION - Mr. Shekhar Parmar

Any newly elected committee should have the strength to change out dated practices
In order to introduce more effective methods in order to become productive

Shari Hanson

Alberta community Development

Presentation from Affiliated Presidents/Representatives:

Mrs. Nirupama Nagarajappa - Southern India Cultural Association

Please view her Power point presentation attached in email.

Subject:- Matched expectations are a primary need in voluntary organization

Mr. Rahul Kohli – School of East Indian & Performing Arts

Please view his Power point presentation attached in email.

Subject:- Professionalism in Volunteer Services

Mr. Hasmukh Vara – Gujarati Mandal of Calgary

Please view his Power point presentation attached in email.

Subject:- Professionalism in Volunteer Services- People and Processes

CONCLUSION

The Seminar / Workshop conducted for the INCA Affiliated Presidents as the first time, will have to be assessed as relatively successful as it had provided a forum for the respective presidents to share their aspirations and difficulties in order to seek remedial actions. The notes of the seminar / workshop provided by Shari Hanson are indicative of this in a concise form which could become the basis for further interactive sessions to be conducted as regularly as possible. Some of the recommendations that have sprouted from the Seminar / Workshop have been as follows:

1. A one day working session with a lunch break and tea time would be conducive to better results. This would give time for the participants esp. the presidents to interact more effectively.
2. Sessions should be conducted at least on a quarterly basis. Presentations should have greater focus.
3. Affiliated Organizations should exert themselves to interact and conduct combined activities that pose common interests.
4. INCA should make a tabulation of all the activities conducted by the various Affiliated Organizations in order to minimize overlapping of events. This will result in greater community participation.
5. As per appeal to all the Affiliated Presidents by Madhura Keshavan to organize an INCA Youth Group with representatives from all the Affiliated Organizations, it is necessary for all the presidents to support and make it a success.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Madhura Keshavan for all the help rendered towards organizing this report.

Senan Mathummal
President
India Canada Association
Calgary