

In Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] territory

Bulletin December 2018

## Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques



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### Qu'en pensez-vous? What do you think?

- Let us know your thoughts about the bulletin.
- Que pensez-vous de notre journal?
- We encourage you to send in your stories and articles for upcoming newsletters in any language by the 25th of every month to:
  - [sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)
  - Écrivez-nous à  
[sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)



A happy  
and  
peaceful  
holiday season!!

## CENTRE UPDATE



### Centre Hours/heure d'ouverture

**Monday & Thursday/lundi & jeudi 9am—9pm**

**Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday/mardi, mercredi & vendredi—9am-5pm**

### **PLEASE NOTE**

### **THE CENTRE WILL BE CLOSED**

**FROM 22ND DECEMBER—6TH JANUARY INCLUSIVE.**

*Last day open, 21st December 2018. Then closed until opening on 7th January 2019*

The Centre is wheelchair accessible/Le centre est accessible aux fauteuils roulants.

**Volunteers —** If you are interested in helping out at the Centre, please contact Juvaria (Ext. 104 or juvaria.y@sawcc-ccfsa.ca) to coordinate a meeting!

**Next Executive Council Meeting:** Check January *Bulletin* for date. All SAWCC members are invited to attend these meetings.

## **Executive Council Meeting Highlights Meeting of November 29th, 2018**

-JUSTICE for Milia — 20th anniversary events discussed

-Overview of year-end party provided

-Update on FFQ Special General Assembly

### **SAWCC Bulletin -- submission guidelines:**

SAWCC members are encouraged to send submissions to the Bulletin, to share items of interest with other members. Send submissions to: [sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)

If using the post send to: SAWCC Bulletin, 1035 Rachel est, Montreal, Quebec, H2J 2J3

Submissions should reach by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month.

Submissions may be original work or reprints (with permission) and can include --

art, reports, photos, information, opinion pieces, short fiction, poetry, announcements, recipes, etc.

Publication criteria are guided by SAWCC's commitment to not negatively discriminate on the basis of physical and mental ability, religion, colour, nationality, age, sexual orientation and identity, caste, and class. Publication is further guided by the feminist ethos of sisterhood, and principles of intersectionality\*, equality, equity, and transparency. As well, material that may compromise confidentiality of individuals without their consent will not be published.

SAWCC reserves the right to select, reject or edit submissions. When authorship identified, items reflect the views of the authors.

\*Intersectionality -- the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

# Justice for Milia!



Two decades ago, in 1998, **MILIA ABRAR**, was murdered in Montreal. Till today her murderer walks free.

**JOIN US** during the 12 Days of Action to End all Forms of Violence Against Women, to remember Milia and renew our demand for justice for her.

Milia Abrar was a student at Dawson College. She was a bright and promising young woman, popular with her friends and peers, liked by her teachers and beloved by her family.

The context of her murder was a classic case of patriarchal violence, control – "If I can't have her, nobody can!" Some elders used her murder as a cautionary tale. "Beware. This is what happens to feisty young women..."

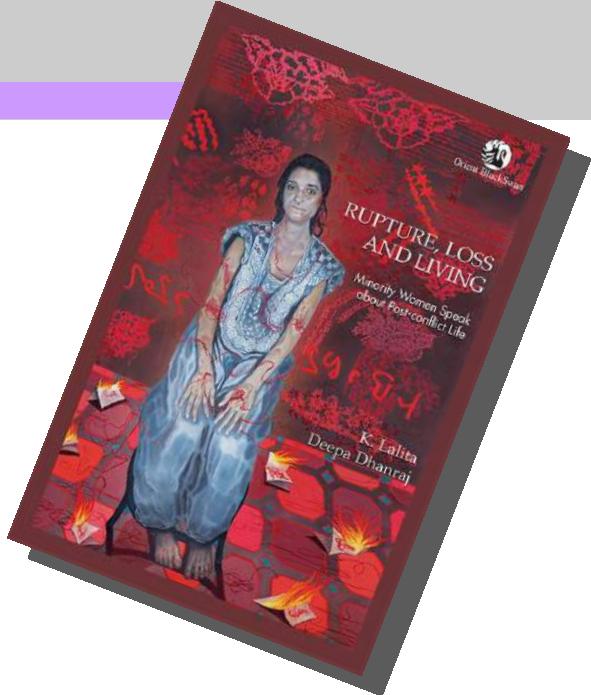
**JOIN US!**  
**-for justice for Milia**  
**-to remember and celebrate Milia**  
**-to assert our right to live our lives on our own terms**  
**-to end violence against women**

வார்வெந் கிளேங்கம்  
 स्वामीतम  
 സ്വാമീ പ്രസാദ്  
 ഫാശാൻഡ്യ  
 Bienvenue  
 Welcome

**Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December**  
**2018 • 2-4pm**  
**SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CENTRE**  
**1035 Rachel est**  
 (between Boyer & Christophe-Colomb;  
 Metro Mt-Royal and bus 11)  
*(On unceded Kanien'kehá:ka territory)*



Cont'd  
from p. 7



An example of a woman in Mumbai successfully moving into a new role after finding herself alone is Nadira. During the anti-Muslim violence in 1993, Nadira's husband and her brother-in-law disappeared, supposedly killed, but Nadira repairs bags to make a living, takes loans, and has made sure her sons will have a future. One is studying to become a doctor and the other still in school also intends to go into medicine.

"I never imagined I would be able to work and earn money," she said in an interview. "I didn't know how to sit out in the open or talk to customers. I had no experience."

What is also interesting is how before the riots some middle class secular Muslim women were non-practicing and living in mixed neighbourhoods. However, as a result of the violence they were forced into identifying first and foremost as Muslim and living in Muslim areas.

For example, Sophia Khan is lawyer and social activist in Ahmedabad who had been working on women's issues but without concern for caste or religion.

After the 2002 riots, she said, "although I had become a feminist, in the end I was only a Muslim. I mean I was reminded I am a Muslim . . . that's why I had to change my house . . . why I had to change my office . . . why my office staff left me. I am a Muslim and that's why after 2002 I took a conscious decision that I should work with Muslim women."

"When my husband died, the Hindus in our basti really helped us .. really helped with everything. Even our own people didn't help as much as the Hindus did."

Although the book has its share of women who have risen to become leaders in different ways, or have at least found ways to make a living and provide for their children, some of the women interviewed are barely hanging on, mainly because they are poor. Such is the story of Zainab Begum in Hyderabad, a woman with nine children, living in a squatter settlement. Her husband was stabbed to death during 1990 violence. However, in her case, it was Hindus in her community who came to her aid after the killing.



## Remembering Milia Abrar

December 6, 2018

CoLab (3F.43)

9:30 am

On this year's national day to end violence against women and girls, we invite you to join us in remembering the life of a Dawson student Milia Abrar who was murdered 20 years ago in Angrignon park.



## SAWCC in Laval



SAWCC's participation and contribution to this event was greatly appreciated!

### DETERMINED HOPE — a poem by Jennifer Chew

She wondered if he knew  
About the flight today,  
She'd tried to act her normal self  
To guard her plan  
To get a-w-a-y.  
  
Each time before he'd brought her back  
And made her swear she'd stay,  
He'd threatened, cajoled, swore his love,  
But quickly lapsed  
Into his bullying, brutal ways.  
  
Today, she hoped, would be different.  
Whatever - she had to try,  
Her life was being drained while she breathed  
And bled,  
She wanted to live, not die.  
  
She slung on her backpack,  
Kissed him, tousled his hair,  
And to the door, she made her way,  
She turned the knob, sweat covering her palm,  
Looked back, smiled, waved.  
He raised a cigarette laden hand,  
Dismissive, distant, preoccupied.  
She pulled the door shut and stood outside,  
Her breath caught in her throat,  
She downed the stairs, two at a time,  
And was soon out the front door.  
  
She imagined his eyes boring through her back  
From the window on their floor,

She stopped, pretending calm  
And checked her watch,  
She had two minutes before  
The bus was due.  
He knew the exact time,  
And so, when she walked fast,  
He would not question her speed.  
Her heart was booming, her thoughts racing,  
Would he, would he not  
Follow her in his car?  
She glanced out the bus,  
She did not see blue,  
But she still felt uneasy,  
With him, one never knew.  
She got off at her office complex,  
And took the elevator up,  
She called him, "Hi honey, I've arrived",  
He replied with one word, "Good".  
On an impulse, instead of the plane,  
She decided to take a bus,  
To where, she was not sure.  
She would continue to journey,  
Until she felt secure,  
But even then, she would never know.

## SAWCC DAUGHTER , NIVATHA BALENDRA

### Finalist in WOMEN CleanTech Program

**Nivatha** is one of six women have been selected to compete for a \$1-million grand prize in the finals of a national competition to find Canada's most promising female cleantech entrepreneur.

The six finalists in the Women in Cleantech Challenge were selected at a live pitch competition at MaRS Discovery District in Toronto by a panel of five judges that included author Margaret Atwood, who is a prominent advocate for the advancement of women, as well as experts in clean technology, STEM [science, technology, engineering, math], business and environmental issues.

The finalists will now participate in an intensive 30-month business accelerator program before competing for the \$1-million prize to invest in their business.

The jury had planned to name five finalists, but increased it to six because of the high-calibre of ideas presented.

The other five finalists are:

- **Evelyn Allen (Ontario) ...**
- **Julie Angus (British Columbia) ...**
- **Amanda Hall (Alberta) ...**
- **Alexandra Tavasoli (Ontario) ...**
- **Luna Yu (Ontario) ...**

**Nivatha** has developed a sustainable way of remediating oil contamination, such as spills or tailing ponds, using biodegradable lipids produced by a specific strain of bacteria.

The lipids are capable of breaking down hydrocarbons in a sustainable manner, unlike conventional approaches that rely on chemical detergents that are harmful to the environment.



Each of the winners will receive support including:

- business incubator support (valued at \$300,000) from MaRS;
- the opportunity to work with federal labs to develop their technology (up to \$250,000 in value); and
- an annual \$115,000 stipend for living and travel expenses for the two-and-a-half-year duration of the challenge.

<https://www.womenincleantech.ca/2018/09/19/women-in-cleantech-challenge-selects-six-finalists-at-live-pitch-session/>  
<https://www.womenincleantech.ca/semi-finalists/>

## BOOK REVIEW by Sheila McLeon Arnopoulos

*Brilliant Book About Muslim Women in the Wake of Targeted Violence by Hindu Fundamentalists*

### Rupture, Loss and Living – Minority Women Speak about Post-Conflict Life,

K. Lalita, Deepa Dhanraj, 434 pp. 2017, Orient BlackSwan Press.

Since the arrival as prime minister in 2014 of Narendra Modi, head of the Bharatiya Janata (BJP) Hindu fundamentalist party in India, there have been continued reports of violence against the minority Muslim community. Out of a total population of over one billion mostly Hindus, Muslims number roughly 200 million.

The most recent case, which has made world news, consisted of a rape and murder of an eight-year-old Muslim girl in the Muslim-majority Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir.

However, this targeting of Muslims in India by fundamentalist Hindus, some of them politicians and police, has a long history.

It goes back to 1992/93 in Mumbai, the 1980s and 1990s in Hyderabad, and most viciously in 2002 in Gujarat where Hindu mobs on trumped up charges, killed more than 2,000 Muslims. At the time, Narendra Modi was Gujarat's chief minister of a BJP- led government .

While researching the Self-Employed Women's Organization in Gujarat for my book on microcredit called Saris on Scooters – How Microcredit has Changed Village India, I was by chance in Ahmedabad in 2002 during the violence. I visited refugee camps filled with terrified survivors and wrote about their experiences for a Canadian newspaper.

Now comes a brilliant and timely book by K. Lalita and Deepa Dhanraj, two well-known Indian feminists and writers, which looks at the way poor Muslim women in particular have forged a place in their communities in the aftermath of the violence.

K.Lalita, the head of the Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies at Osmania University in Hyderabad, wrote We Were Making History - Life Stories of Women in the Telangana People's Struggle. She is also co-editor of a magnificent two-volume compilation of Indian women's writing from 600 B.C. to the present.

Deepa Dhanraj is a documentary filmmaker and feminist researcher and writer.

Together they have crafted a book based on the experiences of seventy-five Muslim women survivors of communal violence. They have focused upon nineteen of them under the themes of I Began to See the World for What it is, Loss and Trauma, Negotiating Survival and Livelihood, and Claiming Accountability, Seeking Justice.

What I found most poignant in the stories told by the women is the way violence and dislocation forced many poor Muslim women into assuming new family and community roles that have led to empowerment.

In Gujarat, for example, Sabah, in her early twenties, with two young children, lost her home and her husband because of the violence. Her husband ran a garment making unit and she never left the house. However, after the violence, living in a relief colony, she made money first as a dishwasher, and then learned sewing skills and became a piecework entrepreneur training others.

"I wish to expand my business and make it as big as what my husband used to have," she said. She intends to teach "up to fifty" women how to do the work, "but only those who are widowed like me." In doing that, she says she and the women will be able to feed and educate their children.

However, this took place against a backdrop of rape, murder, and the wholesale destruction of Muslim homes and businesses wrought by Hindu mobs, including next-door neighbours, with the collaboration of police and the state government. In the aftermath came tented relief camps and concrete rehabilitation centres, some of which still exist.

## LETTRE OUVERTE

POUR DIFFUSION IMMÉDIATE



LETTRE OUVERTE  
POUR DIFFUSION IMMÉDIATE

### L'R SONNE L'ALARME

#### DES SERVICES DE PREMIÈRE LIGNE NÉGLIGÉS EN VIOLENCES FAITES AUX FEMMES

Montréal, le 29 novembre 2018

Dans le cadre des 12 jours d'actions contre les violences faites aux femmes, L'R des centres de femmes du Québec interpelle le gouvernement de monsieur Legault : les centres de femmes effectuent des fonctions de première ligne auprès des femmes victimes de multiples formes de violences, mais n'ont pas le financement adéquat pour le faire, une situation alarmante tant pour les femmes qui ont besoin de ces services, que pour les intervenantes de première ligne, ou que pour les organismes.

#### Dix ans sans augmentation spécifique

La dernière augmentation du financement de la mission des centres de femmes remonte à 2008. Ce rehaussement avait été accordé précisément sur la base de la reconnaissance du travail de première ligne que les centres réalisent matière de violences faites aux femmes. Or depuis dix ans, le contexte a changé, portant avec lui une plus grande propension des femmes à dénoncer les violences qu'elles subissent tout en limitant leur accès, d'autre part, à des services sociaux accessibles pour les accueillir.

#### Ressources sous-financées

Les femmes en situation de crise, celles qui ont des défis de santé mentale, celles qui se demandent si elles vivent de la violence, qui ont besoin d'information, d'accompagnement ou de référence vers des ressources spécialisées, elles font d'abord appel aux centres de femmes. Les centres ont pour mission de rendre ces services gratuits à la population, mais leur mission comporte également d'autres volets qui, présentement,

L'R des centres de femmes demande au Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux de prendre acte de ce constat : les centres de femmes assument un mandat d'une grande importance pour la santé publique et ne sont pas financés suffisamment pour le faire.

#### Porte d'entrée des femmes victimes de violences multiples

Les femmes vivant des situations complexes liées à différentes difficultés, souvent simultanées (pauvreté, violence physique, problème de santé mentale, itinérance, etc.), sont référées par le CLSC ou par le service téléphonique d'infosanté ou d'infosocial, directement aux centres de femmes. De plus, sachant qu'environ 70 % des femmes victimes de violence conjugale ne vont pas en maison d'hébergement, que les services externes qu'elles offrent s'adressent principalement aux ex-hébergées et que les maisons ont des listes d'attente importante pour ces services, les centres de femmes sont donc des ressources indispensables. En effet, les centres les accueillent une à une, les écoutent et les accompagnent vers la sécurité, que ce soit en les référant à des ressources spécialisées ou en les soutenant dans la création d'un scénario de protection. Elles font ce travail avec les victimes de violence conjugale, mais aussi avec les victimes d'agression sexuelle.

D'ailleurs, l'augmentation des dénonciations est aussi observée dans les centres de femmes. Faut-il rappeler le mouvement de dénonciation #MoiAussi ? Statistiques Canada estime l'augmentation des dénonciations d'agressions sexuelles à 61 % après #MoiAussi. Si vous ajoutez à cela la difficulté accrue, suivant les politiques d'austérité, d'accéder à des services adéquats en santé mentale, vous pouvez imaginer que les centres de femmes, ressources de première ligne pour femmes vivant toutes les formes de violences, sont à bout de souffle.

#### Les généralistes de la condition féminine

Les centres de femmes, avec leur approche globale des conditions de vie des femmes et leurs services sans rendez-vous, sont les généralistes spécialisées en condition féminine. Ils rejoignent annuellement de 250 000 à 300 000 femmes.

Présents dans toutes les régions du Québec, même là où d'autres services sociaux sont inexistant, ils sont souvent la première porte franchie par des femmes en situation de crise. Ils utilisent une approche globale, c'est-à-dire qu'ils refusent de découper la réalité des femmes en mille et une problématiques isolées les unes des autres. Cette approche s'appuie sur ce que les femmes perçoivent de leur situation et de leurs expériences : elle est orientée vers la reprise du pouvoir des femmes,



Following on the tabling of the resolution in support of women being free to dress the way they choose without interference by the state, community, etc. that occurred at the special general assembly of the FFQ on 28th October, there has been an outpouring of dissidence one of which was the production by some women of the sticker (to the left) to express this dissidence. It's printed by Katasoho. Many thanks to them! All are invited to share this image in solidarity with women who are being excluded in this way. And this is all also happening in the context of the CAQ's 'Charter light'!

leur autonomie, le développement de leur confiance en elles et leur capacité d'agir.

Besoins de 25 millions \$ de plus par année

L'R des centres de femmes du Québec demande au Gouvernement du Québec d'augmenter le financement des 125 centres de femmes et de L'R des centres de femmes du Québec d'un total de 24 706 559 \$ par année, à répartir entre tous les centres de femmes de la province, en priorisant les centres de femmes dramatiquement sous-financés. Avec ces 25 millions de plus, les centres de femmes pourraient : embaucher une travailleuse de plus par organisme ; améliorer les conditions de travail des travailleuses déjà à l'emploi ; répondre à la demande de services de première ligne aux femmes qui en ont besoin. Cette demande s'inscrit dans le cadre de la campagne CASSSH (communautaire autonome en santé et services sociaux).

Les membres du comité de coordination de L'R :

Stéphanie Vallée, Lanaudière  
 Isabelle Gallant, Bas-St-Laurent  
 Joannie Boivin, Abitibi-Témiscamingue  
 Vanessa Bouchard, Saguenay — Lac-Saint-Jean  
 Christiane Bourgault, Chaudière-Appalaches  
 Monique Brisebois, Outaouais  
 Christine Drolet, Montréal et Laval  
 Jeanine Fournier, Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine  
 Ariane Gauthier-Tremblay, Capitale nationale  
 Nancy Maher, Laurentides  
 Geneviève Legault, Mauricie et du Centre-du-Québec  
 Carolle Mathieu, Montérégie  
 Nadia Morissette, Côte-Nord  
 Marilyn Ouellet, Estrie  
 Marie-Claude Tremblay, Nord-du-Québec

Les co-coordonnatrices de L'R :

Katia Atif  
 Odile Boisclair  
 Valérie Gilker-Létourneau  
 Sylvie St-Amand

**Buy SAWCC Cards and help us  
fundraise! \$10 for a packet of 5 cards.**

**They are handy to have around. The packet  
of 5 also makes a nice little gift!**

Inscribed on  
the reverse of  
the cards



**SAWCC Fund-raises to keep doing what we do —  
empowering women and girls, advocating for our com-  
munities, combatting exclusion and marginaliza-  
tion.... Any donation of \$20 or more will receive a tax-  
deductible receipt! All contributions big and small are  
welcome!!**

## Info for members and centre users

Jan 2019 till March 2019 activity calendar would be published soon and will be on our web page. It will also be sent to mem-  
bers before the holidays.

## SAWCC ACTIVITIES FOR DECEMBER 2018 & January 2019

DATE & DAY	NAME OF ACTIVITY
DECEMBER 2018	
Sun. 2nd December	JUSTICE for MILIA & 6th December commemoration 2-4pm
Thur. 6th December	Dawson College remembers Milia on the occasion of 6th
Sun. 9th December	Year-End Party, CEDA, 1-4pm
JANUARY 2019	
Tuesday 22th	Intro to SAWCC- Needs' analysis of our participants
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup>	Winter comfort foods & recipe exchange
Thursday 31 <sup>st</sup> 11-3pm	Potluck & a movie "MOM" Lunch 10:30-1:00



Dear SAWCC Friends;

We wish you a great holiday season and peaceful holidays and hope that the year 2019 brings peace and happiness to all of us.

A very Happy New Year!

Best wishes,

From SAWCC Staff & Executive Council



Chers / Chères amis de la CCFSA,

Nous vous souhaitons de joyeuses et heureuses fêtes de fin d'année et espérons que l'année 2019 sera porteuse de paix et de bonheur pour nous tous.

Une très bonne année!

Méilleurs vœux,

Du personnel et du conseil exécutif de la CCFSA

### Centre Communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

South Asian Women's Community Centre  
1035, rue Rachel est, 3ième étage.  
Montréal, QC H2J 2J5

Phone: 514-528-8812  
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E-mail: sawcc@bellnet.ca

37 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2018

[www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca](http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca)



# DECEMBER 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
Justice for Milia	2	3	4	5	Dawson College remembers Milia	6
Year-End Party	9	10	11	12	13	14
	16	17	18	19	20	21
	23	24	25	26	27	28
	30	31	1	2	3	4
C E N T R E I S C L O S E D						
December 2018 Calendar						
5						

## Membership Renewal

Please renew your SAWCC membership to ensure you get all the mailings and can participate fully in the organization.

Changes to your information (address, phone number, etc. email, etc.)? Download the membership form from our website, insert the correct information and send it along with your membership dues.

<http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca/EN/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Membership-form.pdf>

Please mail cheque to: SAWCC, 1035 Rachel est, Montréal, QC, H2J 2J5.

Make cheque payable to: "South Asian Women's Community Centre".

Indicate in the note section: "membership".

### Membership dues:

\$15.00 (for salaried)

\$7.00 (for non-salaried)

*Making a donation to SAWCC at the same time?* Donations of \$20 or more will receive a tax-deductible receipt (for 2018 tax year). If including a donation indicate as well the amount towards "donation".