

# MOMENTUM



**South Asian Americans  
Leading Together (SAALT)**  
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## IMPACT OF SAALT IN 2012

20,000 outreach materials  
about the elections  
distributed to South Asian  
community members



4,900 service hours  
contributed by over 3,000  
*Be the Change* volunteers



70 appearances in media by  
SAALT about key issues



22 non-profit advocates from  
*National Coalition of South  
Asian Organizations* received  
leadership development  
training to sustain and  
expand their work



15 college students  
convened in Washington, DC  
for SAALT's *Young Leaders  
Institute*

**South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) is a national, nonpartisan, non-profit organization that elevates the voices and perspectives of South Asian individuals and organizations to build a more just and inclusive society in the United States.**

## CHANGING THE DEBATE



SAALT's Executive Director, Deepa Iyer, convenes a press conference following a hearing about hate crimes in the U.S. Senate on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

On August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the nation woke up to a terrible tragedy, when a gurudwara in Oak Creek, Wisconsin was attacked during Sunday prayer, leaving six people dead. SAALT played multiple roles in the ensuing days and months: to be a support organization to Sikh organizations and individuals impacted by the attacks; to coordinate the field of South Asian, Muslim, and Arab American organizations and allies around the country to identify next steps related to policy and media messaging; and to be a critical voice in informing and shaping public opinion. On September 19<sup>th</sup>, SAALT organized a press conference following a U.S. Senate hearing on hate crimes. The hearing, chaired by Senator Durbin (IL), and the press conference drew a diverse group of organizations who pledged to eliminate hate

in all of its forms. In addition, SAALT placed opinion editorials in the *New Jersey Star Ledger*, the *Detroit Free Press* and *USA Today*. **Our key message: we must all create neighborhoods, schools, and places of worship where everyone feels safe and welcomed.**

## BUILDING A LEADERSHIP PIPELINE

*"Along with a new set of strong connections, I left YLI well-versed in the process of policy change... Through further trainings and discussions with the SAALT team, I was able to construct a concrete action plan to carry out on my college campus." Priya Kamath, Sophomore, University of Florida*

SAALT plays a critical role in developing new leaders across the country and across generations. Just this past year, our *Youth Leadership Institute* (YLI) brought together fifteen dynamic college students who are interested in long-term civic engagement and political work. Through four days of trainings and networking opportunities on Capitol Hill, SAALT introduced 18 to 22 year olds to how policy is created at the federal level, and the role of organizations such as SAALT. Now, our young alumni are working on their own campuses and communities to implement the ideas that they generated at SAALT's *Youth Leadership Institute*.

In addition to building leadership with young people, SAALT also coordinates trainings among non-profit advocates who are part of the *National Coalition of South Asian Organizations* (NCSO). Through leadership buildings such as *We Build Community* (WBC), non-profit staff receive skills such as strategic planning, program evaluation, fiscal management, and media training.

**Tamia Pervez, Policy Organizer at South Asian Network in Southern California, comments, "Our participation in the WBC project is certainly going to help us change our work with our community members, in that we will be including information we learned here about racial equity, systems analysis and systems change in our leadership development curriculum."**



Two participants in the *Young Leaders Institute* interview each other at a communications training.

## THANK YOU FOR MAKING OUR WORK POSSIBLE

Atlantic Philanthropies

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Ford Foundation

Four Freedoms Fund

North American South Asian American Bar Association

Open Society Institute

Security and Rights Collaborative

Sodexo

Southwest Airlines

...and all our individual donors and supporters around the country!

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## ENABLING A MORE INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY

With Census 2010 numbers indicating the South Asian presence has reached 3.4 million, South Asians are increasingly becoming a visible and recognizable community in the U.S. SAALT was on the streets and on the phones this fall, ensuring that South Asians were informed at the polls. Our non-partisan *South Asian Vote!* campaign targeted South Asians in New York City, New Jersey, Texas, Chicago, the DC region and California with information about the how's and why's of voting. Through our campaign, we distributed translated materials to South Asians at Navratri and Eid functions; presented information to community centers and places of worship; and utilized community media to spread the word about why we need to vote. SAALT plans to remain engaged with the issues that matter to our community after the elections with Congress and the Administration.



A young SAALT member gets out the vote

## BE THE CHANGE NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE



Volunteers clean up the park during the 2012 *Be the Change National Day of Service*

On Saturday, October 6th, over 3,000 volunteers answered Mahatma Gandhi's inspirational challenge to "be the change you wish to see in the world" through *Be the Change National Day of Service*, which took place in 45 cities and campuses nationwide. Now in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, *Be the Change* offers students, senior citizens and professionals to come together to provide service in their neighborhoods and communities. This year's sites included the American Diabetes Walk in Philadelphia, the San Francisco Food Bank, Al Lopez Park in Tampa, the Keiro facilities in Seattle, and voter registration drives nationwide.

*"Being South Asian and celebrating Mahatma Gandhi's life at school shows that what he did lives on."*  
Farhana, University of Oklahoma

## SAVE THE DATE: 2013 National South Asian Summit

Join us in the spring of 2013 for the 4th National South Asian Summit, a gathering of community and business leaders, professionals, students and activists. The Summit will kick off with the Changemakers' Reception, followed by two days of panel discussions and the inaugural meeting of SAALT's Business Roundtable.



Community leaders at the 2011 National South Asian Summit

## GET INVOLVED

- Join Our Mailing List
- Invite us to speak at your event
- Donate to help make this work possible
- Volunteer for a SAALT event

Visit [www.saalt.org](http://www.saalt.org) today or email us at [info@saalt.org](mailto:info@saalt.org) to get involved.