

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

Major funding from the Toronto Arts Council, as well as sponsorship from the Islamic Institute of Toronto, Ansarco, Compass Books, the Noor Cultural Centre, and Fairshare Marketing allowed us to engage Jawad Jafry as an artist-in-residence to conduct a documentary film training programme for 12 Muslim youth, “Giving Ourselves a Voice (GOV).” The workshops were conducted in the first two weekends of January 2012. This was a community development project and our objective was to help foster media skills and promote the civic participation of young Muslims in Canada. The workshop was conducted by five media professionals with a range of production experience. They have worked with CBC, OMNI TV, Global TV, Vision TV, CTS and other media outlets. The participants learned about pre-production, production and post-production as it pertains to documentary filmmaking. The end result is two five minute documentaries about two young Canadian Muslim women.

Launched to a crowd of around 60 community members at Ryerson College in May, the GOV launch included a screening of the *Neglected Voices* (NV) films (produced in 2011), a panel discussion afterwards with 2 NV interviewees, the filmmaker Jawad Jafry, a youth trainee from the GOV project, and myself from TTI. Dr Jasmin Zine, whose own research looks at Canadian Muslim youth and the use of art as resistance to racism in Canada gave the keynote address. The event was emceed by up and coming talent spoken word artist Ahmed Saleh, who was also a NV interviewee.

The entire *Neglected Voices* (NV) films were launched in February as part of the University of Toronto’s Student Union’s “Expression Against Oppression” week, with a panel discussion afterwards with filmmaker Jawad Jafry and myself from TTI. The NV films have also been screened at MuslimFest in 2011, and at the Islamic Foundation’s Youth Tarbiyah conference in June 2012.

Also, in June, we released our first “Working Paper: The Right to Testify in Niqab in a Sexual Assault Case, Supreme Court Case: N.S. v. R,” by Lina Elnachef, MPA. Elnachef concluded that “[t]his case is about *Charter* rights, inclusion and access to justice,” and argues “that N.S. should be entitled to wear her niqab. In very exceptional circumstances, if the judge finds that the niqab hinders the fair trial process, N.S.’ religious requirement should be accommodated by the courts to the fullest extent possible.”

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