

[CCMW Position Papers](#)[« Back to CCMW Newsletters/Reports \(Archived Material\)](#)[CCMW Publications](#)[Other Publications
of Interest](#)[Websites of Interest](#)[CCMW Archives](#)

المجلس الكندي للنساء المسلمات

CANADIAN COUNCIL OF MUSLIM WOMEN
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES FEMMES MUSULMANES

IN THE NAME OF GOD

“It is God who brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers when you knew nothing, and God gave you hearing and sight, intelligence and affections; that you may give thanks to God”

Qur’an 16:78.

CONFERENCE 2002:

CCMW held its 18th national conference on the weekend of September 13-15/2002, in Toronto. This was a landmark conference as we celebrated our 20 years of existence and the title of the conference “Strengthening Our Voices: 20 Years of Leadership” was to review our past and to plan for our future as an organization of and for Canadian Muslim women.

It was a very successful conference, mashaAllah, full of exciting speakers, workshops and resulting in a three year strategic plan.

Please note that the website has the speeches of Professor Sheila McDonough and Khaled Abou El Fadl. We highly recommend reading these as they will provide you with knowledge.

CCMW would be pleased to provide the complete report on the Conference to interested parties.

Strategic Plan:

The Conference resulted in a 3 Year Strategic Plan for CCMW. This is to be fleshed out in collaboration with our chapters so that each Goal will be achieved by the national and the local chapters.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THREE YEARS: 2003-2005.

Based on the needs, issues and challenges identified at the Strategic Planning of the 2002 Conference.

GOALS:

1. To be a voice for Muslim women and to work towards improving the image of Islam and Muslim women so as to result in positive outcomes for women.
2. Facilitate the integration and participation of Muslim women into mainstream society.
3. Combat racism and discrimination.
4. Advocacy and lobbying.
5. Collaboration and networking.

6. Media relations.
7. Increase use of technology.
8. To achieve these goals, increase/ strengthen role and visibility of CCMW, at national and local level.

Recommendations From the panels:

Talat:

- Be an issue oriented strong voice for women. Be visible.
- Have a consultative role with government. Media is important.
- Support chapters at local level.
- Develop networks and partnerships.
- Change negative image of Muslims, esp. women. Inspire!!

Nader:

- Preaching to the converted—expand the audience.
- Organize debates with differing points of view/perspectives.
- CCMW on the roster as speaker for CBC and other media.

Nadeen:

- Take on causes, be involved in policies re women's issues.
- Book on creative works by young Muslim women.
- Develop website, e.g. add a data base of resources for women such as names of organizations and information helpful to Muslim women and the media.

Nina:

- Increase visibility of CCMW.
- More projects with partners.
- Increase diversity of members.
- Strengthen chapters.
- Use of technology
- More projects with partners.

Huma:

- Research projects; lecture series;
- Social gatherings, more outreach by chapters.

Ibrahim:

- Letters to Editors.
- Documentary on women in Canada.

From Workshop:

1. To be a voice for women and their families.
2. To ensure a positive impact for Muslim women, and improve image of Islam and Muslim women.
3. Increase engagement in mainstream Integration/Participation. Create awareness of discrimination in all aspects of women's lives.
4. CCMW enhancement of infrastructure, more outreach, projects and support of local chapters.

Chapters' Identified Needs: [via questionnaire]

1. Provide employment and financial support.
2. Host workshops with the Kit, and encourage young people to meet and socialize.
3. Hold discussions, including books.
4. Implement program for young to work with the elderly.
5. Reach women living in poverty with education and sustainable projects.
6. Attract more women to join CCMW.
7. Establish a theatre re issues of culture and lifestyles of Muslims.
8. Educate women on legal rights and responsibilities, and how to be responsible parents.
9. Help Muslim seniors in matters of health, adjustment to Cdn culture and society.

Recommendations From The Workshop On “VOICES” Project:

1. Encourage involvement in local organizations, e.g. schools volunteerism in mainstream organizations.
2. Participate in educational community forums.
3. Learn to advocate and lobby.
4. Network around issues of social justice with similar groups, e.g. interfaith
5. Disseminate accurate information to non Muslims to dispel myths.
6. Create cohesion and collaboration within Muslim communities and organizations. Reach out to new communities of Muslims.
7. Strengthen existing organizations such as CCMW, FMW, membership, projects, local presence.
8. Disseminate information to schools, teachers, libraries, e.g. fact sheets on topics such as fasting.
9. Encourage involvement of youth.
10. Raise profile of Muslim women in the Muslim communities.
11. Make mosques safe places for public discussions.
12. Fight discrimination and racism.
13. Create a video on the diversity of Muslim children.
14. For media relations provide roster of speakers, joint projects with media, provide training locally for media relations.
15. As a community not to contribute to the creation of stereotypes.
16. Build more on website, e.g. have case studies on successful local projects so others can replicate.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

The meeting was held on Sunday September 15/03, after the Conference. Chapters and the National presented their annual reports and an election for a position on the National board was held. Najet Hassan was elected and she is now the Treasurer of the board. Some of the other members of the board had to be re-elected as the time of 3 years had elapsed. The board consists of Najet, Iman Zebian [responsible for the website and works closely with our consultant, Faisal Saeed] Humera Ibrahim [the contact for the chapters and responsible for board minutes]. Nina Karachi Khaled continues to be the Correspondence Secretary and our primary contact for communications. Razia Jaffer is our email contact and also the contact for Conference planning and all sorts of other work which is assigned to her. Nuzhat Jafri remains our ideas person and leader for strategic planning. Solmaz Sahin provides us with her never-ending support, ideas and historical background, while Alia Hogben is the general factotum!

ARTICLES ON CCMW:

We are so proud that articles have been published on CCMW in two major Journals.

The Journal, “The Muslim World” [Volume 92, Spring 2002] has the article by Professors Sajida Alvi and Sheila McDonough titled “ the Canadian Council of Muslim Women: A Chapter in the History of Muslim Women in Canada.” The other article is in the London based Journal of Muslim Minorities written by Laurie Lamoureux Scholes, also published in 2002.

BOOK: The Muslim Veil in North America

Edited by Sajida Alvi, Homa Hoodfar and Sheila McDonough.

This book has been in the making for a number of years and has now been published, 2003, by the Women’s Press, distributed by the University of Toronto Press.

The book has chapters written by Canadian scholars on the topic of the “hijab” and the choices Muslim women are making. In recent years, the adoption of the veil has come to symbolize a brave expression of choice: women reaching out to tradition, but hoping it will not jeopardize their place in the larger North American society. It is with this in mind that CCMW invited scholars to carry out a systematic study of issues surrounding different practices of the hijab among Muslim communities.

The book can be ordered directly through CCMW or from bookstores.

Resource Kit: In My Own Skin

MashaAllah, another achievement has been that the seven young women who devised the Kit held a training session at the conference, for about 20 young women from across the country who will be holding workshops in their communities.

This is a significant step forward for the young women as this phase builds on what they did and allows for the Kit to be used in workshops so that other young Muslim women can be assisted in addressing the issues facing them.

The original young women are Erum Afsar, Leila Bedeir, Rehana Begg, Salima Ebrahim,

Humera Ibrahim, Noreen Majeed and Iman Zebian.

The recent trained facilitators are:

Sabina Sayed, Rania El Saadi, Salma Walji, Mina Khan, Maryam Nabavi, Farheen Haq, Zainab Roya, Seema Baksh, Azmina Ladha, Zainum Bahadshah, Alamira Hussain, Zeynab Moayyed, Farah Meghji, Beenash Jafri, Zahra Moayyed, Sihaam Khan, Nadeen El Kassem, Farheen Hasan, Nadia Kurd, Aamna Afsar, Siema Abbas.

Women Honoured at the Conference 2002:

As part of our celebration, CCMW honoured a number of women who have contributed as Muslims and as Canadians to our lives. We honoured Lila Fahlman, founder of CCMW; Jamelie Hassan, an artist and activist; Mobina Jaffer, lawyer, activist and Senator of Canada; Talat Muinuddin, teacher, community activist and a longstanding President of CCMW; Adeena Niazi, activist, advocate and Executive Director of the Afghan Women's Organization; Nelofer Pazira, journalist, activist, film maker and actor; Fatima Houda Pepin, politician, member of the Legislative Assembly of Quebec; Raheel Raza, journalist, activist and public speaker for Islam and Muslims; and Bibi Zaman, founder of the Toronto agency the Canadian Centre for Women's Education and Development.

Honoured Men, Supporters Of Muslim Women:

CCMW also honoured two men who have provided great moral and time support to us.

Fuad Sahin and Murray Hogben were cited for their hours of work and encouragement on behalf of Muslims in Canada.

NEXT CONFERENCE:

The Montreal and Ottawa chapters have agreed that the 2003 conference should be held in Montreal, in the fall of 2003, inshaAllah.

OF INTEREST:

Turkey's Civil Code.

The government of Turkey has in November 2001, reformed the Turkish Civil Code which abolishes the supremacy of men in marriage and establishes full equality of men and women in the family.

The terms "husband and wife" have been replaced by the concept of "spouse" and so this means no partner is "head" of the family, they are equal and have equal rights.

FLARE magazine nomination.

The seven young women who created the CCMW Resource Kit were nominated for the Volunteer Award of FLARE magazine, and their names are listed in the magazine dated September 2002. We are proud of this recognition as these young women gave hours of their time and did the Kit with great passion and commitment. Thank you!

Baobab for Women's Human Rights.

CCMW congratulates Dr Ayesha Imam of the Nigerian organization, Baobab!

In December 2002, Ayesha was presented with the John Humphrey Freedom Award by the Canada based International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development.

Ayesha Imam and Baobab have fought for the rights of Nigerian women and lately have been very active in fighting against the punishment of stoning being meted out to young women, in the name of Islam.

As part of her acceptance speech, Ayesha said about the imposition of "sharia" based laws:

"There are several schools of Muslim legal thought [fiqh]. The four main Sunni schools that exist today were formed through the personal allegiance of legal scholars or jurists to the founders from which each school took its name—Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi and Hanbali. Each school was influenced by its own specific circumstances of origin. For instance, both Hanafis and Malikis are the representatives of the legal tradition of a particular geographic locality—the former in Kufa, present day Iraq, and the latter in the Arabian city of Medina. The two later schools, following Abu Hanifa and Al Shafi developed precisely out of a controversy in jurisprudence [i.e. human reasoning about law] Consequently each school has variations according to the cultural, political and socio-economic contexts in which they were developed and the philosophy of reasoning that was accepted.

Even the oldest schools of Muslim law did not exist until many decades after the revelation of the Qur'an and the Prophet's death [pbuh]. Hence the laws they outline [commonly collectively referred to as Sharia or as Islamic law] are clearly not direct divine revelations from Allah, but mediated through

human judicial reasoning [ijtihad in Arabic] It was recognized in that “golden” period of Islam that there were legitimate variation in Muslim laws, based on context and therefore that Sharia must be subject to progressive development and therefore change...

Muslim law are therefore not unchangeable law, to be accepted unquestioningly by all Muslims... Imam Malik, the founder of the school of fiqh accepted in Nigeria, cautioned that “ I am but a human being. I may be wrong and I may be right. So first examine what I say...”

We are humbled by Ayesha’s thanks to CCMW as one of the international women’s organizations who have shown solidarity with Baobab and supported its work on behalf of Nigerian women.

Child Welfare League of Canada’s

Pamphlet on “Parenting In Canada” for parents who are recent arrivals in Canada.

The pamphlet outlines Canadian values and laws about parenting in Canada. It is an excellent source of information about what constitutes “child abuse” “reasonable discipline” “child sexual abuse” “neglect” and the role of the provincial governments’ child welfare agencies.

The pamphlet is available from the Child Welfare League based in Toronto.

Canadian Women’s Health Network

This network was established in 1993, and works to provide easier access to health information and encourages participatory research.

Information on women’s health issues is available from their website: www.cwhn.ca or by phoning 1 888 818 9172. Their postal address is 419 Graham Ave Suite 203, Winnipeg MB R3C 0M3.

CRIAW Newsletter

This newsletter lists two books of interest to immigrants. Both are published by the Legal Services Society of British Columbia. One is the book, “Sponsorship Breakdown” and the other is “Benefits and Services for Seniors”. These are aimed at recent immigrants and deal with the problems which occur if a sponsor does not honour his commitment, while the other provides information for seniors. They are available in a number of languages and are available from Legal Services Society, 1500-1140 West Pender St, Vancouver, B.C V6E 4G1.

Website <http://www.lss.bc.ca>.

Council of American-Islamic Relations Canada

This group has published a short concise and very useful guide called “Know Your Rights” It provides excellent information on what one can do if harassed, or contacted by CSIS/RCMP and how to react to anti Muslim crimes etc.

The mini guide is available from CAIR P.O.B 67058, Westboro RPO, Ottawa, Ont K2A 0E8. Phone 1 866 524 0004.

APPRECIATION:

Our thanks to our funders without whom the work of CCMW would not be possible. Thank you on behalf of Canadian Muslim Women to Barbara Riley of the Status of Women, Donna James of multiculturalism and Beverly Wybrow of the Canadian Women’s Foundation.

Canadian Council of Muslim Women
Le Conseil Canadien des Femmes Musulmanes
2400 Dundas Street, W., Suite 513
Mississauga, Ontario L5K 2R8