

# The Arquivos, Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives.



## Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention fonds

<https://collections.arquivos.ca/en/permalink/descriptions38102>

Collection:	Archives
Material Type:	Electronic records Graphic material Moving image Textual records Object
Date Range:	1984- 2016, predominant 1990- 2016
Part Of:	Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention fonds
Fonds Number:	F0181
Language:	English, Urdu, Tamil, Punjabi, Hindi, Gujarati
Physical Description:	1.33m of textual records ca. 450 photographs: col. 5 x 7cm to 11 x 20cm 6 data cartridges 63 floppy discs 12 CD-Roms 1 videocassette 4 betacam tapes 2 puzzles 5 posters
Physical Condition:	Records are in good condition.
History / Biographical:	

Born out of community activism, the South Asian AIDS Coalition, later known as the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention was founded in 1989. A gap in AIDS services was identified after a South Asian man was unable to access services and information at the AIDS Committee of Toronto. ACT contacted ALOT, Asian Lesbians of Toronto and Khush, the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Association to see whether someone could help him. His wife and daughters had already died and he was very ill. ALOT and Khush were able to connect the man with a member's mother who spoke the same language as him, and she acted as a translator and counsellor.

Following this event, ACT, ALOT, KHUSH and the Toronto Counselling Centre of Lesbians and Gays established the South Asian AIDS Coalition. A needs assessment was conducted, finding that mainstream AIDS organizations were not connecting to the local South Asian community. Brochures were rarely available in South Asian languages and there were never South Asian faces on posters or brochures. The needs assessment also revealed that HIV/AIDS was largely seen as a western problem.

The South Asian AIDS Coalition was established as a AIDS service organization that provided cultural and linguistically relevant information for self identifying South Asians. It was established as a sex and queer positive not for profit, community organization that offered prevention education, outreach, advocacy and support services to South Asians infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Its first employee was Kashalia Banergy who worked as a summer coordinator. Anthony Mohamed was hired on as SAAC's first full time coordinator in 1989, and

became the organization's first Executive Director, a role that he stayed in until 1993.

In 1995, the South Asian AIDS Coalition became the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention and the organization was incorporated as an independent AIDS service organization. It is managed by a Board of Directors who is elected from the membership by members at the Annual General election. ASAAP has employed a 3 pronged approach focusing on outreach and prevention education, PHA support services, and networking and advocacy with other AIDS Service and South Asian organizations.

Over the years, a variety of partnerships, support groups and programs have been established by ASAAP to support its mandate. The following list of support groups and programs do not encapsulate the work of ASAAP in their entirety, but reflect some of the initiatives documented in the fonds. As a part of ASAAP's Men's Health Program, Dosti was established as the first South Asian Men's support group. The group's objective was to provide culturally appropriate space for self identifying South Asian MSM, where they could access multilingual resources and build community. In 2005, Snehitan, a support group for queer Tamil speaking men was established. The group provided its members a space to socialize, where they could also access Tamil language resources. The Desis Against HIV/AIDS project was another ASAAP initiative that aimed to increase knowledge of levels of HIV/AIDS and sexual health among South Asian youth, women, and newcomers. HIV/AIDS and sexual health workshops and outreach events were organized in priority neighbourhoods including Thorncliffe, Flemingdon, Jane and Finch, and North York. In 2011, ASAAP established the Women's Health and Support group to fill an identified gap in services for South Asian clients who identify as women. This support group aimed to provide its members with a supportive and knowledge sharing environment. In addition to support groups, ASAAP regularly organized educational workshops and events. A variety of outreach events were held at schools, bathhouses, bars and cultural spaces. ASAAP also offered Individual and anonymous telephone counselling services, practical assistance, and referral services to counsellors, doctors and Eastern health practitioners.

The development and distribution of HIV/AIDS prevention and sexual health resources has also been an important aspect of ASAAP's work. Material has been developed in a number of South Asian languages from Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Tamil and Urdu. Topics from HIV/AIDS prevention, therapies and treatment were covered in these resources. ASAAP has also partnered with other agencies to produce and translate resource material into South Asian languages.

As a way to support their prevention education efforts, ASAAP established a Resource Centre which held a vast collection of information on HIV/AIDS, sexual health and Eastern health and wellness systems including Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani medicines. Resources were made available through videos, books, pamphlets and articles. The Resource Centre has also provided ASAAP clients access to computers and the internet. ASAAP established the brownkiss.ca website, as a creative medium in which South Asian women could access resources online. As a way to keep clients updated on HIV/AIDS, ASAAP put out a monthly mail out to their clients.

A number of collaborations and partnerships were formed between ASAAP and South Asian serving organizations and AIDS Service organizations. These partnerships include, but are not limited to ACT, Black CAP, ACAS, CSSP, CATIE, and the Hassle Free Clinic. Through a variety of community development programs, ASAAP has coordinated with partners and other South Asian serving organizations to build an effective response to HIV/AIDS. ASAAP partnered with the Hassle Free Clinic to provide anonymous HIV and STD testing and counselling. ASAAP has worked to eliminate barriers for South Asians living with HIV/AIDS and has worked with other AIDS service organizations to better serve people of diverse cultural backgrounds. In collaboration with mainstream agencies, ASAAP has advocated for the need for inclusion for South Asians living with HIV/AIDS on various community advisory panels at local hospitals, community centres and regional HIV/AIDS networks in Ontario.

Through television, radio appearances and contributions in a variety of South Asian language newspapers and magazines, ASAAP has advocated for healthy support environments within the South Asian community. ASAAP has also sought to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS and how it affects South Asians.

**Scope and Content:**

The fonds contains the organizational records of the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention dating from 1984 to 2016. Records reflect the administration, governance, support services, prevention education, and partnerships that ASAAP took part in. The fonds has been organized into 3 series: Administration and Governance, ASAAP Projects and Support Groups, and Resources. It includes annual reports, strategic plans, Board meeting minutes, audited financial reports, grant applications, activity reports, brochures and flyers, newsletters, magazines and news clippings.

**Contains series:**

- 1- Administration and Governance
- 2- ASAAP Project and Support Groups
- 3-Resources

**Storage Location:** /01-/04, /10: 7.6.2  
/05- /09: 7.6.3  
/11: A.V.11.1  
/12: S.03.01

**Access Restrictions:** The collection is open to researchers. Researchers interested in seeing the files listed below, must be granted permission from the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention.  
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**Copyright:** Researchers wishing to publish materials must obtain permission in writing from The ArQuives as the physical owner. Researchers must also obtain clearance from the holders of any copyrights in the materials. Note that The ArQuives can grant copyright clearance only for those materials for which we hold the copyright. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain copyright clearance for all other materials directly from the copyright holders.

**Conservation:** Records were removed from plastic folders and placed into acid free file folders. Some staples and paperclips were removed.

**Arrangement:** Original order was kept where possible. The fonds was arranged into 3 series: Administration and Governance, ASAAP Projects and Support Groups, and Resources. Resources were grouped together and mostly organized by date.

**Description Level:** Fonds

**Accession Number:** 2019-070