



CANADIAN ARAB  
INSTITUTE | INSTITUT  
CANADO-ARABE

2021  
ANNUAL REPORT

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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3	ABOUT CAI
4	LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
6	RESEARCH
9	POLICY
11	PROGRAMS
14	COMMUNICATIONS
17	EVENTS
19	FINANCIALS
20	TEAM
23	BOARD OF DIRECTORS
24	PARTNERS

# ABOUT CAI

CAI is a national non-partisan organization that focuses on issues and interests of the Canadian Arab community through research, policy, programming, and community engagement. CAI celebrates and encourages Arab Canadians' participation in all social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of Canadian society.

## Vision

An empowered and engaged Canadian Arab community that is thriving in all aspects of Canadian society.

## Mission

Articulating the perspective of Arab-Canadians and building their capacity to contribute to Canadian society.

- **Inform:** Inform Canadian society on issues that are important to the Arab community through research and thought leadership.
- **Celebrate:** Celebrate the Canadian Arab community's achievements and history through events, programs and content that highlight individual and collective success.
- **Engage:** Support a more engaged community through partnerships, civic initiatives and volunteerism.
- **Thrive:** Support a more cohesive and integrated Canadian Arab community through professional development and partnerships.

## Values

- **Unity:** Amplifying our voices as a Canadian Arab community.
- **Diversity:** Embracing the differences in our perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences.
- **Excellence:** Recognizing how strong research and policy can help make informed decisions
- **Empowerment:** Increasing awareness and understanding of Arab culture and history strengthen communities across Canada.
- **Capacity Building:** Engaging communities is crucial for sharing knowledge and resources.

# LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

While the world continued to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the Canadian Arab Institute (CAI) charged full-steam ahead in research projects, programming, and initiatives that contributed to the empowerment and integration of the Canadian-Arab community economically, socially, culturally, and civically. From community-based projects on the impact of COVID-19 on racialized communities to civic engagement campaigns to expanding our networks across the country, 2021 was a fantastic year for this small but mighty organization.

## Community Engagement

Like many other organizations and sectors, the COVID-19 pandemic made us rethink and reshift the different ways we function. As a micro-small organization with limited resources that are maximized, the pandemic came as a blessing as it allowed us to virtually connect with both the Canadian-Arab community and the general Canadian public from coast to coast to coast. We were able to do this through three community engagement initiatives.

The first one was YallaJab, where we partnered with the Yemeni Canadian Community and the Public Health Agency of Canada to create educational resources in Arabic, French, and English to help combat the misinformation on vaccines, with the aim of increasing uptake of the vaccine among the Canadian-Arab community. The second initiative was a civic engagement campaign (YallaVoteCanada) where we connected with Arab-Canadian candidates across all political parties for the 2021 federal election and produced material to help Get Out The Vote in the Arab community. The third campaign was Text4Amal - a mental health awareness campaign, which offered Arab-Canadians free supportive texts that used cognitive behavioral therapy to help the community push through the unique hardships that it is facing.

After a difficult first year of the pandemic in 2020, we were able to reconnect and re-engage with the community in 2021 using innovative and accessible tools through these community engagement campaigns.

## Capacity Building

This year, we began expanding our team through different programs and initiatives. As staff, we hired two Arab-Canadian youth to lead our Research and Policy, and Communications and Operations departments, respectively. We also engaged with racialized youth across the country through our new policy fellowship program, which trains them about policy and policymaking in Canada.

# LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For our research project on the employment barriers that Arab women are facing in Canada, we hired a team of 6 Research Assistants who have the lived experience of being Arab women themselves. As a community-based research organization, CAI ensures that our data collection and analysis efforts are conducted by the community, for the community, and with the community. This ensures that we do not just suggest recommendations to policymakers and other organizations, but that we also abide by them ourselves.

This year also marks the beginning of our Resource Hub - a digital space where community members and the general Canadian public can access to learn more about the lived experiences of Arab-Canadians and other racialized groups who we stand in solidarity with. As a think-and-do-tank, this type of knowledge sharing is crucial to ensure that our efforts result in tangible tools that different communities can use to combat hate and breakdown barriers that they face.

All this work from training racialized youth to building an inclusive digital space fall under the category of capacity building, as we are trying to help members from our community and beyond self-actualize their talents and power, which can then help them find a sense of belonging in Canada.

## Looking Forward

With all of this energetic momentum going into 2022, we envision next year to be a year of even more growth and implementation for CAI. We are looking forward to the different research projects and programs on the horizon. For instance, we are partnering with the Arab Community Centre of Toronto and York University on a research project named Josoor, which looks into improving the settlement outcomes of newcomer women in Ontario through technology.

Additionally, our Breaking Down to Build Up program, which breaks down myths that Arab-Canadians face, funded by Heritage Canada will bear fruit starting in 2022. We also look forward to analyzing the results from the 2021 Census. Our Census Reports from the 2016 Census, which provide information on the state of the Canadian-Arab community, have proven to be a major success for researchers, as they have been cited across dozens of publications. With an expanded list of partners across the country, we also plan on hosting a virtual forum, where Arab-Canadians can come together and discuss the issues that they face in different sectors and facets of their lives.

Finally, we are excited to be the main civil society group supporting MP David McGuinty's (Ottawa South) upcoming Bill, which will proclaim April as Arab Heritage Month. We are spearheading the effort across all parties to ensure the swift passage of this Bill, as the Canadian-Arab community must be celebrated for its achievements despite the anti-Arab racism that our community faces everyday.

Ultimately, CAI is growing on a foundation that is stronger than ever. The current team, from Board to management to volunteers, is working hard as a unit to ensure that the organization continues to serve its purpose: to inform, to celebrate, to engage, and to thrive.

Sincerely,

Nedal Ismail, Chair  
Dalal Al-Waheidi, Vice-Chair

# RESEARCH

## MESSAGE FROM STAFF

After a busy 2020 where we oversaw the virtual transition of our research projects due to COVID-19, CAI's research capacity tripled in 2021, with the conclusion of our COVID-19 study and the beginning of 3 research initiatives aimed to raise awareness about the issues and interests of the Arab community in Canada. Our COVID-19 study illustrated how the pandemic exacerbated the issues that marginalized communities were already facing, which explains the exponential growth of unemployment facing the Arab community, particularly women. The gender-based violence that women in our community faced also came up as a concern through our data. In the spirit of conducting research that is for, by and with the community, we proudly focused our 2021 research efforts on the experiences of Arab-Canadian women, and curated our research projects to build off of one another.

## COVID-19 STUDY

In collaboration with Brock University, CAI published a groundbreaking community-based research project that evaluated the impact of COVID-19 on equity-seeking groups across Canada. CAI was pleased to partner with co-investigators Dr. Gervan Fearon, President of Brock University and Dr. Walid Hejazi of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. The project began in August 2020 with over 100 volunteers from various equity-seeking groups helping us collect data. This "for the community, by the community, and with the community" project culminated in a research report that was published in May 2021.

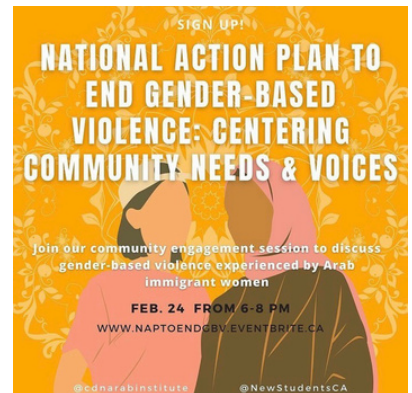
Here are some key insights from the project:

- In terms of overall ranking, Non-Arab and Arab respondents have the highest level of trust in the municipal and federal response measures (over 62% of Non-Arabs and over 73% Arabs strongly agree and agree), compared to the provincial response measures (54% of Non-Arabs and 61% of Arabs strongly agree and agree).
- In terms of satisfaction with the community preventative measures, over half (53%) of Non-Arab respondents were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied, compared to slightly less than half (47%) among Arab respondents.
- Most Non-Arab respondents (75%) identified that their community has responded with measures to address the coronavirus pandemic. The percentage of Arab respondents who were aware of their community taking steps to respond to the coronavirus pandemic was lower, at 61%.
- One third of Non-Arab respondents and one quarter of Arab respondents have experienced reduced hours or job losses because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- For younger participants, great emphasis is placed on exchanges within their social network and how losing the in-person contact affected them.
- For newcomers, a lack of social networks impacted their wellbeing.
- Maintaining social connections—either through socially distanced outings in a park or online via group chats in social media networks—created a sense of connection.

# RESEARCH

## NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE: TACKLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

In February 2021, CAI and NSA held three community engagement sessions to listen to the diverse women's needs in the communities we represent. Service providers, front-line workers, immigrant women, survivors, and academics attended the sessions. The primary cause of rising Gender-Based Violence in Canada is pre-existing institutional gender obstacles. COVID-19 has exacerbated the problem even more. The pandemic cost 1.5 million women their jobs. Many women we spoke to had less access to relevant support and connections with friends, coworkers, and family due to being stuck at home nonstop during lockdowns. The information that we gathered from the sessions was compiled into a report and submitted to YWCA Canada, who then sent it Women and Gender Equality Canada to develop the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.



## EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS FACING ARAB WOMEN IN CANADA

In early 2021, CAI met with the Department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Canada to discuss the alarmingly high unemployment rate of Arab-Canadian women. At the time, what we knew was that Arab-Canadians had the highest unemployment rate overall (17.9%), and Arab-Canadian women faced the brunt of it, with an unemployment rate of 20.3%. What we did not know was why the unemployment rate was so high for Arab-Canadian women. Accordingly, we launched a community-based research project using a mixed-methods approach to understand the barriers that Arab women are facing when seeking employment in Canada. During the summer, we partnered with the Newcomer Students' Association and hired a team of researchers to collect the qualitative data in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta. We partnered with Abacus Data and Institut du Quebec to collect quantitative data from those same provinces. This robust data collection set the foundation for a comprehensive report to be published in 2022.

**EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS FACING ARAB WOMEN IN CANADA**

**CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS!**

Are you an Arab woman residing in Ontario, Quebec, or Alberta? We want to hear from YOU!

The Canadian Arab Institute, in partnership with the Newcomer Students' Association, is conducting a mixed method research study looking at the employment barriers facing Arab Women in Ontario, Quebec & Alberta.

If you are interested in participating in this study or want to learn more, please contact [research@canadianarabinstitute.org](mailto:research@canadianarabinstitute.org)

**EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS FACING ARAB WOMEN IN CANADA**

**OBSTACLES À L'EMPLOI AUXQUELS SONT CONFRONTÉES LES FEMMES ARABES AU CANADA**

**LANÇE D'APPEL POUR PARTICIPANTES!**

Êtes-vous une femme arabe résidant en Ontario, au Québec ou en Alberta? Nous voulons VOUS entendre!

En partenariat avec Newcomer Students' Association, l'Institut canado-arabe mène une étude de recherche à méthode mixte portant sur les obstacles que rencontrent les femmes arabes sur le marché du travail en Ontario, au Québec et en Alberta.

Si vous désirez participer à cette étude ou voulez en apprendre davantage, veuillez s'il-vous-plait contacter [research@canadianarabinstitute.org](mailto:research@canadianarabinstitute.org)

# RESEARCH

## RESOURCE HUB

In 2021, CAI began building its resource hub - a digital space where Arabs and non-Arabs can visit in order to gain more knowledge about our community's experiences in Canada. We created resource guides about: access to healthcare, combating online hate, the importance of Black and Indigenous History Months and the significance of Pride Month. CAI's resource hub is a starting point for those who want to learn more about the rich diversity of our community, which includes those who identify as Black, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, Muslim and/or beyond.





# POLICY

## JANUARY 2021

### MOSAIC INSTITUTE LATEST REPORT HIGHLIGHTS ANTI-ARAB RACISM IN CANADA

In late 2020, CAI consulted the Mosaic Institute on their latest community consultations report entitled “[Dialogue on Race Relations](#).” For this report, we provided a series of recommendations that outline the challenges facing our diverse community. As mentioned in the report, “the Arab community is the largest newcomer population across Canada and it also includes Muslim, Queer, Indigenous and Black community members, which is often not highlighted in research and/or discussions about the community. Arab community members often get lumped under ‘Muslim’ or ‘Middle Eastern’ categories only, further taking away from the various intersectional experiences and demographics of the Arab community in Canada.

## MARCH 2021

### ENVISIONING AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO LEBANON: THE ARAB CANADIAN

After the devastating Beirut Port Explosion on August 2, 2020, CAI took quick action by standing in solidarity with Lebanese-Canadians in their plight against the Lebanese political establishment. To that end, we were commissioned to write a policy brief that outlined what the priorities are for the Lebanese-Canadian community to the Canadian government. This [policy brief](#), co-written by Jad El Tal and Dr. Bessma Momani, offered robust and pragmatic policy solutions that took into account the thoughts of the Lebanese-Canadian community. Our priority is to ensure that the Arab-Canadian perspective is always taken into account in all policy files, including foreign affairs.

## APRIL 2021

### CAI JOINS CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS TO ADDRESS ANTI-ARAB RACISM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

In the Spring, the Canadian public discovered the truth behind the unfortunate revocation of Dr. Valentina Azarova’s appointment as Director of the International Human Rights Program at the University of Toronto’s Law School. The Cromwell report concluded that Dr. Azarova was the “strong, unanimous, and enthusiastic first choice of the selection committee,” but her appointment was revoked due to her past publications on Palestinian human rights. Anti-Palestinianism cannot be separated from Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism. Along with other civil society organizations, including the National Council of Canadian Muslims, and Independent Jewish Voices, we called for the University of Toronto to rightfully reinstate Dr. Azarova’s appointment.

# POLICY

## MAY-AUGUST 2021

### POLICY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

During the summer of 2021, CAI piloted its “Policy Fellowship Program,” where a group of 10 racialized (Arab and non-Arab) youth in Canada joined CAI as policy fellows. Each fellow was assigned a specific policy file of interest to the CAI and to them. Throughout the summer, CAI’s Director of Research and Policy, Jad El Tal, hosted training sessions on the inner workings of policy, government relations, and political engagement. At the end of the summer, the policy fellows presented their work to the CAI team. This pilot program helped us build the foundation for the actual program in the years to come.

## AUGUST 2021

### MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

On the one-year anniversary of the Beirut Port Explosion, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Marc Garneau, gathered a group of 15 Lebanese-Canadian community leaders to hear their thoughts on the next steps that the Canadian government should take in support of the Lebanese people. CAI’s Director of Research and Policy, Jad El Tal, was invited and spoke passionately about the need for a thorough international investigation into the explosion, continued humanitarian assistance for women and LGBTQ+ people in Lebanon, and the need for sanctions against Lebanon’s political class. These issues are what CAI heard from the Lebanese-Canadian community and we were proud to amplify their voices.

## NOVEMBER 2021

### NCCM ADVOCACY DAY

After the killing of the Afzaal family in London, Ont. this past June, CAI joined the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) and tens of other organizations in November to support the introduction of NCCM’s Our London Family Act at Queen’s Park. CAI’s Director of Research and Policy, Jad El Tal, spoke with several Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP) about why this Bill matters to the Canadian-Arab community. It was nice to reconnect with organizations and other stakeholders after a long year of lockdowns during the pandemic.



Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs

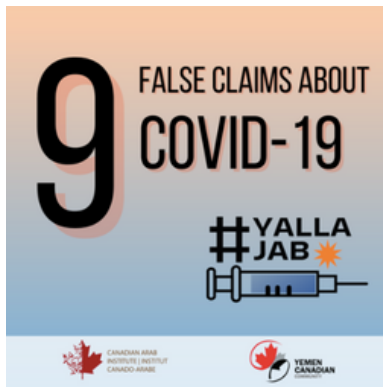


NCCM Advocacy Day

# PROGRAMS

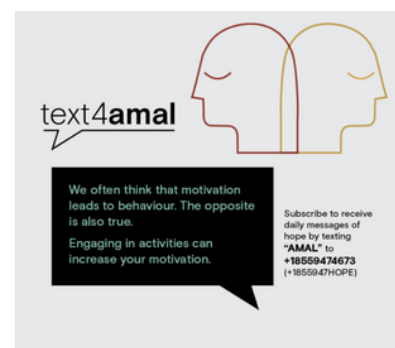
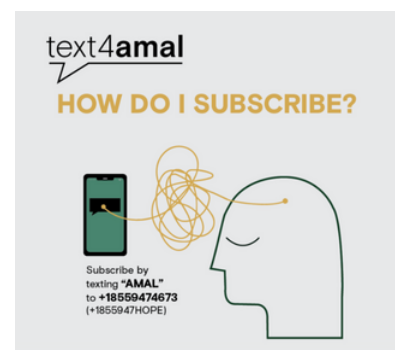
## #YALLAJAB

The #YallaJab campaign was a joint effort between the Yemeni Canadian Community (YCC) and Public Health Canada. By refuting vaccine myths and expanding access to information and facts regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, the trilingual public health resource campaign aimed to increase vaccination rates in Ontario's Arab populations. Arabs in Toronto have an 8-fold greater rate of COVID-19 infections than white Toronto residents. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused financial difficulties for 44 percent of Arabs in Toronto. Through community networks, we were able to spread accurate and verifiable information about the vaccine and pandemic. #YallaJab effectively provided vital information during the COVID-19 pandemic by dispelling myths and combating disinformation about public health in our community. Over the course of the campaign, we engaged with over 100 community organizations throughout Ontario.



## TEXT4AMAL

CAI (CAI) collaborated with the Mental Health Foundation and the University of Alberta, with support from the RBC Foundation, to launch Text4Amal: a free supportive texting program for the Arab community in Canada. Text4Amal is for members of the Arab community who are navigating their mental health and looking for healthy coping skills as they also navigate our new normal. Research from Text4Hope saw overall reported rates of mental health distress drop by 22.7 percent for anxiety, 10.4 percent for depression, and 5.7 percent for stress at the three-month mark, even for people who initially reported moderate to severe symptoms. As the Arab community coped with the shifts and changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the highest unemployment rate among all racialized populations in the country, the demand for equitable and accessible mental health care has never been greater. Text4Amal was able to help fill a gap in mental health services to Arabs in Canada for free, and with the help of service providers, we were able to distribute the service across Canada.



# PROGRAMS

## #YALLAVOTECANADA

To help the Canadian-Arab community get more civically engaged, CAI launched a trilingual voter information campaign called #YallaVoteCanada during the 2021 federal election. #YallaVoteCanada kept Arab-Canadians informed about the electoral process and voting process through informational guides, social media posts, and an FAQ on the federal election. During the 2019 federal election, only 54% of those between the ages of 18-24 casted a ballot. Engaging voters in this age group was one of the major goals of the #YallaVoteCanada campaign, since youth make up 60% of the Arab-Canadian population.

Yalla **يلا**  
**VOTE**  
CANADA

Show up early to the polls  
like you do the airport.

[canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-eng](http://canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-eng)

It's time to  
**#YallaVoteCanada**

Visit the links below to sign the pledge to vote and access our FAQ in Arabic, French, or English!

ENG: [canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-eng](http://canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-eng)  
FR: [canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-fr](http://canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-fr)  
ARA: [canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-ara](http://canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-ara)

Yalla **يلا**  
**VOTE**  
CANADA

Celebrating  
Arab-Canadian  
Members of Parliament

Ziad Aboutaif  
Lena Diab  
Omar Alghabra  
Fayçal El-Khoury

Yalla **يلا**  
**VOTE**  
CANADA

Yalla **يلا**  
**VOTE**  
CANADA

لماذا  
نصوت؟

تصويتك يسمح لك باختيار من يمثلك في البرلمان الكندي.  
من خلال التعبير عن اختيارك، انت تمارس حق ديمقراطي مهم  
جدا للعملية الديمقراطية لحكومة قد بذل العديد من الأجيال جهدا  
في بنائها.  
للمزيد من المعلومات، زوروا موقع تاريخ التصويت في كندا.

ARA: [canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-ara](http://canadianarabinstitute.org/yallavotecanada-ara)

# PROGRAMS

## BREAKING DOWN TO BUILD UP; DE-BUSTING ARAB IDENTITY MYTHS AND TACKLING RACISM

In 2021, CAI was thrilled to receive generous support from Heritage Canada to launch Breaking Down to Build Up, De-busting Arab Identity Myths, and Tackling Racism. This three-year project focuses on showcasing, identifying, and creating knowledge mobilization material on anti-Arab racism in Canada.

CAI welcomes the Government of Canada's commitment to tackling anti-Arab racism by supporting and funding the creation of media materials to debunk myths around Arab identity.

CAI has identified the 9 Myths surrounding Arab identity as follows:

1. Arabs are all the same (i.e., different languages, cultures, ethnicities, intersectionality of Blackness, Jewishness, etc.)
2. There is no Arab world (i.e., the landscape of Arab peoples, their histories, inventors)
3. The Angry Arab (i.e., debunking the over-zealous, irrational, and "too" passionate)
4. All Arabs are Muslim (i.e., beyond the lens of Islam)
5. The fixed, immutable Arab (i.e., problematic media depictions, fixations of Arabs beyond business people)
6. The uncivilized Arab (i.e., existed alongside Indigenous peoples, developed partnerships and relations in historically contributing to what is known as Canada today)
7. The oppressed, fetishized woman (i.e., feminist lens, cultural framework, and critical readings to dismantling notions around "powerless," "submissive," and/or "exotic" woman)
8. The Heterosexual Arab (i.e., homosexuality and other gender identities and orientations exist in the Arab world, and there is support and solidarity work being done)
9. The Integrated Arab (i.e., refugees, newcomers, and the resettlement processes around integration in Canada, experiences of assimilation, and narratives of resilience)

As part of this groundbreaking project, CAI continued their formal partnership with Open Screenplay to produce some much-needed content that will counter anti-Arab racism in Canada. Open Screenplay started the production of a screenplay named Lemons, written beautifully by aspiring Arab-Canadian screenwriter, Rayan Askar.

"At Open Screenplay we've always believed in the power of stories to foster a better understanding of the world around us and of each other. That is why we are incredibly proud to be part of this project led by CAI and delighted to see the Open Screenplay platform utilized to generate beautifully written, compelling, and authentic stories, from diverse writers, that dispel the myths and stereotypes levied at Arabs in Canada"

Sami Alsabawi, Co-Founder & Chief Operating Officer, Open Screenplay.

This partnership will provide CAI with the opportunity to share stories that empower Arab-Canadians and give community members an opportunity to raise awareness about the struggles they face when trying to integrate into Canadian society.

# COMMUNICATIONS

## MESSAGE FROM STAFF

In 2021, we worked on ensuring that our audience was informed and engaged as we celebrated our thriving Arab-Canadian community.

CAI's mission is to highlight the perspectives, issues, and interests of Arab Canadians through research, policy, programming, and community engagement. In 2021, we doubled down on that mission by relaunching our blog!

As we continued to navigate an ever-growing virtual world, the CAI team engaged with traditional media and effectively utilized our social media presence to amplify the issues and interests of our community.

## PRESS & MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

### The Hill Times, January 4, 2021:

CAI's policy brief on Dismantling Systemic Racism in Canadian PostSecondary Institutions: Arab Students' Experiences on Campus written by research fellow Aisha Shibli was featured in The Hill Times, highlighting the need for race-based data in university campuses intensifies.

- "Although Canadians of Arab origin are twice as likely to have a post-secondary degree than their Canadian counterparts, results from a national survey of 265 Arab respondents revealed that one-third of the respondents not only experienced discrimination or unfair treatment due to their ethnic, racial, religious, or social differences, they were also subjected to various stereotypes within their Canadian post-secondary institutions."

### CBC News, May 16, 2021:

CAI's partnership with Brock University was highlighted in a CBC article.

- "The research from Brock University, in partnership with CAI, supports findings from other reports that show how the pandemic has amplified disparities equity-seeking groups face."

### Globe and Mail, May 18, 2021:

Shireen Salti, Executive Director of CAI, was interviewed by John Ibbitson of the Globe and Mail regarding support for Palestinian human rights in Canada.

- "For Ms. Salti, the rights of Palestinians are bound up within the larger movement for social justice. "The fight for social justice includes queer rights, Palestinian human rights, tackling anti-Arab racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Black racism," she said."

# COMMUNICATIONS

## PRESS & MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

CBC Toronto, August 4, 2021:

Jad El Tal, Director of Policy and Research at CAI and member of the Lebanese diaspora, remembers the Beirut Blast 1-year later.

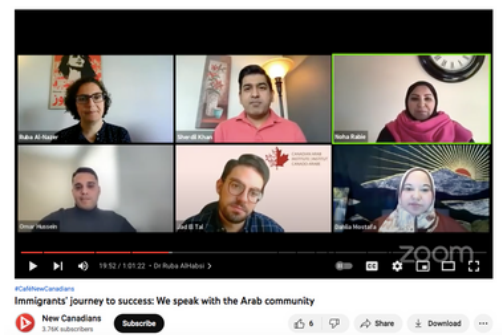
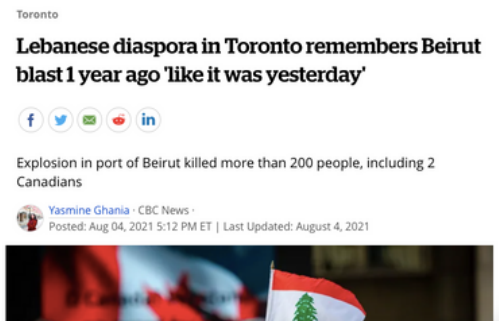
- o
- o "Those minutes felt like hours to El Tal, who was in Toronto waiting for them to return his call from the Lebanese capital. The explosion at the port of Beirut killed more than 200 people. It tore through his parents' neighborhood two kilometers away and shattered their home. El Tal's uncle's home was also destroyed. His loved ones' lives were spared. The emotional scars, however, live on a year later."

Radio Canada International, September 18, 2021:

Jad El Tal, CAI's Director of Research and Policy, and Jasmine Hawamdeh, CAI's Manager of Communications and Operations, were featured in a Radio Canada International article, where they discussed the importance of civically engaging Arab-Canadians and CAI's #YallaVoteCanada campaign. The article is available in French and English.

New Canadians, #CaféNewCanadians, November 6, 2021:

Jad El Tal, CAI's Director of Research and Policy joins Café New Canadians for a round-table discussion about an immigrant's journey integrating into Canadian society with a focus on the Arab community in Canada.



# COMMUNICATIONS

## BLOG

CAI's mission is to highlight Arab-Canadians' perspectives, issues, and interests through research, policy, programming, and community engagement. We doubled down on that mission by relaunching our blog in 2021!

The blog provides us the opportunity to articulate the perspective of Arab-Canadians and build their capacity to contribute to Canadian society. Our blog aims to amplify Arab-Canadian voices and stories from coast to coast and establish a network of narratives representing our diverse community.

We were so lucky to have four phenomenal Arab-Canadian volunteers to help run CAI's blog! Members of our blog team in 2021 include Maria Sarrouh, Managing Editor, Yasmeen Atassi, Editor, Mariam Tell, Editor, and Janine Al Hadidi, editor.

In 2021, we published three different blog posts:



Lebanon Strong: How two Lebanese-Canadian entrepreneurs supported a home country in crisis by Maria Sarrouh

One year after the Beirut Blast, Arab-Canadians, Dina Bakhit and Hamsa Diab Farhat sprung into action. Bakhit and Farhat, starting sending containers of relief aid to Lebanon from Canada. The blog post highlights the various campaigns and efforts of Arab-Canadians to support the crisis in Lebanon.

Lebanon Strong is one of several initiatives led by Arab-Canadians in 2021. Initiatives such as Humanitarian Coalition initiative, which was led by Rola Dagher, Jad Shimaly, Joe Hamadeh, Dany Assaf and others, as well as the private fund matching initiative led by Dr. Joe Dubleh, have helped send millions of dollars to Lebanon in the last year.



Q&A: Reflecting on Pride Month by Maria Sarrouh

Every June in Canada marks the celebration of Pride Month! We used Pride as a time to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Sarah Hegazi's death, a Lesbian feminist and socialist activist who sought asylum in Canada, after being imprisoned and tortured in Egypt for three months after flying a rainbow flag at a Mashou' Leila concert in 2017. She lived with post-traumatic stress after the incident, until her death on June 13, 2020.

Maria Sarrouh spoke with May El-Abdallah, a senior human rights consultant at the city of Toronto and volunteer with Yalla Let's Talk and Jasmine Hawamadeh to discuss the importance of Pride, debunking myths surrounding Arab identity, and the biggest issues facing Queer Arabs in Canada.



CAI Response to Budget 2021 by Jad El Tal and Shireen Salti

The inclusion of Arab-Canadians is vital to Canada's post-pandemic economic recovery. Arabs are Canada's largest newcomer population and fastest growing immigrant population. CAI thanks the federal government for listening to our community, and incorporating our feedback in Budget 2021. The budget responds to CAI's key recommendations during pre-budget consultations, including with respect to issues such as employment, foreign policy, youth, discrimination and integration.



# EVENTS

## March 2021: Celebrating Arab Women Trailblazers: International Women's Day

International Women's Day is an opportunity to celebrate and honour the various triumphs of women across the country. At CAI, we used it as an opportunity to host a virtual panel discussion honouring trailblazers in the Canadian Arab women trailblazers. The panel featured:

- Dr. Bessma Momani, Professor in the Department of Political Science and Assistant Vice-President, Research and International in the Office of Research at the University of Waterloo
- Carole Saab, Chief Executive Officer of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Dr. Muna Saleh, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE) and Author and,
- Barâa Arar, Toronto-based community organizer, writer, and editor.

The panelists shared their expertise and experience in a conversation moderated by Sara Asalya, Founder and Executive director of the Newcomer Students' Association, and named the top 25 Women of Influence.

The theme for International Women's Day in 2021 was #ChoosetoChallenge, and we celebrated the women who have chosen to challenge gender bias and inequality.



# EVENTS

## March 2021: JayU Screening/Q&A

In March 2021, we co-presented the film *What Walaa Wants* with JayU Canada, Hot Docs, and the National Film Board of Canada. We co-presented the film and hosted a Q&A with the film's Director, Christy Garland and CAI's Jasmine Hawamdeh.

The film is about a strong, determined Palestinian woman raised in a refugee camp in the West Bank while her mother was in prison. Walaa is determined to become one of the few women in the Palestinian Security Forces – not easy for a girl who breaks all the rules.

## May 2021: COVID-19 Research Project

In partnership with Brock University, we virtually presented our groundbreaking community-based research project that evaluated the impact of COVID-19 on equity-seeking groups across Canada. During the event, co-investigators Dr. Gervan Fearon, President of Brock University (at the time) and Dr. Walid Hejazi of the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management, presented the findings and fielded questions from the audience. Additionally, we had members of the research team, like Lead Researcher Dr. Susan Murray and Research Assistant Georgette Morris, discuss the process of data collection and their experiences. We were honoured to have MP Greg Fergus in attendance.



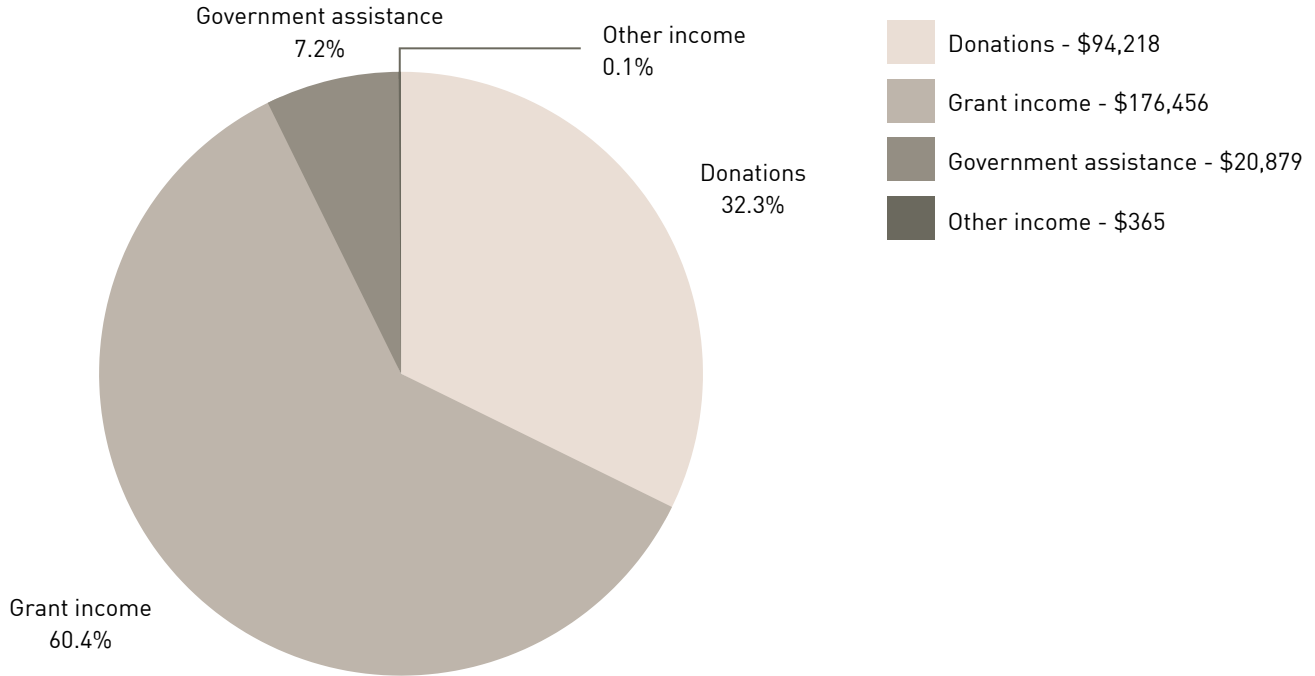
## September 2021: Toronto Palestine Film Festival

For this year's festival, we co-presented the Shorts Program alongside Toronto Arab Film. The Program featured 4 short movies under the theme "On This Land," where audiences were able to get a snapshot of what the Palestinian experience is like both in Palestine and across diasporic communities. Thousands of people attended TPFJ this year, and we were honoured to be a part of it

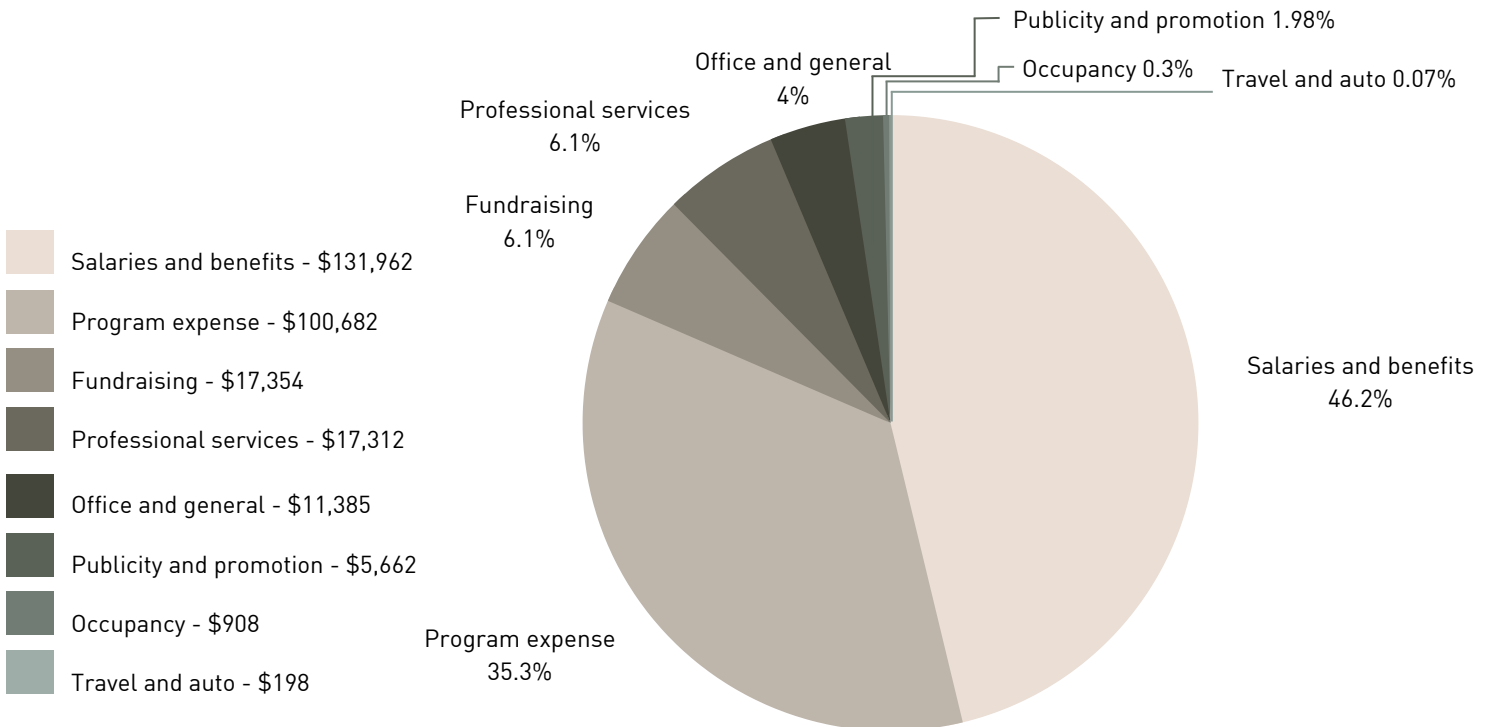


# FINANCIALS

## 2021 REVENUES



## 2021 EXPENSES



# TEAM

## STAFF



**JAD EL TAL**  
Director of Research and Policy



**JASMINE HAWAMDEH**  
Manager of Communications and Operations

**SHIREEN SALT**  
Executive Director  
January - September 2021

## SUMMER INTERNS



**YASMEEN ATASSI**  
Summer Intern



**MICHÈLE ASMAR**  
Summer Intern



**AMMAR AL HULAIBI**  
Summer Intern

# TEAM

## RESEARCH TEAM

### EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS FACING ARAB WOMEN IN CANADA



**EMNA BRAHAM**  
Co-lead Investigator



**RANIA YOUNES**  
Co-lead Investigator



**JAD EL TAL**  
Project Manager and co-author



**SARA ASALYA**  
Project Manager and co-author



**LOBNA MAHDI**  
Research Assistant



**MARIA ALMHANA**  
Research Assistant



**LAYLA JABBOUR**  
Research Assistant



**CZARA AWAD**  
Research Assistant



**PAULINA AWWADEH**  
Research Assistant

# TEAM

## POLICY FELLOWS



LINA MARAGHA

Policy fellow



MICHÈLE ASMAR

Policy fellow



ADAMS AGHIEMEN

Policy fellow



JANINE ALHADIDI

Policy fellow



PAULINA AWWADEH

Policy fellow



MARIA ALMAHNA

Policy fellow



MARIAM TELL

Policy fellow

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