

**COMMUNITY SUMMARY REPORT**  
ASIAN CANADIAN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE  
Calgary and Surrounding Areas

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**OVERVIEW**

This document serves as the community summary report of the Asian Canadian Intercultural Dialogue in Calgary and Surrounding Areas that took place on March 1, 2025, 2pm to 5pm, at the Unison at Kerby Centre, 1133 7 Ave. SW Calgary, AB. It covers key event details including the project’s background and rationale, the speakers and panel of community leaders, the organizations that were represented and highlights of the panel’s storytelling session and the dialogue with the community.



**PROJECT BACKGROUND**

The path to settlement for newcomers and the full and meaningful integration of racialized Canadians can be an arduous and challenging journey. Chinese, Vietnamese, and Filipino Canadians make up a substantial part of the workforce in food and health service sectors as essential workers, providing support to Canadians during challenging times. Yet, they and other immigrant communities have been blamed, scapegoated, and mistreated during the pandemic and in social issues such as employment and housing crisis. Their contributions, participation, and resilience – whether recent or historical – are largely unrecognized.

Through the power of conversation and storytelling, Asian Canadian Intercultural Dialogues were organized in key locations across Alberta (Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer, and Calgary) to increase knowledge and understanding about East and Southeast Asian Communities (centered on Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese), provide a safe space to connect and network with fellow community members and inspiring leaders, as well as discuss next steps for greater and collective impact towards advancing inclusion and equity in Alberta. With the theme No Canada Without Me, the dialogue enhances the importance and value of everyone who consider Alberta and Canada their home.

As part of its commitment to Truth and Reconciliation, the first dialogue organized was with Indigenous Elders from Siksika Nation, Tsuut’ina Nation, and Bearspaw First Nation to begin the project in a

meaningful way. The project’s panel of speakers and community leaders from the East and Southeast Asian communities, gathered in a 3-hour sharing of culture, history, and purpose with the Indigenous elders. A land acknowledgement also marks the beginning of each dialogue, giving recognition to those who were here before us, encouraging our communities to start integrating Truth and Reconciliation in their programs as organizations and in their settlement and integration as Asian Canadians in Treaty 6, 7 and 8. As we acknowledge the land, we called upon our collective culture and traditions to work together, build relationships, have deeper and meaningful collaborations across cultures and generations to create an inclusive space for everyone.

This project is funded by the Government of Alberta’s Ethnocultural and Anti-Racism Grant Programs and presented by ACCT Foundation and ACT2END Racism Network. This Asian Canadian Intercultural Dialogue in Calgary is partially funded by Calgary Foundation.

## SUMMARY

### Participation

Approximately 100 participants attended the Calgary Dialogue from the Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Thai, Malaysian, Bangladesh, South & Central Asian, Black, Indigenous communities, immigrant serving organizations, cultural associations, service providers, media, and non-profit organizations from Calgary, Cochrane, Brooks, Sundre, Airdrie, and Vancouver. The following organizations join those represented by our speakers:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. ACCT Foundation  | 18. Cochrane Drumming Circle, Wazin Îchinabi Ti                       |
| 2. Babae (Council of Filipina Canadian Women)                 | 19. End of the Rainbow Foundation                                     |
| 3. Bahaghari  | 20. F.O.C.U.S on Seniors  |
| 4. Bangladesh Canada Association of Calgary                   | 21. Fairchild Radio FM 94.7   |
| 5. Calgary Chinatown Ambassadors                              | 22. FascinAsian Film Festival – Calgary                               |
| 6. Calgary Japanese Canadian Association                      | 23. Federation of Korean Canadian Associations                        |
| 7. Calgary Kaiping Association                                | 24. Filipino Airdrie Association                                      |
| 8. Calgary Korean Association                                 | 25. Filipinos Rising (FRIENDS)  |
| 9. Calgary Korean Women’s Association                         | 26. Gee How Oak Tin Association                                       |
| 10. Calgary Okinawan Club                                     | 27. Glenbow Museum  |
| 11. Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council (CRIEC)       | 28. Guild of Filipino Canadian of Sundre Alberta and Area (GOFILCANS) |
| 12. Calgary Vietnamese Canadian Association                   | 29. Light and Love Home   |
| 13. Calgary Vietnamese Youth Association                      | 30. Malaysian Singaporean Bruneian Community Association (MSBCA)      |
| 14. Canada International Exchange & Collaboration Association | 31. Momentum  |
| 15. Centre for Newcomers                                      | 32. Philippine Consulate General                                      |
| 16. City of Calgary   | 33. Race Equity Caucus - Alberta NDP                                  |
| 17. CJSW Radio  | 34. Religious Freedom Committee                                       |
|   | 35. Thai Cultural Council of Calgary                                  |

The dialogue was facilitated by a panel of esteemed community leaders from Calgary:

1. Anna Ko | President, [Calgary Korean Women's Association](#)
2. Anne-Marie Pham | Founder, [Calgary Vietnamese Youth Association](#)
3. Cesar Cala | Chair, [Filipinos Rising](#) (FRIENDS)
4. Jae Shim | Founder & Owner, [Shim Law](#) | Advocate for Multiculturalism & Inclusion
5. Ken Richardson | Director, [Calgary Japanese Community Association](#)
6. Kevin Okabe | Executive Director, [National Association of Japanese Canadians](#)
7. Marichu Antonio | Adviser, [Association of Filipino Canadian Community Leaders in Rural AB](#)
8. Patti Pon | CEO, [Calgary Arts Development](#)
9. Teresa Woo-Paw | Chair, [ACCT Foundation](#)



## Dialogue Highlights

### INTRODUCTION

Following the land acknowledgement, Patti Pon emphasized on the importance of acknowledging the Indigenous custodians of the land, the recognition of Indigenous history and the role of the land in supporting multiple civilizations, including Asian Canadians in Calgary today.

Elder Kevin Littelight from the Tsuut'ina Nation and a board member of Calgary Arts Development (CADA) opened the session with his own story and the history of his community, relaying the importance of dialogue and preservation of history and tradition. Elder Kevin highlighted the similarities between Indigenous traditions and Asian culture, emphasizing shared values such as honoring elders and ancestors, cherishing family bonds, and integrating community in all that we do. He expressed his gratitude for being part of the dialogue and being one of the “connection points” between the Indigenous community and the Asian community.

To familiarize everyone with each other, Anne-Marie Pham facilitated an interactive activity called “Who’s in the Room?” where participants were asked to stand if they identify with a particular category such as who was born in Canada, born outside Canada, works with youth, or is part of an organization, then those who are standing were asked some follow-up questions (which Asian country were they born in or which Asian community or organization they are a part of) to encourage networking and possible

collaborations. This activity provided the opportunity for the participants to get to know each other, their connection to the Asian community, and identify shared advocacies and interests.

This was followed by a presentation of the background and rationale of the project by Teresa Woo-Paw. She also shared the goals of the dialogue: 1) share experience, stories, issues and concerns, 2) spark imagination and inspiration, 3) generate greater insights and understanding of individual realities, community impact and systemic issues. The Dialogue also aims to build connections, start conversations, and increase the understanding of the diversity and complexity within the Asian Canadian communities.

Teresa relays the historical connection of the Indigenous communities with the Chinese communities, “And when Calgarians of Chinese descent and other Asian descent were refused healthcare, it was indigenous healers who actually brought our ancestors back to health.” She highlighted the importance of sharing similar stories to recognize and express gratitude to the Indigenous community and to honor the enduring connection and collaboration that these communities have fostered for decades.

Teresa aligns this with the purpose of the gathering, highlighting the importance of acknowledging and celebrating the resilience and accomplishments of the Indigenous and the Asian Canadian communities. She emphasized how collective efforts and the dedication of community members and leaders, including the distinguished panel of speakers, have contributed to these achievements.

## PANEL STORYTELLING SESSION

The storytelling of the panel of community leaders, facilitated by Patti Pon, focused on the histories and leadership journeys of East and Southeast Asians in Alberta and Canada. Historical challenges – including the Chinese head tax, Japanese internment, Vietnamese refugee struggles, professional restrictions for Filipinos, and Korean gender barrier – continue to impact the community today. These impacts include family separation, community disintegration, intergenerational challenges, mental health issues, experiences of discrimination and racism, and economic difficulties.

Together with their leadership and community building approach, the panel demonstrated how Asian Canadians responded to these challenges with remarkable resilience, cultural values, and creativity underpinned by a strong sense of community through cross-cultural collaboration, professional mentorship, settlement support, unified efforts to combat anti-Asian racism, and the development of support networks to overcome systemic barriers.

Considering the significant and increasing presence of other Asian communities in Calgary, Asian Canadians are urged to leverage their growing presence in cities to influence policies and systems. Marichu Antonio highlights the importance of active presence and participation, “we are always seen as clients, we are seen as beneficiaries, it is important that we see ourselves as assets” to shift the perception of the broader community and see Asian Canadians as leaders.

These trailblazing leaders have founded and established organizations that are creating meaningful impacts in the community. They also shared their groundbreaking achievements in legislature,

institutions and broader community: Teresa Woo Paw became the first Asian Canadian woman elected to the school board, as well as the first Asian female elected to Alberta's Legislature and appointed to the cabinet. Patti Pon broke barriers as the first woman of color elected to the Calgary Stampede Board of Directors. Marichu Antonio made history as the first woman of color to be named Citizen of the Year by the City of Calgary.

They shared their leadership stories to demonstrate that such accomplishments and recognition are achievable for Asian Canadians in Alberta. More importantly, they showed how these recognitions create greater ripples of change.

The panel also stressed that history, culture and traditions are important in understanding our stories and how we navigate the world. Cultural values shape how the different Asian groups build community and respond to challenges. Cesar Cala mentioned the Filipino concept of bayanihan, which embodies being a hero for one another, while Ken Richardson referred to the Japanese Kaizen principle, which focuses on making incremental improvements to become a little better with each step.

The panel of community leaders concluded their session by emphasizing that the true power of these stories lies on the preservation of history, intercultural collaboration, innovative support systems, civic and political leadership development, and sustainable community building. Lastly, through the stories they shared, it is essential to highlight that these leaders' accomplishments would not have been possible without their unwavering commitment shown through volunteerism, representation, and collaboration.

*“We have to define our collective pain as a major population and then use our collective power to influence and make greater change.” – Teresa Woo-Paw, Chair, ACCT Foundation*



## COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

The Community Dialogue continued with panel speakers facilitating smaller groups, providing participants the opportunity to share their stories and experiences. While guide questions were offered to steer the discussions, participants were encouraged to engage and share in an organic and natural manner. With community leaders fluent in their first languages, participants were offered to share their stories in the language they prefer.

A total of 7 dialogue groups with 10-15 participants shared their individual and collective struggles and achievements, which mostly resonated with the panel speakers' narratives and presentations. The following guide questions were used to facilitate the discussions and encourage participation:

1. What is this moment asking of us?
2. What is the challenge of community leadership now?
3. How do we help collectively shape the picture of community and community leadership in the Asian Canadian community?

Participants valued the dialogue, recognizing it as a unique opportunity to unite the community in addressing significant issues. While the Asian Community in Calgary has traditionally gathered for cultural and heritage celebrations, engaging in meaningful discussions about deep-rooted challenges and their impacts within the community is seen as a beneficial step forward. In response to the first question, they shared diverse immigrant experiences tied to community building, emphasizing the importance of authentic volunteerism, the need to address conflicts within the community, challenge the growing anti-immigrant sentiment, racism and discrimination, and for authentic representation in the Asian Canadian and broader community. Collectively, the Asian Canadian community should collaborate for amplified results and impact in securing funds, influencing policy, and advocating for greater inclusivity.

Community leadership calls for a shift away from traditional economic policies that treat communities as resources for labor and data, advocating instead for their recognition of the Asian Canadian community as active partners in capacity building. For the dialogue participants, effective leadership emphasizes fostering growth within individual communities while encouraging collaboration across communities to tackle shared challenges. It should draw from evolving cultural experiences to address issues over time, cultivating leaders who are responsive to both historical injustices and emerging needs. By learning from the insights of previous generations, leadership can evolve organically, becoming more inclusive and reflective of the community's diverse voices and experiences.

To answer the third question, groups shared their experiences, identifying individual and collective pain points, issues and challenges then discussed possible areas of actions.

### ***Community Issues and Challenges***

The Asian Canadian community in Calgary experience shared and unique challenges as they navigate their lives as individuals and as a community. These include cultural preservation, youth engagement, intergenerational issues, community integration, organizational sustainability, institutional exclusion, employment & financial challenges, professional recognition, immigration settlement, funding, language barrier, media & communications, devaluation of diversity, equity, & inclusion, and education.

#### **1. Cultural Preservation**

Participants are concerned with preserving their culture due to lack of cultural and historical knowledge and awareness and decrease in traditional practices and use of first language. However, the pressure of strictly adhering to traditional methods from older generations was

also cited, resulting in the decline in the younger generation's interest and participation and widening the intergenerational gap.

Another challenge is the lack of or limited documentation and statistical studies concerning Asian Canadian second and third generation experiences which leads to significant challenges in addressing the evolving needs of these generations or to fully capture their role in shaping the broader cultural identity. This lack of documentation also limits the ability to create targeted programs and initiatives that reflect their experiences. Addressing this issue requires intentional efforts in research, storytelling, and community-driven projects to collect and preserve the narratives of second and third-generation Asian Canadians.

## 2. Youth Engagement

While youth participation is already present within the Asian Canadian communities, it remains an area requiring further attention. There is a collective call to address the specific concerns and challenges faced by both the youth and the older generation as they actively contribute to community building including logistical concerns such as limitations in transportation, access to space and conflicts in schedule and intergenerational dynamics – the perception that the youth relies on the older generation for community involvement and youth feeling discouraged to participate due to political debates and cultural pressures.

## 3. Intergenerational Issues

Intergenerational issues highlight the tension between generations within the Asian Canadian community - honoring the painful history of “our parents’ generation” at the same time facing the realities of the younger generation. This reflects the “the pain of two generations” and the difficulties in transforming that into purposeful unity.

Participants expressed the need to address the challenge of belonging – where some feel caught between being too young and too old for certain roles and communities. Moreover, there is recognition of the pressure to support and guide younger generations in a way that respects both past experiences and the need for future change.

## 4. Community Integration

Declining participation within communities also emerged in the group discussions as one of the challenges in community leadership and development due to divided communities stemming from conflict, life priorities (newcomers, work, youth's situations), or merely used to working in silos. Some communities feel challenged with the need to maintain traditions, changing social environment, and differences in political views (locally, nationally, and in their home countries). The Vietnamese community feels that the aversion to political engagement leads to a blanket dislike to participate in any community event.

It was also identified that there is a need to include more underrepresented groups such as those who face literacy and language barriers, particularly within the older adults in the Asian Canadian community, the South Asian and Central Asian communities.

Another challenge is the segmented nature of communication platforms of the various communities (WhatsApp, Facebook groups, WeChat), which limits broader, inclusive engagement. Further, it was observed within the Filipino community that significant participation in Facebook groups does not translate to actual attendance in events and programs.

Lastly, participants feel that the lack of consulates established in Calgary or in Alberta for specific communities is partly the reason for disinterest in community involvement.

#### 5. Organizational Sustainability

Sustainability is a common issue among many Asian Canadian associations. They face the problem of transitioning leadership to younger generations while maintaining the relevance and values of the organization.

#### 6. Institutional Exclusion

It has been shared that the Asian Canadian communities, together with other cultural groups, are not part of institutional or government lists of organizations. This results the information and opportunities on existing programs, skills and capacity development, and important political and social updates do not reach the Asian Canadian communities. In addition to this, the efficacy of policy communication by institutions was raised since language translation is usually an after thought or not even thought about. A participant recounted that there have been several requests for counselors to translate their platforms into different languages but has not been reciprocated by political parties.

#### 7. Employment & Financial Challenges

Another important issue that emerged in the discussions is the rising employment and financial challenges. The Vietnamese community expressed that the rising costs of living and heavy student loan will not give the opportunity to new graduates to invest in long term assets such as housing. In the Filipino community, a participant connected economic challenges to the inability to volunteer or contribute meaningfully, noting that many community members “juggle three jobs” to make ends meet. Further to this point, a participant cited data and census indicating that Filipinos have the lowest median income in Canada, compounded by low minimum wages and rising rents.

The Asian community also experience discrimination where promotions, salary, opportunities and general treatment in the workplace are based on one’s skin color, race and accent. In connection to this, there is a common sentiment in the dialogue that stereotypes lead to inappropriate and inapplicable job-matching. Stereotyping within communities, such as assumptions about Filipino nurses or caregivers, Vietnamese nail technicians or Chinese restaurateurs, was criticized, with a call for deeper understanding beyond narrow cultural labels.



The discussion extended to include the need for the community to clearly communicate its own needs and to support those who may be deceived or misled by external employment opportunities.

#### 8. Professional Recognition

Closely related with employment and financial challenge is the complex and often inaccessible process of recognizing professional credentials (i.e. excessive exam requirements and insufficient bridging programs) risk depriving the community of essential services by limiting access to skilled professionals.

Asian professionals who migrated to Canada face this persistent barrier to their professional integration in their chosen fields. This struggle can force skilled professionals into roles that do not align with their expertise, leading to underemployment and de-professionalization over time. Such systemic issues not only hinder individual career growth but also impact the long-term potential and contributions of the community.

More specifically, despite the growing recognition of the arts sector, participants expressed that there is a need to provide equitable funding, spaces, and opportunities for artists. Artists often face inequities in compensation and access to resources, even when their talents play a crucial role in shaping the city's artistic and cultural identity.

Racism and discrimination are also evidently present in the workplace. In the academe, despite talk of diversity and inclusion, faculty of color often face disadvantages during budget cuts and restructuring, frequently being the first affected. They also experience inequity in hiring (such as discrimination based on name) and workload balance, reflecting the “model minority” myth that Asians are hard workers and do not complain. Further, there is fear that if they speak up, they risk job security, promotions, and immigrant status.

#### 9. Immigrant Settlement

The dialogue groups discussed various immigration settlement challenges including family reunification, relying on own networks, and the impacts of the immigration policies.

Participants noted that new immigrants often rely on their networks for settlement advice, which, while well-intentioned, can lead to misinformation due to outdated knowledge and misaligned expectations. Skilled workers may end up in unrelated jobs, frontline jobs where the rigorous nature of work leaves them with little opportunity to access resources to integrate into their fields.

Family separation and reunification are common within the Filipino community mainly due to the live-in caregiver and temporary workers program, which requires one parent to live and work in Canada, and after years of separation, their family will join them. While reuniting with one's family is very rewarding, it also comes with its own challenges of family conflict and mental health issues. In addition to this, the realities of responsibilities and obligations of household chores, juggling 2-3 jobs, disrupts family dynamic.

In addition, the inconsistent parameters of the international student program leave Asian Canadian immigrants with uncertainty in status and in economic stability. There is also a glaring disparity between the revenue that the international students generate, and the inadequate resources provided that will help with their settlement.

Emphasis was placed on the systemic nature of these challenges, attributing them to policy shortcomings that affect income levels and overall community support. Immigrants through the International Student, Temporary Workers and Live-In Caregivers programs face displacement, family separation, and loss of opportunities.

#### 10. Funding

Asian Canadians observe inequities in funding opportunities. Due to factors such as language barriers, discrimination and racism, and institutional exclusion, the community is not informed of opportunities or experience arduous grant applications process. There is also a gap that funding expectations do not meet the actual needs of the community, such as the rejection of funding for gas or food – essential components of community engagement.

It was also expressed that there are significant funding differences in the groups that are awarded grants during crisis situations.

#### 11. Language Barrier

Language barrier remains a major issue in the Asian Canadian communities. This is not only reflected in communication skills at work and in public services (hospitals, police, schools) but also in families and in community, creating gaps between generations – in immigration status, i.e. first generation (migrated to Canada) and second generation (born in Canada) and in age – i.e. older and younger generations.

#### 12. Media and Communications Industry

Media emerged as a common challenge across the Asian Canadian communities. Participants mentioned that media should distinguish accurate information from disinformation and misinformation, particularly in light of recent political events in North America. Further, the ongoing reduction in staff and budget cuts underscores the burnout and lack of support that media professionals face, which stifles authentic journalism.

In addition to the lack of Asian Canadian representation in mainstream media, current mainstream narratives are seen as limited, failing to capture diverse perspectives, as illustrated by the lack of adequate coverage on incidents affecting Chinese communities. There is a call for regulatory bodies like the CRTC and Heritage Ministry to reassess CBC's mandates and support opportunities for diverse language reporting, ethnic representation and capturing diverse perspectives.

Similar to other professions, ethnic media professionals face significant pay disparities, earning only a third of what their mainstream counterparts make. On top of this, ethnic media

journalists often expend additional resources for translation and transliteration tasks but are undervalued financially.

### 13. Devaluing of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI)

Participants raised their concerns on the default reliance on white, middle-aged professionals leading the DEI sector and that most organizations commitment to DEI are performative in nature.

Moreover, the growing anti-immigrant sentiments together with the current wave of devaluing DEI in mainstream organizations and community are major concerns of the Asian Canadian community.

It seems that DEI initiatives, including increase in representation, must now demonstrate tangible financial benefits for all, including non-racialized individuals.

### 14. Education

A dilemma that was raised by a faculty member in effectively educating and enriching student knowledge is the challenge of merging Asian and Western values in academic settings, which face resistance from predominantly white students who often undervalue teachings based on non-Western principles.

## Areas for Action

The following themes have emerged as areas for action from the community dialogue in Lethbridge and surrounding areas: cultural preservation, enhance youth engagement, intergenerational initiatives, build the Asian Canadian community, increase & strengthen participation and representation, addressing professional recognition, enhance settlement support, and capacity building.

#### 1. Cultural Preservation and Identity

Communities will thrive when they embrace evolution while honoring traditions allowing all generations to understand and celebrate their cultures while adapting to the evolving identities and social landscape of the society. Intercultural dialogues can promote understanding and bridge generational gaps, while creative documentation methods, such as storytelling or digital archives, serve to preserve and transmit history. These efforts not only honor the past but also nurture future leadership, empowering younger generations to carry cultural legacies forward in meaningful and dynamic ways.

#### 2. Enhance Youth Engagement

The community must prioritize supporting young people in the present, committing to listen to them more to ensure that they feel valued and encouraged to contribute to the community. Adjusting community-building strategies to suit the youth's needs (interests, schedule, economic situation) is key in successfully integrating them in the community. Mentorship programs from formal (professors and counselors) and informal (community, volunteers) support for post-secondary education and/or long-term career planning, intercommunity allyship and

engagement (ex: Asian Canadian Youth activity), continuous dialogue, sharing and pooling resources across cultural communities, forming student or professional associations within existing groups (ex: church), and creative engagement activities (ex: traditional culinary skills building) will help empower the youth to integrate with community.

### 3. Intergenerational initiatives

Informative sessions on historical contexts and activities such as intergenerational dialogues within each and across Asian communities will help in understanding the deeper issues of intergenerational and family conflicts. These initiatives will identify corresponding action points and collaborative measures that will also address challenges in cultural identity and preservation.

Storytelling, creatively capturing data and narratives (film, visuals, theatre), and leveraging on existing programs and platforms (such as Calgary Arts Development, Glenbow Museum's Social History Project), will help achieve intergenerational solidarity.

Activities such as intergenerational dialogues and intergenerational speed-dating surfaced as specific suggestions in engaging multi-generations to encourage mutual listening and achieve mutual understanding.

In addition, professional mentorship programs that unite generations can effectively bridge gaps by blending the experience and wisdom of older generations with the innovative spirit, passion, and knowledge of the younger generation. This synergy fosters mutual support, enabling a continuous exchange of ideas and skills while empowering both groups to contribute meaningfully to community growth and leadership development.

### 4. Build the Asian Canadian Community

Dialogue participants all agree that there is a need for deeper collaboration and greater inclusion across Asian Canadian communities in Calgary and surrounding areas. Utilizing existing platforms like Asian Heritage Month, Asian Film Festival, and the activities organized by the Asian Heritage Foundation represents an accessible and effective way to enhance community engagement across Asian groups. These initiatives provide ready-made opportunities to celebrate shared heritage, foster connections, and address common goals, making them valuable tools for strengthening collaboration and inclusivity within the community.

Continuing and building on events such as this dialogue provides the venue to hear perspectives from all parts of the community, increase intergenerational interactions and invite more Asian groups and organizations to participate. These activities together with shared cultural values and practices across Asian communities pave the way for a more collective and inclusive community building and engagement strategies.

Addressing internal challenges within organizations requires proactive efforts, such as implementing conversation circles, dialogues, and information sessions to promote open communication and understanding. Team-building activities and targeted training programs can

further strengthen relationships, enhance collaboration, and equip members with the skills needed to navigate complex issues.

In building the community, an Indigenous participant highlighted the importance of community healing from historical traumas. Aligned with this is the importance of integrating Truth and Reconciliation in programming, events and community engagement through meaningful connections, land acknowledgement and supporting indigenous development.

#### 5. Increase and Strengthen Participation and Representation

Encouraging representatives from schools and workplaces in dialogues and community activities will help ensure diversity and inclusivity and increase understanding of Asian Canadian communities.

The panel and participants have also mentioned the importance of representing one's own and collective Asian community in board memberships of mainstream organizations. This will increase opportunity for the Asian community's perspectives and concerns to gain traction in decision-making processes that impacts everyone.

In line with this, Asian Canadian community members are urged to actively participate in policy development to address current issues discussed including policies on wage and high living costs, professional regulations, immigration streams, and funding guidelines. It was agreed that diverse voices enhance community representation and should be amplified collectively in discussions with policymakers.

#### 6. Addressing Professional Recognition

Using the Asian community's collective voice will make a bigger impact in addressing the persistent and problematic issue on professional regulation and credentials. Mentors and industry professionals who can review immigrant credentials and validate their qualifications can support newcomers with expectations and possible next steps. Participants shared the importance of networking through volunteering and joining professional associations, advocating for equitable practices that immigrant and racialized workers, professionals, including artists, educators, and journalists receive proper remuneration and resources, and designing a clear strategy to increase the availability of industry mentors and practical pathways of opportunities toward their chosen fields.

It was also suggested that a mutual aid within immigrant communities will help alleviate financial stress for temporary residents.

Another suggestion that emerged is to creating program and resource development strategies to support and encourage professionals in the fields of law, medicine, engineering, and other professionals who require arduous processes to practice in Canada to go through the process. This will address the shortage of skilled professionals in the legal, social, and health services that the province is currently facing. Increased representation from Asian community will open doors for equitable support to community members.

## 7. Enhance Settlement Support

While advocating for re-designing immigration policies is extremely important, service providers are urged to actively engage Asian communities, encouraging them to access available opportunities and promoting greater diversity in their clientele, underscored by the message, “No Canada Without Me.”

Designing programs that accommodate newcomers with temporary status will also help provide solution to this concern such as employing international students in campus roles, such as office assistants, could offer financial support while fostering skill development and capacity building.

## 8. Capacity Building

Capacity and knowledge building on various skills and information based on the needs that were identified is a key step in addressing the challenges the community is facing. Cross cultural sharing of skills, knowledge, and programming will be beneficial for the whole community. Leadership development is emphasized through education and the active involvement of youth, seniors, and professionals, highlighting the significance of capacity building and succession planning.

More specifically, participants identified training opportunities for funding, programming, youth engagement, intergenerational initiatives and engagement in policy and systems change.

## FEEDBACK

The dialogue received overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, with many expressing enthusiasm for more intercultural, collaborative programs and events. Participants appreciated meeting new people from other Asian communities in Calgary and surrounding areas. Learning about the history, contributions, challenges and success stories of other Asian communities was also a highlight for most participants. Participants also shared that they were inspired to see and experience Asian communities coming together, the community’s increasing population and how it can collectively make a bigger impact, and the stories and history that the panel shared. Recommendations include extending the event to all other Asian communities, youth, and organizations and individuals outside the Asian community, time management, more time to connect with other Asian communities, technical improvements (sounds and slide visibility), and more time for the small group discussions.

All in all, this feedback shows that the Asian Canadian community is motivated and inspired to move forward together.



## ATTACHMENTS

- Background Paper on the History, Contributions, and Participation of Asian Canadians in Alberta (focused on Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese communities)
- Project Background Slides presented by Teresa Woo-Paw
- Community Slides by panel speakers
- Note: Full audio recording of the dialogue will be available on the ACCT Foundation website and social media platforms.

*\*Photo credits to Jom Anza*

## CONTACT

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