



South Asian Youth Action

IMPACT REPORT

2021-22



MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am grateful for the generosity of our many supporters and partners that allows us to continue to grow as an organization and to support our young people in their social and emotional growth.



Sonia B. Sisodia
Executive Director

Dear SAYA Community,

What a year this has been – a year filled with reflection, restoration, and rejuvenation. The collective commitment of our incredible donors, partners, and volunteers truly demonstrate the power of our community and the strength of our shared purpose. Thank you for envisioning a world where all youth, regardless of background, will be affirmed in their identities and cultures – seeing their value and connection to their community.

For over 27 years, SAYA has worked to connect our youth to opportunities; build deep, lasting partnerships; and invest in solutions that drive educational equity.

Today our work remains agile and adaptive while providing high-quality programs to an increasing number of youth each year. SAYA is poised for even further growth in 2023 – through greater volunteer engagements, new initiatives, and continued commitment from our Board. We are well-positioned to help even more youth develop life skills, meet their potential, and thrive in school and beyond.

This report reflects the impact that SAYA, our donors, and our partners have on our youth. These stories spotlight the importance of your support, and how it enables us to be responsive to the wellbeing of our youth, help create positive connections to their learning environments, boost their academic readiness, and develop their own sense of agency and belonging. This is why SAYA exists.

I am grateful for the generosity of our many advocates, which allows us to continue to grow as an organization and to support our young people in their social and emotional growth. It is my privilege to work with an amazing staff and dedicated board of directors, partners, and funders.

Warmly,

Sonia B. Sisodia
Executive Director

2021-2022

IMPACT

AT-A-GLANCE

1,900+

youth in kindergarten to college served

72%

retention rate of high school youth at SAYA's Elmhurst Center

\$152,000

in scholarship funds awarded to 18 youth

96%

of college students on track to graduate in 5 years

4.0 OUT OF 5.0

average engagement level (measuring enjoyment and learning) of youth in kindergarten to 8th grade

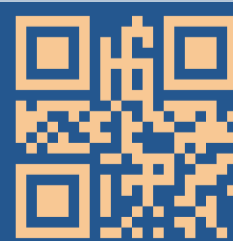
100%

of college access cohort accepted to college

27

years helping youth belong grow, and thrive

LEARN MORE



saya.org

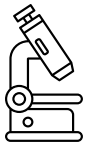
Highlights

We're proud to share some of our accomplishments.



Elementary school

Expanded programming, serving an additional 120 youth



STEAM

Deepened programming with activities covering photography, coding, ecology, robotics, and climate change



Founded new initiatives

Focused on Academic Readiness, Peer Mentorship, Career Exposure, and Wellness



First jobs

Recent college graduates secured their first jobs with SAYA's support, working at companies including Bloomberg LP, KPMG, the NYC Department of Education, Planned Parenthood, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and UM Worldwide



Expanded mentorship

Two 6-month programs with volunteers from Goldman Sachs and PricewaterhouseCoopers



Highlights

We welcomed four new members to the Board of Directors.



SHALINI MAHAJAN

Managing Director
Fitch Ratings, Inc.



FARAZ MUNAIM

Executive Director
Goldman Sachs



SHEETAL SHETH

Actress, Author,
Producer

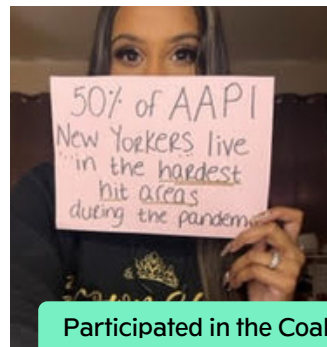
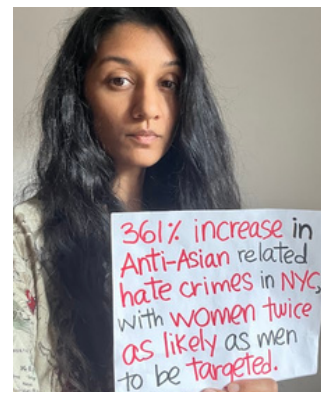
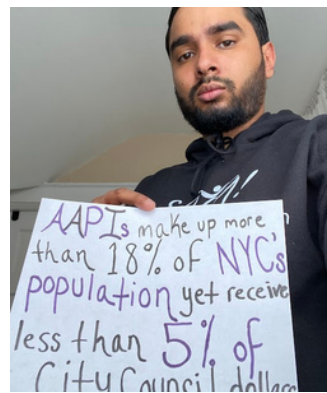


ARUN SUBRAMANIAN

Partner
Susman Godfrey LLP



Successfully advocated for funding to be restored to the New York City Community School Initiative, alongside a number of community-based organizations



Participated in the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) 18% and Growing Campaign to increase city funding for Asian-led and Asian-serving organizations.

\$425K

largest single corporate grant received to date from TD Bank

OVER 85%

of funds spent directly on programming



Partnership Highlight

Through New York State and the Asian American Federation, SAYA was selected to receive a Hope Against Hate Campaign grant award (HAH). The HAH Campaign works to immediately address the public health crisis of hate-based violence impacting Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) New Yorkers while laying the foundation for long-term, community-centered mitigation.

SAYA held sessions with our Center-based youth on anti-AAPI bias - incorporating current events and safety precautions, as well as external workshops with partner organizations. A large part of these sessions was also dedicated to forums where our youth can comfortably discuss their feelings and experiences with the subject.

Youth also took part in increased wellness and self-care curriculum. They focused on managing stress and increasing joy to find balance in their hectic lives. They designed ideal retreats for themselves, brainstorming activities such as exercise, meditation, and games - which they can use to alleviate worries whenever they need.



Our staff also continued providing individual check-ins, during which they inquired about the youth's well-being, ability to balance academic and personal responsibilities, and shared wellness and self-care techniques. As needed, youth who could benefit from therapy were referred to partner organizations.

In addition, all SAYA staff took part in a two-day training provided by the Nonviolent Peaceforce. This training provided tools and guidance for individuals to act as upstanders and equip the group with wellness and mental health resources.

Funding from the Asian American Federation's Hope Against Hate program helped SAYA to continue offering vital support to youth in need, grow our ability to combat bias, and ensure our young people have the network and resources necessary to achieve and succeed now and throughout their lifetimes. SAYA will continue to use the tools, resources, and best practices learned during this initiative throughout our programming. Mental health and wellness for our young people remains a key tenet of our work, and we will continue to provide them with the holistic support they need.

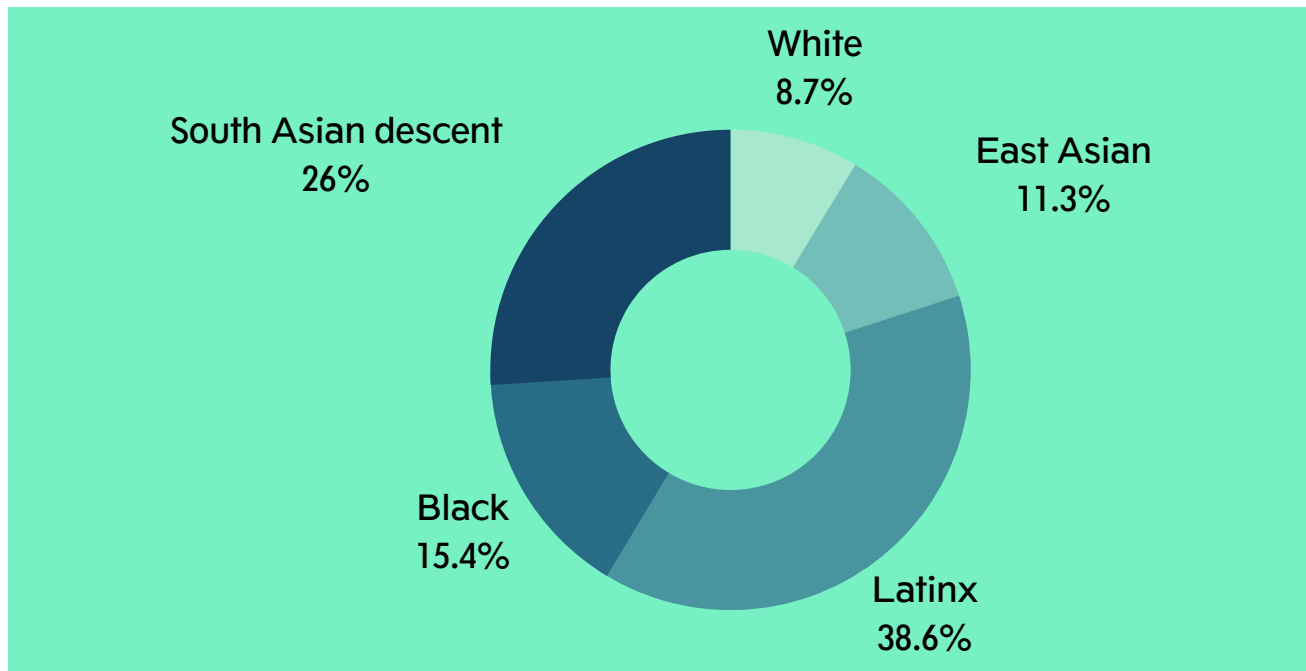
HOPE

AGAINST
HATE

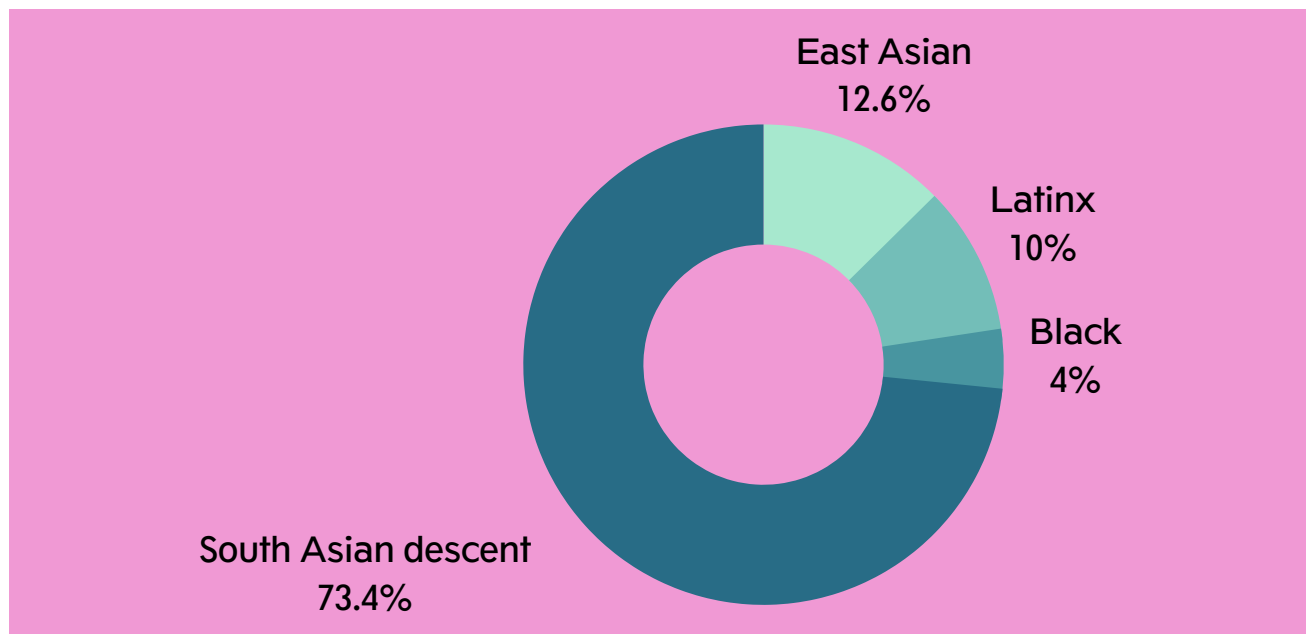
Mental health and wellness for our young people remains a key tenet of our work, and we will continue to provide them with the holistic support they need.

OUR YOUTH

Organization-wide demographics



Elmhurst Center demographics



27

years helping youth
belong, grow, and thrive

**OVER
13K**

young people served
since 1996

10%

increase in enrollment from
pre-pandemic numbers

OUR YOUTH

48%

were born
outside the
United States

91%

have at least one
parent who was
born abroad

93%

are eligible for
free or reduced
lunches at their
schools

77%

come from families
with a combined
annual income of
\$50,000 or less



SAYA youth come from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. Many are first- and second- generation immigrant youth of color who face numerous barriers that hinder their chances to be academically and socially successful, graduate high school, and attend college.

These young people live in under-resourced neighborhoods and attend schools that are ill-equipped to meet their special needs related to language and belonging. In addition, many first-generation parents confront language barriers, societal obstacles, and a lack of familiarity with American culture and the education system. As a result, they are at a disadvantage when it comes to helping their children navigate the complexities of adolescence growing up in the United States.

Taking our youth's individual abilities and challenges into account, SAYA works to meet their needs and improve outcomes through personalized and meaningful mentorship and guidance.



ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW AND MISSION

South Asian Youth Action (SAYA) is an inclusive, South Asian-focused 501(c)3 youth development organization. Through our innovative, holistic approach, we work toward educational equity by providing opportunities and resources to less privileged New York City youth, ensuring they are empowered academically, emotionally, and socially to become engaged community members.

Established in 1996, SAYA provides valuable life skills and holistic, impactful programming to underserved New York City youth. As one of the first South Asian organizations created in the United States, SAYA is the only organization of its kind in the NYC metropolitan area providing inclusive and secular comprehensive youth development services while centering our community's experiences. Today, SAYA provides programming at eight elementary, middle, and high schools in Queens and Brooklyn, along with our Elmhurst-based community center - serving a growing number of youth across all sites each year.

Our continued mission is to address the critical need for culturally-affirming resources, mentorship, and academic support outside the classroom for low-income, immigrant youth. Over the course of our history, SAYA has broken down the "model minority" myth and paved the way for greater attention and investments in social services for the South Asian population. As the communities we serve continue to diversify, our guiding principles of inclusivity and belonging are further exemplified by our commitment to cross-racial solidarity.

A key goal across all of our work is to provide meaningful mentorship and guidance during educational transitions, including elementary to middle, middle to high school, high school to college, and preparation for careers and life after higher education. Our consciously designed offerings provide youth with ongoing individually adapted support. Throughout their time at SAYA, youth build vital social and emotional learning (SEL) and academic skills, as well as a sense of belonging and community which will help them thrive throughout their education and professional journeys.

WHERE WE SERVE

Elementary School

P.S. 124 Osmond A. Church
South Ozone Park, Queens

P.S. 230 Doris L. Cohen
Kensington, Brooklyn

Central Queens Academy
Elmhurst, Queens

Middle School

Central Queens Academy
Elmhurst, Queens

Irwin Altman Middle School 172
Glen Oaks, Queens

J.H.S. 202 Robert H. Goddard
Ozone Park, Queens

Our World Neighborhood
Charter School
Astoria, Queens

High School

Elmhurst Center
Elmhurst, Queens

Richmond Hill High School
Richmond Hill, Queens

Thomas A. Edison Career and
Technical Education High School
Jamaica, Queens

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Samir Gandhi, Chair *
Partner
Sidley Austin LLP

Sasank Chary, Treasurer *
Managing Director
KKR

Bharat Das
Managing Director
Das & Co.

Sonia Deb, Secretary *
Community Member

Sunita Desai
Assistant Professor
NYU Grossman School of Medicine

Samidh Guha *
Founding Partner
Perry Guha LLP

Shalini Mahajan
Managing Director
Fitch Ratings, Inc.

Faraz Munaim
Executive Director
Goldman Sachs

Prashant A. Rai
Senior Managing Director
Guggenheim Partners, LLC

Bharat Sawhney
Partner
Sia Partners

Radhika Sehgal
Community Member

Sheetal Sheth
Actress, Author, Producer

Arun Subramanian
Partner
Susman Godfrey LLP

Sonia B. Sisodia*
Executive Director
South Asian Youth Action

* Executive Committee Member



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