

# Aisha Chapra

## Education & Training

- Sept 06-April 07     **Master of Social Work (MSW)**, University of Toronto  
Specialization in **Social Justice and Diversity**  
*Collaborative MA in South Asian Studies*
- 2003-2004     **Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)**, McGill University
- 1999-2003     **Bachelor of Arts**, McGill University  
Double Major: **Political Science and English Literature**
- June 2012     200 Hour Yoga Alliance Certified Teacher's Training, Sivananda Yoga Institute.
- July 2010     200 Hour Yoga Alliance Certified Teacher's Training, Yandara Yoga Institute.

## Employment Experience

*August 2022 – current*     **Director of Field Education, Bachelor of Social Work Program, Colorado Mesa University**

- Teaching Diverse Populations, Ethical Issues in Social Work, & Seminar
- Coordinating between internship site supervisors, students and the university
- Leader in maintaining high quality of CMU's CSWE accredited social work program through curriculum design, data collection, assessment and evaluation.

*January 2022 – May 2022*     **Adjunct Faculty, Colorado Mesa University**

- Teaching Introduction to Social Work & Diverse Populations
- Creating course syllabus from an anti-racist, anti-oppressive perspective
- Guiding students from diverse backgrounds on core competencies for social workers.
- Modeling social work values, ethics and profession through the classroom experience.

*October 2009 – Current*     **Yoga Instructor, Living Yoga with Aisha**

- Teaching Hatha Yoga to groups of adult men and women and making personal plans regarding various physical, emotional, mental or spiritual needs of clients.
- E-RYT (Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher with Yoga Alliance, USA) with over 1400 hours of teaching experience.
- Conduct workshops on somatic movement.
- Provide continuing education to other yoga and fitness instructors.

*January 2021- March 2022*     **Freelance Writer**

- Monthly column with *Aaj Digital*, a national news network in Pakistan
- Published short story fiction and memoir-based essays
- Preparing submissions for a variety of literary journals
- Taught middle schoolers creative writing course online based on the principles of Natalie Goldberg's Writing Practice.

*Aug 2018 – Dec 2020* **Assistant Editor, Patagonia Regional Times (PRT)**

[www.patagoniaregionaltimes.org](http://www.patagoniaregionaltimes.org)

The PRT is a monthly print newspaper serving a rural area in Southern Arizona. The monthly newspaper covers local news, ranging from school activities to industrial mining projects. Since the onset of the pandemic the newspaper became a critical resource for information for the community. I worked many extra hours covering the first year of the pandemic, interviewing and holding public health and local government officials accountable.

- Write, interview, report, edit the print edition of the newspaper.
- Create, update and manage the organizations website and social media.
- Conducted a variety of administrative tasks including working with Adobe Indesign software to layout the paper.

*January 2010-2014*    **Adjunct Faculty, Syed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science & Technology (SZABIST) University, Karachi, Pakistan**

- Worked in Social Sciences & Media Studies department, teaching Introduction to Social Sciences, Gender Studies, Gender in Film & TV, Media Psychology (2013) to undergraduate students from an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective.
- Taught Media & Postcolonialism and Media & Contemporary Culture (Masters level) from an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective.
- Have previously taught World History at SZABIST.
- Created my own curriculum and course readers for each class with limited access to online publications.
- Taught over 300 students from a wide variety of backgrounds.

*January 2014- October 2017*    **Manager & Instructor, Yoga Retreats with Aisha**

- Advertised, Organized and Executed 15 yoga retreats for groups in Northern Pakistan and 1 in Thailand.
- Retreats focused on wellness through nature, meditation, yoga, and hiking.
- Informal group facilitation with retreat participants.

*August 2012 – 2014*    **Yoga Instructor, The Clinic – House of Medicina Alternative, Karachi, Pakistan**

- Teaching Hatha Yoga to groups of adult men and women in a holistic alternative health model. Creating Monthly or bi-monthly workshops to cope with specific health related issues and teaching a free weekly drop-in Seniors Yoga Class.

*October 2009 – September 2012*    **Yoga Instructor (Volunteer), Central Prison for Women, Karachi, Pakistan**

- Conducting yoga classes that focus on relieving stress and anxiety.
- Coordinated donation drives for women and children living in prison

*August 2010-March 2011*    **Yoga Instructor, The Recovery House, Karachi, Pakistan**

- Teaching Yoga and meditation to people living with mental illnesses at a rehabilitation centre.

*September 2008- July 2009*    **Youth Settlement Counselor, Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre, Toronto**

- Working one on one with immigrant and refugee youth by providing solution-focused counseling.
- Facilitating arts-based groups at middle schools and high schools with newcomer youth.
- Creating fun and creative programming for youth in middle schools and high schools.
- Working specifically to reach out to lesbian, gay, queer and trans newcomer youth.
- Conducting city-wide outreach with immigrant and refugee youth.

*May 07 – July 2009*    **Research Assistant, Professor Sakamoto, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto**

- Supported further enhancing readings assigned for the course: Globalization and Transnationalization: Social Work Responses Locally and Globally

- Assisted in preparing presentations and conducted literature reviews on various topics related to immigration and immigrants in Canada.

January 2008 – July 2009     **Research Assistant, *Re-examining the "Canadian Experience" and acculturation: The missing context of Canada's high-skilled immigrants, Principal Investigator Professor Izumi Sakamoto***

*This research project critically examines the “Canadian experience” in relation to skilled immigrants’ employment challenges from multiple perspectives.*

- Participated in team meetings to refine research design and develop interview and focus group questionnaires.
- Support in media analysis surrounding concept of “Canadian Experience”
- Trained to use NVivo 8 to analyze interview data, along with video, audio and other media.
- Support in coordinating project and bringing insight as a frontline settlement worker to the project.
- Summarizing and analyzing data from focus groups.

May 2007-July 2009     **Research Assistant, *Coming Together: Homeless Women, Housing, and Social Support Principal Investigator Professor Izumi Sakamoto***

*Coming Together is an arts-based community research project exploring how women and transwomen who are marginally housed build support networks with each other in order to survive. Through painting, drama and photography women/transwomen depicted their visions and stories of inclusion, friendship and safe spaces. It is a part of the Arts and Social Work Research Initiative (ASWRI) at the Factor Inwentash, Faculty of Social Work.*

- Co-authoring four academic papers to be submitted to journals.
- Coordinated Advisory Board members for meetings, events and other project related activities.
- Co-presented about various aspects of the project’s findings at academic conferences in North America.
- Conducted numerous literature reviews on homelessness, arts based and arts informed research, community based research evaluation.
- Completed NVivo analysis of in depth interview data, working from grounded theory perspective.
- Implemented evaluation component of the project with Advisory Board of women and transwomen experiencing homelessness and marginal housing.
- Facilitated focus groups of women and transwomen at drop-ins around Toronto to conduct evaluation of the project.
- Created publications of various types – fact sheets, short reports, pamphlets, and website development.
- Assisted with data collection and analysis of participant demographics creating quantitative excel charts and qualitative summaries of content from evaluation focus groups.
- Website development as part of ASWRI and the projects own website page.

October 2007-October 2008     **Research Coordinator, *Homelessness: Solutions from lived experience through Arts Informed Research. Principal Investigator Professor Izumi Sakamoto***

*This project was a collaboration of eight arts-based and/or community-based research projects conducted by peer researchers, community agencies and academics working with people with experiences of homelessness. Together, these works represent an important body of evidence on the lived experiences of homelessness, which is innovative and locally defined.*

- Co-coordinated the launch of an art exhibit, website and combined policy report.

- Participated in developing the initial phase of project and coordinated multiple individuals and organizations to work together.
- Assisted in preparing the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant proposal under the Homelessness and Diversity initiative (grant application was successful).
- Summarized, coded and analyzed the multiple research project outcomes to initialize process of synthesis towards a shared policy report.
- Co-authored policy report that highlighted shared recommendations from the various projects.
- Assisted in video documentation of project.
- Communicated with peer researchers of the various projects to ensure the project would be inclusive of peer researchers with lived experience of homelessness.
- Prepared agendas, minutes, and any other administrative tasks for coordination of meetings with research partners.

October 2007 – September 2008 **Social Worker (Community Health Team)** *Regent Park Community Health Centre, Toronto*

- Counseling and case management with youth, men, women and families living in poverty. High percentage of caseload is with immigrants, or first-generation immigrants, including a number of South Asian clients.
- Act as a client advocate on individual and systemic issues.
- Contribute to chart documentation, participate in chart reviews and case conferences, and make referrals.
- Have assisted in the process of appealing negative decisions for refugee claimants, applying for Humanitarian Compassionate Appeal, permanent residency, citizenship, among other country specific visa/work permit applications.
- Achieved understanding on current social services in Ontario, specifically social assistance, immigration and Violence Against Women sectors.
- Developing and facilitating a pilot young girls group for 12-14 year old 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrants.
- Advanced critical thinking on program delivery in Community Health Centres and other social service organizations.
- Established concrete skills on how to work with an interdisciplinary team and diverse populations to provide holistic care.

Sept 06 - April 07 **Intern (Community Health Team)** *Regent Park Community Health Centre, Toronto*

- Refined data analysis of community based research conducted with youth in Regent Park.
- Case management with newcomer immigrants on an individual and family basis, with an early years focus for families.
- Facilitate weekly art group with trans/women who are homeless or marginally housed at the Adelaide Resource Centre for Women.
- Led group facilitation for children aged 6-12 at Parents for Better Beginnings.

Aug 05- May 2006 **Executive Director**, *Pakistani American Leadership Center (PAL-C)*, Washington D.C  
([www.pal-c.org](http://www.pal-c.org))

- Managed all activities of the office, including budgeting, interns, volunteers, and all events sponsored by PAL-C.
- Promoted awareness on US political system within the Pakistani American community and on issues related to Pakistani Americans and Pakistan with Members of Congress through organizing public outreach and educational seminars.
- Launched photo exhibition “Spirit of Kashmir” following devastating earthquake in October 2005 in Pakistani administered Kashmir, available to view at [http://www.thesaturdaypost.com/spotlight\\_29\\_kashmir.html](http://www.thesaturdaypost.com/spotlight_29_kashmir.html)

Jan 05 – August 05 **Executive Director**, *Rising Leaders*, Washington D.C.

- Coordinated, recruited and linked young Pakistani Americans through events and online forums.
- Initiated Strategic Planning for Rising Leaders by facilitating and preparing workshops for youth membership and a subsequent Strategic Plan.
- Achieved hosting two successful national conferences in Los Angeles and Washington D.C for Pakistani-American youth as chief organizer.
- Produced and designed all written materials for distribution to membership, sponsors, and website content development and management.

Jan 05 - July 05 **Internship Coordinator**, *Embassy of Pakistan*, Washington D.C

- Positioned in the diplomatic wing with the Deputy Chief of Mission in a high-pressure environment.
- Enhanced summer internship program for youth 18-25 by spearheading an 8-week initiative.
- Managed intern activities, reviewed and supervised their work, while providing mentorship formally and informally.

### Academic Publications

Chapra, A. & Chatterjee, S. (2009). Talking Colour, Talking Race: Racialized women, their home and belongingness. *Canadian Women Studies*, 27 (2/3).

Sakamoto, I., Chin, M., Chapra, A., & Ricciardi, J. (2009). A 'normative' homeless woman?: Marginalisation, emotional injury, and social support of transwomen experiencing homelessness. [Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review](#), 5(1), 2-19.

Sakamoto, I., Khandor, E., Chapra, A., Hendrickson, T., Maher, J., Roche, B. & Chin, M. (2008). Homelessness – Diverse Experiences, Common Issues, Shared Solutions: The Need for Inclusion and Accountability. Toronto: Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto.

### Other Publications:

Chapra, A. (2022). Saint by the Sea. *Yolk Literary Magazine*. 2.1.

Chapra, A. (2021). Bird of Paradise. *Climate Liberated: Short Stories to Change the World*. STCW Publishing.

Chapra, A. (2021-2022). Northern Exposure Monthly Column. *Aaj News Pakistan*.

Chapra, A. (2009). Untitled & The alleged (poetry). *Celebration of Resistance and Self Defense Launch of the Premiere issue of AQSA ZINE*, February 26, 2009.

### Academic presentations

Sakamoto, I., Chin, M., Chapra, A., & Khandor, E., (August 2009). What's next? From individual arts-informed research projects to collaborative initiative. *American Psychological Association 117<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention*, Toronto, August 6-9, 2009.

Sakamoto, I., Chin, M., Chapra, A & Ricciardi, J. (February 2009). A 'normative' homeless woman?: Social exclusion and resiliency of transwomen who have experienced homelessness. *Growing Home: Housing and Homelessness in Canada*, February 18 – 20, 2009 at the University of Calgary MacEwan Conference & Event Centre.

Sakamoto, I., Chin, M., Chapra, A., & Khandor, E. (February 2009). Homelessness: Solutions from Lived

- Experiences through Arts-Informed Research. *Growing Home: Housing and Homelessness in Canada*, February 18 – 20, 2009 at the University of Calgary MacEwan Conference & Event Centre.
- Sakamoto, I., Allan, B., Chapra, A., & Ricciardi, J. (February 2009). Re-visioning Homeless and Marginally Housed Aboriginal Women: Helpers not Helpless. *Growing Home: Housing and Homelessness in Canada*, February 18 – 20, 2009 at the University of Calgary MacEwan Conference & Event Centre.
- Sakamoto, I., Chin, M., Chapra, A., & Ricciardi, J. (November 2008). Elucidating Homeless Transwomen's Experience from Social Determinants of Health Perspective. *Annual Program Meeting, Council of Social Work Education*, Social and Economic Justice Track, November 2, 2008.
- Sakamoto, I., Wood, N., Chapra, A. & Ricciardi, J. (May 2008). Staged photography as a community-based participatory research method. *Fourth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry*, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, May 17, 2008.
- Sakamoto, I., Ricciardi, J. Chapra, A., Wood, N. & Allan, B. (May 2008). Arts-based research as a tool of anti-oppression and human rights: A university-community collaboration focusing on social support of women experiencing homelessness. *Social Work National Conference*, Toronto, May 24, 2008.

### **Professional presentations**

- Abdmoulaie, G., Chapra, A., & Saadi, S. (April 2009). This is not a homework club: Using arts as a tool for youth settlement and integration. *Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, Professional Development Conference*, Nottawasaga, Ontario, April 22-24, 2009.
- Chapra, A., Chatterjee, S., Mucina-Kaur, M. (June 2008). Forced Marriages as a form of violence against women. *The Right to Choose: an international symposium on forced/non-consensual marriage*, Toronto, June 4, 2008.
- Bokhari, T., Chapra, A., & Chambon, A. (2007). Photography as a Social Work Intervention: Expression of Disaster & Life during the 2005 Earthquake in Pakistan. *AMNI Centre and Arts and Social Work Research Initiative*, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, February 13, 2007.

### **Professional & Volunteer Membership**

October 2011 – 2014

- General Body Member at Aahung, a sexual health education and awareness NGO in Karachi.

June 2010 – October 2020

- Registered Yoga Teacher with Yoga Alliance, U.S.A.

September 2007 – December 2009

- Membership in Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers

### **Relevant Special Skills/Training**

- **Video-making workshop – Factor Inwentash Faculty of Social Work**
  - Co produced and edited video “Talking Colour, Talking Race” about the experiences of racialized women and immigrant women living in Toronto and their experiences related to migration, home, belonging, education and social services in Canada.

- **Certificate for Microsoft Office in 2004 (Including Publisher, Excel and Access)**

**Languages**

- Fluent in English, Urdu (spoken) and Hindi (spoken)