



ANNUAL REPORT

2023
EDITION

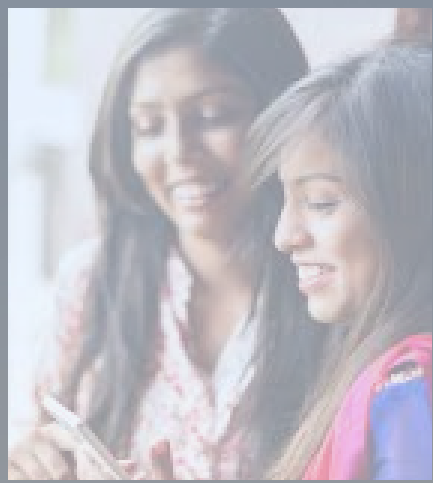
Saheli Annual Report 2023



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About Saheli

Saheli is a culturally specific domestic violence response and prevention organization offering non-judgmental and trauma-informed services to immigrant domestic and sexual violence survivors from South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.

OUR MISSION

Saheli's mission is to empower South Asian and Arab women and families to lead safe and healthy lives by:

- Empowering them to become financially independent
- Increasing awareness about legal rights for immigrant women and families
- Educating families about physical, emotional, financial, and immigration abuse
- Increasing awareness about healthy relationships among families, youth, and children

OUR VISION

Saheli's vision is to create a socially just and violence-free environment for South Asian and Arab immigrant women and families. Saheli envisions an environment for immigrant families that is free of gender-based violence; one that gives each and everyone, regardless of gender or sexuality, a powerful voice; one that questions and subverts the long-held patriarchal beliefs; and one that paves the way for children of immigrants and immigrant youth to live safe and healthy lives.

OUR CLIENTS



Geography

Saheli supports survivors across Massachusetts whose backgrounds are South Asian, Middle Eastern, and North African.



Language

Our multilingual staff provides support in South Asian languages (including Hindi, Bengali, Urdu, Gujarati, & more), Arabic, and French. Approximately two-thirds of our survivors have limited English proficiency.



Socioeconomic Status

The majority of Saheli's survivors are low-income and/or dependent on their abusive partners.



Immigration

The majority of survivors need both immigration and family law support. Many survivors' legal statuses are dependent on their spouses.



Empowering women & children to lead safe and healthy lives.

In 2023 Saheli saw a 12% increase in survivors seeking our support. Saheli's strengthened Legal Advocacy services with two in-house attorneys for family law and immigration kept survivors safe and on the path toward stability. With the ongoing housing crisis in Massachusetts, Saheli saw an increase in survivors and their families who are seeking a roof over their heads. Saheli was able to support 18 families with short & long-term rental assistance and over 50 families with housing stabilization support.

430

Helpline calls received from South Asian and Arab survivors of Domestic Violence

331

Survivors received Saheli's services

86

Survivors received housing advocacy services

172

Survivors received legal advocacy services

39

Survivors received mental health counseling sessions

77

Families received housing stabilization support through utilities, food and rent assistance

26

Survivors attended therapeutic support groups

44

survivors received economic empowerment services



Domestic Violence Advocacy



Support & Empowerment

Advocates stand by survivors, providing support and encouragement as they navigate the challenges of domestic violence. They offer a safe space where survivors can express themselves and receive guidance on their journey toward healing and independence.



Case Management

Advocates provide personalized case management support, guiding survivors through every step of their journey toward safety and healing. They assess individual needs, coordinate services, and offer ongoing assistance and advocacy to ensure survivors receive the comprehensive support they require to rebuild their lives with dignity and resilience.



Safety Planning

Advocates partner with survivors to develop practical safety plans tailored to their needs and circumstances. By providing guidance and support, they help survivors take steps toward creating a safer and more secure future for themselves.



Resource Referrals

Advocates identify survivor needs and connect them with various support resources, including housing support, economic empowerment, legal advocacy, mental health support, and more. Advocates network with various providers to help survivors access community resources.



Our Programs

Saheli offers services to meet our survivors where they are and support them holistically. Each of our services is offered through a lens of cultural competency in the survivors' native South Asian languages or Arabic.

HOUSING

Saheli's Housing Program provides housing search and supportive services to promote survivors' self-sufficiency, integration into the community, and permanency in housing.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Saheli strengthened its Economic Empowerment Program (EEP) in 2023. Our EEP gives domestic violence survivors tools and resources to live a safe, self-sustaining, and empowered life. The EEP model includes financial and computer literacy classes, assistance to obtain certifications, financial aid for professional training, career planning, and resources to find jobs.

LEGAL ADVOCACY

Saheli offers a range of culturally tailored legal advocacy services, with our Family Law and Immigration attorneys. We assist survivors in navigating the complex legal system. Saheli's attorneys supported 172 survivors in 2023.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Saheli mental health services include one-on-one care and support groups for survivors. Saheli guides survivors in leading conversations on healing and fostering empowerment in a way that survivors previously had not had the opportunity.

“ I am now safe on a powerful healing journey. No one can stop me. ”

Saheli Survivor who received mental health support

COMMUNITY OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT, & PREVENTION

Saheli engages stakeholders in domestic violence work around Massachusetts. By engaging survivors, law enforcement, physicians, college students, social workers, lawyers, and legislators, Saheli addresses prominent issues around domestic violence. Saheli also hosts community awareness events for the general public, such as the Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Month Walk.



Program Highlight

Community Outreach & Engagement

In 2023, Saheli pinpointed the following areas of focus and subsequently crafted training programs to address them.

A CULTURALLY COMPETENT APPROACH TO SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

This training orients service providers, to understand **(1)** *cultural nuances*, **(2)** *barriers to disclosure*, and **(3)** *cultural humility and competency*.

In 2023, Saheli partnered with multiple community organizations to train service providers on cultural competency:

- Boston Healthcare for the Homeless Program
- Revere Police Department
- Boston Children’s Hospital



ADDRESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A SOCIAL DETERMINANT OF HEALTH

Saheli is committed to addressing domestic violence as a nontraditional risk factor for poor health outcomes. Saheli collaborates with college students to **(1)** *understand how trauma manifests in chronic illness* and **(2)** *develop interventions to increase survivor agency in managing their health*.

These trainings were held at Tufts University. In 2024, Saheli is developing a community health intervention to improve survivor health outcomes.



Saheli additionally hosted bystander intervention trainings, discussions on the power dynamics women of color face in relationships, and more.

IN 2023, SAHELI REACHED OVER 1,867 COMMUNITY MEMBERS THROUGH OUTREACH, ENGAGEMENT, AND PREVENTION EFFORTS.



Prevention

Saheli is committed to raising awareness, providing support services for survivors, educating healthcare and legal systems, collaborating with youth, and addressing underlying cultural factors of domestic violence. Our aim is to develop interventions that are community-based and through expressive mediums like art and discussion.

MIT WORKSHOPS: ENGAGING IN ADVOCACY THROUGH AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS

In this 3 part workshop series, students learned to

- engage in introspection
- navigate different forms of advocacy
- locate & analyze pieces of legislation
- identify prevalent issues in their communities

SUMMER YOUTH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The Youth Fellowship ran from July to August 2023 and students learned to

- engage in arts-based exploration with fellows from different communities
- discuss issues like their identity & sense of belonging and healthy relationships
- identify mechanisms for social impact regarding mental health & issues in their communities
- develop weekly reflections for assembly into a community journal

“

Saheli gave an engaging presentation to our club on the communities they serve through their work and the undeniable impact their efforts have.

Tufts for Health Equity”

“I grew up” by a Saheli Youth Fellow

I grew up almost my whole life in Houston Texas.

I grew up with the same classmates from kindergarten.

I grew up through their awkward stages.

I grew up through the class parties we had in elementary.

Most of all I grew up nestled between the same walls, within those walls was a place I called home.

It's where my earliest memories took place.



Survivor Story:

Lost in Translation

This recent account of a survivor under Saheli's care underscores the critical need for cultural awareness training among service providers. The story revolves around a young, single Bangladeshi mother with two children who sought assistance from a new staff member at the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Unfortunately, her culturally ingrained practice of sitting on the floor and eating with her hands while feeding her children led to the distressing consequence of her children being taken away. Instances like these highlight the urgent requirement for comprehensive cultural sensitivity education and training for DCF staff and law enforcement personnel. Misinterpretations of cultural parenting behaviors can result in unwarranted trauma for immigrant families, perpetuating stigma and instilling fear regarding authority figures employed to offer assistance. This narrative underscores the importance of fostering understanding and sensitivity within the systems designed to support vulnerable populations.

Survivor Story: Journey to Empowerment

Amal, a 21-year-old Moroccan refugee with no knowledge of English, sought assistance from Saheli through a local mosque in February 2022. Recognizing Saheli's cultural and linguistic proficiency, the mosque refers survivors like Amal to the organization. Pregnant with twins and escaping domestic violence, Amal received comprehensive support from Saheli, including securing an apartment, financial assistance for rent and food, enrollment in benefit programs such as WIC for her children, access to an ESOL program, and mental health therapy sessions conducted by an Arabic-speaking counselor.

As her twins reached daycare age, Saheli's housing team was crucial in helping Amal secure employment at a Dollar Tree store. She acquired a secondhand bike with the organization's support and transitioned into a full-time job. A year and a half later, while Saheli continues to contribute to a portion of her rent, Amal has diligently saved \$3000, marking significant progress on her journey towards stability. While well on her path to self-sufficiency, Amal acknowledges the ongoing support from Saheli, recognizing that the organization remains a vital pillar until she can fully support herself and her two children.

Memorable Moments of 2023



Denim Day at the State House & Revere Police Department



Advocacy Workshop Series at Massachusetts Institute of Technology



Domestic Violence Awareness Month 5K Walk



Saheli's team met with legislators throughout 2023 to champion our mission and advocate for survivors of domestic violence, fostering crucial dialogue and support within legislative circles. (Pictured left to right: Representative Tram Nguyen, Senator Michael Moore, Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, & Representative Jessica Giannino)

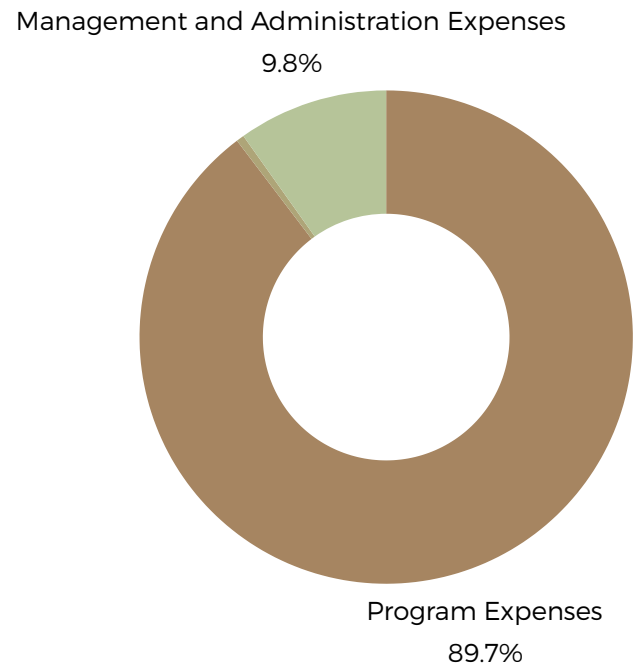
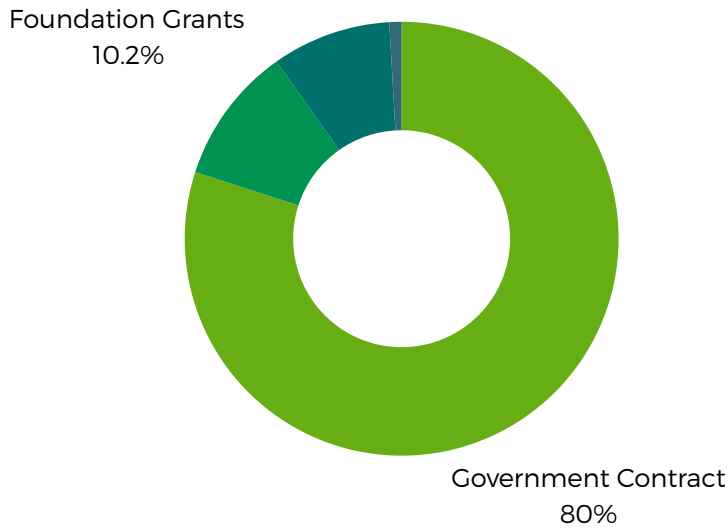
2023 Finances

Total Revenue
\$1,368,229

Total Expenses
\$1,305,558

- Government Contract
- Foundation Grants
- Fundraising Events & Indi...
- Investment Income & Rei...

- Program Expenses
- Fundraising Expenses
- Management and Administr...



Foundation Support

Agnes Lindsay Trust



Boston Bar Foundation



The Dow Fund

The Ludcke Foundation



Thank you for your unwavering commitment to Saheli's mission to combat domestic violence. Your generosity empowers survivors, fostering hope and resilience in the face of adversity.



Together, we are making strides towards a safer, more compassionate future for all those affected by domestic violence.

To Support Saheli:

You can make a donation to support survivors at Saheli at saheliboston.org/donate or by mail to P.O. Box 1345 Burlington, MA 01803.

For inquiries regarding donations or other ways to support Saheli, reach out to info@saheliboston.org.



Saheli

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