

# South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT) Three-Year Strategic Plan, 2010-2012<sup>1</sup>

## MISSION

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.

SAALT's strategies include conducting public policy analysis and advocacy; building partnerships with South Asian organizations and allies; mobilizing communities to take action; and developing leadership for social change. Our program areas include: **Community Outreach and Mobilization; Policy Change; Be the Change/Leadership Development; and Partnerships.**

## VALUES OR OPERATING PRINCIPLES

- We believe in advancing equality, civic participation, and civil and human rights using a progressive social justice framework.
- Through our work, we seek to identify and eliminate systemic and institutional policies that can lead to inequity based on race, national origin, religion, immigration or citizenship status, gender, and sexual orientation.
- We seek to facilitate the emergence of a South Asian American identity that transcends generational, religious, ethnic and class-based boundaries, without undermining national, cultural or religious affiliations.
- We seek to encourage South Asians to participate in collective problem-solving, advocacy, and coalition-building that will lead to positive social change in the United States.
- We seek to amplify the concerns of disempowered South Asian community members.
- We seek to enter into partnerships with local South Asian organizations in the United States, and formulate policy positions that are informed by and evolve from local expertise and experience.
- We seek to maintain a collaborative relationship with our local partners by maintaining a transparent internal structure, sharing information, and engaging in open communication and consensual decision-making.
- We seek to work in collaboration with broader civil and immigrant rights movements.
- We do not discriminate with respect to age, economic status, ethnicity, gender, geography, immigration or citizenship status, language ability, national origin, profession, race, religion, gender identity, sex, ability, or sexual orientation.

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<sup>1</sup> SAALT's Board of Directors and staff developed this strategic plan throughout the latter part of 2009, with input from SAALT members, partners, funders, and other stakeholders. The plan was prepared with the assistance of Mosaica: The Center for Nonprofit Development and Pluralism.

## **VISION FOR THE COMMUNITY**

Our broader vision involves strengthening the South Asian community and South Asian community-based organizations, which will lead to a more vibrant and inclusive civil society in the United States.

The South Asian community will have the resources and tools to be fully engaged in the civic and political life of their neighborhoods, cities, and country as a whole. We will move beyond barriers such as those related to national origin, socioeconomic status, religion, and immigration status in order to come together as a fully-inclusive South Asian community. In addition, we will work with other communities of color, immigrants, and progressive-minded individuals to eliminate the systemic and institutional barriers that prevent and inhibit access and participation in civic and political life.

South Asian community-based organizations will be strong and well-resourced, with the ability to improve the lives of their constituents. Marginalized South Asians will be able to avail themselves of the resources and information necessary to lead full lives. Policy changes that preserve the rights of immigrants and minorities, and bring about racial and socioeconomic equity will be adopted and implemented at local, state and national levels.

## **SAALT IN THREE YEARS**

Over the next three years, SAALT will grow and strengthen its base, programs, and infrastructure in order to become a leading national voice in the movement for racial and social justice in the United States by 2012.

### **NATIONAL ROLE AND REPUTATION**

SAALT will be widely regarded as an advocate, resource, and progressive voice by the South Asian community, policymakers/government officials, the media and our partner organizations.

SAALT will be known for:

- Our connections to South Asian communities
- Our expertise and analysis on pressing policy issues related to the South Asian community
- Our ability to educate the South Asian community about policy issues and serve as a catalyst for action around these issues
- Our role as a “bridge builder” and our contributions to broader coalitions
- Our local-national model which fosters partnerships, collaborations, and consensus building at local levels for the purpose of developing national stances and positions on policy issues
- Our focus on strategic growth and infrastructure building both internally and with the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations

## **NATIONAL COALITION OF SOUTH ASIAN ORGANIZATIONS (NCSO)**

SAALT's coordination of the National Coalition of South Asian Organizations (NCSO) will create community infrastructure that will enable more effective social service provision, advocacy and organizing to occur at local and regional levels. SAALT's policy analysis and advocacy at the national level will result in substantive policy changes on civil and immigrant rights issues. SAALT's work will have regional and local impact through the involvement by individual community members, volunteers, and regional coordinators.

## **PROGRAMS**

SAALT will have clearly identifiable program areas including: **Community Outreach and Mobilization; Public Policy Advocacy; Be the Change/Leadership Development; and Partnerships**. In addition, SAALT will have strong communications capacity that will enable the organization to maintain a public presence both online and through trusted media outlets.

## **BASE**

SAALT will continue to develop two strong bases: the community-based organizations that comprise the NCSO; and individual members around the country whom we will engage through our leadership development and community mobilization programs.

## **COMMUNICATIONS/TECHNOLOGY**

SAALT will integrate communications throughout all of our programmatic and fundraising initiatives. Our strategic communications goals include placing persuasive opinion editorials and articles in community and mainstream media; expanding the diversity of spokespersons who can address pressing policy issues; and deepening the capacity of community-based partners to access multimedia opportunities. SAALT will also develop and integrate an internal technology plan for the organization.

## **GOVERNANCE**

By 2012, SAALT's Board of Directors will include 9 to 12 individuals representing diverse professions, nationalities, and backgrounds. In addition, the Council of Advisors will be more integrated into the organization's programming and policy work. SAALT will also engage a Leadership Council that connects business leaders in the South Asian community with our work.

## **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND STAFFING**

By 2012, SAALT's annual budget will have grown to approximately 1 million, reflecting the resources needed for successful implementation of the organization's goals. Personnel at the national office will include the Executive Director; Director of Programs and Partnerships; Policy Director; and Development and Operations Director. In addition, personnel will include Programs, Field, and Policy Associates; Communications and Technology Manager; Office Manager; interns; and volunteers. We will also develop our regional impact through the placement of coordinators in key areas around the United States.

## Goals, Objectives, and Key Strategies: 2010-2012

Following are the primary goals to be met by the end of 2012 in the arenas of programs; governance; and resource development.

### Programs: Partnerships

**Brief Program Overview:** SAALT promotes and builds partnerships as a key strategy for creating a unified progressive South Asian presence at policy-making tables. SAALT also seeks to strengthen South Asian organizations to better meet the needs of local communities and become more engaged with racial and immigrant justice efforts.

#### GOALS:

- Strengthen and expand the NCSO and the role of the NCSO Advisory Committee.
- Help to build the capacity of NCSO members through trainings and skills development, including the Advocates for Community Empowerment (ACE) Training, biannual South Asian Summits, webinars, and encouraging collaboration and peer support.
- Deepen participation in broader civil and human rights coalitions.
- Establish and strengthen partnerships with non-NCSO South Asian organizations (such as college groups and professional associations)
- Develop an effective regional-national partnerships model through local community empowerment projects in targeted areas around the United States

### Programs: Community Outreach and Mobilization

**Brief Program Overview:** SAALT uses community outreach and mobilization strategies in order to raise public awareness about South Asian communities and issues, and to mobilize community members to take action in their local communities.

#### GOALS

- Provide a range of informational resources – including reports, a re-designed website, factsheets on issues affecting the community, action alerts, webinars, *Know Your Rights* brochures, and SAALT's *Community Connections* and *Policy Connections* newsletters – for use by the general public, allies, South Asian community members, policymakers and other stakeholders, with an emphasis on creating materials that are responsive to needs of community members.
- Develop and provide a menu of accessible educational resources and advocacy tools – such as *Know Your Rights* Brochures, fact sheets, action alerts, e-newsletters, advocacy days, South Asian summits, town hall meetings, NCSO campaign efforts, and other community-based events – to educate and mobilize community members to take action on issues affecting South Asians, including both current and proposed policies, as well as emerging events.

- Increase local capacity by reflecting our national work at the local level in three new regions of the country, reflecting both overall size and breadth of the South Asian population as well as community needs and NCSO presence. Capacity building strategies will include: strengthening relationships between local NCSO members and ally organizations; connecting community members to resources; building leadership through SAALT-sponsored activities and events; and promoting individual community member engagement through participation at local events.

### **Programs: Public Policy Advocacy**

**Brief Program Overview:** SAALT influences laws and policies affecting community by bringing South Asian voices to policymaking tables, engaging in policy analysis and advocacy, connecting the NCSO to government agencies and elected officials, and mobilizing community members to become advocates for policy change. SAALT's core issues include: post 9-11-related issues, immigration, hate crimes, racial profiling, the Census, language access, voting rights, and health.

#### **GOALS:**

- Conduct analysis, documentation, and research on the impact of current and proposed policies on the South Asian community with a focus on SAALT's core issues.
- Deepen knowledge of policy impact and analysis on issues, including: women - VAWA; seniors; economic justice; LGBTIQ; youth; housing; and workers' rights.
- Develop interactive online tool in 2010 to document community stories related to the impact of various policies.
- Elevate the South Asian community's experiences and perspectives on laws affecting them by strengthening relationships with legislators and government agencies and engaging in legislative and administrative advocacy to effect policy change on core issues.
- Develop accessible advocacy resources tools – including Know Your Rights Brochures, factsheets on legislation, town halls, monthly *Policy Connections* newsletter, action alerts, and public webinars – to mobilize South Asian community members to take action on current and proposed policies.
- Provide training, tools and resources – including advocacy training, advocacy days, webinars, and policy support – to empower individual South Asian community members and organizations to become their own advocates and have influence over policies that affect them.
- Deepen policy advocacy work at the state and local levels in areas with significant South Asian populations in collaboration with NCSO partners.
- Launch and implement a 9/11 ten-year anniversary accountability and acknowledgment campaign

## **Programs: Leadership Development/Be The Change**

**Brief Program Overview:** SAALT promotes and develops the leadership of South Asian community members as a key strategy for creating a sustainable and diverse social justice movement. Our leadership development programs offer progressively advanced tools, resources, and skills-building opportunities. The programs also provide a clear role for individual community members to connect them to SAALT's program and policy work.

### **GOALS:**

- Provide opportunities for community members at the local/regional level to develop leadership; to connect and network with other progressive South Asians toward developing a common vision for social change; and to feel empowered to engage in advocacy and action at the local level. To this end, SAALT will develop a menu of options – beginning with SAALT's annual *Be the Change National Day of Service* and including progressively advanced opportunities such as SAALT Circles, town hall meetings, advocacy days, and conferences – for community members to engage at the local level, or to mirror our national campaigns locally.
- Provide leadership development opportunities to college students through a range of activities and trainings of varying depth and duration. In 2010, SAALT will develop opportunities for college student organizations to build on their participation in *Be the Change*.
- Work collaboratively with the NCSO to develop a fellowship model focused on leadership and service.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

**Brief Overview:** SAALT seeks to integrate communications throughout all of our programmatic and fundraising initiatives. SAALT will also develop and integrate a technology plan for the organization.

### **GOALS:**

- Reflect and reinforce the integral nature of partnerships and coalitions to SAALT's work in promotional materials, including highlighting the work of NCSO partners and allies.
- Utilize a range of innovative online tools and media outlets– including SAALT's website, social networking tools, ethnic media, and online blogs – to disseminate information and opinion pieces and increase the visibility of the South Asian community and the issues affecting it.
- Develop and maintain communications materials to enhance SAALT's campaigns around profiling; immigration reform (*One Community United*); and post 9/11 accountability.
- Develop and maintain communications materials to enhance resource development and fundraising efforts.

## **GOVERNANCE and RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

### **GOALS:**

- Further develop the SAALT Board of Directors so that it is comprised of between 9-12 individuals of diverse backgrounds, who provide the needed mix of skills and contacts needed for effective governance and who effectively carry out its governance and oversight functions.
- Ensure meaningful Board participation in the organization's fundraising efforts.
- Develop and maintain advisory structures that provide added value to governance, programmatic, and fundraising efforts.
- Diversify and expand funder base with an emphasis on cultivating individual members and donors.
- Increase annual budget each year.
- Maintain appropriate number of staff for successful implementation of the strategic plan.