

2013 National South Asian Summit
In Pursuit of Justice
April 19 - 22, 2013 | Washington DC

The National South Asian Summit 2013 was hosted by South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) and the South Asian Law Student Association (SALSA) at American University Washington College of Law as part of the Founder's Day Celebration.

2013 National South Asian Summit Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 375 people—representing 18 states across the US, as well as Canada and the UK, and over 30 South Asian community-based organizations—gathered in Washington, DC on April 19-22 for the 2013 National South Asian Summit.
- The fourth biannual National South Asian Summit brought together diverse activists, advocates, allies and community members for four days of advocacy, peer exchange, skills-building, networking, and strategizing.
- The third ChangeMakers Awards reception, featuring Pramila Jayapal, honored four individuals and programs advancing social justice
- The Summit enabled participants to bring local voices and experiences to the national level in key ways:
 - A congressional briefing with community leaders about data on immigration reform as it relates to South Asians, client stories of struggles due to our current immigration system, and calls to action.
 - A briefing by Administration and government about immigration reform, health care access, and hate crimes, with panelists from The White House, U.S Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
 - Hill visits to 14 legislative offices to advocate around immigration reform.
- Members of the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (founded in 2008 and coordinated by SAALT) convened to strategize around gender justice issues.



"From community storytelling to digital organizing, immigration policy to caring for seniors, the National South Asian Summit was a place where I could learn, be challenged, and meet wonderful new collaborators and friends from across the country."

- Anirvan Chatterjee
South Asian Radical History Walking Tour
San Francisco, CA

- Over 175 community members, advocates, and allies attended SAALT's third ChangeMakers Awards Reception to honor individuals and organizations that have made significant advances in social justice among South Asians in the U.S.
- This year's keynote speaker was **Pramila Jayapal**, founder of One America and Distinguished Taconic Fellow at the Center for Community Change and a Distinguished Fellow at the University of Washington Law School, who shared moving remarks about the importance of immigrant organizing and advocacy.



“We have to create the space for ourselves to be heard, to demand that space.”

- Pramila Jayapal

- This year's awards recognized four individuals and projects that have empowered their communities and uplifted community voices in the U.S.:

Sukhjinder Kaur Dhariwal is a Sikh American public school educator from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Following the mass shooting at the Oak Creek gurudwara on August 5, 2012, Ms. Kaur emerged as a prominent and powerful advocate for the Sikh American community.

Bupendra Ram is a student activist who organizes at the intersection of the undocumented, queer and Asian Pacific Islander (API) communities in California.

Silk Road Rising was founded as a creative response to the attacks of September 11, 2001 by Malik Gillani and Jamil Khouri, with the aim of countering the negative representation of AMEMSA peoples. Mosque Alert is a first of its kind online civic engagement and new play development process that illuminates the challenges faced by Muslim Americans when trying to build houses of worship.

Dr. Aparna Sharma [posthumously] was one of the leaders of the South Asian Progressive Action Collective for over eleven years, and a long-time advocate for immigrant and women's rights. She played a critical role in SAPAC's civic engagement, art and activism, anti-communalism, and bridge building in Chicago and beyond. Dr. Sharma passed away on February 9, 2013.

“I am constantly inspired by the resilience of our community.”

- Sukhjinder Kaur Dhariwal

“Just as I have been inspired, I hope others will have the courage to come out and tell their story.”

- Bupendra Ram



- Over 375 people from across the US, Canada, and the UK attended the Summit on April 20-21 in Washington, DC.
- Summit participants and offerings reflected rich diversity in race/ethnicity, country of origin, language, socioeconomic status, sociopolitical
- SAALT issued a Call for Proposals and selected session ideas from over 100 submissions from community members, partners, and staff.



“As a person who has attended every South Asian Summit organized by SAALT to date, I continue to be extremely grateful to learn about the amazing work being done by South Asians to change our communities. The Summit gives me an opportunity to meet other South Asian change-makers throughout the nation and world, connect with them and strategize on how we can do our work collaboratively. This weekend was emotionally challenging, as well as validating and inspiring.”

Aparna Bhattacharya
Raksha
Atlanta, GA

- For the first time, the Summit offered tracks to assist with navigating 40+ plenaries, panels, workshops, and caucuses
 - **Issues:** Issues that affect South Asians in the U.S.
 - **Skills:** Individual skills and organizational capacity-building skills
 - **Strategies:** Better practices and tools
- At least 85% of respondents scored each session a 4 or 5—based on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being the highest score.
- Some of the most successful Summit sessions, based on participant feedback, were the following:
 - **Speed Networking: Pitch Your Idea to Funders/Major Gift Officers**—offered again by popular demand— provided an opportunity for participants to discuss funding ideas and challenges and receive immediate feedback from a representatives from Open Society Institute, Environmental Defense Fund, Proteus, and A Better Chance.
 - **How To Win The Internet For Social Justice** encouraged participants to take their interest in digital media to the next level and explored how we leverage our power and numbers online to make real change in the world.
 - **Community Storytellers: Documenting History and Experience in the South Asian American Community** explored the four different ways to tell a community's story and history—from visual artifacts and pictures to place-based storytelling and personal narratives--and provided tips to become a community storyteller.



- **In the Face of Xenophobia: Addressing the Bullying of South Asian and Muslim Youth in U.S. Schools and Communities**
shared new curriculum and other resources, materials, and knowledge of community organizations in order to educate and prevent instances of bullying and intimidation.
- **The Time is Now: How South Asians are Affected by Immigration Reform**
examined comprehensive immigration reform and discussed the variety of possible reform, identified how South Asian Americans are impacted by immigration reform, which issues uniquely impact South Asians, and which need to be pushed forward.
- **Law Enforcement in the Community: Exploring Multiple Strategies for Engagement**
discussed the complicated relationship between South Asian communities and law enforcement, particularly in the aftermath of September 11th. This session explored multiple strategies used by the South Asian community with law enforcement, including education and training, advocacy, and organizing.



“The National South Asian Summit will be remembered by attendees as one of the most inclusive civil rights leadership and community rights activist conferences hosted this year. In addition to American Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Nepali, Sri Lankan, and Maldivian activists taking center stage, Hispanic, Asian, Middle Eastern, white and black community leaders from all backgrounds, faiths, and orientations were there to share their experiences challenging society and government to respect the rights of all Americans. The level of shared insights and energy were empowering, and in a year's time when I need to recharge my passion and reason for being a social activist. I can look forward to the next summit.”

Robert McCaw
Council on American-Islamic Relations
Washington, DC

Summit 2013 Sessions

Issue-based sessions	Skills-building sessions	Strategy sessions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Asian Momentum: Beyond the 2012 Elections • Nine Months After Oak Creek: The Rise in Hate Violence & Recommendations for Change • Learning from Racial Justice Movements Here and Abroad • DREAMers: From Personal Struggle to Policy Victory • Education Equity: Trends Affecting South Asian Students • From International Attention to Local Solutions: Gender-Based Violence in the United States • Health Equity: Navigating Reform, Systems, and Disparities • Identity as an After-Thought: Inclusivity of Indo-Caribbean and Diaspora Communities in South Asian Organizing Narratives • Law Enforcement in the Community: Exploring Multiple Strategies for Engagement • Meeting the Needs of Recent Immigrants and Refugees • Profiling and Surveillance of the Muslim Community • South Asian Seniors: Issues of Concern & Strategies for Engagement • The Time is Now: How South Asians are Affected by Immigration Reform • We Hold Up Half the Sky: Immigrant Women and Social Change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Leadership: What is “Good Governance” for Social Change Organizations? • Building Sustainable Organizations Through Diversifying Our Funding • Doing Our Own Work: South Asian Americans and Anti-Racist Accountability in the Movement • How To Win The Internet For Social Justice • I Care About the Cause: How Can I Help? • Make Your Voice Heard: How to Engage in Legislative Advocacy • Managing Organizational Transitions and Turn-Over • Speaking With Conviction: Spokesperson Training 101 • Speed Networking: Pitch Your Idea to Funders/Major Gift Officers • Your Cover Story: Pitching to Reporters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing Art to the Struggle • Building Multi-Racial Political Alliances in the United States: Lessons from South Africa, United Kingdom, and the Caribbean • Community Storytellers: Documenting History and Experience in the South Asian American Community • Data Driven Social Change • Education Equity: Trends Affecting South Asian Students • Faith & Social Justice: Strengths, stigmas, and possibilities of social justice through a faith lens • Filling Your Cup Before Pouring for Others: Self Care for Activists • Immigrants and People of Color Building Power • In the Face of Xenophobia: Addressing the Bullying of South Asian and Muslim Youth in U.S. Schools and Communities • Integrating the Male Voice into Domestic Violence Work • Language, Rights, & Community • Law Enforcement in the Community: Exploring Multiple Strategies for Engagement • LGBTQ Movement Building: Intersection and Opportunity for South Asian LGBTQ Community Members & Allies
Caucuses		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DREAMers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively Challenging Discriminatory, Anti-Immigrant Laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Asian Queer Community-Building

- The Summit provided a national coordinated effort for South Asian community members to meet with policymakers in Congress in order to raise issues affecting the community through a progressive framework.
- Over 75 people attended two briefings:
 - A congressional briefing with community leaders about data on immigration reform as it relates to South Asians, client stories of struggles due to our currently broken immigration system, and calls to action
 - A briefing by the Administration and government officials about immigration reform, health care access, and hate crimes, with panelists from The White House, U.S Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
- Harnessing the power of community members who came from diverse regions around the country, attendees participated in meetings with the staff of 14 key Congressional offices, both in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. Participants advocated for much-needed policy reforms around immigration as they relate specifically to South Asian community members.
- Over 50 community members and leaders were inspired and heartened by the commitment of Congressional offices to immigration reform and their willingness to hear the concerns of South Asian communities, particularly related to the family immigration system and the need for an inclusive and effective profiling prohibition in immigration reform. Hill visits included the following offices:

Rep. Becerra
Sen. Bennet
Rep. Bera
Rep. Carter
Rep. Crowley

Sen. Durbin
Sen. Feinstein
Rep. Gutierrez
Rep. Honda
Rep. Jackson Lee

Rep. Pelosi
Sen. Reid
Sen. Rubio
Sen. Schumer



“Every once in a while, I need a reminder that I can be so much more than just a lawyer, that I can serve communities through multi-faceted advocacy, and that it can be fulfilling and joyful. I need to be reminded that there are wonderful people across the country doing phenomenal, progressive, community-based work with sincerity, hope and optimism. I need to be reminded that I am a part of a large community of people with non-traditional career paths, and that it is not only OK to have such a path, it is crucial for social change.”

**Amol Sinha
NYCLU
New York, NY**



MEDIA

Media Hits

- SAALT Summit: ‘We’re In This Thing Together’. *Asian Fortune*, (May 6, 2013)
- United Sikhs Policy Advocate speaks at 2013 National South Asian Summit. *Sikh24.com*, (May 7, 2013)
- Leadership lessons at the National South Asian Summit. *India Abroad*, (May 10, 2013)
- South Asian Leaders Conference Dwells on Boston Tragedy, Aftermath. *India Times*, (April 26, 2013)
- SAYA! at SAALT South Asia Summit. *South Asian Youth in Action*, (April 29, 2013)
- SAALT Summit Inspires DC AALEAD Youth. *Asian American Lead*, (April 25, 2013)
Got Privilege? Social Justice Lens on Working with Clients-Reflection from SAALT Summit 2013. *Counselors Helping (South) Asian/Indians*, (May 3, 2013)
- South Asian Men Addressing Domestic Violence. *Counselors Helping (South) Asian/Indians*, (May 2, 2013).
Reflections On Workshop At The SAALT Summit: The Importance Of Refilling Your Cup Before Helping Others. *Helping (South) Asian/Indians*, (May 1, 2013).
- In Pursuit of Justice, the 2013 SAALT Summit. *Helping (South) Asian/Indians*, (April 29, 2013).

Social Media

- 1679 Twitter followers
- SAALT posted 245 Summit tweets
- The Summit hashtag #NSAS2013 was used over 400 times
- 2274 Facebook likes
- 43 Facebook posts related to the Summit

NEXT STEPS

We anticipate that next steps will differ depending on individual and organizational interests. A range of suggestions were offered at the Summit and in evaluations, such as:

- Continuing to share information among organizations regarding best practices and organizational development.
- Launching the second year of the “We Build Community” initiative with selected NCSO organizational partners to provide technical assistance, training and sub-grants to ensure that groups can better engage on issues in their communities through advocacy, organizing, and communications strategies.
- Identifying new ways to collaborate and build bridges with South Asian organizations and allies in the broader immigrant community at the local, regional, and national levels.
- Continue the dialogue with community members and organizations as immigration reform moves forward.
- Organizing collectively around immigration, racial profiling, housing, violence against women, bullying, LGBTQ, and economic justice.



- Applying innovative approaches involving community voices and inclusive perspectives to document community stories through narratives, film, art, and new media.
- Connecting district members and facilitating dialogues at the local level with policymakers.
- Coordinating future local advocacy trainings and in-district Congressional visits to foster local relationships and increase pressure from the field on federal policy issues.
- Connecting resources and experts with community-based organizations.
- Identifying opportunities for community education around immigration reform. SAALT will be connecting with Summit participants in the months to come in various ways at the local level, national webinars, and opportunities for trainings and collaborations.
- As immigration reform moves forward this summer, SAALT plans to engage in four town halls in Washington, Detroit, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Houston. SAALT will collaborate with local groups in the coordination of these town halls in an effort to provide an opportunity for local community members to engage in the immigration debate, understand the progress and current outcomes, and learn ways in which to raise their voices and impact immigration reform their community needs may be addressed.
- Convening the fifth South Asian Summit in 2015.



All photography credited to Les Talusan



South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) is a national, non-partisan, 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.

SPONSORS

The 2013 National South Asian Summit was generously supported by:



With generous support from the Ford Foundation, the Four Freedoms Fund, the Security and Rights Collaborative, Open Society Foundations, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and Atlantic Philanthropies.