

***Workshop* on**
Afghan-Canadian Youth Professionals
Success and Achievements

Final Summary Report

February 2016



AFGHAN ASSOCIATION
OF ONTARIO, CANADA

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About Participants

Number of participants: 162

Number of feedback forms received: 68

Participants at the workshop described their job role(s) as follows:

Job role	Number of participants
Student/support	20
Head of Communities	20
Professionals from all fields	54
Parents and others	68
Total	162

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Agenda of the workshop

Minutes of the workshop

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Report Abstract

Afghan Association of Ontario (AAO) has organized the first time and first of its kind workshop on Afghan-Canadian Youth Professionals Success and Achievements. The workshop was organized, led and funded by the Afghan Association of Ontario with the collaboration and technical support from the volunteers of the Association.

The City of Toronto, Ward 38 has been one of the facilitators of the workshop by providing the venue and technical IT supports throughout the workshop. The venue was in Albert Campbell Square Civic Center (156 Borough Dr. Scarborough, ON).

The workshop aim was to gather professionals, parents and other community members to take active part as one team to identify the current ongoing challenges and obstacles within the Afghan community. Likewise, to find solution and address the outcomes to the participants.

Initially, the workshop was designed to appreciate and identify the achievements and success of the youths in our Afghan-Canadian society. AAO's thorough engagement with a group of professional and highly qualified young calibers, we managed to develop a full day event that focused on several issues concerning the Afghan community.



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The workshop began with the recitation of the holy Quran. It focused on themes and matters that have been significant in our society. Despite their effects, these topics have always been perceived as a taboo and have been neglected by our community. However, our youth and professional took it upon them to discuss the following topics; Community development/cultural values, Crime & drugs, Radicalism (what's radicalism and how to prevent from spreading) and family/relationship (problems), Ontario's education system and the role of a parent on one's education. In addition to this, AAO recognized and rewarded the youths and parents their achievements and success, and likewise for their positive contribution for building a safe, sound and prosperous society within our diversified communities, in Canada.

Dignitaries like Mr. Gholam M Formuli (President of AAO) has delivered his opening remarks to the audience. Subsequently, Ms. Salma Zahid, (MP for Scarborough) talked about the importance of the workshop and gratitude the organizer for such remarkable initiative. Throughout the workshop, the AAO's board of directors also delivered their speeches on the importance of the workshop.

The workshop also featured 8 highly professional and caliber panelists from various backgrounds including doctors, engineers, police, community mobilizer, lawyers and psychologists.

As mentioned above, the topic item-solutions does not only focus on families, its results are beneficial to the Afghan society as a whole with assisting and cooperation of young generation, including the seniors and adults within the Afghan community. The solutions will also assist the Government with results that they can take to solve the barriers concerning this specific community.

Therefore, based on the problems mentioned above, this workshop has picked the topics to mitigate the challenges and problem.

The Afghan Association of Ontario (AAO) perceives itself as a responsible entity for the Afghan community here in Ontario, and therefore took the initiative to conduct this workshop that has been held for the first time ever in our community. Participants were all satisfied from the outcomes of the workshop. A team of highly enthusiastic young volunteers of AAO have been involved throughout the planning and preparation process. The volunteers continuously interacted with the participants and provided fruitful technical support, accordingly.

Workshop Description

The Afghan Association of Ontario (AAO) is one of the active not-for-profit Organizations that paves the opportunity for the Community and society development. Likewise, the Association is empowering the community members in all societal and livelihoods. In addition, the Association has been engaged in many societal development programs/projects and activities including women empowerment, assisting senior citizens and working with Young professionals to address the community needs and requirements to find ways for solution/improvements.

In addition, it is well understandable that Afghan society members who immigrated to Canada and all over the world in the last four decades, most of them made the GTA their home. It's clear that the significant of them fled the Afghanistan to escape from the atrocities of war and miss management of securities, and to seek better life for their families, especially for new generation to improve their knowledge on the proper ways .The feedback of this sacrifices are significant numbers of seniors who face an array of problem in the host country due to language and cultural barriers.

They have increased anxiety and stress trying to adjust and integrate in the host country while concerning about their kith and kin left back home, the sad stories of killing, unjust, kidnapping, poverty, and joblessness increased almost daily and traumatized them and bring back reminiscences of the past.



The workshop covered most valuable topics including Family issues and Problems, Drugs and gangs Prevention, Crime/Criminal issues, Laws and orders, Radicalism and terror, Community engagement and development, Ontario Education System.

The workshop thusfar, featured 8 highly professional and caliber panelists who are doctors, engineers, police, community mobilizer, lawyers and psychologists. They have been brilliant and addressed every issues and concerns of the participants logically, likewise they have analyzed and provided thoughtful solutions to the problems. In addition, they have addressed to the enquiries of the participants by providing descriptive very helpful information and counseling.

During the workshop, Afghan Association of Ontario (AAO) also introduced those individuals with high calibers, potentials and their accomplishments not only to themselves and their families but also to contributed to the community enhancement. Thus AAO, awarded the aforementioned leaders, experts,

professionals, and likewise the parents that have been one of the role-model example to our community. These individuals were recognized by the community and AAO, their efforts and positive contribution.

The workshop materials were introduced by AAO and the panelists. Materials were exemplary, and covered most of the ongoing challenges, obstacles and present issues/topics of the day within each and every community.

AAO also prepared the workshop material and other supporting document in handouts and every participant received, accordingly.

Workshop Analysis

As per the outcome of the workshop, the entire materials and topics have been identified after a thorough analysis conducted by the Afghan Association of Ontario (AAO) prior to the workshop.

The professionals and expertise discussed subject matters as presented by the panelists about the current and emerging needs, opened the channel and doors of opportunities to have practical discussions and joint efforts to enhance implementation of such programs and issues both academically and holistically.

Throughout the excellent panel discussions during the plenary sessions, our panelists provided us with numerous solutions and strategic ways for the Afghan community to enhance our society and how to strengthen it. By working together, we will create a stronger community. Since the people are the heart and soul of a society, this workshop has been truly a unique and a beneficial social event in recent year among the Afghan community in Greater Toronto Area.

After the panel discussions by each four groups, the panelists delivered the outcomes of their discussions briefly to audience. *For reference, the minutes of the workshop is enclosed with this report.*

Each of our panelists was asked questions by the audience during the Q&A session. Their replies were explicitly satisfactory, and accepted by the audience, as a whole.

During the workshop, the aim and theme of the panelists and the organizer have been to focus on ways to combat common problems and getting-together tackle those common issues and obstacles. In addition, with the formation of the Youths Network we shall be able to reap more benefits from shared efforts within the newly born network. Our aim in this gathering has been to get our progressive generation a dynamic and active participation in community work alongside the diverse society in Canada.

As mentioned above, Afghan Association of Ontario (AAO) not only awarded individuals for their accomplishments and engagement within the Afghan community, but their families who have also contributed to the community enhancement. Individuals were recognized for their parenting roles, community engagement, and academic achievements.

AAO also managed to bring up parents and their children sit together and work together for one common goal on how to boost self-development and building a very dynamic society, accordingly. AAO has shown strengths by gathering the intellectuals, community leaders and well-known individuals, professionals and experts to jointly work together and establish a concrete mechanism for the enhancement of a dynamic Afghan-community, in the next coming years.

Conclusion

It was indeed a remarkable seminar in every sense. From the moment of start to the conclusion, the participants were enthusiastic and were very grateful to the Afghan Association of Ontario (AAO) and the Toronto municipality for being the facilitator (provided venue) of this Workshop. And of course, our devoted and hardworking organizer team that made the event possible.

At the end of the workshop, a feedback assessment form was distributed to the audience to express their comments and feelings about the workshop. They were also to comment on whether AAO should continue providing the community with these sessions in the future.

After analyzing the assessment feedbacks of the audience, majority of them have demanded the continuation of such workshop to be led and organized by the Afghan Association of Ontario (AAO). In addition, the Afghan Association of Ontario has already received a high demand by other communities for organizing such events within their communities or respective regions across Ontario.

Certificates of recognition and awards were distributed to those individuals, leaders, experts, professionals and as well as parents that have been one of the role-model example to our community. The nominees were gathered by the community and AAO together.

Therefore, the Afghan Association of Ontario has decided to continue the organizing of such workshops every four months, (three times a year), consequently. As per the final outcome of the workshop, it has been analyzed that the workshop managed to enchant message that the continuation of such workshops will be highly effective for our personal and professional commitment to protect healthy environment for our citizens.

Likewise, the organizer of the workshop managed to deliver the message to audience to encourage the Afghan or non-Afghan community families to participate in the future venues of AAO initiatives.

