

Nari Kallyan Shangho (NKS) is eighteen and steadily moving towards its primary goal of serving grassroots in the South Asian communities for the betterment of their life circumstances. The year 2004 –05 was buzzing with activities at NKS, ensuring a busy time for all staff and the management committee, and being the last year of the Lottery funds also saw the review of NKS services. The project celebrated its achievements by presenting the evaluation report. The report was launched on the 18th of May with 150 people attending the event.

At the management level, NKS have been engaged in building an infrastructure around some services such as group work, to consolidate the platform for South Asian women and to explore funding channels for other services as the financial support was coming to an end. The project has also successfully negotiated with the local authority for the use of the room upstairs which has enabled many more users to come and use different services at NKS.

The services at NKS have been developing fast due to demand from users. The members of staff network with users and provide services as effectively as possible within the limited time and resources. All staff and the management committee at NKS deserve commendation for all their valuable input to develop NKS as an organisation, filling a huge gap in services for South Asian women and children in Edinburgh.

The areas of work targeted in the year 2004-05 have been promoting active citizenship and capacity building through activities in a group setting, befriending/outreach services for South Asian women in Edinburgh, independent advocacy, family support work, childcare, training/courses and prioritisation of development in the Bangladeshi community by developing various strategies suitable to the community needs.

Over the years, with the financial support from a number of funding bodies – the core funding bodies and the National Lottery Community Fund, the group work has developed successfully. Of the 10 groups that run at NKS, each group is established and has developed an identity of its own with women sharing common interests coming together and learning different life skills in a group setting and sharing information with each other. The group work at NKS includes; two ESL classes, Bangladeshi Women's Group, Wednesday Women's Group, Mother and Toddler Group, Sewing class, Aerobic class, Older Women's group, Youth Group, Saturday Women's Group and Newsletter Team. Last year the youth group worked closely with Edinburgh Youth Inclusion Project on a project about their identity. The girls attending the group prepared posters and other items over several weeks which were displayed in an exhibition. The Mother and toddler group was set up last year in conjunction with the Grass Market Nursery and is successfully running at NKS with support from NKS workers. The Paan support group, set up collaboratively with MEHIP successfully completed ten sessions which involved encouraging women to give up paan chewing and provided them with information about the dangers of paan chewing. There is a future plan of preparing a resource pack with MEHIP which will provide information about paan chewing and how to help people give it up. Most of the groups are well established with a good number of women in attendance and need very little financial support. However, money is needed to fund group activities.

The two groups that are in danger of collapsing without financial support are – the Youth Group and the Older Women’s Group. These two groups require appropriate funds to continue in their present capacity.

As in other years, the demand for independent health advocacy continue to grow due to the pressing need among South Asian women to access health services with the support of workers. This one to one service is crucial and much needed due to various barriers faced by women while accessing services in Edinburgh. NKS can offer no more than six appointments a week to support women in this area due to limited resources. The information about health services is shared by women and service providers on one platform through group advocacy at NKS. Last year more than six sessions were provided with the help of the Minority Ethnic Health Inclusion project of Lothian Health.

The outreach/befriending service is crucial as it provides much needed support to women who are isolated and lack confidence to integrate with other women in a social setting. The service also gives NKS an opportunity to assess women’s needs, and offer them package services to combat isolation among them. The befriending service requires appropriate funds to reimburse travel expenses of workers who visit women at home. NKS made four visits a week last year to network with women who need NKS services.

The Family Support Work is the most used service at NKS. The post of a Part-time Family Support Worker is funded by the Social Work Department. The worker working for eighteen and a half hours a week is struggling to provide the service and meet the needs of families who require support. Every year there are an increased number of appointments made with the worker to help women, but the funds and the number of hours remain the same. With the end of the Lottery funding period, the number of hours for the post of a family Support worker have been reduced, but the demand for this service is ever rising. NKS needs to explore different channels of funding to fill the widening gap in the service.

The demand for full-time childcare at NKS is always on the increase. The Childcare provision for two to five years old from 9am to 3pm, all five working days of the week is well utilised. Through the feed back obtained from NKS users it is emerging that there is a need for the childcare facility to encompass provision for children starting from one year of age. This year NKS is working on obtaining registered provision for children from one year of age. Although NKS is continuously in demand for childcare, it is difficult to attract funds for the service. NKS Childcare Provision is registered with the Social Work Department and works hard to keep in line with the Care Commission standards within its limited resources. The project needs support from the core funding bodies to sustain the childcare service.

NKS recognises the need for development in the Bangladeshi community as the degree of isolation and deprivation is more among Bangladeshi women. Last year NKS further prioritised the needs of the Bangladeshi community and sought funds to support the work. The Lloyds TSB and the Local Development Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council provided funds to develop work with the Bangladeshi community in different areas such as activities in a group setting and one to one support for Bangladeshi women. The work is steadily and successfully developing,

thus encouraging women to utilize these services. NKS would like to thank the funding bodies for their financial support.

As 2004-05 was the last year of the grant award from the Lottery Community Fund and the BBC Children In Need, NKS is facing a huge funding crisis in the current year that puts the services developed over years in danger of collapsing. Presently, the main priority of the project is to negotiate its financial situation with funding bodies and seek support to save services that are crucial to the South Asian communities and are helping to fill gaps in service provision in Edinburgh.